

**ZAC KAZEPIS**  
(Sound Design)

Zac Kazepis is a critically acclaimed actor, writer and music composer. As a composer and sound designer, Zac has worked on a number of different productions including *No One Likes Me* (by Darren Vizer) and *Three Short Works* (by Lloyd Jones) at La Mama. He has also composed music for performances staged at the VCA and at the Adelaide Feast Festival. Zac worked again with Darren Vizer as sound designer and composer for *Stigma* (Open Stage Theatre / Melbourne Fringe Festival, and interstate seasons). Most recently, Zac worked as a composer and sound designer on *Just A Boy*, *Standing In Front of a Girl* (produced by 15 Minutes From Anywhere).

**MICHAEL MUMFORD**  
(Costume Designer & Maker)

An award-winning graduate from Whitehouse Institute of Design in 2011, Michael was commissioned to design and produce the costumes for the opera *Euridice*, for the Woodend Winter Arts Festival directed by Rodney Hall. Michael recently returned from two years in London working for couturier Antonia Pugh Thomas. He is currently working on his own label and couturier business. Michael also designed the costumes for the 2017 production of *Tchekov at the House of Special Purpose*. He is now working towards his Masters degree.



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La Mama Theatre is on traditional land of the Kulin Nation. We give our respect to the Elders of this country and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people past, present and future. We acknowledge all events take place on stolen lands and that sovereignty was never ceded.

We are grateful to all our philanthropic partners and donors, advocates, volunteers, audiences, artists and our entire community as we work towards the La Mama rebuild. Thank you!

La Mama is financially assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council – its arts funding and advisory body, the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria, and the City of Melbourne through the Arts and Culture triennial funding program.



**JULIAN ADAMS**  
(Stage Manager)

Julian is an Honours graduate of La Trobe University's Bachelor of Arts, having also completed a diploma of Live Theatre Services with Melbourne Polytechnic. A jack-of-all-trades and self-confessed theatre addict, Julian is always looking for a new opportunity to challenge his skills. His recent successes include lighting design for *Echoes* (La Mama, 2017), *Bipolar Bear* (Fringe, 2016), stage management for Monash in *Love and War* (Chapel Off Chapel, 2018), sound design for *Creatures of The Deep* (Fringe 2018, Sustainability Festival 2019) and acting as Medvedenko in *The Seagull* (2018, LTU), Samson 2 in *ManDogMan* (MonsterFest 2017) and Gloucester in *King Lear* (2017, LTU). He thanks you for your patronage and hopes you enjoy the show.

**LA MAMA** presents  
**TCHEKOV at THE HOUSE of SPECIAL PURPOSE**

Чехов в доме специального назначения



# TCHEKOV AT THE HOUSE OF SPECIAL PURPOSE

Written by **R.Johns**

Directed by **Alex Menglet**

Performed by **Maria Paula Afanador, Jim Daly, Gregory J. Fryer, Joanna Halliday, Huw Jennings, Kandice Joy, Adam May, Meg Mckibbin, Phil Roberts, Natalia Rozpara, Anita Torrance, Roxana Paun Trifan**

Production & Set design by **Peter Mumford**

Lighting design by **Shane Grant**

Sound design by **Zac Kazepis**

Costume designer and maker **Michael Mumford**

Stage manager **Julian Adams**

Make up artist **Alison Murphy**

Design credit: **Peter Mumford** in homage to Lazar Markovich Lissitzky

## WRITER'S NOTE:

The inspiration for this work came in an unusual way. I had been invited to show my work *Black Box 149* at the curated WPI Riksteatern Conference in Stockholm. Travelling there I visited St Petersburg with my sister. On our last Saturday evening in the city, we walked past the State Hermitage Museum, (and the site of the former Tsar's Winter Palace,) and by chance it was open. Only a handful of people were there, it was as if we had become specially invited guests. As I sat in the silence, on a window ledge, looking down at the River Neva, it came to me that I needed to write about the four Romanov girls, the daughters of the last Tsar. I discovered the Romanov girls had performed the short plays of Chekhov in their imprisonment and this became the window into their world. Little-known facts of the actual history are incorporated into the play, including the relationship between Maria and Ivan, and what happened to Olga before the journey to Yekaterinburg. *Tchekov at the House of Special Purpose* advances Chekhov's theatrical form of *Three Sisters*, into the Russian revolution exploring love, belief and family values in time of war and chaos, asking the question what makes us human?

