

THE LIFESPAN OF A FACT

By Jeremy Kareken & David Murrell
and Gordon Farrell

Directed by Petra Kalive



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

WELCOME



The Lifespan of a Fact is one of those intriguing based-on-true-life stories that wouldn't seem real if it were pure fiction.

True to its interrogation of fact, fiction and truth, the play melds all three in the retelling of Jim Fingal and John D'Agata's real-life experience, resulting in a funny and playful ideological battle that raises a whole lot of questions and will have you pondering your own take on the matters and the pervasive discussions around fake news.

As Jim Fingal, we are thrilled to welcome Karl Richmond to MTC, making his debut with the Company. Steve Mouzakis returns to MTC as John D'Agata alongside Nadine Garner who completes the cast in this Australian premiere production.

At the helm is MTC Associate Director Petra Kalive, bringing together a brilliant creative team of Andrew Bailey, Kat Chan, Paul Lim, Emma Valente, Geraldine Cook-Dafner and Alice Qin. Together this team has realised the world of half-truths and creative non-fiction within which *The Lifespan of a Fact* exists.

With this new production, MTC 2021 — Act 2 officially begins. It is so thrilling to be at this point, having seen through a very successful Act 1 and now into our subscription season. When we were planning for 2021 there were so many unknowns about how our recovery year would pan out. It's still early days in the scheme of things but it is incredibly heartening to see our theatres alive again and audiences returning with great enthusiasm, with their passion for live theatre being on full display.

Thank you joining us again and enjoy the show.



Brett Sheehy AO
Artistic Director & CEO



Virginia Lovett
Executive Director & Co-CEO

MTC is a department of the University of Melbourne.



MTC is assisted by the Australian 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

THE LIFESPAN OF A FACT

By Jeremy Kareken & David Murrell
and Gordon Farrell

Based on the book by John D'Agata and Jim Fingal

15 May—3 July 2021

Arts Centre Melbourne, Fairfax Studio

ABOUT THE PLAY

While interning at an eminent literary magazine, recent graduate Jim Fingal is thrilled when his editor offers him a career-making opportunity: fact check venerated essayist John D'Agata's exploration of a disturbing Las Vegas reality, which is going to press in five days. It sounds simple enough, but when Fingal is still unravelling the inconsistencies and literary liberties of the first sentence three days later, he realises he has a problem. So he does what any thorough young up-and-comer with something to prove would do: he goes straight to the source. It could be the biggest mistake, or the best decision, of his life.

CAST

Emily Penrose Nadine Garner

John D'Agata Steve Mouzakis

Jim Fingal Karl Richmond

CREATIVE TEAM

Director Petra Kalive

Set Designer Andrew Bailey

Costume Designer Kat Chan

Lighting Designer Paul Lim

Composer & Sound Designer Emma Valente

Voice & Dialect Coach Geraldine Cook-Dafner

Assistant Director Alice Qin

Fight Choreographer Lyndall Grant

Stage Manager Julia Smith

Assistant Stage Manager Lisette Drew

Production Photography Jeff Busby

Rehearsal Photography Charlie Kinross

This production contains coarse language, references to suicide, choreographed violence and mature themes.

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

The Lifespan of a Fact is presented by arrangement with Music Theatre International (Australasia).

The Lifespan of a Fact was originally produced on Broadway by Jeffrey Richards, Norman & Deanna Twain, Will Trice, Barbara H. Freitag, Suzanne Grant, Gold/Ross Productions, Jamie deRoy, Jennifer Manocherian, Barbara Manocherian, ManGol Productions, Carl Moellenberg/Wendy Federman, Ken Greiner, Van Kaplan, Dominick LaRuffa Jr., Marc David Levine, WitzEnd Productions, Eric Falkenstein/Moreland Mott, Caiola Productions, Rimmel T.Dickinson, & Jayne Baron Sherman.



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Director Petra Kalive

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

THEATRE OF THE ABSURD

The Lifespan of a Fact is a play that wants you to grapple with dichotomies, writes director Petra Kalive. It's a play on the precipice of possibility, of the unknown, of an answer, of a definitive end that cannot be.

