

THANK YOU'S

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SURPRISE PARTY

WITH JEM AND DEAD MAX



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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.

The La Mama community acknowledges the considerable support it has received in the past decade from Jeanne Pratt and The Pratt Foundation.

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BY GEORGIA SYMONS
16 – 27 AUGUST
LA MAMA COURTHOUSE

SURPRISE PARTY WITH JEM AND DEAD MAX

WRITER'S NOTE

I began writing this play in 2015 during a Hot Desk Fellowship at The Wheeler Centre. The writing process that began there two years ago culminates with the show you experience now at La Mama. There have been large gaps within that two-year development period. But every time I have come back to the play after a long absence, it has been surprising, and a bit embarrassing, and awkward, but ultimately warm and joyous – like reconnecting with an old friend. That warmth is in no small part due to my collaborators, Anna Kennedy and Christian Taylor, for whom the play was written, and who have profoundly influenced the work. My deep thanks also to our wonderful director Iris Gaillard; our tireless producer Fiona Dunne; and my dear friend Liv Satchell, who was there with myself, Anna and Christian at the very beginning and has supported us all immensely. And to the whole team who have sprung up around this work – you are all incredible.

I'm not sure what to tell you about the content of the play before you see it. I have had countless conversations, particularly with young women, which have bolstered my belief in the need to tell stories like this one. I wish I could write an angrier play; I hope I do one day. But this play is about those times when we should be angry, we have every right to be angry, and yet we can't be. What do we do then?

CREDITS

Directed by Iris Gaillard
Written by Georgia Symons
Performed by Anna Kennedy and Christian Taylor
Production Design by Daniel Moulds
Lighting Design by Shane Grant
Sound Design by Joshua Trappett
Production & Stage Management by Piper Huynh
Produced by Fiona Dunne
Image by Connor Tomas O'Brien

GEORGIA SYMONS

Georgia is a theatre-maker, game designer and installation artist based in Melbourne. She is interested in using playful, interactive forms to 'play through' complexities. She also works extensively in youth arts, most frequently with Western Edge Youth Arts. In 2015, her writing was supported by an Australian Theatre for Young People mentorship, a Hot Desk Fellowship with The Wheeler Centre, and an Australia Council ArtStart grant. In 2016, she was selected to participate in the Melbourne Festival Directors Lab, and as a writer in the Lonely Company mentorship program. Her recent works as a writer for live art and theatre include: Of Longing and Belonging (Western Edge/Geelong Courthouse), The Wheel of Fate (Uprising Youth Theatre/Gertrude Street Projection Festival), You Must Come Alone to Read the Last Book on Earth (Library at the Dock/Melbourne Fringe Open Book program), Zone 4 (Testing Grounds) and Caliban (Coopers Malthouse/Western Edge). In 2017, Georgia will collaborate with UK-based interactive theatre company Agency of Coney on Remote, as well as presenting a number of works around Melbourne and Australia. Georgia holds a Master's of Writing for Performance from VCA. She is the co-founder and co-director of monthly Melbourne scratch night Small and Loud, hosted at Arts Centre Melbourne.

IRIS GAILLARD

Iris is a French theatre director based in Melbourne since 2011. She graduated from Cours Florent and the National School of Decorative Arts in Paris. In 2014, She obtained a Postgraduate Diploma in Theatre Directing at VCA and was the recipient of the Creative Scholarship. Iris is currently undertaking a Masters in Directing for Performance at VCA. In Melbourne, she has been directing classics and collaborating with emerging playwrights. In 2013, She led The Gina Project (La Mama's Exploration Season). In 2015, she directed In the Dark, an immersive theatre/game hybrid (Brunswick Mechanics Institute, Live Works season). She assisted Peter Houghton on The Boy at the Edge of Everything (MTC) and was part of the first international Director's Lab (Melbourne Festival 2015). In 2016, she featured in MKA's Hot! Hot! Hot! Climate Arts Festival, and directed Duality, OK! at La Mama by and with Sarah Mainwaring. She focuses her practice around new immersive and participatory forms of storytelling, and investigating ceremony and ritual as modes of performance.

ANNA KENNEDY

Anna Kennedy is a Melbourne-based actor, theatre-maker and producer. She is the Creative Producer of She Said Theatre and the Company Manager of Rollercoaster Theatre. In 2016, she produced and tour-managed the multi-award winning show HART by She Said Theatre, as well as For the Love of Pina by Rollercoaster Theatre (Ararat Performing Arts Centre) and F. by Riot Stage for Poppy Seed Theatre Festival. In 2015, Anna produced four shows for FRISK (True North Arts Festival/Darebin Arts) and produced/performed in Living Positive Victoria's ENUF Stigma Campaign (Midsumma and ChillOut Festivals). Her performance/theatre-making credits include A Room of One's Own (Sentient Theatre/La Mama 2016), Steppe: A Journey of Unforgetting (Melbourne Fringe 2015), The Living Museum of Erotic Women (Bernzerk Productions 2015), and Since the Death of Sarah Kane (La Mama 2015). She directed The Quiet Bite (Melbourne Fringe 2016) and assistant directed Bock Kills Her Father (La Mama/Melbourne Fringe 2015). Anna graduated from VCA with a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Theatre Practice) in 2014.

