

## Acknowledgements / Thank you's:

La Mama Team, City of Melbourne, Hannah Ruthven, Helen Hopkins, Mary Helen Sassman, Hilary Bland, Michael Sargeant, Katrina Gow, Donna Hughes.



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La Mama Theatre is on traditional land of the people of the Kulin Nation. We give our respect to the Elders of these traditional lands and to all First Nations 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!

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LA MAMA AND REACTION THEATRE  
PRESENT

# T O B Y



M a r c h 9 - 1 4 , 2 0 2 1

Image by Darren Gill

# T O B Y

Written by: **Abe Pogos**

Directed by: **Louise Howlett**

Produced by: **ReAction Theatre**

Stage Manager: **Steph Young**

Set design: **Jacob Sandom**

Lighting designer: **Shane Grant**

Lighting Intern: **Giovanna Yate Gonzalez**

Sound designer: **Sidney Millar**

Costume designer: **Jeremy Pryles**

Performed by: **Alex Tomisich, Sam Stopforth,**

**Pat McAuliffe, Meg McKibbin, Iris Gaillard,**

and **Adam May**

**JEREMY PRYLES** is a set and costume designer based in Melbourne. He has a Bachelor of Fine Arts: Painting from Monash University and a Masters of Design for Performance from The Victorian College of the Arts (VCA). Instagram: @jeremy\_pryles\_design | www.jeremypryles.com

**SHANE GRANT** has been acknowledged as an “Absolute Genius” (Theatre People, 30/7/16) for his lighting design of Sarah Kane’s *4:48 Psychosis*. Shane earned a Bachelor of Arts (PA) from the VCA. In July 2021, he will complete his 500th show since graduating and is in discussion with the AFL about presenting a “son et lumière” before the Collingwood v Richmond game at the G. Watch this space! Shane has: toured the world; operated venues (Gasworks, Mechanics Institute Brunswick, St Martins); written, performed, sold tickets and produced shows; sold drinks in the foyer; built sets; built theatres; and given the St Crispin’s Day speeches that get everyone over the line on opening night—sometimes all with the same production. Many shows that Shane has contributed to have won group Green Room Awards for Best Ensemble or Best Production in their category. Some recent notable shows that Shane has designed are: Samah Sabawi’s *Tales of a City by the Sea* (La Mama Courthouse and tour), *Underground* (Gasworks Theatre), *Scream Bloody Murder* (Abbotsford Convent), *The Omission of the Coleman Family* (Metanoia Theatre at the Mechanic’s Institute), *Toorak Rules* (St Martins Theatre), *Last Words* (Kadimah Cultural Centre) and *Hotel Sorrento* (national tour).

**GIOVANNA YATE GONZALEZ** is a Colombian professional dancer and teacher with experience over 10 years in the performing arts industry. She is currently expanding her skill set and knowledge in Australia as a third-year VCA Student in Lighting Design.

**JACOB SANDOM** grew up in Auckland, New Zealand, and moved to Melbourne in 2015 to pursue a career in design. He graduated from RMIT University in 2019 and, in his final year, worked alongside ReAction Theatre investigating sustainable and ethically sourced set production, and the reduction of waste in the theatre for his Honours Thesis. He also designed an innovative ‘origami floor’ for the production of *Secret of the Raft* that enabled projection surfaces to ‘pop up’ from the stage. Jacob is passionate about all aspects of the Performing Arts and especially about sustainable practice and the use of advanced technologies in theatre.

**MEG MCKIBBIN** Hailing from Perth, Meg completed a Bachelor of Arts (Music Theatre) from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) in 2017. During her studies, Meg appeared as Abigail Williams in *The Crucible*, and Heather Duke in *Heathers: the Musical*. Other notable shows include *Bring it On; the Musical* (dir. Jay-James Moody), *42nd Street* (dir. Jason Langley), and *Chicago*. Meg made her professional debut as the female swing in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Australian Shakespeare Company). More recently, Meg appeared as Viola in *Twelfth Night* (Melbourne Shakespeare Company), Olga Romanov in *Tchekov at the House of Special Purpose* (La Mama), and Lydia in *Spike Heels* (Living Room Productions.) She also stars in the short-film *Gaslight*, for which she received a "Best Actress" award at the 2020 Northern Frights Film Festival.

**PAT MCAULIFFE** graduated with Honours from the Flinders University Drama Centre in 2016 where he was professionally trained for stage and screen. He has performed for Windmill Theatre Company in the Australian tour of *Grug and the Rainbow* in 2017 and the television series *Bloom* on Stan in 2020. This is Pat's first performance with ReAction Theatre and at La Mama.