Adapted from the book of the same name, *The Lifespan of a Fact* tells the story of award-winning writer John D'Agata's blistering essay about teenager Levi Presley, who jumped from a balcony of a Las Vegas hotel. Emily Penrose, editor of a high-end magazine, sees the impact D'Agata's essay will have on readers, on the magazine's reputation and on her own legacy. The time to publish is now. The deadline is

Monday but that should not be a problem, as it only needs a few facts to be checked. She does not expect intern Jim Fingal to actually check every single fact and then relentlessly pursue the truth.

This is a play about the friction between facts and ‘truth’ – can statistics and accuracy be compromised for the sake of artistic expression? Emily says to Jim, ‘we live in stories. Events organised to make ourselves known to each other and to history. Organised in a way that gives our lives meaning ... the right story at the right time changes the way people look at the events in their own lives.’ John is organising this moment in history, the suicide of a teenage boy, to find an essential truth, attempting to ‘give meaning to’ and find the poetry in a young boy’s final moments. He does not need

‘What is happening under the surface is an interrogation of metaphysical distress: how do we best communicate a life?’

evidence, numbers and facts to back up what he knows is a truth. But what we have historically characterised as ‘essential truth’ has been dictated by those who write the stories – and their ‘truth’ is shaped by privilege, power, experience and perspective. Jim has a perspective that is generationally and racially different from John and finds his ‘essential truth’ to be full of ‘white lies’ and deeply

problematic. From Jim's perspective, very simply, 'if you say an event occurred, readers need to trust that it occurred.' It comes down to credibility. Jim knows we are living in a post-truth world, where facts can be meaningless, while unfounded opinion goes viral. We all exist in our algorithmically curated news bubbles. The ability to discern facts from lies has never been more important.

This play wants you to grapple with dichotomies. Between fact and fiction, youth and experience, desert and the city, Manhattan and Vegas, black and white. Between the whippersnapper upstart entrenched in technology and the old guard holding onto positions of power. It is these opposites that invite the ridiculous and give us permission to laugh at the absurdity of where we find ourselves.

Reminiscent of Eugène Ionesco's *The Lesson* and more loosely theatre of the absurd, these characters are relentlessly pursuing their perspective. This is exceptionally funny for an audience to watch but what is happening under the surface is an interrogation of metaphysical distress: how do we best communicate a life? What facts or fictions will create something that lives and affects change in the mind of the reader? What are we doing it all for?

Designer Andrew Bailey and I wanted to explore these dichotomies through the design. We begin in the gleaming, reflective surfaces of the Manhattan office, a high tower from where reflection distorts the truth. This is ultimately punctured by a living room that is somehow out of time with outdated furniture, and yet more real because of it. This house exists in a void-space and is incomplete, reminding

us that we never really see the full picture. Like John's essay, it is 'full of half-truths'.

Sitting along the edge of all the binaries is the idea of a precipice. The play is constantly on the precipice of possibility, of the unknown, of an answer, of a definitive end that cannot be. While the play hurtles us towards the deadline for the printing press, the two men keep hitting an impasse because of the gulf they cannot cross, and it is up to Emily to walk them up to the very edge of what they are willing to accept. She is the pendulum between pedant and poet, ultimately leading them to our final precipice, the ledge of the balcony where Levi Presley takes a moment before deciding to end his life. In the closing image of the play, we arrive at this precipice, with all three characters on their own ledge. Will they jump?



Karl Richmond



THE LIFESPAN OF *THE* LIFESPAN



Steve Mouzakis, Karl Richmond
and Nadine Garner

The story of *The Lifespan of a Fact* began almost 20 years ago. The play presents a fictionalised version of non-fiction people and events. The real Jim Fingal spoke with MTC to reflect on the lifespan of *The Lifespan of a Fact*.