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE:

We explore broad humanity in the play not statements of power, victory or broad ideology. The play's strength lies in its questions not in didactic answers. We are interested in the vibration of the human heart, not the politics of who was right or wrong in that time. We are interested in the humanity of the characters and that despite what fate awaits each, their willingness to fall in love, put on a play, and celebrate life! It is an ode to youth, love and beauty. A cast of 12 culturally and linguistically diverse actors tell a Russian story as seen through 21st Century Australian eyes, exploring the resonances of that story and what it means to us.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS / THANK-YOUs:

**Thank you to our donors to Tchekov at the House of Special Purpose, through the Australian Cultural Fund, we appreciate your generosity so much.** Jennifer Alderton, Cait Alderton, Richard Antliff, Robert Bender, Juliet Bradford, Dr Swee Onn Chan, Margo Collins, Matt Crosby, Joanne Davis, Helen Doig, Trish Dutton, Cathy Field, Dr Eleanor Flynn, Dr Ted Gott, Belinda Hoare, Olwyn Jones, David Macrae, Dr Benny Katz, Dr Jenny Schwarz, Helen Morris, Matthew Myers, Lemai Nguyen, Meg Spencer, Dr Greg Taggart and our two anonymous angels.

To the VCAA for selecting this work for VCE Theatre Studies Unit 4 Playlist. John Lloyd Fillingham for his video promo and photographs. To the 2017 cast of the play. Meg Spencer, Asleen Mauthoor and Yvette Turner for permission to use their image. Auspicious Arts projects and Selene Bateman. Australian Cultural Fund, Sam Nicol and the Flemington Rotary Op Shop for the donation of props, Hugh Halliday, Adrian at MDM.

Profound thanks to Liz Jones for supporting my work for many years, and ensuring my voice has been heard, particularly as a female playwright. And thanks to all of the wonderful La Mama family.

It has been wonderful to work with director Alex Menglet. His vision for the work, of wanting a prominent role for women as the Bolsheviks. His aesthetic of Cut, Cut, Cut! Simpler! Simpler! More concrete! It has been a master class to watch him shape the work. To Peter Mumford for the fabulous conceptual ideas which

created the art of the piece and are at it's core. Thank you for all our endless discussions and being there! To the wonderful cast and creatives for their thoughts and offers, their commitment and passion. With much gratitude to Sandra Shotlander who read a final draft and shared with me some interesting insights, To the early dramaturgy on this project with Hungarians Laszlo Suba and Ágota Brezcki. The workshop with Miklos Gerey and Laszlo Suba where we found Huw!

This play is dedicated to Peter Stratford, my dear friend and mentor for many years, who was essential to the creation of the work.

To the great authors and historians who have inspired me Anton Chekhov and *Three Sisters*, Leo Tolstoy, Helen Rappaport, Robert K. Massie, Simon Sebag Montefiore, Nikolai Bukharin, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Maxim Gorky, the mysterious State Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg and to the four sisters, Olga, Tatiana, Maria and Anastasia.

## R. JOHNS

(writer)

Rosemary studied at Manchester University, Tulane and U.C.R. Rosemary was the recipient of a DFAT grant, Australia now focus Germany in 2017. The Staatstheater Nürnberg played *Black Box 149* (original production La Mama, VCE Playlist) in repertoire - the first time this German state company has curated an Australian work. Her work has been presented in Mumbai, Athens, Stockholm, Cape Town and Christchurch. With the La Mama Learning Program, she has had five works selected for the VCE playlists.

