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SEASON 2017

MELBOURNE'S HOME OF THEATRE

MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY

SEASON 2017

MTC

Season 2017

Melbourne Theatre Company Artistic Director Brett Sheehy AO today revealed MTC's 2017 Season – a collection of works from around the world that celebrate the art of great, live storytelling.

'Season 2017 is one of our most exciting yet,' **Brett Sheehy** said. 'The year ahead draws together an enviable assortment of artists to present stories from France, Britain, Ireland, America, India, and, of course, Australia for a season that will bring laughter, empathy, debate and intrigue to all our lives.'

'In a season that celebrates and showcases live storytelling at its best, we are especially thrilled that four outstanding new Australian plays will have world premiere productions on our stages,' Mr Sheehy said.

Melbourne Theatre Company's 2017 Season features **eleven mainstage productions**, an extensive **Education Program** and **touring education production**, plus a range of industry-leading initiatives including MTC's **Women in Theatre Program**, **NEON NEXT**, **MTC CONNECT** and **Cybec Electric**.

The season opens in grand period style with Garson Kanin's 1940s Broadway classic **Born Yesterday** – a screwball romance directed by MTC Associate Director **Dean Byrant**, starring **Christie Whelan Browne** and **Joel Jackson**.

The incomparable **Helen Morse** and **Julia Blake** return to the stage alongside **Ursula Mills** making her MTC debut in **John**, the latest highly acclaimed work from Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright **Annie Baker**, directed by MTC Associate Director **Sarah Goodes**.

Judy Davis directs **Brian Friel's** enduring work of art, **Faith Healer** – an extraordinary creation presented in four beautifully sculpted monologues – starring **Colin Friels**, **Pip Miller** and **Alison Whyte**.

Led by director **Sarah Goodes**, **Catherine McClements** stars in the world premiere of **Three Little Words**, a brand new acerbic comedy from **Joanna Murray-Smith** about friends, relationships and the complexities of navigating through the everyday upheavals of life.

Legendary actors **Nancye Hayes**, **Sue Jones** and **Rhys McConnochie** star alongside comedy favourites **Virginia Gay**, **John Leary** and **Georgina Naidu** in **Minnie & Liraz**, an hilarious offbeat story of kindly Jewish grandparents and raw ambition by the magnificent **Lally Katz**, directed by **Anne-Louise Sarkis**.

Shakespeare's searing tragedy of ambition, betrayal and murder, **Macbeth**, marks the hotly-anticipated return of the Bard on MTC's stage, directed by former MTC Artistic Director **Simon Phillips**.

Sam Strong directs an MTC and QTC co-production of **Noises Off** by **Michael Frayn**, the shamelessly entertaining backstage farce, starring a superb ensemble cast including **Simon Burke AO**.

Marion Potts returns to MTC's mainstage to direct **Di and Viv and Rose** by **Amelia Bullmore**, a heart-warming comedy starring **Nadine Garner** exploring female friendship and lifelong alliance.

Noël Coward's high society classic, **Hay Fever**, is given a glorious new production starring **Marina Prior** and **Simon Gleeson**, directed by 2016 Helpmann Award-winning director **Lee Lewis**.

Continued >

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MTC Season 2017

Damien Ryan directs theatre luminary **John Bell AO** in an MTC and STC co-production of **The Father**, a powerful, funny and deeply unsettling mystery by French literary star **Florian Zeller**, translated by Christopher Hampton, that transports audiences into the puzzling labyrinth of an old man's once familiar world.

The world premiere of **Vivid White**, the latest creation from the wild satirical mind of **Eddie Perfect** about middle-class aspirations and the living nightmare that is the Australian housing market, closes MTC's 2017 mainstage season, directed by **Dean Bryant** and starring **Brent Hill** and **Verity Hunt-Ballard**.

In addition to its mainstage season, MTC presents the world premiere of **Melbourne Talam**, a vibrant new work about three young people from India searching for belonging in Australia by **Rashma N. Kalsie**, as its 2017 Education production.

Also as part of MTC's award-winning **Education Program**, the Company continues to offer a range of unique learning opportunities and resources to students and teachers, and the **Sharing the Light** initiative enters its third year providing subsidised \$5 tickets to eligible students and families, scholarships for young Indigenous people and a regional tour of MTC's Education production.

Beyond the stage, the Company continues to lead the way in creating and developing opportunities for artists to enhance their skills, test ideas and engage with MTC and Melbourne audiences alike.

In 2017 **NEON NEXT** focuses on artist development through dedicated creative workshops, a new Company in Residence program, and providing touring support for THE RABBLE and Sisters Grimm, while continuing to develop new works by Nicola Gunn and Daniel Schlusser.

The annual **Cybec Electric** play reading series celebrates the inaugural Asia-Pacific Triennial of Performing Arts (Asia TOPA) by turning its attention to Asian-Australian playwrights, and MTC's range of artist access initiatives return including its **Assistant Directors Program**, **MTC CONNECT** and the **Women in Theatre Program**.

'MTC is dedicated to bringing audiences the best theatre possible and supporting the artists who make it happen. Season 2017 is going to be a wonderful year and we look forward to welcoming many friends, old and new, on stage and in the audience, for another stellar year at Melbourne's home of theatre,' **Mr Sheehy** said.

Subscription packages for MTC's Season 2017 are now on sale.

Single tickets for **Born Yesterday**, **John** and **Faith Healer** go on sale on **Thursday 1 December**, and single tickets for **all remaining shows** go on sale on **Thursday 2 March 2017**.

mtc.com.au/2017

     [MelbTheatre2017](https://www.instagram.com/MelbTheatre2017)

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MTC

Season 2017

Calendar



Born Yesterday

by Garson Kanin

14 January – 25 February
Opening Night: Thursday 19 January
Southbank Theatre, The Sumner



John

by Annie Baker

10 February – 25 March
Opening Night: Thursday 16 February
Arts Centre Melbourne,
Fairfax Studio



Faith Healer

by Brian Friel

4 March – 8 April
Opening Night: Thursday 9 March
Southbank Theatre, The Sumner



Three Little Words

by Joanna Murray-Smith

18 April – 27 May
Opening Night: Saturday 22 April
Southbank Theatre, The Sumner



Minnie & Liraz

by Lally Katz

12 May – 24 June
Opening Night: Thursday 18 May
Arts Centre Melbourne,
Fairfax Studio



Macbeth

by William Shakespeare

5 June – 15 July
Opening Night: Friday 9 June
Southbank Theatre, The Sumner



Noises Off

by Michael Frayn

8 July – 12 August
Opening Night: Wednesday 12 July
Arts Centre Melbourne, Playhouse



Di and Viv and Rose

by Amelia Bullmore

12 August – 16 September
Opening Night: Thursday 17 August
Southbank Theatre, The Sumner



Noël Coward's Hay Fever

23 September – 28 October
Opening Night: Thursday 28 September
Southbank Theatre, The Sumner



The Father

by Florian Zeller, translated by
Christopher Hampton

2 November – 16 December
Opening Night: Wednesday 8 November
Arts Centre Melbourne, Fairfax Studio



Vivid White

by Eddie Perfect

18 November – 23 December
Opening Night: Thursday 23 November
Southbank Theatre, The Sumner



MTC Education

Melbourne Talam by Rashma N. Kalsie

4 – 20 May
Opening Night: Friday 5 May
Southbank Theatre, The Lawler

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BORN YESTERDAY

by Garson Kanin



Cast includes Heidi Arena,
Christie Whelan Browne, Joel Jackson,
Richard Piper
Director Dean Bryant
Set & Costume Designer Dale Ferguson
Lighting Designer Matt Scott
Composer & Sound Designer
Mathew Frank
Voice & Dialect Coach Leith McPherson

'The classic Broadway comedy.' Variety
'Deliciously witty.' NY Daily News

Season Dates

14 January – 25 February

Opening Night

Thursday 19 January, 8pm

Venue

Southbank Theatre, The Sumner

Subscriptions

On sale from
6pm Sunday 28 August 2016
mtc.com.au

Single Tickets

On sale Thursday 1 December 2016
mtc.com.au
03 8688 0800

Melbourne Theatre Company's 2017 Season opens in 1940s style with Garson Kanin's Broadway classic *Born Yesterday* – a screwball romance that has plenty to say about the dark side of politics and the power of knowledge.

