



# THE FATHER

by Florian Zeller,  
translated by Christopher Hampton

**MTC** MELBOURNE  
THEATRE  
COMPANY

# Welcome



Florian Zeller's *The Father* is a profound example of theatre's ability to transport audiences to places and times unknown, sharing together the laughter, joy and heartbreak that life throws up.

In this case, we are plunged into André's world – seeing his life through his eyes as he grips to the familiar and tries to make sense of the unfamiliar. Played with astonishing mastery by John Bell, *The Father* marks John's very welcome return to MTC after last performing in *Long Day's Journey into Night* 18 years ago.

John is truly one of Australia's finest actors and his commanding performance, directed with great skill by Damien Ryan, is one that will stay with you long after the curtain comes down.

*The Father* is one of three Australian premieres at MTC this year, programmed alongside acclaimed world premieres of Australian plays and fresh takes on much loved classics.

It is also another outstanding co-production with Sydney Theatre Company. We look forward to joining creative forces with STC again in 2018 for Lucy Kirkwood's *The Children*, starring Pamela Rabe, Sarah Pierse and William Zappa, and directed by our Associate Director Sarah Goodes.

We love bringing Melbourne a range of theatrical experiences each season and as we begin to look forward to 2018 there are 13 wonderful productions on the horizon. Amongst them are a further five exclusive Australian premieres of the best international works – so if you haven't yet subscribed hurry up to secure the best seats at the best prices.

See you at the theatre.

**Virginia Lovett**  
Executive Director

Melbourne Theatre Company acknowledges the Yalukit Willam Peoples of the Boon Wurrung, the Traditional Owners of the land on which Southbank Theatre and MTC HQ stand, and we pay our respects to Melbourne's First Peoples, to their ancestors past and present, and to our shared future.

MTC is a department of the University of Melbourne.



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MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS  
A MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY & SYDNEY THEATRE COMPANY PRODUCTION

# THE FATHER

by Florian Zeller,  
translated by Christopher Hampton

2 NOVEMBER – 16 DECEMBER 2017  
Arts Centre Melbourne, Fairfax Studio

— Cast —

Laura Faustina Agolley  
André John Bell  
Pierre Marco Chiappi  
Man Glenn Hazeldine  
Anne Anita Hegh  
Woman Natasha Herbert

— Creative Team —

Director Damien Ryan  
Set & Costume Designer Alicia Clements  
Lighting Designer Rachel Burke  
Composer & Sound Designer Steve Francis  
Assistant Director Priscilla Jackman  
Voice & Text Coach Charmian Gradwell  
Production Manager Kate Chapman  
Stage Manager Natalie Moir  
Assistant Stage Manager Katie Hankin  
Assistant Stage Manager Christine Bennett  
Rehearsal Photographer Christine Messinesi  
Production Photographer Philip Erbacher

— About the play —

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

**For information regarding the performance running time please see  
a member of the Front of House team.**

By special arrangement with Theatre Royal Bath Productions.  
Cover photo: Justin Ridler

# Happenstance and desire

Playwright Florian Zeller discusses his entry into the world of theatre.



Florian Zeller

*Still in his thirties, Florian Zeller has proven himself one of France's finest contemporary writers, winning prizes and acclaim for both novels and plays. Here, he discusses his writing process and the inspirations for The Father.*

**You began your writing career as a novelist, but have since turned largely to writing plays. What brought about the change?**

My dream as a young boy was to be a novelist not a playwright, simply because I wasn't that familiar with theatre. What brought me to writing for theatre was a succession of happenstance and desire. It was like falling in love – I discovered this art form that I knew nothing about and I was dazzled by it.

I had known theatre as a reader, but I had never been to the theatre. That changed when my first novel [*Neiges artificielles* or *Artificial Snow*] came out and someone asked me to write the libretto for an opera. I didn't know much about theatre but I knew about music so the project seduced me and, without knowing what I was doing, I was taking my first step towards being a playwright.

We created the opera in Montpellier – it was a very big team with people from the circus, musicians, singers and dancers. The experience was so impressive and left me so happy, that I had to keep digging deeper into that territory. It wasn't something that was calculated, that was analytical, that was done by sacrificing something else, it was simply the movement of life and desire.