Production highlights include co-directing with Peter Stratford both *Carrying Shoes into the Unknown* (La Mama, VCE Playlist) and *At the Centre of Light* (La Mama/12th Night Theatre Brisbane).

Rosemary was AWGIE nominated for Youth and Community Theatre with *As Told By The Boys Who Fed Me Apples*. (Big West Festival, La Mama)

## ALEX MENGLET

(director)

Alex Menglet comes from an established Russian theatrical family. He was trained at the Academy of Performing Arts, in Moscow. In Australia, Alex has worked for the MTC, STC, QTC, Playbox/Malthouse, Belvoir St Theatre, Bell Shakespeare Company, Anthill, the State Theatre of South Australia, 45 Downstairs and Red Stitch.

Film and television work includes *He Died with a Falafel in his Hand*, *Children of the Revolution*, *Salvation*, *The Petrov Affair*, *Wentworth* and *Kath and Kim*.

Alex has directed at Red Stitch Actors Theatre, *Playing the Victim*, *Yellow Moon*, *Jack Goes Boating* and *The Rites of Evil*, for Alliance Française Crime and Punishment and *Tchekov at the House of Special Purpose* at La Mama.

Alex is a Green Room Award winner and a Helpmann Awards nominee.

## MARIA PAULA AFANADOR

(*The Guard*)

Maria Paula Afanador studied Performing Arts at the Charlot Academy and The National Theater House in her home country, Colombia, graduating in 2012. In Australia, in 2014 she performed with the Spanish Theater Company in Erotic Alleluia (Mechanical Theater.) Performances at La Mama include *The Masque of Beauty* (Peter Green) and *Women on the Verge*. She reprised her role as Woman Alone in *Women on the Verge* at The Butterfly Club and The Italian Institute of Culture. Maria was part of *Tchekov at The House of Special Purpose* in 2017. Maria is co-founder of The Bridge, a theatre company of native Spanish speakers. She is interested in creating an artistic community, focusing on the impact of immigrants on the Arts.

## JIM DALY

("Citizen" *Nicholas Romanov*)

Jim Daly has been an actor for almost sixty-five years, with wide experience across theatre, film and television. His first television work at the age of 10 was on a South Australian children's TV show, *Southern Stars*. Highlights of his career have been the two television series of *Pirate Islands*, shot in Australia and Fiji, and the last series of *Rake*.

National tours of *Cosi*, *Hello*, *Goodbye and Happy Birthday*, and *Coranderrk* are amongst his fondest stage memories, along with Ray Mooney's powerful play *Everynight Everynight*, in which he played an insane criminal in H Division in Pentridge prison. He has just completed *The Ghetto Kabaret*.

Next year he will complete an eight year PhD from Monash on performing grotesquely.

## GREGORY J. FRYER

(Kharitonov)

After graduating in theatre study, Greg performed in Asia & Europe and in stand-up comedy at the Melbourne International Comedy Festival. He has featured in several award-winning short films such as *The Disappearance of Willy Bingham*. In 2009, Greg played Joe in *The Circuit* before landing a role in *The Sapphires* (2012) which premiered at Cannes. In 2013, he joined the *Corenderk* project, which had a season at the Sydney Opera House, and was narrator for *The Coniston Massacre* documentary. He appeared in *The Gods of Wheat Street* (2014). He has worked on *Mad as Hell, Dr Blake, Wake in Fright* and has collaborated with the Lloyd Jones ensemble at La Mama Theatre which he considers his second home.