With MTC Associate Director **Dean Bryant** at the helm and a cast including **Christie Whelan Browne** (*The Importance of Being Earnest*) as Billie Dawn and **Joel Jackson** (*Peter Allen: Not The Boy Next Door*) as her bookish love interest, audiences will be swept up in the glamour of post-war America when the comedy masterpiece opens on **Thursday 19 January** at Southbank Theatre, The Sumner.

Dean Bryant said, '*Born Yesterday* is an hilarious and startling look at the political machinations that go on behind closed doors. Billie Dawn is a brilliant creation, a determinedly ignorant girl who becomes a sharp and generous woman under the tutelage of an idealistic journalist. Witty and romantic, it tells the evergreen story of a couple of little guys who trump the corrupt and powerful.'

With the war over and Europe littered with a billion tons of scrap metal, junk-yard tycoon Harry Brock settles into a swank Washington hotel suite ready to grease palms and browbeat senators. Yet how can he win over Congress if his girlfriend, Billie, is always bringing down the tone? Enter Paul Verrall, a left-leaning magazine reporter, who knows enough about Washington to be cynical about the place. For a price, Verrall will teach Billie a few things, but does she have the capacity to learn? Does she ever!

Newly appointed MTC Associate Director, **Dean Bryant**, is an award-winning director with a raft of national and international accolades to his name. For MTC Dean has directed *Skylight*, *I'll Eat You Last* and *Next to Normal*. For Hayes Theatre Company, he directed *Little Shop of Horrors* and *Sweet Charity*. Other credits include *Anything Goes* (Opera Australia/GFO); *Once We Lived Here* (Kings Head Theatre, London), *Straight* (Red Stitch), *The Last Five Years*, *Virgins: A Musical Threesome*, and the verbatim theatre piece *Gaybies* (Midsumma/Darlinghurst Theatre Company).

Garson Kanin (1912–1999) was a 20th Century Renaissance man. He began his stage career as an actor, later attending the American Academy of Dramatic Arts and making his Broadway debut in 1933. *Born Yesterday* was his masterpiece, playing over 1500 performances on Broadway, and winning its original star Judy Holliday an Oscar for her performance in the film version. Over the course of his career Kanin wrote or directed thirty-two plays (including the premiere of *Funny Girl*), worked on twenty-nine films (including *It Should Happen to You*, *Adam's Rib*, and the Oscar-winning *The True Glory*) and continued to write books (including *Smash*, the basis for the TV series). In 1985, the same year he wrote and directed his last play, *Peccadillo*, he was inducted into the American Theater Hall of Fame.



#mtcBornYesterday
mtc.com.au/BornYesterday

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JOHN

by Annie Baker

AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE

Cast includes Julia Blake,
Ursula Mills, Helen Morse
Director Sarah Goodes
Set & Costume Designer
Elizabeth Gadsby
Composer & Sound Designer
Russell Goldsmith

'So good on so many levels that it casts a unique and brilliant light.'
The New Yorker

'Inspiring. More than any play I've seen recently, *John* acknowledges, and even celebrates, the act of watching a play in a theatre.' Slate

Season Dates
10 February – 25 March

Opening Night
Thursday 16 February, 8pm

Venue
Arts Centre Melbourne, Fairfax Studio

Subscriptions
On sale from
6pm Sunday 28 August 2016
mtc.com.au

Single Tickets
On sale Thursday 1 December 2016
mtc.com.au
03 8688 0800

The incomparable **Helen Morse** (*The Aunt's Story*) and **Julia Blake** (*The Crucible*) return to the stage alongside **Ursula Mills** making her MTC debut in ***John***, the latest highly acclaimed work from Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright **Annie Baker**. Directed by MTC Associate Director **Sarah Goodes**, *John* opens on **Thursday 16 February** at Arts Centre Melbourne, Fairfax Studio.

Over the past decade, Annie Baker has found poetry in extraordinary dialogue and ultra-ordinary situations. In *John* she splashes a liberal measure of Gothic eeriness into the pot.

Sarah Goodes said, 'Annie Baker's *John* explores and celebrates the unique quality of immediacy and intimacy of theatre. It activates the extraordinary inside the everyday and burrows towards the human need for connection and empathy. The opportunity to see this astonishing new piece of writing brought to life by two of this country's most experienced and talented actors, Helen Morse and Julia Blake, is a remarkable opportunity not to be missed.'

A young couple, Jenny and Elias, arrive late one evening at Mertis Graven's bed and breakfast in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania – historic site of a terrible Civil War battle. They are trying to get over some history of their own. Each is prickly and easily feels the other's stings. Perhaps in this comfortable home surrounded by dolls, knick-knacks and Mertis' blind and eccentric friend Genevieve, they can find peace with each other. But the past can be a kind of haunting, where rooms are temperamental and you never know what objects are thinking.

Annie Baker is a multi award-winning American playwright whose plays include *Circle Mirror Transformation* (Obie Award for Best New American Play, Drama Desk nomination for Best New American Play) which had its Australian premiere at MTC in 2011; *The Flick* (Pulitzer Prize for Drama, Susan Smith Blackburn Prize, Obie Award for Playwriting); *The Aliens* (Obie Award for Best New American Play); and *Body Awareness* (Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle nominations for Best Play/Emerging Playwright). Her plays have been produced at over 150 theatres throughout the US and have been produced internationally in over a dozen countries.

New MTC Associate Director **Sarah Goodes** has garnered a reputation as a leading director of new Australian and international work, attracting critical acclaim and multiple award nominations for her productions including *Disgraced*, *The Hanging*, *Switzerland*, *Battle of Waterloo*, *The Effect* and *Orlando* (all for Sydney Theatre Company). Formerly resident director at STC, she has also directed *Vere (Faith)*, *The Splinter* and *Edward Gant's Amazing Feats of Loneliness* for the company. Other directing credits include *Black Milk*, *The Sweetest Thing* and *The Small Things* (Belvoir); *The Colour of Panic* (Sydney Opera House and its Norwegian tour); *Vertigo and the Virginia* and *The Schelling Point*, *Hilt* and *What Happened Was* (Old Fitzroy Theatre); and *The Unscrupulous Murderer Hasse Karlson Reveals the Gruesome Truth About the Woman Who Froze to Death on a Railway Bridge* (Darlinghurst Theatre Company).



