

così

BY LOUIS
NOWRA



Welcome



While there are a number of great Australian classics, there are few that manage the trifecta – withstanding the test of time, having successful iterations across multiple artforms and maintaining their place on school curriculums. It just so happens that two of these classics appear in our 2019 Season.

Later in the year we'll be treated to a spectacular new staging of *Storm Boy*, and this new production of *Così* brings Louis Nowra's much loved characters back to MTC, 25 years after *Così's* debut.

This special story reminds us all of the transformative power of music and performance, and how art can make us soar – even if just for a moment. It is vital for us as human beings and something MTC promotes year round through our productions and special programs.

As we approach the end of the financial year, we invite you to help MTC continue leading the way on and off-stage by making a tax-deductible donation at mtc.com.au/continuethehistory.

The important role donations play for the company has grown exponentially over the years, and they have allowed us to achieve some truly extraordinary things. MTC's home venue continues to be a remarkable and enduring example of what can be achieved through the power of philanthropy. Like each and every production at MTC, Southbank Theatre itself could not have existed without the shared passion, generosity and loyalty of our donors. Here's to 10 years of our home and those who made it possible.

Enjoy the show.

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.



MTC is a member of Live Performance Australia and the Australian Major Performing Arts Group.



MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS
A MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY & SYDNEY THEATRE COMPANY CO-PRODUCTION

COSÌ

BY LOUIS NOWRA

30 APRIL — 8 JUNE 2019
Southbank Theatre, The Sumner

— About the Play —

'Let's aim for the stars!' It's 1971 Australia and outside, the nation is protesting the war in Vietnam. Inside, a cast of lovable amateurs are preparing for a performance of Mozart's famous comic opera, *Così Fan Tutte*, but no-one can sing, act or speak Italian. Its aspiring young director, Lewis, has just finished drama school and his first directing gig is at a psychiatric facility. What could possibly go wrong?

— Cast —

Gabriel Fancourt Zac/Nick
Esther Hannaford Julie/Lucy
Glenn Hazeldine Henry
Bessie Holland Cherry
Sean Keenan Lewis
Robert Menzies Roy
Rahel Romahn Doug
Katherine Tonkin Ruth
George Zhao Justin

— Creative Team —

Director Sarah Goodes
Set Designer Dale Ferguson
Costume Designer Jonathon Oxlade
Lighting Designer Niklas Pajanti
Composer & Sound Designer Chris Williams
Associate Sound Designer Amy Holley
Assistant Director Rachel Chant
Fight Choreographer Lyndall Grant
Stage Manager Julia Smith
Stage Manager - Tour Jess Maguire
Assistant Stage Manager Pippa Wright
Costume Design Mentee Charlotte Lane
Production Secondment Caitlin Tsiolkas
Rehearsal Photography Deryk McAlpin
Production Photography Jeff Busby

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

Opening Night Partner



Production Partner



Media Partner



A co-production with STC



Motley Mozart

Louis Nowra tells Fiona Gruber about the people who changed his life, and how they came to form the inspiration behind his iconic play *Cosí*.



Director Sarah Goodes with Katherine Tonkin, Esther Hannaford and Bessie Holland

At the beginning of *Cosí*, would-be thespian and psychiatric hospital patient Roy says, ‘This is where I belong, in the theatre.’

The themes of identity and belonging are central to Louis Nowra’s play. Its characters have trouble adhering to the world as it is, and for young theatre director Lewis and his odd-ball cast of the hospitalised, the make-believe world of Mozart’s and Da Ponte’s opera is a welcome refuge.

For Lewis’s girlfriend Lucy and best friend Nick, it is their place in the tumultuous political landscape of early 70s Australia that is the problem. They’re fighting against the status quo and Australia’s involvement in the Vietnam War; what sort of a society do they want to belong to?

