

 **LA MAMA**  
presents

# MADAME NIGHT SHADE'S POISON GARDEN

21 SEPTEMBER - 1 OCTOBER 2017



# MADAME NIGHT SHADE'S POISON GARDEN

Created and Performed by **Anna Thomson**

Directed by **Sarah Ward**

Dramaturgy & Co-Direction **Jaye Hayes**

Co-devising (Explorations 2016) **Kimberley Twiner**

Design and Scenic Art **Lara Week**

Lighting Design/Operation **Megz Evans**

Stage Manager **Lisa Inman**

Sound Production/Design **Jacky T**

Image credit **Theresa Harrison**

## CREATOR'S NOTES:

The seeds for this work started over 18 months ago. *Madame Nightshade* was originally conceived as a character for a short vignette with comedy troupe *PO PO MO CO* and became a recurring act at monthly shows. Last year it was developed into a full length show and its first instalment was shown as part of *La Mama's Exploration* season.

In the dystopic world of *Madame Nightshade's Poison Garden*, Beatrice (a devilish shape shifter) lurks in the shadow of her alter ego Madame Nightshade. Her anarchic antics in the Poison Garden, a metaphor for our ailing planet, fracture the perfect façade of contemporary culture, revealing that there's shit in the beauty. And there's beauty in the shit.

I have been inspired by the words of Dante's *Inferno* and images of *The Holy Mountain*, and the way they approach capitalism, religion, history, bodies, gender and violence through visceral imagery and humour. I delight in creating physical comedy that uses grotesque, absurd and larger than life characters to confront societal norms and gender politics. I want audiences to be affected by the live experience, to oscillate between joy and revulsion, delight and disgust, laughter and discomfort.

*A note on food waste/recycling: Rest assured that the majority of the organic food in this production has and will be chopped, dipped, souped, stir-fried and eaten. The majority of soft plastics will be recycled at: [www.redcycle.net.au](http://www.redcycle.net.au). Live Green!*

## ANNA THOMSON

Anna Thomson is a Melbourne-based clown, theatre-maker, workshop facilitator, and circus performer. She trained and worked as a performer with the Women's Circus (2010-2012), performing in *Quite Contrary* (2010 Innovation Award, Melbourne Fringe) and *Snakes and Ladders* (2011). In 2015 she studied physical theatre, contemporary clowning, and performance making at the John Bolton Theatre School in Melbourne. She has worked as a facilitator in community theatre for the past 4 years. Anna is a founding member of *PO PO MO CO*; Melbourne's rambunctious queer comedy troupe, and has performed at festivals in Melbourne and around Australia. Anna has a love of dark-comedy and a strong interest in visual theatre, costumes and props. She enjoys exploring grotesque characters and the worlds they inhabit, and making absurd performance art.

## **SARAH WARD**

Sarah is a cabaret anarchist, actor, writer and feminist. Creator of cabaret character of Yana Alana, Sarah received the 2014 Helpmann award for Best Cabaret Artist. Alongside her band Tha Paranas and director Anni Davey the act has received eleven Green Room Awards, the Adelaide Fringe Award and the Melbourne Fringe Award for Best Cabaret. Sarah has performed in Copenhagen, Madrid, the USA, Buenos Aires, New Zealand and across Australia both with her own shows and with Circus Oz, La Soiree, Finucane and Smiths Glory box, Yummy, Arena Theatre Company, Melbourne Workers Theatre and The Women's Circus. Sarah plays the role of Bobby in the Dee & Cornelius play *SHIT* which received four Green Room Awards including Best Ensemble and Best Production in Independent Theatre. Sarah was one half of the much celebrated cult hip-hop cabaret act Sista She, she co-created SHE TV for Channel V as well as appearing on light entertainment shows for SBS, ABC and the Ten Network. Sarah is a singing teacher, mentor and director.

## **JAYE HAYES**

Jaye Hayes is a dance/media artist, writer, somatic movement researcher, yoga teacher and embodied ecologist, working at the intersection of dance and disability, somatics and technology. She studied Laban Movement Psychology for Performance at the Centre Performing Arts before completing a BA (Drama) at Flinders University and a BCA Hons (Dance) at Deakin University. As an emerging artist Jaye produced a body of queer performance, live art and dance/media work, with highlights including residencies at the Banff Centre (Canada) and bootlab (Berlin), and commissions for ACMI (Melbourne) and PICA (Perth). In the last decade her practice has shifted from performance making to movement research. During this period she has pursued training in Body-Mind Centering as the foundation of her practice. As a dramaturg, Jaye enjoys the opportunity to support artists in refining their vision by drawing on her knowledge of different modes of composition (physical, visual, textual) and her aptitude for critical insight into the cultural and political resonances the work.

## **MEGZ EVANS**

Megz has been involved in the performing arts from a very young age, starting as a performer in primary school and discovering the world of lighting soon after. The childlike wonder of theatre and performance has lead Megz to pursue both Performance Making at the University of Wollongong (UOW) and Performance Technology at the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA). Recently Megz worked with Lightning Jar Theatre on *Stupid F#cking Bird* (2017), Riot Theatre on *Lovely Mess* (2017) and currently has *<i>Next Fall</i>* with *BoysLikeMe* playing at Chapel Off Chapel. As an independent theatre maker, Megz is driven to create, develop and present new pieces of theatre that leave a lasting impression on those who experience it.

## **LARA WEEK**

Lara Week is a designer for performance and creative producer. Most recently she designed sets and costumes for *Caliban* (Malthouse Theatre), *Wages of Fear* (Metanoia Theatre), *Night Sings Its Songs* (La Mama Theatre), and the award-winning *Tales Of A City By The Sea* (La Mama Courthouse) which she co-produced and toured to Adelaide, Sydney, and Kuala Lumpur. Since 2011 Lara has been associate producer for Tribal Soul Arts, producing decolonial arts programs and performances in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, the Netherlands, UK, and Australia.

## **JACKY T**

Jacky T is a Melbourne based poet/MC/Producer originally from country Victoria. He wears city life like an itchy woollen sweater.

## THANK YOU'S

A huge thanks to all of the wonderful artists and crew in this production and their amazing skills, especially Jaye Hayes – I couldn't have done it without you. To my dear friends, family and housemates who support (and put up with) me through all of the ups and the downs and those who have helped with the creative making and crafting. To Alex Sangster and the Fairfield Uniting Church for rehearsal space.

Special thanks to all of the La Mama staff for all the wonderful work they do in supporting new performance and the Melbourne arts community - here's to another 50 years! And thanks to you, the audience, for supporting independent theatre.



Office Phone: (03) 9347 6948

Office Hours: Mon – Fri | 10:30am – 5:30pm

Level 1, 205 Faraday Street, Carlton VIC 3053

[www.lamama.com.au](http://www.lamama.com.au) | [info@lamama.com.au](mailto:info@lamama.com.au)

Our sincerest thanks to the many volunteers who generously give their time in support of La Mama.

La Mama's Committee of Management, staff and its wider theatrical community acknowledge that our theatre is on traditional Wurundjeri land.

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