#mtcJohn
mtc.com.au/John

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FAITH HEALER

by Brian Friel



Cast Colin Friels, Pip Miller, Alison Whyte
Director Judy Davis
Set Designer Brian Thomson
Costume Designer Tess Schofield
Lighting Designer Verity Hampson
Composer & Sound Designer
Paul Charlier

'A major work of art. The narrative has the addictive pull of a detective yarn.'
The New York Times

Season Dates
4 March – 8 April

Opening Night
Thursday 9 March, 8pm

Venue
Southbank Theatre, The Sumner

Subscriptions
On sale from
6pm Sunday 28 August 2016
mtc.com.au

Single Tickets
On sale Thursday 1 December 2016
mtc.com.au
03 8688 0800

Brian Friel's enduring work of art, *Faith Healer*, is an extraordinary creation presented in four beautifully sculpted monologues. Under the direction of **Judy Davis**, the transcendent, intricate drama will open in Melbourne on **Thursday 9 March** at Southbank Theatre, The Sumner.

In this Belvoir production, **Colin Friels** (*Skylight*) takes to the stage as the enigmatic faith healer, Francis Hardy – for whom his gift is both a blessing and a curse – alongside **Alison Whyte** (*Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*) as the loyal but damaged Grace and **Pip Miller** (*Death of a Salesman*) as his manager, Teddy.

Increasingly fascinating as the story progresses, Francis, Grace and Teddy take turns wrestling with the past, showing that memory can be as unreliable, and as contradictory, as faith.

From church hall to church hall, from one remote and dying village to the next, Francis Hardy, faith healer, works his magic, curing the sick and the lame, giving strength to the weak. He can tell you of nights when miracles were conjured as fast as he could place his touch, but his powers have never been reliable. More of a mystery is why Grace and Teddy stay with him.

Director **Judy Davis** said, 'To quote Brian Friel himself, "Memory is about what has happened in the past. It's also about what might have happened but never did." *Faith Healer* grapples with this notion of truth and falsity, and presents us with the gift of theatre in its essence – exceptional language that comes alive through carefully crafted characters.'

Judy Davis' previous directorial credits include *The School for Scandal*, *Barrymore* and *Victory* for Sydney Theatre Company. As an actor, Judy first came to attention for her role as the fiery Sybylla Melvyn in the 1979 film *My Brilliant Career*, for which she won two BAFTA Awards. She was nominated for an Oscar for her role in *A Passage to India* and again for her role in *Husbands and Wives*. She is a three-time Emmy Award-winner for her roles in *Serving in Silence*, *Life with Judy Garland: Me and My Shadows* and *The Starter Wife*. The many other credits across her significant career include her AACTA Award-winning performances in *The Dressmaker*, *The Eye of the Storm*, *Children of the Revolution*, *On My Own*, *High Tide*, *Kangaroo*, *Winter of Our Dreams* and *Hoodwink*.

The late **Brian Friel** was a master Irish dramatist. Described by The Guardian as a 'writer acclaimed for the clarity, economy and intensity of his language and his probing of public and private anxieties', Brian Friel had his first big success with *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* Among his collection of notable works are the plays *Translations*, *Aristocrats*, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *The Freedom of the City*, *Molly Sweeney*, and, of course, *Faith Healer*, which many believe to be his greatest play.



#mtcFaithHealer
mtc.com.au/FaithHealer



A Belvoir Production

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THREE LITTLE WORDS

by Joanna Murray-Smith

WORLD PREMIERE

Cast includes Catherine McClements
Director Sarah Goodes

'One of the nation's most popular playwrights.' The Australian

'Joanna Murray-Smith has a way of weaving life's rich tapestry into a consummate collection of character pieces.' Crikey

Season Dates
18 April – 27 May

Opening Night
Saturday 22 April, 8pm

Venue
Southbank Theatre, The Sumner

Subscriptions
On sale from
6pm Sunday 28 August 2016
mtc.com.au

Single Tickets
On sale Thursday 2 March 2017
MTC Box Office
mtc.com.au
03 8688 0800

Catherine McClements stars in the world premiere of **Joanna Murray-Smith's** brand new cutting comedy of contemporary manners, *Three Little Words*. Opening on **Saturday 22 April** at Southbank Theatre, The Sumner, this fresh Australian play is a sharp social observation about friends, relationships and the complexities of navigating through the everyday upheavals of life.

With a track record of staging stellar new Australian works and the recent success of her production of Joanna Murray-Smith's previous play, *Switzerland*, MTC Associate Director **Sarah Goodes** is perfectly placed to direct to this sophisticated, acerbic comedy.

Director **Sarah Goodes** said, 'Joanna Murray-Smith's *Three Little Words* highlights her brilliant ability to focus on the complex dynamics of human relationships through wit, depth and the power of social commentary. In this new work she dives inside the interdependence of friends and their relationships – how we build our identities around those closest to us and how the breakdown of romantic relationships can be equally traumatic for those we spend the most time with. Brilliant and funny, as well as possessing a Greek-like focus on human interaction and behaviour, *Three Little Words* will be a wild night in the theatre.'

Bonnie and Annie and their best friends, Tess and Curtis, have both been together for twenty years. The cosy world of coupledom has insulated them all from the challenges of a complicated world. But at an anniversary dinner Tess and Curtis casually drop a bombshell – they have decided to split up. There's no way to predict or control the devastation that follows.

Joanna Murray-Smith is one of Australia's most nationally and internationally acclaimed playwrights. 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 *Switzerland*; *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 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.

New MTC Associate Director **Sarah Goodes** has garnered a reputation as a leading director of new Australian and international work, attracting critical acclaim and multiple award nominations for her productions including *Disgraced*, *The Hanging*, *Switzerland*, *Battle of Waterloo*, *The Effect and Orlando* (all for Sydney Theatre Company). Formerly resident director at STC, she has also directed *Vere (Faith)*, *The Splinter* and *Edward Gant's Amazing Feats of Loneliness* for the company. Other directing credits include *Black Milk*, *The Sweetest Thing* and *The Small Things* (Belvoir); *The Colour of Panic* (Sydney Opera House and its Norwegian tour); *Vertigo and the Virginia* and *The Schelling Point, Hilt and What Happened Was* (Old Fitzroy Theatre); and *The Unscrupulous Murderer Hasse Karlson Reveals the Gruesome Truth About the Woman Who Froze to Death on a Railway Bridge* (Darlinghurst Theatre Company).



#mtcThreeLittleWords
mtc.com.au/ThreeLittleWords

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MINNIE & LIRAZ

by Lally Katz

WORLD PREMIERE



Cast Virginia Gay, Nancye Hayes, Sue Jones, John Leary, Rhys McConnochie, Georgina Naidu
Director Anne-Louise Sarks
Set & Costume Designer Mel Page
Lighting Designer Matt Scott

'Lally Katz is one of our most prolific and lauded playwrights.' ABC

'Among Australian playwrights of her generation, Lally Katz probably has the most original dramatic imagination.' The Age

Season Dates

12 May – 24 June

Opening Night

Thursday 18 May, 8pm

Venue

Arts Centre Melbourne, Fairfax Studio

Subscriptions

On sale from
6pm Sunday 28 August 2016
mtc.com.au

Single Tickets

On sale Thursday 2 March 2017
mtc.com.au
03 8688 0800



#mtcMinnieLiraz
mtc.com.au/MinnieLiraz

This project is supported by the Australian Writers' Foundation, with the generous support of Kim Williams AM

Minnie & Liraz is an hilarious oddball story of kindly Jewish grandparents and raw ambition starring legendary actors **Nancye Hayes** (*Jerry's Girls*) and **Sue Jones** (*Other Desert Cities*), alongside comedy darlings **Virginia Gay** (*Winners & Losers*) and **John Leary** (*Private Lives*).