Nowra wrote *Cosí* in 1992 but based it on events of his own youth; in 1971, as a 20-year-old he directed a version of Gilbert and Sullivan’s comic operetta, *Trial by Jury*, at Plenty Psychiatric Hospital in Melbourne’s northern suburbs. ▶



*Bessie Holland, Katherine Tonkin,
Glenn Hazeldine, Rahel Romahn,
Esther Hannaford, Robert Menzies
and Sean Keenan; (below) Sean
Keenan and George Zhao*



He hated the operetta (which is why he substituted it with Mozart in the play) and it wasn't a great production, he says, but it was worth it.

'It was a one-off performance and I don't know how messy it was but at the end, it was one of the greatest experiences of my life; after the applause, the euphoria was absolutely magnificent. Because you have to remember, asylums are very melancholic places.'

The play has been performed around the world (most recently in China) and is produced by between 20 and 30 amateur companies every year in Australia; its savage humour bites hard, but the laughter is, at the start, uneasy.

'The audience go "oh my goodness, are we laughing at the patients or are we laughing with them?"' he says, 'But by the end,' he continues, 'they've forgotten they're watching patients, rather than an eccentric group of characters brought together for a play.'

And he says his characters, including pyromaniac, sex-mad Doug, obsessive-compulsive Ruth and know-it-all Roy, can be found in many a theatre cast, alongside egos that have to be assuaged. 'You have to give an aria to each actor so that there would be no jealousy'.

The environment of *Cosí* is a world that no longer exists. It's difficult to convey, he says, the important role asylums played in society before most were closed in the 1990s.

(Below) Director Sarah Goodes with Robert Menzies and Rahel Romahn; (opposite, clockwise from left) Glenn Hazeldine, Bessie Holland and Rahel Romahn; Glenn Hazeldine; Gabriel Fancourt



‘... I thought there was an honesty among [them] about their own condition and how they saw the world.’

— *Louis Nowra*

Although in many cases places of abuse, they were also, he argues, places of refuge.

By the 1960s, the introduction of tranquilisers and anti-psychotic drugs had treated a generation of patients. It is this era in which the play is set, an era that saw revolutionary ideas about mental health alongside rebellion in the streets.

‘Lewis, like me became much more fascinated in what was happening in the mind than what was happening outside,’ Nowra explains. He describes the student radicals as “poseurs”

who wanted to overthrow the government and believed their own bullshit. ‘[In contrast] I thought there was an honesty among mental patients about their own condition and how they saw the world,’ he says.

Nowra knows more about mental illness and institutions than many of his contemporaries; both his grandmothers spent time in Melbourne’s Mont Park Asylum and his mother suffered from trauma. ‘She had her demons’, he explains, ‘because she shot and killed her father.’ ▶



(From top) George Zhao; Gabriel Fancourt with Director Sarah Goodes; Glenn Hazeldine, Katherine Tonkin, Robert Menzies and Gabriel Fancourt

He's written about his troubled childhood in the memoir *The Twelfth of Never*: it's also fictionalised in his 1992 play, *Summer of the Aliens*; featuring a teenaged Lewis; *Così*, is the second part of a semi-autobiographical trilogy. The third and final play, *This Much is True*, was written after a 25-year gap.

The latter is set in a pub in the harbour-side Sydney suburb of Woollomooloo and it's there that I meet Nowra. He spends part of each day at the Old Fitzroy Hotel and the final part of the Lewis Trilogy was commissioned and produced by the hotel's resident theatre company, Red Line Productions, in 2017.

What unites all three plays, and is as true of *Così* as for the rest, he says, is a cast of oddball characters who have trouble fitting in.

'The pub we're in ... I felt right at home and a lot of people I mix with here are definitely a bit strange. I thought, that's typical, I've gone for a group of people I really adore ... but in the three plays these people are never going to be part of middle class suburbia; and those are the people that have changed my life.' ■



Hear more from playwright Louis Nowra in our MTC Talks podcast series. mtc.com.au/MTCTalks



Cast & Creative Team



GABRIEL FANCOURT

Zac / Nick

Gabriel Fancourt is a graduate of NIDA where he appeared in *Lord of the Flies*, *A Midsummer Nights Dream* and *This Property is Condemned*. Gabriel's further theatre work includes *Henry V* for Bell Shakespeare; *The Hypochondriac* for Darlinghurst Theatre Company; *K.I.J.E*, *Fallout* and *Babes in the Woods* for Old Fitz Theatre; and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Tempest*, *A Comedy of Errors*, *Edward II*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Servant of Two Masters* and *River at the End of The Road* for Sport for Jove Theatre Company. He has also appeared in Cry Havoc's *Titus Andronicus* and *Punk Rock* for ATYP and *This Is Not Mills and Boon* for Old 505 Theatre.



