



# HEISENBERG

BY SIMON STEPHENS

**MTC** MELBOURNE  
THEATRE  
COMPANY

# Welcome



Any chance to see the work of renowned artists in an intimate setting like the Fairfax Studio is a special one indeed. This Australian premiere of *Heisenberg* delivers that opportunity, featuring the inimitable actors Kat Stewart and Peter Kowitz, with a leading creative team under the direction of Tom Healey.

This play also marks our third presentation of a Simon Stephens play since we introduced MTC audiences to his work in 2015 with his revealing exploration of fame, celebrity and stardom in *Birdland*, and hosted him at MTC as part of the University of Melbourne's Macgeorge fellowship.

Last year his wonderful adaptation of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* made its long awaited Australian debut in an MTC co-presentation with Arts Centre Melbourne, charming and astonishing audiences who came in droves to see the international blockbuster.

And now, we present a Simon Stephens work of an entirely different scale – and one that proves his versatility and command of writing for the stage.

Fostering relationships with international writers is central to bringing Melbourne the best work from overseas, and, closer to home, investing in local writers is core to MTC's mission to enhance the Australian theatre landscape with exciting, new works from the country's best writers. Our NEXT STAGE Writers' Program is allowing us to do just that, and later this year you'll see the first play to come out of this initiative – *Golden Shield* by the astounding young writer Anchuli Felicia King. We can't wait to share it with you.

But for now, enjoy this Australian premiere.

Brett Sheehy AO  
Artistic Director & CEO

Virginia Lovett  
Executive Director & Co-CEO

Melbourne Theatre Company acknowledges the Yalukit Willam Peoples of the Boon Wurrung, the First Peoples of Country on which Southbank Theatre and MTC HQ stand, and we pay our respects to all of Melbourne's First Peoples, to their ancestors and Elders, and to our shared future.

MTC is a department of the University of Melbourne.



MTC is assisted by the Commonwealth Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body, and by the State Government of Victoria through Creative Victoria.



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MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS

# HEISENBERG

BY SIMON STEPHENS

17 MAY — 3 JULY 2019

Arts Centre Melbourne, Fairfax Studio

— About the Play —

The Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle helped redefine the world of physics, but Simon Stephens is less concerned with quantum mechanics than with the atomic uncertainty of the human heart. With wit and dry humour, *Heisenberg* asks us to take a chance on love and embrace the magic of the unknown.

— Cast —

**Alex Priest** Peter Kowitz  
**Georgie Burns** Kat Stewart

— Creative Team —

**Director** Tom Healey  
**Set & Costume Designer** Anna Borghesi  
**Lighting Designer** Bronwyn Pringle  
**Composer & Sound Designer**  
Clemence Williams  
**Voice & Dialect Coach** Anna McCrossin-Owen  
**Choreographer** Jarryd Byrne  
**Stage Manager** Jess Keepence  
**Assistant Stage Manager** Brittany Coombs  
**Assistant Stage Manager – Swing** Julia Orlando  
**Rehearsal Photography** Deryk McAlpin  
**Production Photography** Pia Johnson

For information regarding running time, please see a member of the Front of House team.

Production Partner



# A ripple of magic

Director Tom Healey explores how the possibility to transform exists in us all, and looks at how this concept evolves in *Heisenberg*.



The trajectory of *Heisenberg* is powered by a sense of loneliness, Director Tom Healey says. ‘Despite that, it’s an optimistic text. There’s a lot of faith in it, a fascination with science and a ripple of magic.’

Healey has directed two Simon Stephens plays at other theatre companies – *Punk Rock* and *Birdland*. Both are driven by complex and violent central characters, which Stephens explores with extraordinary empathy, and – notwithstanding its decidedly more romantic quality – Healey thinks *Heisenberg* is no different.

‘The love that Stephens has for us, for our complexity as humans ... is the source of

all his writing – and of course the source of all great playwriting, right back to Shakespeare and the Greeks. It’s tussling with the idea of why we are the way we are. And what we endure as humans.’

In *Heisenberg*, Stephens gives us two eccentric, complex and fascinating characters. There’s Alex Priest, a 75-year-old Irish-born butcher and fanatical diarist who is fascinated by the ‘seams’ of animals. He loves music – all genres; he’s a loner and a creature of extreme routine. Then there’s Georgie Burns, a 42-year-old, single mum from New Jersey who can’t dance but sure can swear.