A brainchild of the magnificent **Lally Katz** and directed by award-winning director **Anne-Louise Sarks**, *Minnie & Liraz* will have its world premiere on **Thursday 18 May** at Arts Centre Melbourne, Fairfax Studio.

The Autumn Road Retirement Village in Caulfield has a fiercely competitive bridge club, although with time and tide doing its inevitable work, no bridge partnership lasts for long. When Minnie Cohen loses her partner in an unfortunate swimming accident, the best player in the village, Liraz Weinberg, wants them to team up. They'd be unbeatable all right, but Minnie abhors Liraz and wants something in return. She has a granddaughter and Liraz has a grandson, and both are hopelessly single. Laying all her cards on the table, Minnie is bidding hearts.

Director **Anne-Louise Sarks** said, 'I was immediately drawn to the incredible, charming and complex women at the centre of *Minnie & Liraz*. I can't wait to bring it to life. Lally's writing is truly original and her latest play is deeply funny, honest and heart-warming – plus there's the excitement of the bridge championship and a twist that even I did not see coming! In *Minnie & Liraz*, like all great comedies, there's real truth at the core and the stakes are high.'

Award-winning writer **Lally Katz** has earned a reputation as one of the most unique voices in contemporary Australian playwriting. Recently, she wrote the libretto for Opera Australia and Barking Gecko's *The Rabbits* which won numerous awards including Best New Australian Work at the 2015 Helpmann Awards. Her plays include *Back at the Dojo*, *Timeshare*, *A Golem Story*, *The Dog/The Cat*, *Neighbourhood Watch*, *Return to Earth* and *Starchaser*. In 2013 Lally's one-woman show *Stories I Want To Tell You In Person*, directed by Anne-Louise Sarks, played at Belvoir and Malthouse and was remounted off Broadway in New York. In 2014 it transferred to Hothouse Theatre and Brink Productions in Adelaide and in 2015 ABC TV commissioned and produced a television adaptation of the show. The theatre production has also toured to Mexico and through India. She was a Churchill Fellow in 2010 and was appointed a Writer In Residence at Melbourne University in 2011. In 2012 Lally won InStyle Magazine's Women Of Style Award in the arts category and in 2013 she was the inaugural recipient of an Australian Writers' Foundation Playwriting Grant.

Anne-Louise Sarks is an award-winning theatre maker whose work has been performed in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Mexico City, New York, Warsaw, Mannheim, Delhi, London, Amsterdam and Paris. From 2013-2015 Anne-Louise was resident director at Belvoir where she directed *Jasper Jones*, *Seventeen*, *Nora*, *Stories I Want to Tell You In Person*; co-wrote *Elektra/Orestes*; directed and co-wrote *Medea*; was assistant director on *The Wild Duck*; and dramaturg on *Thyestes*. *Medea* won five 2013 Sydney Theatre Awards including Best Direction, Best Mainstage Production and Best New Australian Work. It was also awarded an AWGIE for Best Stage Play and nominated for four 2013 Helpmann Awards including Best Direction, Best New Australian Work and Best Play. Her other theatre directing credits include *The Seed* (MTC); *The Nest*, *Yuri Wells* and *By Their Own Hands* (The Hayloft Project). She is a former Associate Artist for Belvoir, Director in Residence at Malthouse and Artistic Director of The Hayloft Project.

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MACBETH

by William Shakespeare



Director Simon Phillips
Composer Ian McDonald
Lighting Designer Nick Schlieper
Voice Coach Leith McPherson

'This *Richard III* is one of the greats. Simon Phillips has given us a *Richard* for our times.' The Australian (On MTC's *Richard III*)

'The shortest, sharpest and most stormily violent of William Shakespeare's tragedies.' Variety

Season Dates
5 June – 15 July

Opening Night
Friday 9 June, 8pm

Venue
Southbank Theatre, The Sumner

Subscriptions
On sale from
6pm Sunday 28 August 2016
mtc.com.au

Single Tickets
On sale Thursday 2 March 2017
mtc.com.au
03 8688 0800

Season 2017 sees the much-anticipated return of the Bard on Melbourne Theatre Company's stage with *Macbeth*, Shakespeare's searing tragedy of ambition, betrayal and murder. Former MTC Artistic Director **Simon Phillips** will bring his distinctive style and sure touch to the dark and comfortless epic when it opens on **Friday 9 June** at Southbank Theatre, The Sumner.

Following his highly acclaimed productions of *Richard III* and *Hamlet*, **Simon Phillips'** fearsome reinterpretation of *Macbeth* completes a trilogy of unforgettable Shakespearian productions for MTC.

Director **Simon Phillips** said, 'I'm so delighted to be returning to the Company with a Shakespeare – my greatest theatrical passion. This is probably his most visceral play – it operates on the head and the heart in equal measure, inviting the audience into the irrational world of its anti-hero. The results will hopefully be compelling, chilling and spasmodically heart-rending.'

In the aftermath of battle, flushed with victory, two soldiers have a bizarre encounter. Three unearthly women prophesy for them undreamed-of greatness. But when shortly afterwards the first of their prophecies come true, one of them dares to imagine. And thus begins the reign of Shakespeare's most tormented tyrant. Driven to ever increasing horror in his attempts to cover his tracks and second-guess his rivals, Macbeth sinks deeper and deeper into isolation and madness.

Internationally renowned director **Simon Phillips** was MTC's Artistic Director from 2000–2011. Over his 30 year history with the Company he has directed an impressive number of productions, with his recent MTC credits including *North by Northwest*, *Pennsylvania Avenue*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Hamlet*, *Songs for Nobodies*, *Richard III*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, *August: Osage County* and *Poor Boy*. In 2015 Simon directed the award-winning Australian musical *Ladies in Black* for Queensland Theatre Company which went on to have a highly successful season with MTC. Over his illustrious career Simon has also worked for many other arts organisations nationally and internationally including the State Theatre Company of South Australia, where he was Artistic Director from 1990–1993. On the commercial stage, his productions include The 2016 Australian tour of *The Beast* as well as *Priscilla Queen of the Desert*, *the Musical*, Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Love Never Dies*, and *Eat Pray Laugh* – Barry Humphries's farewell tour, all of which have had various international seasons. Simon has won seven Green Room Awards and five Helpmann Awards.



#mtcMacbeth
mtc.com.au/Macbeth

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NOISES OFF

by Michael Frayn

Cast includes Simon Burke,
Ray Chong Nee, Libby Munro,
Hugh Parker, Louise Siverson

Director Sam Strong
Set & Costume Designer
Richard Roberts
Lighting Designer Ben Hughes
Voice & Dialect Coach Leith McPherson

'If there is a finer stage comedy than
Michael Frayn's farce about the staging
of a farce, I've yet to see it.' The Times

'One of the all-time great farces.' The
Hollywood Reporter

Season Dates
8 July – 12 August

Opening Night
Wednesday 12 July, 8pm

Venue
Arts Centre Melbourne, Playhouse

Subscriptions
On sale from
6pm Sunday 28 August 2016
mtc.com.au

Single Tickets
On sale Thursday 2 March 2017
mtc.com.au
03 8688 0800



#mtcNoisesOff
mtc.com.au/NoisesOff

**queensland
theatre
company**

A Co-Production with Queensland
Theatre Company

Melbourne Theatre Company and **Queensland Theatre Company** join forces to present **Noises Off** by **Michael Frayn**, the rollicking backstage farce that many say is the funniest play ever written.

