



LITTLE BROTHER, BIG SISTER

What would you like to know about schizophrenia? *Little Brother, Big Sister* provides an inside view of a life, from the perspectives of someone with the condition and someone who cares for their sibling. A deeply personal debut play by Michel Tuomy drawn from his lived experience, opens at La Mama Theatre following World Schizophrenia Awareness Day (May 24) featuring Adam Cass (*I Love You Bro*) and Myf Powell, directed by Cathy Hunt (*She Wrote the Letter*, *Phantasmagoria*).

Little Brother Big Sister has been described as “as a love letter to those diagnosed with schizophrenia and the people who care for them.”

This powerful play explores the relationship between siblings Michel (Cass) and Karen (Powell). It has come about through Michel’s arts mentorship through the NDIS. Michel’s arts mentor Tania Smith encouraged him to take his writing to a professional level. This play previously opened at La Mama in May 2021 but the season was cut short by Melbourne’s fourth lockdown. Michel and the team have been waiting for a long time to bring audiences this story. They were forced to close as the theatres went dark. The set has sat in storage since.

In the play, Michel is writing his first novel *Hipflask* and seeking surf in Byron Bay, while his older sister Karen experiences Europe as an artist. Michel’s letters take a strange turn, he suddenly believes he can speak with long-dead people and is diagnosed with schizophrenia. Karen drops everything to return home to care for her brother. So begins our journey.

A truthful account from the perspective of a person with schizophrenia on stage is a rare offering. The emotional hardship endured by both characters illuminates the difficulty of adjusting to the condition while pursuing creativity, as the brother and sister struggle to find their way through the condition and the responsibility of caring, to a full life. Proving that even people thought of as on the margins of society can live with vibrancy, find balance and joy.

“It’s a story of battling with the illness and coming to a point where you can accept it,” says Tuomy. It’s also about how to get through the trauma of having a family member with schizophrenia.”

The importance of this unique struggle for identity is what attracted Liz Jones from La Mama to *Little Brother, Big Sister*. Cathy Hunt directs actors Adam Cass and Myf Powell and has been working with Michel on the script since 2019. The previous incarnation of the show cut short by lockdown, was described as, “what magic theatre can be when everyone involved is not only talented but are all working to honour the art...it is must see theatre.”

“What I hope is that the illness will be de-mystified by the play,” says Tuomy. “It’s all about public perception versus reality. Yes, people with schizophrenia have delusions and fantasies, but with the right support, they can get a helping hand and contribute to society. That’s what I want to portray with the play, the real face of schizophrenia.”

For information and interviews, please contact
Cathy Hunt email: cathyhunt@ihug.com.au

Written by Michel Paul Tuomy
Directed by Cathy Hunt
Performed by Adam Cass & Myf Powell
Set & costume design: Kris Bird
Sound design: Jess Keeffe
Lighting design (original): Shane Grant
Lighting realisation & recreation: Giovanna Yate Gonzalez
Dramaturg: Peter Matheson
NDIS Arts Mentor: Tania Smith
Mad Comrade: Sandy Jeffs
Michel’s artworks: Michel Paul Tuomy
Karen’s artworks: Elyss McCleary
Image: Darren Gill

SEASON June 7 - 18 2023
TIMES Wed: 6:30 PM
Thu - Sat: 7:30PM
Sun: 4pm
 Auslan Interpreted &
Livestreamed Friday June 9 7.30pm
VENUE La Mama HQ
205 Faraday St, Carlton VIC 3053
LENGTH Approx. 60 minutes
TICKETS \$30 Adult | \$20 Concession
Preview \$20.00 | Mob \$8.00
BOOKINGS 03 9347 6948
www.lamama.com.au

Detailed content information available online and at the theatre:
We have in-depth information to provide awareness of any possibly confronting material available on request from La Mama box office. And we have a quiet space at the theatre into which to retreat, if you are in need of tranquil space, during or after the play. Michel Paul Tuomy



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