*Kat Stewart and Peter Kowitz; (opposite) Director Tom Healey with cast and members of the creative team*



When Georgie enters Alex's orbit, a great experimentation of contrasting personalities unfolds. 'You've got this older European man, with a very traditional job, an ancient kind of skill, and then you've got this scatty, brash, 'new-world' American. Putting those two temperaments together is certainly deliberate. It's like a social experiment where you pour two ingredients into a test tube to get the fizz.'

As the characters' interactions deepen, we begin to sense their desire for change. Right from the outset, the vibration of displacement and isolation swirls underneath the text. They are subconsciously and consciously seeking

greater connection in their lives. 'It's about loneliness, and loneliness is a very sad subject,' Healey explains. 'All of us have experienced it. There isn't a person alive that hasn't spent at least a day feeling lonely, if not a great deal of their time.'

'It's about the idea that all of us contain the possibility to transform ourselves. Whether we're in a marriage, and that marriage needs transformation. Or whether we're single. Whatever point we're at in our jobs, and our lives, it's easy to get patterned or stuck very quickly. When we're not alive to what is actually happening, to what is available at our finger tips, we can fall into that before we know what's happening.' ▶

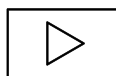


So *Heisenberg* is about breaking these patterns, Healey thinks. And about opening ourselves up to the possibility of ‘really, truly, actually’ being alive. Not just existing, not just walking through the world, but rather understanding what the world is in all its miraculous dimensions.

Healey is happy to let audiences make up their own minds about what brings Georgie and Alex together. He’s still figuring out where he stands. ‘I have two theories,’ he says. ‘I think Georgie is brave – that’s incontestably true. Whether she orchestrates these events or not, I’m not sure. I’m open to the idea that she sees Alex, and for whatever reason she kisses him. And everything that happens thereafter is in the present. On the other hand, there’s the possibility that it’s more calculated, more of a science experiment ... the ambiguity is delicious!’

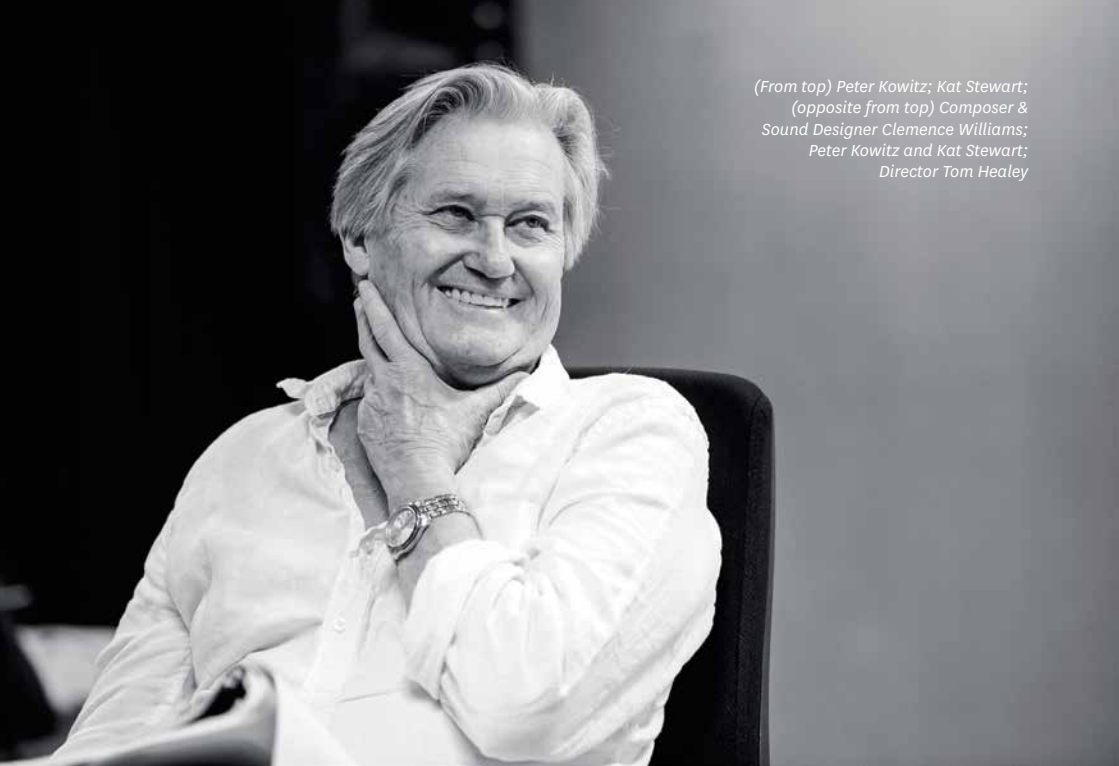
In the Encyclopaedia Britannica, the Heisenberg Principle states that both the position and velocity of a particle cannot be measured exactly at the same time. In other words, it is the principle of uncertainty or indeterminacy of all things at the tiniest of levels. *Heisenberg* the play suggests that this principle is applicable to every aspect of our lives. ‘[It’s] about staring down loneliness, defying convention, and embracing the high-voltage rush of leaping into uncertainty. It’s an exquisite, life-affirming jewel of a piece.’ ■