Under the masterful direction of QTC Artistic Director **Sam Strong** and featuring a superbly versatile ensemble cast including **Simon Burke AO** (*Devil's Playground*), **Ray Chong Nee** (*Othello*), **Libby Munro** (*Disgraced*, QTC season), **Hugh Parker** (*The Seagull*) and **Louise Siverson** (*True Minds*), **Noises Off** will have Melbourne in stitches when it opens on **Wednesday 12 July** at Arts Centre Melbourne, Playhouse, following a season in Brisbane at the Queensland Performing Arts Centre.

Director **Sam Strong** said, '*Noises Off* has been a guilty pleasure for audiences for decades. It's a shamelessly entertaining night out, the quintessential workplace comedy that hilariously shows how the best intentions of any enterprise are undone by our all too human foibles. *Noises Off* is also a guilty pleasure for artists. This is the ensemble comedy par excellence, a Swiss watch of farcical construction that ensures everyone involved (actors and audiences) has a ridiculous amount of fun. I'm putting together a crack team of the country's finest comic actors and we can't wait to share our fresh take on the mayhem of *Noises Off* with audiences next year.'

It's after midnight and the touring company for a new play *Nothing On* struggles through a final dress rehearsal unprepared for an Opening Night that is only hours away. Actors forget lines and where to put their props, the stage managers cope with mounting disasters, and the director is driven to hair-pulling exasperation. And although all seems shambolic now, remember the theatrical motto: 'It'll be all right on the night!' Well, in this case, maybe not.

Sam Strong is the Artistic Director of Queensland Theatre Company, a role he took over in late 2015 after three years as Associate Artistic Director at MTC and, previously, three years as Artistic Director at Griffin Theatre in Sydney. 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 Production. His directing credits include *Jasper Jones*, *Double Indemnity*, *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).

Multi award-winning British playwright, novelist and translator, **Michael Frayn**, has written sixteen plays of which *Noises Off*, *Copenhagen* and *Democracy* are perhaps best known. He has also translated a number of works from Russian, including plays by Chekhov and Tolstoy. Frayn's eleven novels include *The Tin Men*, *Towards the End of the Morning*, *Headlong*, *Spies* and *Skios*. He has also published two works of philosophy, *Constructions* and *The Human Touch*; and a memoir, *My Father's Fortune*. For screen his work includes *Clockwise*, a comedy starring John Cleese; *First and Last*, for which he won an Emmy; and an adaptation of his 1991 novel *A Landing on the Sun*. His work has garnered much critical acclaim and he has been the recipient of numerous awards, including the Whitbread Award for Best Novel and the Commonwealth Writers' Prize (for *Spies*), the Critics Circle Theatre Award and Tony Award (*Copenhagen*) and numerous Laurence Olivier and London Evening Standard Awards.

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DI AND VIV AND ROSE

by Amelia Bullmore

AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE

Cast includes Nadine Garner
Director Marion Potts

'Incredibly touching. A moving and surprising pleasure of an evening.'
The Telegraph

'A play that makes you want to give it a hug.'
Financial Times

Season Dates

12 August – 16 September

Opening Night

Thursday 17 August, 8pm

Venue

Southbank Theatre, The Sumner

Subscriptions

On sale from
6pm Sunday 28 August 2016
mtc.com.au

Single Tickets

On sale Thursday 2 March 2017
mtc.com.au
03 8688 0800

Leading director **Marion Potts** returns to MTC's mainstage to direct *Di and Viv and Rose*, a heart-warming comedy exploring female friendship and lifelong alliance, opening on **Thursday 17 August** at Southbank Theatre, The Sumner.

Through vividly written characters, playwright **Amelia Bullmore** details the highs and lows of an enduring friendship that will be brought to life by an eminent cast including **Nadine Garner** (*The Weir*, *Private Lives*).

From different classes, from different places, with different experiences and expectations, Di, Viv and Rose would never have crossed paths if they hadn't shared a flat all those years ago at university. It was the laughs and the troubles that bound them together, and sure, as time passes their bond loosens, stretches and strains, but throughout all the triumph, disaster and change, it never breaks.

Director **Marion Potts** said, 'Over twenty years the world changes, things happen to us for better or worse. This play focuses on the relationships that somehow withstand the volatility of our lives – as much as a result of their flexibility as their solidity. It's about those friendships that can bend and not break.'

Di and Viv and Rose is British writer and actor **Amelia Bullmore's** second play. It was originally staged at Hampstead Theatre in London to great success, later transferring to the West End in early 2015 where it ran at the Vaudeville Theatre. Her first stage play, *Mammals*, was the winner of the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize and was shortlisted for the *What's On* Best New Comedy Award. For TV, her writing includes episodes of *This Life*, *Attachments*, *Black Cab*, and *Scott & Bailey*. And as an actor, Amelia's expansive credits include *State of Play*, *Happy Valley*, *Scott & Bailey*, *Ashes to Ashes* and *Sherlock*.

Marion Potts is currently Director of Theatre for the Australia Council for the Arts and was previously Artistic Director for Malthouse Theatre from 2010–2015. Prior to this Marion worked with many of the country's finest theatre companies, last directing for MTC in 2009 with her production of *Grace*. Across her career Marion has received numerous nominations and awards, including the Helpmann Award for Best Direction of a Play in 2006. For Malthouse Theatre, Marion has directed *The Riders* (with Victorian Opera and West Australian Opera), *Latitud* (with Dramafest, Mexico), *Ugly Mugs* (with Griffin Theatre Company), *The Dragon*, *Hate*, *Wild Surmise*, *Blood Wedding*, *Meow Meow's Little Match Girl* and its return season at the Southbank Centre in London, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, *Sappho... in 9 fragments*, and *Venus & Adonis* (with Bell Shakespeare) and its return season for Auckland Festival. Other theatre directing credits include *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *The Taming of the Shrew* (Bell Shakespeare); *The Wonderful World of Dissocia*, *Playgrounds*, *Volpone*, *Don Juan*, *Life After George*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *The Crucible*, *Navigating*, *Del Del*, *Closer*, *The Herbal Bed*, *What is the Matter With Mary Jane?*, *Pygmalion*, *Where Are We Now?*, *The Café Latte Kid*, *The Blessing*, *Two Weeks With The Queen* (STC); *Equus*, *The Torrents*, *Gary's House*, *A Number*, *The Goat or Who Is Sylvia?* (STCSA); *Constance Drinkwater and the Final Days of Somerset* (QTC).