ESTHER HANNAFORD

Julie / Lucy

Esther Hannaford most recently played Viola in *Twelfth Night* (Melbourne Theatre Company) and Carole King in *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* (Michael Cassel Group). Other theatre credits include *Mr Burns* (Belvoir); *The Last Man Standing* (Melbourne Theatre Company) *Little Shop of Horrors* (Tinderbox Productions); *Nice Work If You Can Get It* (The Production Company); *Three Mikados* (Melbourne Comedy Festival); *King Kong* (Global Creatures); *Miracle City* (The Hayes); *Virgins* (Malthouse Theatre); *Hairspray* (Dainty/Roadshow); *Hair*, *Mame* and *The Boyfriend* (The Production Company); *Once We Lived Here* (fortyfivedownstairs). Selected awards include Helpmann and Green Room Awards for *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*; Sydney Theatre Critic Award for *Little Shop of Horrors*; Helpmann Award and Green Room Award for *Hairspray*; Green Room Award for *King Kong* and *Once We Lived Here*.



GLENN HAZELDINE

Henry

Since graduating from NIDA in 1994, Glenn Hazeldine's selected theatre credits include *Dead White Males*, *The Judas Kiss*, *Don's Party*, *The Father* (MTC); *Away and Love and Information* (Malthouse Theatre); *Disgraced*, *Arcadia*, *After Dinner*, *Perplex*, *Tot Mom*, *Elling*, *The Pig Iron People* and *Julius Caesar* (STC); *Jack Manning Trilogy*, *Managing Carmen*, *Tuesdays with Morrie* and *A View from the Bridge* (Ensemble Theatre), *A Hoax* and *Porn.Cake* (Griffin Theatre Company) and *As You Like It* (Bell Shakespeare). Film and television credits include *House of Bond*, *The Moodys*, *ANZAC Girls*, *Redfern Now 2*, *The Elegant Gentleman's Guide To Knife Fighting*, *All Saints*, *Blackjack*, *Last Train To Freo* and *Dripping in Chocolate*. Glenn is a proud member of Actors Equity, where he serves as Vice President of the NSW branch, and is Deputy Chairman of the Actors Benevolent Fund of NSW.

Cast & Creative Team



BESSIE HOLLAND

Cherry

Bessie Holland's theatre credits include *The House of Bernarda Alba* (Melbourne Theatre Company), *The Sovereign Wife* (Melbourne Theatre Company, NEON/Sisters Grimm), *Accidental Death of An Anarchist* (Sydney Theatre Company), *Blaque Showgirls* (Malthouse Theatre), *Summertime in the Garden of Eden* (Griffin Theatre Company/Sisters Grimm), *The Lower Depths* (Ariette Taylor, fortyfivedownstairs). Short film credits include *True History of Billie the Kid* (directed by Leticia Cáceres). TV credits include season 2 of *Get Krackin'* (ABC directed by Hayden Guppy) *The Beautiful Lie* directed by Peter Salmon (ABC) and *Wentworth* (FOXTEL, Fremantle Media) Seasons 2 – 6. Bessie has just finished filming *The Dry*, which will be her film debut, directed by Robert Connolly.