## JOANNA HALLIDAY

(Maria)

Born and raised in Melbourne, Joanna has trained in Music Theatre at Showfit and completed her Bachelor in Acting at The Victorian College of the Arts. At the VCA, she played Abigail Williams in *The Crucible* (dir. Adena Jacobs), and Henry in Shakespeare's *Henry the V* (dir. Leith McPherson). Joanna debuted as Juliet in Melbourne Shakespeare Company's *Romeo and Juliet* (dir. Jennifer Sarah Dean). She has performed as Lady Maria in *Love's Labour's Lost*, and Gwendolen Carr in *Travesties* (dir. Jennifer Sarah Dean). Joanna will appear in the feature film *Ride Like a Girl* as Young Burnadette, featuring Sam Neill and Teresa Palmer (dir. Rachel Griffiths.) Joanna has trained in singing, classical piano, violin and classical and contemporary dance. She is the 2018 recipient of the Irene Mitchell Award.

## HUW JENNINGS

(Ivan)

Huw Jennings is an actor and filmmaker. He is a graduate of the National Theatre Drama School and the RADA Acting Shakespeare course 2016. He was acknowledged for outstanding achievement in VCE theatre, drama and filmmaking, featuring in the VCAA Top Acts and Top Screen. During his studies, Huw gained experience in stage and screen performance working with industry professionals. His graduate performance was as Laurence Moss in *Abigail's Party*. Since graduating, he's toured to the Adelaide Fringe Festival, performed in *Measure For Measure*, toured nationally playing the lead role in stage show *The Gizmo*, created several short films and appears in feature films *That's Not Me*, *Miss Fisher and the Crypt of Tears* and *Bernie Brown: The Show*.

## KANDICE JOY

(Tatiana)

Kandice has trained at The Second City Improv Hollywood, L.A, in the UK at RADA, (The Shakespeare Award), and at Pineapple Studios, London and currently at Howard Fine Acting Studio, Australia. Her television and film credits include *Winners & Losers, Underbelly, Fat Tony & Co, Utopia*, hosting *Creative Kids, Sammy Kingsford*, U.S Web Series, *Predestination, Ryhme & Reason, Kath & Kimderella, Milk & Cookies, Aura* and *Knock 'Em Dead*.

At the age of nine, Kandice played July in the Australian production of *Annie* and appeared in *Candy Man* (Arts Centre Melbourne). In 2017, Kandice represented Australia in Malaysia, (CSTD International Dance Competition) and continues training at The May Downs School of Dance. Kandice is delighted to perform at La Mama.

## ADAM MAY

(Yurovsky)

Adam has acted extensively in theatre, film, and television, spanning a broad variety of theatre spaces including La Mama, Theatreworks, Chapel off Chapel, 45 Downstairs, Northcote Town Hall, Gasworks, Victorian Arts Centre, Regal Theatre Perth, the London Palladium, and the Edinburgh Festival. Film and television credits include the Chinese feature film *Dogfight, Sunshine, Utopia, Ali's Wedding, House Husbands, Tangle, Blue Heelers* (semi-regular), *Saddle Club, One Perfect Day, Secret Life of Us* and nominated best actor at the 15/15 Festival. Adam also wrote *Rising Fish Prayer* (winner of the Asialink Playwriting Award) broadcast periodically on BBC Radio and published by Currency Press.

## MEG MCKIBBIN

(Olga)

Hailing from Perth, Meg graduated from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) with a Bachelor of Arts (Music Theatre) in 2017. During her studies, Meg appeared as Abigail Williams in *The Crucible*, and Heather Duke in *Heathers: the Musical*. Meg made her debut as a female understudy in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2018; Australian Shakespeare Company) and as a core cast member in *Treasure Hunt!* (2018, Echelon Productions). She also stars as April in the short film *Gaslight* (finalist; St Kilda Film Festival) and was last seen as Viola in *Twelfth Night* (2019; Melbourne Shakespeare Company.) Meg is thrilled to be joining the company as the eldest Romanov daughter for their 2019 season.