Words by Sarah Corridon



Hear from actor Kat Stewart  
on *Heisenberg* at  
[mtc.com.au/backstage](http://mtc.com.au/backstage)





(From top) Peter Kowitz; Kat Stewart;  
(opposite from top) Composer &  
Sound Designer Clemence Williams;  
Peter Kowitz and Kat Stewart;  
Director Tom Healey

*'Heisenberg*  
is about ... opening  
ourselves up to  
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of "really, truly,  
actually"  
being alive.'



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# Cast & Creative Team



**PETER KOWITZ**

Alex Priest

Peter Kowitz has appeared with Melbourne Theatre Company in *Double Indemnity*, *The Weir* and *Australia Day*. Other stage credits include *Blackbird*, *Tot Mom*, *Marriage Blanc*, *Australia Day*, *Talk*, *Australian Graffiti* (Sydney Theatre Company); *The Wild Duck*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* *Creditors* (STCSA); *The Alchemist*, *King Lear* (Bell Shakespeare); *Burning*, *Strange Attractor*, *The Floating World* (Griffin Theatre Company); *Taking Steps*, *Happiness*, *The Ninth Step*, *The Deal*, *Emerald City*, *Rough Justice*, *Blinded By The Sun*, *Table For One* (Ensemble Theatre); *The Summer Of The Seventeenth Doll*, *Away*, *Twelfth Night*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Falling on My Left Ear* (Railway Street Theatre); *Miracle City* (Hayes Theatre) and over 25 productions with Queensland Theatre, including this year playing Willy Loman in *Death Of A Salesman*. Peter works regularly in television, most recently in *Janet King*. He has two AFI Awards, a Variety Club Award and a Sydney Theatre Award.



**KAT STEWART**

Georgie Burns

Kat Stewart has previously worked with Melbourne Theatre Company in *Disgraced*, *The Speechmaker*, *Frost/Nixon* and *Festen*. She was an active ensemble member at Red Stitch for 10 years with credits including *Creditors*, *The Little Dog Laughed*, *The Shape of Things*, *Bug*, *Dirty Butterfly* and *Loyal Women*. Her television credits include the upcoming *Five Bedrooms*, *Offspring* (series 1-7), *Mr and Mrs Murder*, *Get Krack!n*, *Orange is the New Brown*, *True Story with Hamish and Andy*, *Tangle* (series 1-3), *Newstopia* (series 1-3) and the original *Underbelly*. Film credits include: *Little Monsters*, *West of Sunshine*, and *Sucker*. Kat has received an AACTA Award for *Offspring*, and both an AFI and Logie for Most Outstanding Actress in *Underbelly* as well as many nominations. She received Green Room Awards in 2003 and 2005.