SEAN KEENAN

Lewis

Sean Keenan made his screen debut at the age of fourteen in *Lockie Leonard*, playing the title role of the series based on Tim Winton's novels. Sean's television credits include *Cloudstreet*, *Puberty Blues* (Series 1 and 2), *Dance Academy*, *Glitch* (Series 1, 2 and 3), *Hunters*, *Hoges*, *Newton's Law* and *Wake in Fright*. Sean's film credits include *Strangerland* opposite Nicole Kidman and Hugo Weaving, *Australia Day*, *Hard Target 2*, *Is This the Real World*, *Drift*, *Nim's Island* and will next be seen in feature *The True History of the Kelly Gang*, alongside Thomasin McKenzie, Essie Davis and Nicholas Hoult. For his performance in *Wake in Fright*, Sean was nominated for an AACTA Award for Best Lead Actor in a Television Drama. Sean's other accolades include a Logie Award Nomination for Most Outstanding New Talent, an AFI Nomination for the Young Actor's Award and was an AFI Heath Ledger Scholarship Finalist in 2016.



ROBERT MENZIES

Roy

Robert Menzies acts in *Così* after appearing in *Macbeth*, *The Weir*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Music*, *Queen Lear*, *Hamlet*, *Life Without Me* and *August: Osage County* for Melbourne Theatre Company. He has also appeared in *Ghosts*, *A Christmas Carol*, *The Wild Duck*, *The End*, *The Threepenny Opera*, *Measure for Measure* (Belvoir); *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Golden Age*, *Macbeth*, *Fury*, *Gross Und Klein*, *War of the Roses*, *Reunion/A Kind of Alaska*, *Julius Caesar*, *Seneca's Oedipus* (Sydney Theatre Company); *The Government Inspector* and *Knives in Hens* (Malthouse Theatre). Robert has also appeared in numerous films including *Cactus*, *Force of Destiny*, *Canopy*, *Home*, *Siam Sunset*, *Three Dollars*, *Lamb*, *Bliss* and *Heatwave*. For television he has appeared in *Glitch*, *The Beautiful Lie*, *Monash & the ANZAC Legend*, *My Brother Jack* and *3 Acts of Murder*.

Cast & Creative Team



RAHEL ROMAHN

Doug

Rahel Romahn is one of Australia's rising young actors with a string of impressive credits in film, theatre and television. *Così* marks Rahel's debut at Melbourne Theatre Company. Previous theatre productions for the Sydney Theatre Company include *Mary Stuart* directed by Lee Lewis, *The Harp in the South*, *Three Sisters* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* all directed by Kip Williams. In film, Rahel has appeared in *The Combination: Redemption, Ali's Wedding, Down Under, Alex & Eve* and the Oscar shortlisted *The Ground Beneath*. He will soon be seen in *Little Monsters*. In television he has been seen in *Secret City Series 2, Mr Inbetween, Pulse, The Other Guy, Hyde and Seek, Janet King Series 2, Cleverman, Ready for This, The Principal, Underbelly: The Golden Mile and Gangs of Oz*. Coming up next is *Australian Gangster*. Rahel's work in *The Principal* garnered nominations for a Logie Award and an AACTA Award.



KATHERINE TONKIN

Ruth

Katherine Tonkin's theatre credits include *Abigail's Party, Three Little Words, The Cherry Orchard, Apocalypse Bear Trilogy, Cloud Nine* and *Explorations: A Streetcar Named Desire* (Melbourne Theatre Company); *The Histrionic* and *Baal* (Sydney Theatre Company/Malthouse Theatre); *The Wild Duck* and *Elektra/Orestes* (Belvoir); *Conversation Piece* (Lucy Guerin Inc/Belvoir); *Tame, OT: Chronicles of the Old Testament* (Malthouse Theatre); *The Eisteddfod* (Malthouse Theatre/Brisbane Powerhouse/Downstairs Belvoir); *Xenides* – which she also co-devised (Black Swan State Theatre Co); *Gilgamesh* (Melbourne Festival/Sydney Opera House/Barbican/China tour); *Smashed* (Griffin Independent); *I Heart John McEnroe* (Theatreworks); *Duets for Lovers* and *Dreamers* (fortyfivedownstairs); and *3XSisters* (Hayloft Project). Screen credits include: *Wentworth, The BBQ, Macbeth, Nowhere Boys, The Future is Expensive, Winners and Losers* (Series 3 and 4), *City Homicide* (Series 3 and 4), *Neighbours, Blue Heelers, Snake Tales* and *Kick*. Katherine is a graduate of WAAPA and proud member of Actors' Equity.