LIFE ONE

When he graduated college with a degree in English literature, Jim Fingal had big dreams of a glittering career in publishing. He scored an unpaid internship at *The Believer* – an independent literary, arts and culture magazine – where he did whatever unglamorous work he was assigned, and was quickly disabused of any notion that the role might lead to something bigger, better or paid. He was wrong.

A few years earlier, renowned experimental essayist John D'Agata had been commissioned to write a piece for *Harper's* magazine, which was ultimately rejected for publication. The truth of why is a bit murky: it was either due to disagreements about its fact checking or because the magazine had a new editor by the time it was written, and that editor wasn't on the same page as the author about his vision for the piece: less non-fiction journalism and more literary reflection. The piece, titled *What Happens There*, was eventually salvaged for a new life at *The Believer*, where the editorial staff had full knowledge of D'Agata's writing style and his take on the essay. It was, however, still given to Jim Fingal to fact check.

'I was not particularly trained in fact checking,' Fingal says via Zoom from his home in San Francisco, 'but I was very enthusiastic.' It was late 2005, and the young intern worked on this task part time over a few months. He knew his job was basically busy work, but in his enthusiasm he was determined to do his duties well. 'And so life one of *The Lifespan of a Fact* was me doing a more or less straight fact check of the essay,' he says, 'but in this bizarro land where we already knew that a lot of it was manufactured or finessed.'

Life two, to use Fingal's terminology, began when the managing editor of *The Believer* sent D'Agata the '70 or 80 or 90-page' Word document that Fingal produced in the course of fact checking the author's 10-page essay. 'I think John was both horrified and fascinated by it,' he says. 'I think he saw in it a similar level of obsession, but focused in a different way than his approach to writing.'

It was at this point, well before the essay was even published, that D'Agata approached Fingal with the idea of creating a book. He was immediately on board with the proposal. 'I was very excited,' he says. 'I was young, and I wanted to do the literary thing, and this was an exciting opportunity.' Fingal even came up with the concept for the layout featuring the red and black text: 'John's idea immediately made me think of this palimpsest, illuminated manuscript kind of thing, with the comments around the text.'

Nadine Garner



LIFE TWO: FROM ESSAY TO BOOK

Over the next year or so, they worked on the draft by sending Word documents back and forth. Fingal claims D'Agata was 'largely incapable of using Track Changes' so they instead relied on comparing versions, which meant they ultimately lost track of who wrote which parts. 'It's not like he was assigned his character and I was assigned my character,' he explains. 'There's a fair amount of back and forth there.'

But I don't know that there's any of the actual exchanges between John and I from the initial fact check,' he says, admitting that it would be pretty boring to read their original emails because they were so polite to each other. 'John was apologetic that this poor intern had to go through this – at least he was outwardly; maybe he was inwardly annoyed with me! But a back and forth between two collegial people discussing the facts of an essay would probably have a much smaller audience,' he jokes. 'So if you read the book from page one to the last page, that's absolutely not how a fact-checking job goes.'

Essentially, both author and fact checker took certain fictional liberties for the sake of the story. *The Lifespan of a Fact* is less non-fiction journalism and more literary reflection, just like D'Agata's original essay. 'I think you can read the book as an essay in the spirit of how John defines an essay,' Fingal concurs. 'The essence of our points of view are in the characters of Jim and John in the book. I don't think we made up our perspectives. And we tried to make it fair, that there wasn't a clear winner. But I certainly played up my saltiness and John says that he let his inner diva come out in the John character.'

'I think John was both horrified and fascinated by it. 'I think he saw in it a similar level of obsession, but focused in a different way than his approach to writing.'

"I started to volunteer at the Las Vegas Suicide Prevention Center after moving to the city to help my mom out. The center made me sign a 'waiver of intent,' make a cash donation of \$100, and take a three-week-long course about the city's suicide problems." John has this

'waiver of intent' in his notes, which states that volunteers can't discuss with the press what went on at the hotline (which, by the way, he seems to be violating). But I can't find any receipt for this donation. I also can't find any confirmation of this move he made to Vegas to "help [his] mother out." John, any receipts from movers and the Suicide Prevention Center that you could fax me? Also, is there any way I could get your mom's phone number to confirm the timing of all this?