#mtcDiVivRose
mtc.com.au/DiVivRose

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Noël Coward's
**HAY
FEVER**

Cast includes Simon Gleeson,
Marina Prior
Director Lee Lewis

'Coward's well-nigh perfect comedy of bad manners.' The Independent

'A comic masterpiece in the great tradition of high English comedy.' The Telegraph

Season Dates
23 September – 28 October

Opening Night
Thursday 28 September, 8pm

Venue
Southbank Theatre, The Sumner

Subscriptions
On sale from
6pm Sunday 28 August 2016
mtc.com.au

Single Tickets
On sale Thursday 2 March 2017
mtc.com.au
03 8688 0800

Noël Coward's supreme comedy of bad manners, *Hay Fever*, is a top drawer, high society classic that has been raising scandalised laughter for almost a hundred years. With Coward's characteristically exquisite dialogue and a suitably irresistible cast including **Marina Prior** (*Jumpy*) and **Simon Gleeson** (*Les Misérables*), *Hay Fever* will delight and entertain when it opens on **Thursday 28 September** at Southbank Theatre, The Sumner.

2016 Helpmann Award-winning director **Lee Lewis** returns to the Company after her triumph with MTC's 2013 production of *Rupert* to direct this sure-fire hit.

Although decidedly odd, the Bliss family can be perfectly charming when they want to be. Although it is indubitably true that Judith, a retired actress, tends towards melodrama in her everyday affairs, and her husband, David, a novelist, can be rather reclusive and foul tempered. Their grown-up children, Simon and Sorel, are quite capable of civility – if it suits them. It is just that, on this blighted weekend, each has invited a guest to stay at their house in the country without telling any of the others. So dashed inconsiderate! And for their poor guests, perfect agony!

As a writer, composer, director, actor and singer, **Sir Noël Coward** (1899–1973) was renowned for his wit, flamboyance and chic style. His prodigious output spanned six decades including more than fifty plays, some of which have been adapted for screen, and more than three hundred songs. He started writing in his teens and was an overnight sensation with his play *The Vortex*. By the thirties he was famous on both sides of the Atlantic. Many of his works including *Hay Fever*, *Private Lives*, *Design for Living*, *Present Laughter* and *Blythe Spirit* have endured as theatre classics. He was knighted in 1970 and the following year received a Tony Award for distinguished achievement in theatre.

Lee Lewis is the Artistic Director of Griffin Theatre Company and one of the country's leading stage directors. Her productions have included *Rupert* for MTC; *The Bleeding Tree*, *The Literati*, *8 Gigabytes of Hardcore Pornography*, *Silent Disco*, *Emerald City*, *The Bull the Moon and the Coronet of Stars*, *A Hoax*, *The Call*, and *The Nightwatchman* for Griffin; *Twelfth Night* and *The School for Wives* for Bell Shakespeare; *Honour*, *ZEBRA!*, and *Love Lies Bleeding* for Sydney Theatre Company; *This Heaven* and *That Face* for Belvoir; *Battlegrounds* and *Citizenship* for Australian Theatre for Young People; and over twenty independent productions. Other directing credits include Kate Mulvany's *Masquerade* for Griffin and the State Theatre Company of South Australia, which had its world premiere at Sydney Festival; the national tour of *Highway of Lost Hearts* for Darwin Festival; and *The Serpent's Table* at Sydney Festival. She holds a Master of Fine Art from Columbia University and a Master of Fine Art from NIDA. In 2007 Currency House published her book *Cross-Racial Casting: Changing the Face of Australian Theatre* as part of their Platform Paper series.



#mtcHayFever
mtc.com.au/HayFever

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THE FATHER

by Florian Zeller
translated by Christopher Hampton

AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE



Cast John Bell, Ian Bliss, Marco Chiappi, Anita Hegh, Natasha Herbert
Director Damien Ryan
Set & Costume Designer Alicia Clements
Lighting Designer Rachel Burke
Composer & Sound Designer Steve Francis

'The Father is a revelation. It's as sharp and surprising a play as you'll see all year.' The Times

'The most exciting new theatre writer of our time. Hugely rewarding. The play of the year.' The Guardian

Season Dates

2 November – 16 December

Opening Night

Wednesday 8 November, 8pm

Venue

Arts Centre Melbourne, Fairfax Studio

Subscriptions

On sale from 6pm

Sunday 28 August 2016

mtc.com.au

Single Tickets

On sale Thursday 2 March 2017

mtc.com.au

03 8688 0800



#mtcTheFather

mtc.com.au/TheFather

SYDNEY
THEATRE
CO

A Co-production with Sydney Theatre Company
by special arrangement with Theatre Royal
Bath Productions

Theatre luminary **John Bell AO** stars in *The Father*, a powerful, funny and deeply unsettling mystery by **Florian Zeller** that transports audiences into the puzzling labyrinth of an old man's once familiar world.

The Father was a hit in France before **Christopher Hampton** translated it into English and repeated the success and critical acclaim in London and New York. Now, **Melbourne Theatre Company** and **Sydney Theatre Company** present an Australian premiere production opening on **Wednesday 8 November** at Arts Centre Melbourne, Fairfax Studio.

Under the direction of **Damien Ryan**, John Bell will be joined on stage in this award-winning drama by a host of critically acclaimed actors including **Ian Bliss, Marco Chiappi, Anita Hegh** and **Natasha Herbert**.

Director **Damien Ryan** said, 'The greatest plays tend to be about family, an area we are all experts in, particularly its dysfunction. This play is a stunningly simple, funny and biting theatrical look at a family taking on a challenge that many in the audience will recognise as very close to home. It is, in fact, all of our destinies. We spend a lifetime collecting our identity and possessions around us, but what do we do when our mind begins to divest itself of that identity, when everything we recognise turns strange? *The Father* reminds us of everything we care about.'

There's definitely something fishy going on. You can't fool André, and while he may be eighty years old and apt, on occasion, to forget things, they are only ever small things. Such as where he's put his watch. It doesn't explain why people are messing around with things in his flat, and why his daughter keeps contradicting herself. And it doesn't explain why she allows strangers to come in and threaten him. No, something's going on and he'll get to the bottom of it.

Florian Zeller is fast becoming one of France's most celebrated contemporary playwrights and has been described by The Guardian as 'the most exciting new theatre writer of our time'. Amongst his collection of acclaimed plays, *The Father* and *The Mother* have both received Molière Awards and were adapted into English by Christopher Hampton. Prior to becoming a playwright, Florian had already made a name for himself as a novelist, publishing his first novel, *Artificial Snow*, when he was just twenty-two and receiving the distinguished Prix Interallié for *The Fascination of Evil* which tackles the relationship between the West and Islam.

Damien Ryan is Artistic Director of Sydney-based Sport for Jove Theatre and has worked extensively with Bell Shakespeare as an actor, director, teacher and writer for many years. Damien's work has earned him multiple awards including Sydney Theatre Awards for Best Director and Best Production. For Bell Shakespeare his directing credits include *Hamlet*, *Henry V*, *Henry 4* and *Romeo And Juliet* as well as shows for their Actors at Work program. His other theatre credits include directing *Antigone*, *Away*, *Look Back in Anger*, *The Crucible*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Twelfth Night*, *Hamlet*, *The Libertine*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Macbeth*, *As You Like It*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Sport for Jove Theatre.

Translator **Christopher Hampton** is best known for his play based on the novel *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* and subsequent film version *Dangerous Liaisons*, for which he won an Oscar for Best Adapted Screenplay; and his Oscar-nominated film adaptation of Ian McEwan's novel *Atonement*. Over the course of his career he has written and translated a number of plays, films and musicals.