**What were you able to explore, to find, in writing for theatre that you hadn't found in writing novels?**

Writing for theatre brings related joys: the joy of building something with other people – something bigger than yourself – and the joy of a group of actors, of the theatre-life, the act of rehearsing, working and dreaming alongside other people. Also, something that truly touches me about theatre is the fact that it's a simple art, it's very modest. You can't get away from the illusion.

As an audience, we observe the illusion, are conscious of the theatre's unreality,



## ‘Theatre is the language of children, of play, of illusion.’

yet we are still touched by and sensitive to the destiny of the characters in front of us, even though these are actors performing emotions and feelings that are artificial. Artificial in the noble sense of the word, meaning that they have been crafted. However, they are still communicated as if they were the truth. And this is what I find so deeply moving about theatre. At the same time as you know that everything is false, your soul is transported as if it were true. Theatre is the language of children, of play, of illusion. It’s also the language of magic – and it’s that dimension of magic, very modest magic, that I find most striking about theatre.

**When you set out to write *The Father*, what was the initial inspiration?**

I wrote this play for a French actor, Robert Hirsch, who was 88 at the time and is an

actor whom I admire a lot. That was one source for my writing – I wanted to write for this body, this voice, this presence.

**Did you bring with you the lessons you learnt as a novelist and put them to work as a playwright?**

I believe they are very different paths. I have often been told that there are two types of theatre writers. Those who come from theatre: actors who one day start writing and who benefit from their intimacy with the theatrical space. In France, the foremost would be Molière. And then there are others, rarer and often less talented, who come from literature, like Albert Camus or Henry de Montherlant. They are not actors and, in general, they write theatre that is more literary and less playful. ▶



*In rehearsal (top): Marco Chiappi and Anita Hegh; (above from left) on stage: Glenn Hazeldine and John Bell; Natasha Herbert and Anita Hegh*

I didn't come from theatre, I wasn't an actor. But I had this desire that I wanted to satiate. Still, I didn't feel connected to this family of literary authors. My material wasn't literary. It was very simple. I felt very connected to the actors, to the act of play, to situations. But my only sense of this was intuitive, not experiential.

What guided me was the consciousness that words don't have intrinsic value. That's why my theatre is not purely literary. It's not lyric. It's not poetic. In the theatrical

process, it's not the phrasing that creates poetry, because words don't have an intrinsic value. An actor can say 'yes' but you can hear 'no'. Behind every word can be hidden an infinite range of meanings, tensions, unavowed desires. ■

Translated from French by Marie Laubie and Carl Nilsson-Polias.



Go online to see the full gallery of *The Father* production and rehearsal images.

[mtc.com.au/backstage](http://mtc.com.au/backstage)

# In conversation

John Bell and Damien Ryan

*On a break from rehearsal, John Bell and Damien Ryan discuss working together on *The Father*, being actor-directors and the last 50 years of Australian theatre.*

**John, is there a difference in how you approach a contemporary character like André compared with how you approach the Shakespearean roles you're best known for? Is it still primarily the text?**

**John Bell:** It's totally the text. There's truth in the saying that there's no such a thing as a character – rather, the character emerges by adding up all the dot points that the text provides. If you've got some kind of created character in mind and you're thinking about make-up and costumes, well that's the wrong way around. You simply play every moment of the text and look at the end result and say, 'Ah, so that's it! That is the character.' That applies to a Shakespeare play as much as any other.

In *The Father*, there really is no character – there are flashes of memory and flashes of impetus and things happen randomly and you put all those together. It can be played by any sort of actor – the age is important, I suppose, but there's no description of the character as there might be at the beginning of a Bernard Shaw play ('He is 45 with a ginger moustache and a twinkle in his eye...'). There's none of that sort of descriptive writing in *The Father*.

It's a very reactive role. André doesn't do much, he's always reacting to things that



are happening to him and around him, trying to put all the pieces together. It's a bit like *Hamlet* in a way – Hamlet reacts to things that happen to him and tries to puzzle it out, discover what it's all about. He's not a passive character, he's just a reactive character. Macbeth is all action. So, in that sense, it's fascinating and I won't know what it's all about until opening night, if then!

**Damien, what is it like to have an actor in the room like John who has directed so many plays? Indeed, he's directed you.**

**John Bell:** It's terribly intimidating!

**Damien Ryan:** Well, having watched John direct many times, I've seen that he's very collaborative. He's always asking questions of the actors, he's never dictatorial or telling you precisely what something is. He helps you understand the world of the play that you are in. It's extremely playful. ▶



'We have to keep reaffirming the importance  
of theatre, and the arts in general.'