**SIMON STEPHENS**

Playwright

Simon Stephens is an Olivier and Tony Award-winning playwright. His original plays for theatre are *Maria*, *Nuclear War*, *Rage*, *Fatherland* (with Karl Hyde and Frantic Assembly), *Song from Far Away* (with Mark Eitzel), *Birdland*, *Blindsided*, *Carmen Disruption*, *Morning*, *Three Kingdoms*, *Wastwater*, *A Thousand Stars Explode in the Sky* (co-written with Robert Holman and David Eldridge) *The Trial of Ubu*, *Punk Rock*, *Seawall*, *Pornography*, *Marine Parade* (with Mark Eitzel), *Harper Regan*, *Motortown*, *On the Shore of the Wide World*, *Country Music*, *Christmas*, *Port*, *One Minute*, *Hérons*, *Bluebird*. He has written English language versions of Jon Fosse's *I Am The Wind*, Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Seagull*, Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, Odon von Horvath's *Kasimir and Karoline* (re-titled *The Funfair*), and Ivo van Hove and Jan Peter Gerrit's adaptation of Visconti's *Ossessione*. His adaptation of Mark Haddon's novel *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime* has won many awards and been produced in more than thirty countries. His book *A Working Diary* is published by Methuen. Simon Stephens is an Associate at the Lyric, Hammersmith and Professor of Scriptwriting at Manchester Metropolitan University.

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CHOREOGRAPHY BY JEAN-CHRISTOPHE MAILLOT

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Artist of Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo. Photography Alice Blangero

# Cast & Creative Team



**TOM HEALEY**

Director

This is Tom Healey's debut for Melbourne Theatre Company. Previous productions include *Jumpers for Goalposts*, *The Shape of Things* and *American Song* (Red Stitch); *The Kid* (Griffin Theatre Company); *The Spook* (Malthouse Theatre); *Elegy*, *The Sign of the Seahorse*, *Ancient Enmity*, *Insouciance*, *The Fat Boy* and *Falling Petals* (Playbox); *Let's Get it On* (Room 8); *Doris Day – So Much More Than the Girl Next Door* (Boldjack); *Disarming Rosetta* and *Inside Out* (Hothouse Theatre); *Good Evening* (Token) with Shaun Micallef and Stephen Curry; *The Man in Black* (Folsom Prison Productions); Eddie Perfect's solo shows, *Drink Pepsi*, *Bitch* (Malthouse Theatre and tour); and *Angry Eddie* (Chapel Off Chapel). Tom is currently Head of Directing at Flinders Drama Centre and Associate Dramaturg at Red Stitch. Previous positions include Literary Manager at the Australian Script Centre and Artistic Associate at Playbox. He has been a proud member of the MEAA since 1989.



**ANNA BORGHESI**

Set & Costume Designer

Anna Borghesi is an award-winning costume designer with over 25 years experience in film, television and theatre. Some of her film credits include the recently completed *Dirt Music* (dir. Gregor Jordan, 2019), *Hotel Mumbai* (dir. Anthony Maras, 2018), *Ali's Wedding* (dir. Jeffery Walker, 2017), *Red Dog: True Blue* (dir. Kriv Stenders, 2016), *The Killer Elite* (dir. Gary McKendry, 2011), *Mao's Last Dancer* (dir. Bruce Beresford, 2009), *The Book of Revelation* (dir. Ana Kokkinos, 2006), *Love's Brother* (dir. Jan Sardi, 2004), *Ned Kelly* (dir. Gregor Jordan, 2003) for which she won the AFI Award for Best Costume Design, *Pitch Black* (dir. David Twohy, 2000) and *Head On* (dir. Ana Kokkinos, 1998). Her most recent television credits include *Romper Stomper*, *Lowdown* and *Twentysomething*. Anna has worked extensively in theatre, designing costumes and sets for Melbourne Theatre Company, Belvoir, Malthouse Theatre, Queensland Theatre and The State Theatre Company of South Australia among others.



**BRONWYN PRINGLE**

Lighting Designer

*Heisenberg* is Bronwyn's first Melbourne Theatre Company design. Other theatre credits include *Alias Grace* (Malthouse Theatre); *American Song*, *The Realistic Joneses*, *The Antipodes*, *Colder* (Red Stitch); *Lottie in the Late Afternoon* (Kin Collective); *Muckheap* (Polyglot Theatre); *My Life in the Nude* (Maude Davey/La Mama); *Cuckoo* (15 Minutes from Anywhere); *Coranderrk: We Will Show the Country* (Ilbjerri Theatre Company/Minutes of Evidence Project/La Mama) *Yarn*, *Songbirds and Angels*, *Aviary* (La Mama); *Topsy*, *Letters from Animals*, *The Time is Not Yet Ripe* (Here Theatre). Dance credits include *Fire Monkey* (The Arts Fission Company/Victoria Chiu); *SPIN*, *Distraction Society* (Anna Seymour); *ButohOUT!*, *Evocation of Butoh* (Yumi Umiumare). Music credits include *The Book of Daughters*, *These Compulsive Behaviours* (JOLT Arts); *Automation*, *Speak and Unspoken* (Speak Percussion); *Between Lands and Longings* (Chamber Made); *Attacca*, *Shatter Me* (Cathexis). Bronwyn has won two Green Room Awards and four further nominations.