**IRIS GAILLARD** is a French actor, theatre director & dramaturge based in Australia since 2011. She graduated in Acting at Cours Florent and Scenography at ENSAD, Paris. In 2014, She obtained a postgraduate Diploma in Directing for Performance at the VCA. She is passionate about inclusive theatre. In 2019, she joined (It's no) drama - a regional all-abilities theatre group supported by South Gippsland Shire & Creative Victoria, and mentored by Rawcus - as an Arts Worker. Her last acting projects include *Facing Medea* by François Cervantes directed by Jenny Kemp at La Mama, 2019, nominated for best theatre in the Melbourne Fringe Festival 2019, and *Party of One*, a short film created in isolation produced by (It's no) drama and directed by Samara Cunningham, in 2020.

**SIDNEY MILLAR** has designed audio for theatre, dance, film and installations. Her unique style has emerged from her extensive experience as a performer and composer of classical and jazz music. She particularly enjoys using sound and music to create emotional states and subtle tensions in a work. Sidney graduated from the Victorian College of the Arts in 2017 and participated in the Melbourne Theatre Company's Women in Theatre Program 2018. Sidney's design highlights include *Wild* (Melbourne Theatre Company); *Crazy Brave* (dir. Melanie Beddie); *Lou Wall's Drag Race* (Melbourne Fringe); and *LOTUS* (Melbourne Fringe). Sidney was also the Associate Sound Designer to Russell Goldsmith for *Angels In America* (dir. Gary Abrahams); and *FIERCE* (Theatre Works). Sidney's other interests include lighting, visual art, stage and production management. In 2016 she was nominated for the Union House Theatre Stage Management Award for the musical *Rent*.

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

TOBY was first published in 2004 and explores some of the darker and less impressive aspects of human nature, the so-called 'dark triad' of traits - narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism. It tells the poignant and eerily all too familiar tale of how individuals in positions of power can manipulate public perceptions and erode culture from the inside out.

Having endured the horrendous year that was 2020, many of us have an understandable urge to return to 'normal life' - to our familiar habits and connections, our usual way of doing things, and with that, to the established power structures and processes of our past. TOBY holds up a mirror to this 'land,' challenging us to look clear-eyed at *what is* and fearlessly imagine *what could be*.

This play comes to you at a time of great uncertainty; a severe global crisis that has affected us economically, socially, and politically and is one that may go on to completely upend the world as we have known it. So much has shifted in our culture since the start of 2021. In light of this pandemic 'societal shock' it is now time to rethink and insist upon more constructive patterns in our cultural and political discourse, ensuring that all voices are heard.

It has been my great privilege to work with these artists to breathe life into this script which lay dormant for such a long time. We so missed making art, and relished the joy of playing together and the deep pleasure of proximity. Performance is a reminder of what art truly does; it gives us a chance to heal, to help make sense of what happened to us over the past year and to reimagine our future for these new and challenging times. Thank you for joining us!

**ABE POGOS** has mostly worked as a scriptwriter since graduating from the VCA School of Drama in 1984. He has received several fellowships from the Literature Board of the Australia Council and his scripts have had professional productions on main stages including The Athenaeum, The Malthouse, and The Sydney Opera House. He has had several scripts produced by ABC Radio Drama and has written scripts for Australian TV shows *Stingers*, *Something In The Air*, *Blue Heelers*, *Marshall Law*, *Always Greener*, *MDA*, *Headland*, *Marx and Venus* and *Packed to the Rafters*. He has had three feature films produced including *Compo* in 1989 (AFI nomination), *Sugar Mountain* which premiered in the US and Canada in 2016, and *Broken Ghost* (Brisbane and Anchorage International Film Festivals). In recent years, he has added composing to his repertoire. He has collaborated with director Catherine Hill many times writing three original music theatre pieces and incidental music for a number of other productions including Caryl Churchill's *A Number* and Tennessee William's *Two-Character Play* for Winterfall Theatre, the stage adaptation of *Calendar Girls* for Canberra Rep, and *Hallowed Ground* for Shift Theatre. Most recently he co-produced and composed the score for Catherine Hill's feature film, *Some Happy Day*.

