



PHOTOGRAPH 51

BY ANNA ZIEGLER

Education Mini-Pack

1 NOVEMBER — 14 DECEMBER

Arts Centre Melbourne, Fairfax Studio

About the Play

Rosalind Franklin was one of the great scientists of the 20th Century. In 1952 she used X-ray diffraction photography to examine the intricate structure of DNA, but her trail-blazing work was never recognised. Threatened by her brilliance, Franklin's rivals scandalously stole her research and were awarded the Nobel Prize for discovering the double helix. *Photograph 51* relives the chase to find 'the secret of life' amidst all the inherent ambition, sexism and isolation of the 1950s, while shining a spotlight on an unsung hero.

About the Playwright

Anna Ziegler is an award-winning playwright whose widely produced play *Photograph 51* won London's 2016 WhatsOnStage award for Best New Play. It was selected as a 'Best of the Year' play by *The Washington Post* (twice) and *The Telegraph*. In 2017, The Williamstown Theatre Festival, The Manhattan Theatre Club and The Geffen Playhouse premiered her play *Actually* (winner of the Ovation Award in Los Angeles for Playwriting of an Original Play), and The Roundabout Theatre Company produced *The Last Match*. Her play *The Wanderers* won the 2018 San Diego Critic's Circle Award for Outstanding New Play and *Boy* was nominated for the 2016 John Gassner Award by the Outer Critics Circle. Her work has been produced on the West End (*Photograph 51*, starring Nicole Kidman, winner of the Evening Standard Award for Best Actress) and at The Old Globe, Seattle Rep, South Coast Rep, Cincinnati Playhouse, The Ensemble Studio Theatre, Theater J, The Magic Theatre and many more, and developed at the Sundance Theatre Lab, The O'Neill Playwrights Conference, NY Stage & Film, Soho Rep and the Cape Cod Theatre Project, amongst others.

Genre

Contemporary British drama

Cast

Ray Gosling Gig Clarke
James Watson Nicholas Denton
Rosalind Franklin Nadine Garner
Maurice Wilkins Paul Goddard
Don Caspar Yalin Ozucelik
Francis Crick Dan Spielman

Creative Team

Director Pamela Rabe
Set & Lighting Designer Nick Schlieper
Costume Designer Esther Marie Hayes
Composer & Sound Designer Mary Finsterer
Voice & Dialect Coach Anna McCrossin-Owen
Stage Manager Christine Bennett
Assistant Stage Manager Meg Richardson
Directorial Secondment Suzannah Kennett Lister
VCA Stage Management Intern Benjamin Cronin
Rehearsal Photographer Deryk McAlpin
Production Photographer Pia Johnson

Running Time

Approx. 90min, no interval

Attendance Information

For detailed information, please visit
www.mtc.com.au/production-content-guide



Turn the page for activities,
and discussions.

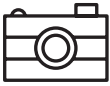
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Before the Show



Read Dr Jen Martin's article about the life and legacy of Rosalind Franklin, 'DNA's Thwarted Heroine', at mtc.com.au/backstage.

Playwright Anna Ziegler says 'I don't understand a lot of these concepts, so whatever I put on stage has to be simple enough that I can understand it! ... As long as the science is there and creating an authentic backdrop essentially, then I feel like I've done my job.' Choose a scientific concept and write your own scene that communicates the big ideas.



See the rehearsal gallery at mtc.com.au/backstage and make predictions about how the set design will be used to tell the story.



Watch a video where actor Nadine Garner and director Pamela Rabe discuss *Photograph 51* at [YouTube.com/melbtheatreco](https://www.youtube.com/melbtheatreco). Discuss the adjectives they use to describe Rosalind Franklin, then research online to see how else she is portrayed and remembered.



Discuss this quote from the play, and consider what this quote means when spoken by a scientist, actor or director:

ROSALIND: We made the invisible visible.

Discuss this moment from the play where two male scientists are discussing Rosalind's attitude:

WILKINS: She takes things so seriously.

WATSON: One needs to be more lighthearted sometimes.

Discuss contemporary examples of this conversation, and what beliefs might underpin these comments. Playwright Anna Ziegler says 'I loved that Franklin was this incredibly real person with all these flaws. She had all these obstacles, but she was also an obstacle to herself, as so many of us are.'

Post-show Activities



What theatre style/s would you say *Photograph 51* was performed in?

Discuss the idea that science and art have shared intentions, and make connections to *Photograph 51*.

In her notes, Anna Ziegler says her play is 'based on the story of the race to the double helix in England in the years between 1951 and 1953, but is a work of fiction. I have altered timelines, facts and events, and recreated characters for dramatic purposes.' Research the real people her characters are based on, and discuss how they've been reimagined for the play.



Look at the production photos at mtc.com.au/backstage. Discuss how design elements were manipulated to the 'many and various' locations.



Research previous productions of *Photograph 51* online and compare and contrast the production photos you can find with the MTC production you saw.

Melbourne Theatre Company acknowledges the Yalukitj 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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