*Artist's impression*

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# Cast & Creative Team



## CLEMENCE WILLIAMS

Composer & Sound Designer

Clemence Williams is a director, composer and sound designer for theatre and opera. A graduate of National Institute of Dramatic Art (Directing) and the Sydney Conservatorium (Music), Clemence's work includes: as a composer, *Arbus & West* (Melbourne Theatre Company); *A Cheery Soul*, *Lethal Indifference* (Sydney Theatre Company); *Romeo and Juliet* (Bell Shakespeare); *The Wolves* (Belvoir); *A View From the Bridge*, *The Humans*, *Wind in the Underground*, *Paper Doll* (Redline Productions); *Chapel Perilous* (New Theatre); *Fallen* (fortyfivedownstairs); as director, *Findr* (Eternity Theatre); *Chamber Pot Opera* (Sydney Opera House, Adelaide, Edinburgh, St Petersburg); *Unfinished Works* (Seymour Centre); *The Cherry Orchard* (New Theatre); and *Trancienc* (KXT); as Assistant Director, *St Joan* (Sydney Theatre Company) and *La Passion de Simone*, *Notes from the Underground* (Sydney Chamber Opera). Upcoming work includes: as Composer & Sound Designer, *Banging Denmark* (Sydney Theatre Company); *A View from the Bridge* (Ensemble Theatre); as Director, *Chorus* (Old Fitz). Clemence received Sydney Theatre Awards nominations for Best Original Score for *A Cheery Soul* and Best Sound Design for *The Wolves*.



## ANNA McCROSSIN-OWEN

Voice & Dialect Coach

Anna McCrossin-Owen is a voice and dialect coach for theatre, TV, film, music theatre, animation, voice-over and private studio. Theatre credits include over 50 productions for Melbourne Theatre Company including *A View from the Bridge*, *Gloria*, *Frost/Nixon*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, *Rock'n'Roll*, *Spelling Bee*, *Cyrano de Bergerac* and *Urinetown*. Film credits include coaching Emily Mortimer for *RELIC*; Dame Helen Mirren and cast for *Winchester*; Margot Robbie, Chewitel Ejiofor and Chris Pine for *Z for Zachariah*. TV credits include *Glitch*, *The Family Law* (series 1-3) and *The Kettering Incident*. She is a lecturer in Spoken Voice at the Victorian College of the Arts. Anna is a graduate of University of Queensland (B.A.), VCA (Acting) and VMT (Voice), and Associate of Trinity College London and AMEB Australia. She consults to business and trains news journalists. Anna has been honoured by the Victorian Green Room Association for Outstanding Contribution to the Melbourne Stage.



## JARRYD BYRNE

Choreographer

Originally from Wagga Wagga, Jarryd Byrne has forged a successful career on both stage and screen. His most recent choreography credits include *Dancing With The Stars*, Immersive Cinema's *Dirty Dancing*, *The Unbelievables* and White Night Melbourne. Performance credits include: Nathan Starkey in Baz Luhrmann's *Strictly Ballroom The Musical* (understudy Ken Railings), *Burn The Floor*; *The Unbelievables* and *Shake Rattle & Roll*. Jarryd is also a resident professional dancer on *Dancing With The Stars* and has been partnered with Olympia Vallance, Ricki-Lee Coulter, Jesinta Franklin and Ash Pollard.



UNION  
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An original new performance work by  
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Directed by Xanthe Beesley | Collaborator Emma Hall

A photograph of four young adults sitting on a dark, low-profile bench against a plain, light-colored wall. From left to right: a woman in a blue short-sleeved top and dark pants, a man in a dark blue t-shirt and pants, a woman in a black turtleneck and dark pants, and a woman in a blue t-shirt and light blue jeans. They are all looking towards the camera with neutral or slightly somber expressions. The lighting is soft and even.

# THE LONELY CROWD

*Is it lonely in here? Or is that just me...*

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George Paton Gallery, Union House  
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[umsu.unimelb.edu.au/lonelycrowd](https://umsu.unimelb.edu.au/lonelycrowd)

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