John Bell



(Left) John Bell on stage

It's probably a great relief for him to be an actor sometimes, not to be thinking about the entire play and dealing with everyone's problems – just to be focussed on his own perspective. Still, it is intimidating knowing it's John Bell ...

**JB:** No it's not!

**DR:** It is. But it doesn't feel like it once we get underway with the work. We're all working together to make sense of the play. I've never found it a problem at all to say, 'I don't know the answer,' and hear what actors think.

The thing with a play like this, as John was saying, is that it's about someone trying to make sense of their world. From the outside, I think it differs to Shakespeare in that Shakespeare will use language – metaphors and similes – and ideas for characters to try and make sense of things. But in *The Father*, the language is very economical, it's very reactive (as John said), and it's often trying to get to the point as quickly as it can. There are moments of genuine digression, when you start tripping on an idea, but they come almost as a surprise. The rest of it is quite short and sharp, and it's very much what is unsaid that the audience is dealing with. Whereas, in Shakespeare, so much of it is explored with and worked out through language.

**JB:** When I'm acting I do enjoy turning off my directorial brain. I might throw in a suggestion, but I'm very conscious that it's the director's show – they direct it and I'll be part of it.

I remember once, years ago when I had a young director directing me, I made a suggestion and he said, 'John, who's

directing this show? You or me?' And I said 'OK, right, I'll sit back and let you do it.' The thing is, I trust Damien entirely and enjoy the way he works, so I feel very little temptation to barge in with ideas or suggestions. And Damien is always very collaborative and looking for people to contribute. So, putting all those things together, I just enjoy being part of the process. And it really is a relief not to have to worry about the props and the costumes, the lighting, the tech sessions. I just have to do my bit. It's not exactly a holiday, but a happy change.

**DR:** The pay-off for someone like John is that, when he's directing, he does so with a deep knowledge of what it's like to be on that stage as an actor. He understands an actor's perspective, he has a level of empathy and a level of understanding of how to talk to an actor to help them overcome something that isn't working.

**JB:** One problem for directors who aren't actors is that they rarely get to see other directors at work. As an actor, you get to see many directors at work and you can then compare and contrast their faults and virtues. You pick the best from the good directors and make that part of your armoury.

**John, in the last few weeks, whenever you're on a break, you've been running lines. Has that always been your habit, that the breaks aren't really breaks?**

**JB:** Yes, you've got to keep it ticking over. At this stage of rehearsals especially, when we're still getting the play on its feet. I find this text particularly tricky to learn – and I think I speak for the other actors as well – because it's very fractured and you





*In rehearsal: John Bell  
and Faustina Agolley*

need to make your own links between phrases. It's just short grabs of text, which are hard to learn. It's easy to learn a slab of Shakespeare, for instance, or Chekhov. They write these long passages that have an internal logic, that might even rhyme.

**We're approaching the 50th anniversary of Nimrod's founding in Sydney – your first theatre company, John – what's changed about the city's theatre landscape since then? What have been the victories and what are the fights that still need fighting?**

**JB:** We have to keep reaffirming the importance of theatre and the arts in general. It's surprising how easily it can be disregarded by politicians. You'd think we'd have won that fight by now, but we're always having to remind people that we're here, we matter, we need support. I'm surprised that hasn't become a foregone conclusion by now.

When I first started, there were very few Australian plays, there were no professional theatre companies in Sydney. So, you look around at the proliferation of major companies and independent theatre now, the acceptance of Australian writing being absolutely essential, the way in which new voices and causes have become part of the story – from female and Aboriginal writers to gay rights. These were beachheads that had to be established and I don't think we'll ever go backwards from them.

