



# HEISENBERG

BY SIMON STEPHENS

## Education Mini-Pack

17 MAY — 6 JULY 2019  
Arts Centre Melbourne, Fairfax Studio

### About the Play

Georgie (42, American) kisses the neck of Alex (75, Irish) at London's St. Pancras Station – she thought she knew Alex, but it was an embarrassing accident. This oddly intimate moment between two strangers becomes increasingly more remarkable as the play progresses. 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.

### About the Playwright

Simon Stephens is an Olivier and Tony Award-winning playwright. His adaptation of Mark Haddon's novel *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* has won many awards and been produced in more than thirty countries. His original plays for theatre include *Birdland* (presented by MTC in 2015), *Maria*, *Nuclear War*, *Rage*, *Fatherland* (with Karl Hyde and Frantic Assembly), *Song from Far Away* (with Mark Eitzel), *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* and many more. 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 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.

### 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

### Genre

Contemporary British drama

### Running Time

Approx. 90min, no interval

### Attendance Information

Contains coarse language, sexual references, the use of theatrical haze and smoke and dynamic sound. For detailed information, please visit [www.mtc.com.au/production-content-guide](http://www.mtc.com.au/production-content-guide)



Turn the page for activities, and discussions.

## Before the show



Download the show programme at [mtc.com.au/backstage](http://mtc.com.au/backstage) to hear from the director, Tom Healey. Healey says *Heisenberg* is 'like a social experiment where you pour two ingredients into a test tube to get the fizz'. Discuss this idea and how it relates to the themes of the play.



Hear actor Kat Stewart discuss the play at [YouTube.com/melbtheatreco](https://www.youtube.com/melbtheatreco). Predict how Stewart will use her acting skills to create the character of Georgie. What will her voice sound like? How will she use gestures?



See the rehearsal gallery at [mtc.com.au/backstage](http://mtc.com.au/backstage) and make predictions about how the set will function. Look at images of the Fairfax Studio at Arts Centre Melbourne and discuss how Anna Borghesi's set will respond to this space.



How do you expect the various locations (train station, butcher shop, Turkish restaurant, bedroom, park) to be created on stage?

In what ways might Georgie and Alex be similar/different, regarding their cultural background and age?

What is the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle? Why is this play titled *Heisenberg*?

## Post-show Activities



Discuss this moment in the play:

**ALEX:** How did you find out where I worked?

**GEORGIE:** How do you think?

**ALEX:** I honestly have no idea.

How did Georgie find out where Alex worked? Discuss how privacy is explored in the play.

Discuss how playwright Simon Stephens has written the dialogue in this play. Were there sections that sounded like natural conversation? How did Stephens use language to create character?

Discuss how Bronwyn Pringle's lighting design was used to enhance the performance and evoke changes in place and time.



Analyse Anna Borghesi's costume designs by looking at production photos at [mtc.com.au/backstage](http://mtc.com.au/backstage). Annotate the characters' costumes and identify how Borghesi uses costume to communicate character.



Write an additional scene that could be inserted before, during, or after the play. You might choose to write a monologue from the perspective of Georgie or Alex, or a duologue in the style of Stephens' play.

Compare and contrast *Heisenberg* with another two-hander play, e.g. *Lungs* by Duncan Macmillan or *Constellations* by Nick Payne. MTC has presented all of these plays, so you can research them online.

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. We pay our respects to all of Melbourne's First Peoples, to their ancestors and Elders, and to our shared future.



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