## PHIL ROBERTS

(Dr. Botkin)

Phil was born and raised in England, where he was a member of the Cambridge Footlights Society. After a few years teaching in Papua New Guinea, he moved to Australia, and was a part of the vibrant arts scene in Canberra. In 1999, he arrived in Melbourne in a production touring to La Mama Theatre, and he has remained close to La Mama ever since.

Over the course of his career he has appeared in nearly two hundred mainstage productions, and has played a wide variety of roles, from Hamlet to a neurotic caterpillar. Whether as actor or director, Phil has appeared across a number of platforms, in film, television and radio, but independent theatre has always been his greatest passion.

## NATALIA ROZPARA

(Anastasia)

Natalia attended the Children's Performing Company of Australia, at 13 she was cast in their production of *The Silver Donkey*. The musical toured the US, notably performing at Disneyland and off-off-Broadway. In 2014, Natalia attended Verve Studios' Professional Actors Studio and performed in *With You, Alone* (Darren Natale) at Theatre Works. Natalia has studied a Bachelor of Acting for Stage and Screen at Federation University's Arts Academy, performances include Yvette in *Mother Courage and Her Children* (directed by James Wardlaw.) Natalia also undertook physical theatre training at Brisbane's Zen Zen Zo and has studied at The Film Space with Aleksis Vellis. In 2018, Natalia booked a minor role in a feature film *Angel of Mine* directed by Kim Farrant.

## ANITA TORRANCE

(Oxana)

For Anita, acting has been an exciting adventure, whether literally or when exploring the emotional life of her characters. Her career in Australia includes key guest roles on *Blue Heelers* and *Stingers*, as well as performing in theatre, where she had the opportunity to work with such directors as Rosemary Johns, David Myles and Lucy Freeman.

While en-route to Canada, Anita secured the series regular role of Tess Adamson in New Zealand's popular television show, *Shortland Street*. In Vancouver, Anita has worked on such shows as *Smallville* and *Caprica*.

She has trained as an actor extensively in both Australia and North America. Anita is thrilled to be back at La Mama, performing in *Tchekov at The House of Special Purpose*.

## ROXANA PAUN TRIFAN

(Alexandra)

Roxana is a professional theatre and film actor, with a substantial career in European theatre, PhD candidate in Theatre Performance at Monash University. She has worked with Rosella Falk, Alberto Terrani, Carlo Mazzacurati, Andrei Serban, Eugenio Barba and John Strasberg among others.

## PETER MUMFORD

(Production and Set Design)

Peter has designed for dance, drama and opera companies across Australia. He was a founding member of The Torch Projects.

Peter was resident designer with Red Stitch Actors Theatre 2005-2013. He gained Best Production Green Room Award with his production design for *Harvest*, and a Green Room Award nomination for *Red Sky Morning* design. In 2014, he received the Green Room Award for best design for *Foxfinder*.

Peter designed Rodney Hall's early Opera projects for Woodend Winter Arts Festivals, and the premiere of Rodney Hall's and Paul Dean's opera *Dry River Run* 2018, Queensland Conservatorium of Music.

For Rosemary Johns, he has designed many plays including *Stray* and *As Told By The Boys Who Fed Me Apples*, produced at Big West Festival and La Mama.

## SHANE GRANT

(Lighting Design)

Shane is an accomplished lighting designer, having worked extensively with companies like Ranters Theatre, The Torch Project, NYID and many others.

Shane has a BA Dramatic Arts (Production) VCA from 1994. Shane is currently an artistic director of Metanoia Theatre.

Shane is also a writer and theatre maker he recently enjoyed success with an adaptation of Georges Arnaud's novel *The Wages of Fear* and *Hard Boiled Bush Noir* three tales of ice crime in the outback.

Shane has written and performed monologues at Gasworks theatre, La Mama theatre and the Mechanics Institute Brunswick. Shane is currently the venues manager at St Martins Youth arts center. He continues to write and light in venues around Melbourne.