We have so many wonderful companies now made up of people who crave making theatre. The passion amongst theatre makers has just kept on growing. ■



Hear from John Bell in our  
MTC Talks podcast series at  
[mtc.com.au/backstage](https://mtc.com.au/backstage)

# Playwright & Translator

## FLORIAN ZELLER

Writer



Florian Zeller is a French novelist and playwright. He is, according to *The Independent*, 'one of the hottest literary talents in France'. He won the Prix Interallié in 2004 for his novel *Fascination of Evil*, and several Molière Awards (the highest theatrical honour in France) for *La Mère* and *Le Père*. *Le Père* (*The Father*) in the English translation by Christopher Hampton has been nominated for Best Play at the Olivier Awards and the Tony Awards. Many actors performing the play have

been nominated and won awards in their country as Best Actor, including Frank Langella on Broadway and Kenneth Cranham in London. Zeller's plays, which have been produced in many countries, include: *L'Autre*, *Le Manège*, *Si tu mourais* (Prix Jeune Théâtre Académie Française), *Elle t'attend*, *La Mère*, *La Vérité*, *Le Père*, *Une Heure de Tranquillité* (translation Jeremy Sams), *Le Mensonge*, *L'Envers du décor*, *Avant de s'envoler*. Novels: *Neiges artificielles* (*Artificial Snow*), *Les Amants du n'importe quoi* (*Lovers or Something Like It*), *La Fascination du pire* (*Fascination of Evil*), *Julien Parme*, *La Jouissance*.

## CHRISTOPHER HAMPTON

Translator



Christopher Hampton became involved in theatre while studying French and German at Oxford University. His plays, musicals and translations have so far garnered four Tony Awards, three Olivier Awards, five Evening Standard Awards and the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award; prizes for his film and television work include an Oscar, two BAFTAs, a Writers' Guild of America Award, the Prix Italia, a Special Jury Award at the Cannes Film Festival, Hollywood Screenwriter of the Year, and The Collateral Award at the Venice Film Festival for Best Literary Adaptation. His works for the stage include original plays (*Appomattox*, *The Talking Cure*, *White Chameleon*, *Tales From Hollywood*, *Treats*, *Savages*, *The Philanthropist*, *Total Eclipse* and *When Did You Last See My Mother?*); plays adapted from novels (Ödön von Horváth's *Youth Without God*, Sándor Márai's *Embers*, Laclós' *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, George Steiner's novella *The Portage to San Cristobal of A.H.*); musicals (*Sunset Boulevard*, *Dracula: The Musical* and, most recently, *Stephen Ward*, all with Don Black); libretti (*Waiting For The Barbarians*, *Appomattox* and *The Trial*, all with composer Philip Glass); and many translations (plays by Chekhov, Ibsen, Molière, Horváth, Yasmina Reza and Florian Zeller; and a German musical based on Daphne

du Maurier's *Rebecca*). Hampton's screenplays include *Ali and Nino* (based on the novel by Kurban Said), *Adore* (based on Doris Lessing's *The Grandmothers*), *A Dangerous Method* (based on his play *The Talking Cure*), *Chéri* (from the novel by Colette), *Atomement* (from Ian McEwan's novel), *Imagining Argentina* (which he also directed), *The Quiet American* (from Graham Greene's novel), *The Secret Agent* (from Joseph Conrad's novel, and which he also directed), *Mary Reilly* (from Valerie Martin's novel inspired by Robert Louis Stevenson's *Jekyll and Hyde*), *Total Eclipse* (from his play of the same name, and in which he also performed), *Carrington* (the first film he also directed), *Dangerous Liaisons* (based on his play *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*), *The Good Father* (from Peter Prince's novel), *The Honorary Consul* (from Graham Greene's novel), *Tales From the Vienna Woods* (from the von Horváth play) and *A Doll's House* (based on his translation of Ibsen's play). His television scripts include mini-series *The Ginger Tree* (from Oswald Wynd's novel), *Hôtel Du Lac* (from Anita Brookner's novel), *The History Man* (from Malcolm Bradbury's novel), *Able's Will* and *The Thirteenth Tale* starring Vanessa Redgrave and Olivia Colman, based on Diane Setterfield's novel.

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# Cast & Creative Team



**FAUSTINA AGOLLEY**

Laura

Faustina Agolley makes her Melbourne Theatre Company debut as Laura in *The Father*. Faustina has trained in acting and voice by Anthony Mark Barrow, Diana Castle's The Imagined Life Studio, Jane Fujita and mentored by Will Munroe in the United States. She has also received training from Penny McDonald and Anna McCrossin-Owen in Australia. As a broadcaster, Faustina has hosted *Video Hits* on Network Ten, co-hosted *The Voice Australia* on Channel Nine and the *Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras* on SBS. She has also shared her political views on ABC's Q&A. In film, Faustina has appeared in *Now Add Honey* opposite Portia de Rossi and Lucy Fry. Faustina also DJs and has toured Australia and New Zealand with Oprah Winfrey for her *An Evening With Oprah* speaking tour in 2015. Faustina was born in London, grew up in Melbourne and is a graduate of The University of Melbourne and RMIT University in Media and Communications, Media Studies, Geography and Social Science. Faustina is a proud member of Actors' Equity.