GEORGE ZHAO

Justin

George Zhao is an award-winning actor working across film, TV and theatre. Since graduating with a Bachelor of Dramatic Art in 2013 he has performed in leading roles in *Monkey Tales* (Monkey Baa Theatre Company) and in the sold out season of *The Screw Tape Letters* (Twisted Tree Theatre Company), which toured nationally in 2016 and 2017. In 2018, he performed in the award-winning Sydney Theatre Company production *The Harp in the South* – parts One and Two. Screen roles include SBS webseries *Homecoming Queens*; TV series *Jack Irish*, and most recently, lead role of Leo Gao in *Runaway Millionaires*. His awards include Best Guest Actor at the 2017 LA Web Film Festival for his role in the short film *It Came from Outer Suburbia*, and 2018 MEAA Best Ensemble Cast for Comedy for his ongoing role as Andrew Law in the hit SBS show *The Family Law*. Recently, George was also awarded the 2018 Rising Star award by the Casting Guild of Australia.



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Cast of Peter Pan (2018), photo by Drew Echberg

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MELBOURNE

Cast & Creative Team



LOUIS NOWRA

Playwright

Louis Nowra was born in Melbourne. He is the author of plays *Inner Voices*, *Visions*, *Inside the Island*, *Sunrise*, *The Golden Age*, *Capricornia*, *Byzantine Flowers*, *Summer of the Aliens*, *Radiance*, *The Temple*, *Crow*, *The Incorruptible*, *Miss Bosnia*, *The Jungle*, *The Language of the Gods* and *The Boyce Trilogy*. Louis' screen credits include *Map of the Human Heart*, *Cosi*, *Heaven's Burning*, *The Matchmaker*, *Radiance*, *K-19: The Widomaker* and *Black and White*. He was co-writer of the documentary series *First Australians*. He has written six non-fiction works: *The Cheated*, *Warne's World*, *Walkabout*, *Chihuahuas*, *Women and Me*, *Bad Dreaming*, *Kings Cross: A Biography* and, most recently, *Woolloomooloo: a Biography*. His novels include *The Misery of Beauty*, *Palu*, *Red Nights*, *Abaza and Ice* and young adult fiction *Into That Forest* and *The Prince of Afghanistan*. His two memoirs are *The Twelfth of Never* and *Shooting the Moon*. Louis' latest play is *This Much Is True* and premiered at the Old Fitz in Sydney in July 2017.



SARAH GOODES

Director

Sarah Goodes is Associate Artistic Director of Melbourne Theatre Company. She is a Helpmann Award-winning theatre director recognised for bringing over 14 new Australian works to the mainstage. For Melbourne Theatre Company, Sarah's work includes *Arbus & West*, *Astroman*, *A Doll's House, Part 2*, *The Children* (with Sydney Theatre Company), *Three Little Words*, and *John*. As Resident Director at Sydney Theatre Company, Sarah directed *The Hanging*, *Disgraced*, *Orlando*, *Battle of Waterloo*, *The Effect*, *Vere (Faith)*, *The Splinter*, and *Edward Gant's Amazing Feats of Loneliness*, and Associate Director on *The Present*. Sarah's other directing credits include *The Sugar House* (Belvoir), *The Sweetest Thing*, *The Small Things*, *Elling*, and *Black Milk* (B Sharp Belvoir); *The Colour of Panic* (Sydney Opera House); *Vertigo and the Virginia*, *The Schelling Point*, *Hilt*, and *What Happened Was* (Old Fitz Theatre). In 2018, Sarah won a Helpmann Award for Best Direction of a Play for her work on *The Children*, which also won Helpmann Awards for Best Play and Best Female Actor.