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VIVID WHITE

by Eddie Perfect

AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE

Cast includes Brent Hill,
Verity Hunt-Ballard
Director Dean Bryant
Set & Costume Designer Owen Phillips
Lighting Designer Ross Graham

'Eddie Perfect delights in his creations like an old testament god.' *The Australian*

'Perfect likes to find the gaps and cracks in society, and open them up.' *The Age*

Season

18 November – 23 December

Opening Night

Thursday 23 November, 8pm

Venue

Southbank Theatre, The Sumner

Subscriptions

On sale from
6pm Sunday 28 August 2016
mtc.com.au

Single Tickets

On sale Thursday 2 March 2017
mtc.com.au
03 8688 0800

Vivid White is the latest creation from the wild satirical mind of **Eddie Perfect**, an hilarious and ruthless swipe at middle-class aspirations and the living nightmare that is the Australian housing market. Starring **Brent Hill** (*Little Shop of Horrors*) and **Verity Hunt-Ballard** (*Mary Poppins*), this MTC commission, directed by MTC Associate Director **Dean Bryant**, will have its world premiere on **Thursday 23 November** at Southbank Theatre, The Sumner.

Eddie Perfect's first play, *The Beast*, took MTC audiences by storm in 2013 and the success of its recent tour has proved Australia's appetite for theatre that delivers a healthy dose of merciless irony. In *Vivid White*, Eddie stirs the pot a little further, adding satirical songs to top off the outrageous comedy.

Director **Dean Bryant** said, '*Vivid White* is the most theatrical new piece I've read in years – a roller coaster of comically dark scenes, interspersed with modern-day Weill-esque songs, and a climax unlike anything seen on MTC's stage before. Eddie has one of the best gifts in the world, the ability to make you laugh hysterically at how ridiculous we are, and then leave you awake in the middle of the night. This new work screams off the page as a terrifyingly vivid look at what our world is becoming and it is thrilling to bring it to life.'

Liz and Ben have known Cynthia and Evan for years and would never let anything get in the way of their friendship. Except. When the couples each set their sights on buying the same house – well, that's different. Forget friendship, forget respect, forget human decency: this is the property market. And nothing, not even the imminent collapse of civilisation itself, can stop the zombie-like single-mindedness of buying the perfect house.

Eddie Perfect is one of Australia's most diverse, respected and prolific writers, composers and performers, having made his mark in the fields of comedy, music theatre composition, playwriting, screenwriting, classical music, jazz and acting for stage and screen. Eddie's first play, *The Beast*, was commissioned and produced by MTC in 2013 to critical and box office success. In 2016 a new production of *The Beast* toured to Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. Among his many other writing credits are *Shane Warne The Musical*, *Keating! The Musical* and *Songs From The Middle*, as well as his solo music comedy shows *Angry Eddie*, *Drink Pepsi Bitch* and *Misanthropology*, which all received Helpmann and Green Room Awards and toured Australia, New Zealand, Edinburgh and London. As an actor and performer, Eddie's credits include *Offspring*, a host on ABC's *Play School* and a judge on *Australia's Got Talent*. Eddie is also Co-Artistic Director of the Adelaide Cabaret Festival.

Newly appointed MTC Associate Director, **Dean Bryant**, is an award-winning director with a raft of national and international accolades to his name. For MTC Dean has directed *Skylight*, *I'll Eat You Last* and *Next to Normal*. For Hayes Theatre Company, he directed *Little Shop of Horrors* and *Sweet Charity*. Other credits include *Anything Goes* (Opera Australia/GFO); *Once We Lived Here* (Kings Head Theatre, London), *Straight* (Red Stitch), *The Last Five Years*, *Virgins: A Musical Threesome*, and the verbatim theatre piece *Gaybies* (Midsumma/Darlinghurst Theatre Company).



#mtcVividWhite
mtc.com.au/VividWhite

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MTC EDUCATION

MELBOURNE TALAM

by Rashma N. Kalsie

Melbourne Season

4 – 20 May

Opening Night

Friday 5 May, 7pm

Venue

Southbank Theatre, The Lawler

Tickets

On sale late 2016

mtc.com.au

03 8688 0800

Regional Tour

22 May – 9 June

Melbourne Talam by Rashma N. Kalsie is a new play about three young people from India searching for belonging in Australia. Developed as part of MTC's NEON Festival and Cybec Electric play reading series, *Melbourne Talam* will receive its world premiere for MTC Education on **Friday 5 May** at Southbank Theatre, The Lawler, before touring regionally as a full-scale production.

Jasminder, Poorna and Sonali see each other across a crowded Flagstaff station. They just missed the train. Now they wait. And think. They think about home: Punjab, Delhi, Hyderabad. And of all the impossible things they must do to stay in Melbourne. And about how they just can't seem to get the city's *Talam* – its rhythm – right. A sudden and calamitous event changes the lives of all three, and their future in Australia.

Melbourne Talam is vibrant and fast-paced theatre, energised with Melbourne's urban intensity and cultural diversity, traversing time and space to put our city's contemporary social issues centre stage.

Its engaging storytelling rhythms are punctuated with conflicts and collisions – dreams colliding with reality, difference colliding with bigotry, a person colliding with a train. Inspired by real events, *Melbourne Talam* will resonate with MTC's increasingly diverse young audiences.

Rashma N. Kalsie is an established journalist and television scriptwriter who splits her time between Melbourne and Delhi. Her most recent play, *The Rejected Girl*, was short-listed in an India-wide contest for one-act plays. Rashma was formerly a participant in MTC CONNECT, a partnership between Multicultural Arts Victoria and Melbourne Theatre Company that engages talented theatre practitioners from diverse communities to build a richer arts landscape.

Through MTC CONNECT, Rashma was able to access dramaturgical support from MTC Literary Director Chris Mead, and *Melbourne Talam* was presented at the NEON Readings program in July 2015 and further developed as part of Cybec Electric 2016.



#mtcMelbourneTalam

mtc.com.au/MelbourneTalam

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MTC Community

MTC Education

Melbourne Theatre Company's award-winning Education program provides access to first-class productions and learning opportunities to thousands of young Victorians each year. The comprehensive program aims to broaden the experiences of young people across the state in order to enrich their creative lives.

Through MTC Education students are able to take part in unique opportunities that support their studies and give them an insight into professional theatre-making. These opportunities and activities include the Youth Scholarship Course, MTC Ambassador Program, pre-show talks, tailored teaching resources and VCE Drama and Theatre Studies workshops.

MTC also produces theatre made especially for students and in 2017 MTC's Education production is *Melbourne Talam*, a play by Rashma N. Kalsie about three young people from different cultures in India, making new lives in Australia. *Melbourne Talam* will make its world premiere at Southbank Theatre, The Lawler in May 2017 before touring regionally.

Full details about MTC's Education Program can be found at mtc.com.au/Education

Sharing the Light

MTC is passionate about making theatre accessible for all and, with the *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 and Packer Family Foundations.

MTC's subsidised \$5 Student Tickets and \$5 Family Show Tickets have been welcoming thousands of brand new audience members to the theatre, while the Regional Tour project is taking our Education production to young people in regional Victoria and Tasmania.

Since its inception in 2015, almost 160 schools around Victoria have taken up the \$5 ticket offer, resulting in over 6,500 tickets for students to attend MTC productions. Additionally, MTC has provided travel subsidies for over 2,500 students from outer-metro and regional areas to get to the theatre.