**JOHN BELL**

André

John Bell is the founder of Bell Shakespeare and one of Australia's most acclaimed theatre personalities. In a career of acting and directing, John has been instrumental in shaping the Australian theatre industry as we know it. John has previously starred in *Uncle Vanya*, *Macbeth*, *Shadowlands* and *Emerald City* (Sydney Theatre Company). Other theatre credits include *Madame Butterfly*, *Tosca* and *Carmen* (Opera Australia). John's previously held positions include Founding Artistic Director of Bell Shakespeare (1990–2015), former Associate Artist of the Royal Shakespeare Company as well as co-founding Sydney's Nimrod Theatre Company. John has been Awarded The Officer of the Order of Australia and the Order of the British Empire. In 1997, John was named one of Australia's Living Treasures by the National Trust of Australia. His many awards as an Actor and Director include 2002 and 2015 Helpmann Awards for Best Actor (*Richard III*, *As You Like It*), a Producers and Directors Guild Award for Lifetime Achievement and the JC Williamson Award (2009) for extraordinary contribution to Australia's live entertainment industry.



**MARCO CHIAPPI**

Pierre

Melbourne Theatre Company credits include *His Girl Friday*, *Grapes of Wrath*, *Macbeth*, *The Rover*, *Dealer's Choice*, *A Doll's House*, *Closer*, *Death of a Salesman*, *Duchess of Malfi* and *The Tempest*. Other theatre: *Away, Love and Information* (both with Malthouse Theatre), *Pygmalion*, *Jerusalem* (Sydney Theatre Company); *Edward II*, *Woyzeck*, *A Pacific Union*, *Jerusalem* (Malthouse Theatre); *Phèdre*, *Hamlet*, *Merchant of Venice*, *Richard III* (Bell Shakespeare). *The Lower Depths*, *Ninth Moon*, *Funniest Man in the World*, *Scissors, Paper, Rock* (Keene/Taylor); *Serious Money*, *A Lie of the Mind*, *Cheapside*, *Our Country's Good*, *Burn This* (Zootango Theatre); *Popcorn* (Black Swan); *Torrez* (Griffin Theatre); *The Misanthrope*, *The Real Thing*, *Noises Off*, *The Goat or Who is Sylvia?* (STCSA); *Dreamers*, *The Lower Depths* (fortyfivedownstairs); *Reckless* (Theatreworks); *An Ideal Husband* and *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* (The Eleventh Hour Theatre). Television credits: *Deadline Gallipoli*, *Parer's War*, *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries*, *Upper Middle Bogan* and *The Mystery of the Hansom Cab*. Marco's film credits include *Holding the Man*, *The Boy Castaways*, *Amy* and *Mr Reliable*. Proud member of Actor's Equity.

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# Cast & Creative Team



**GLENN HAZELDINE**

Man

For Melbourne Theatre Company Glenn Hazeldine has appeared in *Don's Party* (with Sydney Theatre Company). Other theatre credits include *Away* (with Malthouse Theatre), *Disgraced*, *Arcadia*, *Love and Information* (with Malthouse Theatre), *After Dinner*, *Perplex*, *Tot Mom*, *Elling*, *The Pig Iron People*, *Julius Caesar*, *Victory*, *Love for Love*, *Mongrels*, *Historia*, *Two Weeks With The Queen*, *Dead White Males* (Sydney Theatre Company); *Rupert* (Daniel Sparrow Productions); *Act One*, *All My Sons*, *Sanctuary*, *Face to Face*, *A Conversation*, *Charitable Intent*, *Birthrights*, *Rhinestone Rex* and *Miss Monica*, *Happiness*, *Managing Carmen*, *Tuesdays With Morrie*, *A View From The Bridge*, *Ten Unknowns*, *The Ruby Sunrise*, *Rapture*, *Blister*, *Burn* (Ensemble); *As You Like It* (Bell Shakespeare). *The Judas Kiss* (Belvoir); *Rhinoceros* (B Sharp). *A Hoax*, *Porn.Cake* (Griffin Theatre); and *Transparency* (Seymour Centre). Glenn's TV credits include *House of Bond*, *A Place To Call Home*, *Anzac Girls*, *Redfern Now*, *The Moodys*, *All Saints*, *BlackJack*, *Stingers*, *Water Rats*, *Backberner*. Glenn is the Vice-President of the NSW branch of Actors' Equity and Deputy Chair of The Actors Benevolent Fund of NSW.