DALE FERGUSON

Set Designer

Dale Ferguson's designs have been a regular feature of MTC productions, most recently in *An Ideal Husband*, *Born Yesterday*, *Skylight*, *The Weir*, *The Speechmaker*, *Neighbourhood Watch*, *The Crucible*, *Top Girls*, *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, *Life Without Me*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, *God of Carnage*, *August: Osage County*, *The 25th Annual Putman County Spelling Bee*, and *The History Boys*. Ferguson has worked for Australia's leading theatre companies on productions such as *King Lear* (Bell Shakespeare Company), *Anything Goes* (Gordon Frost Organisation), *Counting and Cracking* (Belvoir), *Away* (Malthouse Theatre) and *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* (Sydney Theatre Company). Ferguson has designed many international opera productions, most recently, Lyric Opera of Chicago's production of *The Magic Flute*. Ferguson has received five Green Room Awards, most recently in 2018 for *Away*, and the 2010 Helpmann Award for MTC's *August: Osage County*. His set and costume designs for Belvoir/Malthouse Theatre's production of *Exit the King* earned him Tony and Drama Desk Award nominations when the production transferred to Broadway in 2009.



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and crew a successful season.



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Cast & Creative Team



JONATHON OXLADE

Costume Designer

Jonathon has designed for Windmill Theatre Co, Sydney Theatre Company, Belvoir, Queensland Theatre, Restless Dance Theatre, The Last Great Hunt, Terrapin Puppet Theatre, Barking Gecko, Arena Theatre Company, Bell Shakespeare, Vitalstatistix, Aphids, The Escapists, The Border Project, LaBoite Theatre, Sydney Opera House, Melbourne Festival, Adelaide Festival, AsiaTOPA, STCSA, Malthouse Theatre and Performance Space. For Melbourne Theatre Company he has designed *Astroman*, *Big Bad Wolf* (Windmill Theatre) and *Boy Girl Wall* (The Escapists). He is currently Resident Designer at Windmill Theatre Co. His film work includes *Girl Asleep* and has illustrated the picture book *The Empty City* for Hachette Livre/Lothian Books. Jonathon has received Matilda Awards for Best Design for *A Christmas Carol* and *Attack of the Attacking Attackers*; PAWA Award for Best Costume for *The Irresistible*; Sydney Theatre Award for Best Costume for *Mr Burns*; APDG Award for Best Production Design and Best Costume for *Girl Asleep*; ACCTA Award for Best Costume *Girl Asleep*; Lord Mayor's Fellowship to attend Prague Quadrennial of Scenography and Architecture; and Sidney Myer Creative Fellowship 2016.



NIKLAS PAJANTI

Lighting Designer

For Melbourne Theatre Company Niklas has designed the lighting for *A View from the Bridge*, *Astroman*, *A Doll's House, Part 2*, *Rupert*, *Australia Day* (with STC), *The Cherry Orchard*, *The Beast*, and *Queen Lear*. Other theatre credits include *When the Rain Stops Falling*, *Spring Awakening*, *I Want to Dance Better at Parties* (STC); *One Night the Moon*, *Not Like Beckett* (Malthouse Theatre); *Angels in America*, *The Wild Duck*, *Babyteeth*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, *The Pillowman* (Belvoir); *Sunday in the Park with George* (Victorian Opera). His dance credits include *Skeleton Tree* (Stephanie Lake), *Specktra*, *Dust* (Dancenorth) *Complexity of Belonging*, *An Act of Now*, *Black Marrow 247 Days*, *Singularity* (Chunky Move); *Piece for Person and Ghetto Blaster* (Nicola Gunn). Exhibitions include *Wonderland*, *Game Masters*, *Star Voyager: Exploring Space on Screen* (ACMI), *Tim Burton The Exhibition* (MOMA), *Hollywood Costume* (V&A Museum). Niklas has won two Green Room Awards, a Helpmann and Sydney Theatre Award and has received 10 Green Room Award nominations.