The initiative also supports MTC Education on Tour which enables thousands of students in regional Victoria and Tasmania to see the full scale production of MTC's Education show in their local theatre venue.

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.

Full details about *Sharing the Light* can be found at mtc.com.au/SharingTheLight

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MTC Community

NEON NEXT

Since establishing the ground-breaking NEON initiative in 2013, MTC has supported the independent theatre sector and its artists with practical opportunities to showcase work and unique skill-advancement programs.

MTC will continue the NEON initiative in 2017, particularly focussing on artist and work development through dedicated creative workshops for independent artists, establishing a new open-application Company in Residence program, offering touring support to pioneering local artists THE RABBLE and Sisters Grimm, while continuing to develop new works by Nicola Gunn and Daniel Schlusser – two of Australia’s most innovative independent theatre practitioners.

For further details visit mtc.com.au/Neon

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.

Established to create opportunities for playwrights to increase their skills and experience, the stories developed through Cybec Electric reflect the here and the now. The series is a rare opportunity for audiences to be part of the important development stage of new Australian plays.

A number of the plays featured in Cybec Electric have gone on to receive full scale productions at MTC and theatre companies nationwide. Continuing this trend, in 2017 MTC will be presenting one of the 2016 Cybec Electric plays, Rashma N. Kalsie’s *Melbourne Talam* (previously named *The Day I Left Home – Melbourne Talam*) as part of its Education Program.

In conversation with Asian-Australian performing arts organisation Performance 4a, Playwriting Australia and their collaborative LOTUS Asian Australian Playwriting Project, MTC will be selecting four local playwrights with Asian-Australian backgrounds to be part of 2017’s Cybec Electric series which will also form part of Asia TOPA, a landmark festival-style celebration of Asian-focused performance and culture launching in Melbourne. Each of these writers will work with a visiting director from Asia on the development of their work.

Cybec Electric is generously supported by The Cybec Foundation.

For further details visit mtc.com.au/CybecElectric

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MTC Initiatives

Women In Theatre Program

In 2017, MTC continues its industry-leading Women in Theatre Program to help create practical pathways for women pursuing careers in a range of disciplines from production to artistic and executive management.

MTC's Women in Theatre Program provides the opportunity for participants to be mentored by respected theatre practitioners; take part in intensive leadership training; access practical career advice and coaching across a wide range of business and commercial aspects of the theatre industry; and gain insights to the daily operation of a major performing arts organisation.

More information about the 2017 Women in Theatre Program and details about the application process will be available in late 2016, with the program due to commence in early 2017.

Assistant Directors

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 in the theatre through to opening night.

Applications for the 2017 Assistant Directors Program will open in late 2016.

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.

The tailored program sees 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 masterclasses, one-on-one sessions, programming updates and debriefs from members of the MTC Artistic team, and longer-term initiatives.

In 2017 the MTC CONNECT participants are Samah Sabawi, Suhasini Seelin, Shannan Lim, Vidya Rajan and Wahibe Moussa.

For more information about these MTC Initiatives visit mtc.com.au/ArtistAccess

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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 in January 2013. Prior to this she was Executive Director 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 executive, she successfully designed a range of strategic initiatives through her roles at Melbourne International Comedy Festival and Sydney Festival.

In addition, Virginia has extensive strategic, 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, Sydney Theatre Company and the National Gallery of Victoria. She has also worked as an advisor for state ministers in Victoria and New South Wales.

In 2006 she was awarded a Churchill Fellowship and is a graduate of the Museum Leadership Program. She is currently Chair of Arena Theatre Company, a member of the ABC Arts Reference Panel, and has been a past director on Live Performance Australia, Force Majeure, Craft Victoria, and Legs on the Wall. For the past five years Virginia has been a mentor for the Australia Council Emerging Leaders Course, Teach for Australia and the Council for Museum Directors.

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Melbourne Theatre Company

Melbourne Theatre Company is one of Australia's flagship performing arts companies and has been enriching lives for over 60 years. MTC is the State theatre company for Victoria and, under the leadership of Artistic Director Brett Sheehy AO and Executive Director Virginia Lovett, 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 world, MTC employs almost 500 artists and industry professionals each year and has a subscriber base of nearly 20,000 people. The Company stages over 680 performances annually which reach over 230,000 attendances a year.

MTC produces an annual subscription season of up to twelve mainstage productions ranging from classics to new Australian works; plus an extensive Education and Families program; its Women in Theatre Program; its multicultural artists program, MTC CONNECT; the Cybec Electric play reading series; and regional and national tours. In addition, MTC regularly collaborates with companies and artists from the independent and small-to-medium sector through NEON NEXT and other initiatives.

In 2017 MTC is working with a host of outstanding talent including actors John Bell, Simon Burke, Colin Friels, Virginia Gay, Nadine Garner, Nancye Hayes, Sue Jones, Catherine McClements, Marina Prior and Christie Whelan Browne; and award-winning directors including Judy Davis, Lee Lewis, Marion Potts, Simon Phillips, Damien Ryan, Anne-Louise Sarks, and MTC's Associate Directors Dean Bryant and Sarah Goodes.

These artists will be bringing to life works by some of theatre's finest writers including Annie Baker, Michael Frayn, Brian Friel, Rashma N. Kalsie, Garson Kanin, Lally Katz, Joanna Murray-Smith, Florian Zeller, Eddie Perfect and William Shakespeare.

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 54% of MTC's revenue comes from ticket sales; 18% from sponsorship and donations; and, as a designated Australian Major Performing Arts Company, MTC receives 8.3% (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.

f [melbournetheatrecompany](#)
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MTC Foundation

Established to assist Melbourne Theatre Company in attracting major philanthropic support, the MTC Foundation is charged with appropriately managing and distributing donations across key areas of MTC's business to realise the Company's strategic and artistic goals.

All donations to the Company go through the MTC Foundation, which is chaired by philanthropist and business woman, Jane Hansen, and governed by Board Members Terry Bracks AM, Fiona Griffiths, Janette Kendall, Dr Sam Margis, Louise Myer, Leigh O'Neill, Hilary Scott and Richard Tegoni along with support from MTC Executive Director Virginia Lovett, Finance Director Liz Chappell and Development Director Tiffany Lucas.

Many of MTC's initiatives such as play readings, new writing commissions, subsidised tickets for schools and students, the Women in Theatre Program and education and family initiatives are only possible due to targeted donations to the MTC Foundation. As the State's flagship theatre company, these activities are what sets MTC apart from the commercial theatre sector and are central to the fundraising efforts of the Foundation.

The MTC Foundation is also responsible for building and managing MTC's general endowment fund to help secure a strong, sustainable and artistically vibrant future for Victoria's state theatre company. In February 2016, the general endowment fund was seeded with a leadership gift from The Little Foundation of \$1 million – the largest single donation from a private donor in MTC's history.

MTC has big plans for the future including creating and developing new landmark works for the Australian canon, touring internationally, and bringing the best theatre from around the world to Melbourne audiences. The MTC Foundation is committed to making these dreams a reality.

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For more information about supporting MTC please contact our Philanthropy team on 03 8688 0959 or donations@mtc.com.au or visit mtc.com.au/support

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MTC is assisted by the Commonwealth Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body, and by the State Government of Victoria through Arts Victoria.

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 **Head of Corporate Partnerships** on 03 8688 0952 or 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 Justin Ridler. Art Direction and Design Emma Wagstaff.



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