**ANITA HEGH**

Anne

For Melbourne Theatre Company Anita Hegh has appeared in *The Crucible*, *Top Girls*, *Don's Party*, *A Single Act*, *Dumb Show*, *The Rover*, *Fred*, and *The Duchess of Malfi*. For Sydney Theatre Company Anita has appeared in *Cloud Nine*, *All My Sons*, *Love and Information* (with Malthouse Theatre), *After Dinner*, *The Secret River*, *Gross und Klein*, *Our Town*, *Like a Fishbone*, *The City*, *King Lear*, *Three Tall Women* (with MTC), *As You Like It*, and *Pygmalion*. Other theatre credits include *Twelfth Night*, *The Wild Duck*, *Cut*, *The Seagull* (Belvoir); *Killer Joe* (B Sharp); *King Tide*, *The Emperor of Sydney*, *Honour* (Griffin); *Phèdre* (Queensland Theatre); and *Yellow Wallpaper* (Malthouse Theatre). Anita's TV credits include *Janet King*, *Catching Milat*, *Black Comedy*, *The Killing Field*, *The Doctor Blake Murder Mysteries*, *Carlotta*, *Time of Our Lives*, *Rescue Special Ops*, *My Place*, *False Witness*, *The Informant*, *McLeod's Daughters*, *Valentine's Day*, *MDA*, *Last Man Standing*, *Loot*, *Stingers*, *Water Rats*, *Wildside* and *State Coroner*. Film: *Stuffed*, *The Last Ride*, *The Forest* and *Paradise Road*. Anita is a proud member of Actor's Equity.



**NATASHA HERBERT**

Woman

Natasha Herbert's credits for Melbourne Theatre Company include *Neighbourhood Watch*, *The Dreamlife of Butterflies*, *God of Carnage*, *Pillowman*, *The Balcony*, *The Three Sisters*, *Hysteria*, *I'm not Rappaport* and *I Hate Hamlet*. Other theatre credits include *Away* (with Sydney Theatre Company), *On the Misconception of Oedipus*, *Happiness*, *Kitten*, *Still Angela*, *Black Sequin Dress*, *Rapture*, *Honour*, *Love Child*, *Wolf* (Malthouse Theatre); *The Unspoken Word is Joe*, *The Large Breast or the Upside-down Bell*, *Inconsolable* and *Love Child* (Griffin); *The Country* (Company B); *Anti-Hamlet*, *I Heart John McEnroe* (Theatreworks); *Extinction* and *The Village Bike* (Red Stitch); *WarHorse* (Global Creatures); *Small Metal Objects* (Back to Back); *The Wall* (Ranters); *Dreamers*, *Progress & Melancholy* (fortyfivedownstairs); and *Portrait of Dora* (La Mama). Natasha's film credits include *The Menkoff Method*, *X*, *Lake Mungo*, *Corroboree* and *Boytown*. Her television credits include *Neighbours*, *The Time of Our Lives*, *The Doctor Blake Murder Mysteries*, *City Homicide*, *MDA*, *Blue Heelers*. Natasha's awards include Green Room Awards for Best Actor *Portrait of Dora* and Best Ensemble *I Heart John McEnroe* and *On the Misconception of Oedipus*.