**LOUISE HOWLETT** is a director, producer, theatre-maker, writer, performer, and the Artistic Director of ReAction Theatre. She has successfully produced and/or directed a range of new Australian works, including *Appropriate Kissing for All Occasions* by Griffin Theatre award-winner David Finnigan; *At the Water's Edge* – a commission celebrating the 85th Anniversary of the St Kilda Palais; *Hypoxia* (VCA Master of Writing - Performance) by Rebecca Lister; *Bomb the Base* by Mark Andrew; a sell-out season of *Heart Thy Neighbour* by Camilla Maxwell for MICF/Melbourne Fringe; *Proof* by David Auburn and *Some Girl(s)* by Neil LaBute. Apart from TOBY, ReAction Theatre has also been developing *SECRET OF THE RAFT* - a production incorporating 3D projection mapping, installation, interactive participation, and live performance. So far, the work undertaken has included a residency with Arena Theatre, a collaboration with RMIT to develop complex digital sequences, two creative developments/showings, with dramaturgy by award-winning playwright, Matthew Whittet. [www.reactiontheatre.com.au](http://www.reactiontheatre.com.au).

**STEPH YOUNG** is a BFA Production graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts. Steph has continued developing her skills with the Faculty of Fine Arts and Music, where she is employed in various capacities including Front of House, Technical Support and Stage Management. During the unprecedented 2020 Lockdown, Steph was the Stage Manager for several performances delivered live on Zoom Webinar, including *'Machinal'*, *'The One Hundred Year Revue'*, *'Abbyss'* and *'Play Readings 2020'*. Since graduating, Steph has worked as a Production Coordinator on New Years Eve 2020 with the ABC, the Stage Manager of *'My Brilliant Career'* at The Alexander Theatre, Monash University, *'The Feather in the Web'*, *'Dance Nation'* and *'Hir'* at Red Stitch Actors Theatre, the tours of *'Romeo is Not The Only Fruit'* at Brisbane Festival and HotHouse Theatre, *'Moral Panic'* at the Northcote Town Hall, on the

development of *'LOTUS'* with Signal Arts, as a Front of House Room Supervisor at the Melbourne International Comedy Festival (2018, 2019, 2020\*, 2021) and as the Back of House Caller for the Victorian State Schools Spectacular. In her graduate year, Steph interned with the Melbourne International Comedy Festival and the Victorian State Schools Spectacular.

**ALEXANDER TOMISICH** is a Melbourne-based actor and a proud MEAA member. Graduating from the VCA in 2018, his credits include Agamemnon in *The Greeks* (dir. Melanie Beddie), Richard III in *Richard III* (dir. Budi Miller), Smea in *Peter Pan* (dir. Benjamin Schostakowski), and Dinosaur/Convener in *The Skin of our Teeth* (dir. Dean Bryant). He has several performances in education shows to his credit with Perform Education and The National Theatre for Children (NTC), covering topics such as Ocean conservation, mental health, and STEM research, in schools across the country. Alexander has been a Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School (VCASS) tutor and teacher/mentor with the Riverina Drama camp in NSW. His web series credits include Willy in *Undergarment Odysseys* and *Robert Tech Inc. Global*, with Crispy Yoghurt Productions. Alexander is excited about his performance at the historic La Mama theatre in Toby.

**SAM STOPFORTH** A Perth-grown, Melbourne-based actor, Sam has undergone extensive stage and screen training over the past 6 years, completing a Bachelor of Performing Arts, majoring in Performance Making (Acting, Writing and Directing) from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) in 2016. He has also recently completed the full-time acting program at 16th Street Actors Studio, graduating in 2019. Since 2012 Sam has contributed to 9 theatre productions and filmed lead or supporting roles in 17 short films. His feature film debut *Magenta Sky*, in which he plays a leading role, is slated for a December 2021 release. He has also performed in numerous music videos, notably *Jack River's Fools Gold*, which was nominated for a Triple J Music Video of the Year Award and has accumulated over 600K views on YouTube. On the commercial circuit, Sam was chosen to play the lead role in Danny Green's nation-wide *Coward's Punch* TVC, which also ran in select theatres for 3 years. In his senior year of high school, Sam achieved WACE scores which placed him in the top 20 drama students in Western Australia.

**ADAM MAY** has been an actor for over 30 years 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*, *Utopia*, *Ali's Wedding*, *House Husbands*, *Tangle*, *Blue Heelers* (semi-regular), *Saddle Club*, *One Perfect Day*, *Secret Life of Us*, and nominated the best actor at the 15/15 Festival. Awarded Best Comedy Actor by the Cracked Actors Theatre in 2020. Winner of Extreme Improv World Championship live-streamed from London, 2020.