CHRIS WILLIAMS

Composer & Sound Designer

Chris Williams is a composer and conductor whose works have been performed by Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, London Musical Theatre Orchestra, Joyful Company of Singers, The Song Company, The Australian Voices, Cavaleri Quartet, Schola Cantorum, and Manchester Chamber Choir. Chris's *San-Shih-Fan* was commissioned by and premiered at New York's Carnegie Hall. For Melbourne Theatre Company he designed sound for *A Doll's House, Part 2*. Other credits include *Cloud Nine*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (STC); *Fascination* (Arcola Theatre); *The Cold Clear Elsewhere* (Edinburgh Fringe). In 2017 Chris won the compositional prize at the Australian International Chopin Competition and received a Sydney Theatre Award nomination for *Cloud Nine*. Other work includes Compositional Techniques and Harmony Tutor at University of Oxford; Composer-in-residence with The Australian Voices; Creative Arts Fellow at National Library of Australia; and Music Librarian at Central Music Library of the BBC. He is Associate Artist at the Australian Music Centre. Chris holds a Master's in Composition from University of Oxford and is a graduate of Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

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Cast & Creative Team



AMY HOLLEY

Associate Sound Designer

After spending four years sound designing throughout Brisbane, Amy Holley is incredibly excited to join Melbourne Theatre Company as their Associate Sound Designer for *Così*. Her work has most recently been featured in *Sometimes it's Hot Like the Sun* (Undone Theatre Collective); *The Eisteddfod* (Room To Play and Metro Arts); *NSFW* (Underground Productions); and *Nobody Likes the Winter* (Ryškus Productions). Throughout this time Amy has also cultivated her technical and recording abilities, working as a theatre technician and recording engineer. Amy's expertise has been refined throughout her studies at JMC Academy, where she graduated with a Bachelor of Audio Engineering and Sound Production.



RACHEL CHANT

Assistant Director

Rachel Chant is a Sydney-based director and is Festival Director of Bondi Feast. Recent productions include *Love* (Darlinghurst Theatre Company); *Glengarry Glen Ross* (NIDA); *Intersection 2018: Chrysalis* (ATYP @ Griffin Theatre Company); 2018 Griffin Award Readings (Griffin); *The Village Bike* (Old Fitz Theatre); *Moth* (ATYP); *Leaves* (Kings X Theatre); *When the Rain Stops Falling* (New Theatre); *Decay* (Old505 Theatre); *Machine* (Old505 Theatre); *Blue Italian* (Site&Sound). As Assistant Director, *Mortido* (Belvoir / STCSA, dir. Leticia Caceres). Selected awards include Sydney Theatre Award nominations for *Moth* and *The Village Bike*; BroadwayWorld Best Director Award for *Leaves*; Suzy Goes See's Best Direction for *Love* and *When The Rain Stops Falling*. Rachel is a member of MTC's 2019 Women in Theatre Program. She has worked as director, script assessor and dramaturg for Playwriting Australia and was the Artistic and Directorial Associate for the inaugural women's theatre festival, Festival Fatale. Rachel has a Masters of Applied Theatre Studies from the University of New England.

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You continue the story

In celebration of 10 years at Southbank Theatre, Christie Whelan Browne reflects on what MTC means to her.

I first became involved with MTC in Year 10. My friends made a compilation VHS of all of my school musical performances and sent it in to ask if I could do work experience...and they said yes. Year 10 Christie would never have imagined that [one day] she would work for this Company. Sometimes I think back to that young girl and I think she'd just be blown away.

'It's one of my favourite places to work.'

My first show at MTC [*The Drowsy Chaperone*], was a huge learning curve for me. I never got to study acting at university, so I learned so much from Simon Phillips and everyone that worked on that show.

MTC provides a workplace for so many people and so many actors. The storytelling is so great, the commitment to the work from the Company is incredible and there's the support from donors who are so generous in their support of the art.

If you see me in the bows you'll often see me crying – and it's not because I'm loving the applause – it's because I am seeing the faces of people who have been moved by what they have just seen. And that's why I do it.



Go backstage to watch Christie's full interview, alongside other members of the MTC community at mtc.com.au/southbank10

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