# Cast & Creative Team



**DAMIEN RYAN**

Director

Damien Ryan is Artistic Director of Sport for Jove Theatre. His directing credits include *No End of Blame*, his own adaptations of *Cyrano de Bergerac* and *Antigone*, *The Libertine*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Away*, *The Crucible*, *The Tempest*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *Twelfth Night*, *As You Like It* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Sport for Jove). National tours include *Hamlet*, *Henry V*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Henry 4*, parts 1 and 2, co-directing with John Bell (Bell Shakespeare). Damien has performed in *Twelfth Night* and *Nora* (Belvoir St). His awards include Sydney Theatre Awards for Best Production (*Henry V*, *Antigone*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, and *The Libertine*); for Best Director (*Henry V*, *Cyrano de Bergerac* and *Antigone*); for Best Supporting Actor (Iago in *Othello*); a Green Room Award for Best Production (*Henry V* and nominated for Best Director); a Glug Award for Best Production (*Look Back in Anger*).



**ALICIA CLEMENTS**

Set & Costume Designer

Alicia Clements is a costume and set designer whose passion for the craft has seen her work and train around the globe. Graduating from the West Australian Academy of Performing Arts in 2008, Alicia has furthered her training in Paris and London through the support of The Australia Council for the Arts and the 2014 Kristian Fredrikson Scholarship for Design in the Performing Arts. Alicia's recent theatre credits include set and costume designs for *Assassins* directed by Dean Bryant (Hayes Theatre), *The Father* (Sydney Theatre Company); *Two* and *The Rasputin Affair* (Ensemble Theatre); and set design for *Ramaeu: Anacreon* and *Pigmalion* (Pinchgut Opera). Alicia also designed set and costumes for *Hay Fever* and *After Dinner* (STC); *Barefoot in the Park* (Ensemble Theatre); *ARMIDA* and *BAJAZET* (Pinchgut Opera); and *Hamlet* (Bell Shakespeare). She is currently the Associate Costume Designer to Gabriela Tylesova on *Muriel's Wedding*. Alicia was the production designer on short films *Problem Play*; *Cold Hearts*; and *Sherbert Rozencrantz, You're Beautiful*.



**RACHEL BURKE**

Lighting Designer

Rachel Burke's credits for Melbourne Theatre Company include *Melbourne Talam*, *Buyer and Cellar*, *Cock*, *Solomon and Marion*, *The Man from Mukinupin* (with Belvoir), *True Minds*, *Constellations*, *Coup D'Etat* and *True West*. Rachel's other lighting credits include *Black Medea* and *Night Fall* (Sydney Theatre Company); *Art to Sky*, *Cinderella*, *Swan Lake*, *Dark Lullaby*, *Ballet Imperial*, *Unspoken Dialogues*, *Molto Vivace* (The Australian Ballet); *Walking into the Bigness*, *Black Medea* (with Belvoir), *Cargo*, *Woman Bomb*, *Parramatta Girls* (with Belvoir), *Moth* (with Arena Theatre Company and Malthouse Theatre); *Wolf*, *Glass Mermaid*, *Good Works*, *The Incorruptible*, *Night Fall* and *Rapture* (Playbox). Rachel has a critically acclaimed body of work in the Independent Theatre sector including work with Dee & Cornelius, Peta Murray, Jenny Kemp and Nadja Kostich. She has recently designed sold out national tours of *SHIT* (Dee & Cornelius) and *The Season* (Sydney Festival, Ten Days on the Island, MIFA 2017). Rachel's awards include eight Green Room Awards, 2005 and 2010 IES Victorian and National Awards of Excellence for Lighting Design and Helpmann Award nominations in 2005 and 2015.



# Cast & Creative Team



**STEVE FRANCIS**

Composer & Sound Designer

For Melbourne Theatre Company Steve Francis has worked on *The Weir*, *The Sublime* and *Other Desert Cities*. Other theatre credits include *Talk*, *The Hanging*, *Disgraced*, *Arcadia*, *Orlando*, *Battle of Waterloo*, *After Dinner*, *Switzerland*, *Mojo*, *Travelling North*, *Machinal*, *Vere (Faith)* (with STCSA), *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, *The Secret River*, *Sex with Strangers*, *The Splinter*, *Under Milk Wood*, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, *Pygmalion*, *Bloodland*, *Blood Wedding*, *The White Guard*, *Hamlet*, *Tusk Tusk* (with ATYP), *Leviathan*, *Spring Awakening*, *The Removalists*, *Rabbit*, *The Pig Iron People*, *Gallipoli*, *The Great*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Embers*, *The 7 Stages of Grieving*, *Fat Pig*, *A Hard God* and *Stolen* (Sydney Theatre Company); *A Rabbit for Kim Jong-il*, *The Bull*, *the Moon* and *the Coronet of Stars*, *Between Two Waves*, *This Year's Ashes*, *Speaking in Tongues* and *Strange Attractor* (Griffin Theatre); *Angels in America*, *Babyteeth*, *This Heaven*, *The Man from Mukinupin*, *Ruben Guthrie*, *Baghdad Wedding*, *Keating!*, *Paul*, *Parramatta Girls*, *Capricornia*, *Box the Pony*, *In Our Name*, *Gulpilil*, *Page 8* and *The Spook* (Belvoir).