CHRISTIAN TAYLOR

Christian is a Melbourne based actor, writer and theatre-maker and graduated from the VCA with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre Practice in 2014. Christian's practice explores immersive and participatory performance, and is currently developing a body of work concerning climate change and environmental literature. Christian was also awarded Best Emerging Writer at Melbourne Fringe Festival 2016 for his critically acclaimed solo performance work How Can You Sleep At Night. Christian's film credits include lead roles in multiple short films, including Gabby's First Time (dir. Tristen Barr), and Reactions (dir. Hayden Mustica). His theatre credits include: Cosi (Soapbox Theatre Company); Tuesday (VCA); Plus Sign Attached (Living Positive Victoria & VCA); #howtodisappear (Melbourne Fringe & VCA); Flashblaks (Ilbjerri Theatre Company); In The Dark (Metanoia Theatre); How Can You Sleep At Night (Melbourne Fringe); The Bells (Five Angry Men); and Shrine (Kin Collective).

DANIEL MOULDS

Daniel is an emerging set and costume designer and visual artist, having graduated with a Master of Design for Performance from VCA in 2015. He also holds a postgraduate diploma of Performance Creation from VCA, a Bachelor of Visual Art & Design (ACU) and a diploma of Transpersonal Art Therapy (Phoenix). Recent credits include The Removalists (Baker's Dozen Theatre Company, 2016), Mr Naismith's Secret (TBC Theatre, 2016), Butch Masters: Man of Destiny (Midsumma, 2015), The Alien Meteorites of Federation Square (that probably won't kill us all) (Pop up Playground/Fresh Air Festival, 2015), Disasterpiece (Melbourne Fringe/Frisk Festival, 2015), The Chapel Perilous (VCA, 2015), and The Prodigal Son (VCA, 2014).

SHANE GRANT

Shane is an accomplished lighting designer having worked extensively with companies like Ranters Theatre, The Torch Project, NYID and many others. Shane has a Bachelor of Dramatic Arts (Production) from VCA from 1994. Shane sits on the Green Room Awards Association Theatre Companies panel and is currently an artistic director of Metanoia Theatre. Shane is also a writer and theatre maker he recently enjoyed success with an adaptation of Geroge Arnaud's novel The Wages of Fear.

JOSHUA TRAPPETT

Joshua Trappett is a composer masquerading as a sound designer. He has studied at the University of Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, and has managed and designed for a plethora of stage shows, including MUSC's Lear Theatre 451's Forget Me Not in 2016, and FLW's Who's Afraid of the Working Class. In the future Josh hopes to succeed in his pursuit of true, marketable happiness.

PIPER HUYNH

Piper Huynh is a multi-skilled theatre-maker who is driven by stories. She has worked extensively with Western Edge Youth Arts on projects such as Chronicles: Searching for Songlines, Iago and Caliban. As an avid Playback Theatre practitioner she has facilitated workshops around Melbourne and in Sri Lanka and the Philippines. Her recent works include Patchwork, a short film with MS Limited, projection design for From Here To Maternity at Chapel Off Chapel, producing The Voices of Joan of Arc for Next Wave Festival 2016, and as an assistant artist on the children's picture book 2 On Winter Melon. Piper is currently part of Footscray Community Arts Centre's Emerging Cultural Leaders Program where she hopes to begin her new body of work exploring the intersectionality of the Vietnamese-Australian identity. Recent stage/production management credits include My Ancestral Roots (Gertrude Street Projection Festival), Salt (She Said Theatre) and Anti-Hamlet (New Working Group/TheatreWorks).

FIONA DUNNE

Fiona Dunne is Melbourne-based producer and arts manager from Western Sydney, focused on the development of young and early-career artists across the spectrum of Australian storytelling. Fiona has worked with festivals and arts organisations focused on the production, publication and support of new Australian work across both literature and theatre,. She is the current Creative Producer of Express Media, Australia's peak organisation for young writers. In 2016, Fiona was selected for Footscray Community Arts Centre's Emerging Cultural Leaders program, and was a delegate of the Australia Council's India Literature Exploratory, supported by the UNESCO Melbourne City of Literature.