**CHARMIAN GRADWELL**

Voice & Text Coach

Charmian Gradwell's theatre credits include *Cloud Nine*, *Chimerica*, *Gross und Klein*, *Waiting for Godot*, *The War of the Roses*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *The Maids*, *The Long Way Home*, *Switzerland*, *Suddenly Last Summer*, *All My Sons*, *Dinner*, *After Dinner*, *Hayfever*, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (Sydney Theatre Company); *The Taming of The Shrew*, *Julius Caesar*, *Pericles*, *Macbeth*, *A Winter's Tale*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Days of Significance*, *Naughts and Crosses* (Royal Shakespeare Company UK); and *The Lion King*, *Aladdin*, *Mary Poppins* dialects (Disney Australia Touring). Charmian's film dialect credits include: *Truth*, *Ginger and Rosa*, *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales*, *Reaching for the Moon* and *Thor: Ragnarok* starring Cate Blanchett.



**PRISCILLA JACKMAN**

Assistant Director

For Sydney Theatre Company Priscilla Jackman is the Director and Creator of *Still Point Turning: The Catherine McGregor Story*. As Assistant Director at Sydney Theatre Company she has worked on *The Hanging*. Priscilla's other directing theatre credits include *Eurydike + Orpheus* (NIDA); *The Angelica Complex* (Kings Cross Theatre); *Photosynthesis* and *Cookies* (Seymour Centre); *Boatshed* and *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Ensemble). Priscilla has worked as Co-Director on *The Tempest* and *Romeo & Juliet* (Sport for Jove). As Assistant Director she has worked on *Good People* and *Barefoot in the Park* (Ensemble); and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Sport for Jove). As an actor, Priscilla has appeared in *The Vegemite Tales* (Itchy Feet Theatre); *Uncle Vanya* (Deadpan Productions UK); and *One World Shakespeare* (MOPA Theatre). Priscilla's TV credits include *All Saints*, *Love Child*, *The Power Games: The Packer Murdoch Story*, and *FortySomething*. Priscilla held the position of Resident Director at Sport for Jove (Winter 2017). She is recipient of a 2017 Rockend Berlin New Music Opera Award and a 2016 Sandra Bates Directors Award.

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In 1980, Sydney Theatre Company's first Artistic Director, Richard Wherrett, defined STC's mission as to provide "first class theatrical entertainment for the people of Sydney – theatre that is grand, vulgar, intelligent, challenging and fun." Years later, that ethos still rings true.

STC offers a diverse program of distinctive theatre of vision and scale at its harbourside home venue, The Wharf; Roslyn Packer Theatre Walsh Bay; and Sydney Opera House, as its resident theatre company.

STC has a proud heritage as a creative hub and incubator for Australian theatre and theatre makers, developing and producing eclectic Australian works, interpretations of classic repertoire and great international writing. STC strives to create theatre experiences that reflect Sydney's distinctive personality and engage audiences.

STC often collaborates with international artists and companies and, in recent years, the company's international profile has grown significantly with productions touring extensively to great acclaim. Renowned artists John Crowley, Tamás Ascher, Philip Seymour Hoffman, Liv Ullmann, Steven Soderbergh and Isabelle Huppert have all worked with STC in recent years and STC has presented productions by the National Theatre of Great Britain, Abbey Theatre and Steppenwolf Theatre Company.



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



## VIVID WHITE

by Eddie Perfect

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Season 2018 opens with the National Theatre's multiple Olivier and Tony award winning play by Simon Stephens, based on the novel by Mark Haddon, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*.


If you haven't secured your tickets with a 2018 subscription, get in quick before single tickets for this highly sought after Australian premiere go on sale on November 13th.

**Book your tickets at [mtc.com.au/2018](http://mtc.com.au/2018)**

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