John: I'm not in the habit of asking for receipts for donations. You're also getting nowhere near my mom.

"Some people say it's drugs, and others say it's stress, and of course there are always people who blame our suicides on the gambling," explained Marjorie Westin, the director of the center. The basic gist of this quote is in John's notes, although not in this exact order syntactically. Plus, he changed this woman's name; her real name is Dorothy Bryant. Also, just FYI: in the *Suicide Prevention Center of Clark County Administrative Policy and Procedures* packet (more on that later) there is a section that says "statements or stories to news

media or for publication will be made only by authorized staff with approval from the Director. No statements or stories should mention the prevention center or its services without this specific authorization." In the margins John has written, apparently rhetorically,

"Could I just change everyone's name, including the organization's name?" So I guess he made up his mind about that...

I started to volunteer at the Las Vegas Suicide Prevention Center after moving to the city to help my mom out. The center made me sign a "waiver of intent," make a cash donation of \$100, and take a three-week-long course about the city's suicide problems.

"Some people say it's drugs, and others say it's stress, and of course there are always people who blame our suicides on the gambling," explained Marjorie Westin, the director of the center. "But I've been studying this city's problem for my entire adult life, and none of those theories are right. The truth is that nobody wants to hear the real answer about suicide."

Marjorie Westin founded the Las Vegas Suicide Prevention Center when she was still a graduate student, thirty-five years ago. There are twenty-three people who volunteer for the center, one of whom is on duty at any given time, receiving calls in his or her own private home. This is a variation on the standard hotline system in which two

"There are twenty-three people who volunteer for the center . . ." Factual Dispute: According to an article in the *Las Vegas Mercury*, there are thirty people who volunteer for the Las Vegas hotline, although the article was published two years after John was a volunteer, so perhaps the hotline has since added volunteers ("Lives on the Line" by Andrew Kiraly, *Las Vegas Mercury*, December 16, 2004).

"... one of whom is on duty at any given time, receiving calls in his or her own private home." Confirmed in "Calling for Help" by Joan Whitley, *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, March 9, 2000.

"This is a variation on the standard hotline system in which two trained counselors usually

answer calls together, providing each other support in a centralized location." Confirmed by Stacy Willis in "Stopping Suicide: Nevada Lags Behind Nation in Prevention Programs," *Las Vegas Sun*, November 23, 2001.



By way of example, Fingal confirms that he did not actually write a fact-checking batch automation script to do the job faster (as depicted in the play). Neither did he fly from New York to Las Vegas to confer with D'Agata in person during the fact check – 'I was an unpaid intern. No one's flying me to Vegas to check things!'

He did, however, fly to Vegas after he and D'Agata decided to write the book. 'It was generating material for a more dramatic scene,' he explains. 'I originally googled it. But I think it was much more interesting and striking going to the location of the Stratosphere Hotel, and getting the material for the red brick pavilion, for instance, which indeed didn't appear to be the colour that it was described as in the essay!'

The now co-authors finished their draft in 2007, and initially found a small indie publisher who was interested in the book. But momentum stalled: D'Agata's previous book, *About a*

Mountain, had been published by WW Norton, who had the option to his next manuscript. But because the events discussed in *What Happens There* (and by extension, *The Lifespan of a Fact*) were also featured in *About a Mountain*, Norton wanted to wait. It was another five years before they eventually published *The Lifespan of a Fact*.

‘It got a much larger audience with Norton,’ Fingal acknowledges, ‘but for a long time we’d check in once a year and be like “yep, still nothing’s happening.” It’s kind of funny,’ he continues, ‘because when the book eventually came out in 2012, there was literary fanfare and it struck a chord with reviewers and writers and editors – which is good if you want publicity for a new book – and I think it got optioned immediately to become a play but then it was another six years until that came out. So, the lifespan of *The Lifespan* has been very extended.’

LIFE THREE: FROM PAGE TO STAGE

Once the rights were optioned, Fingal and D’Agata essentially handed the story over to playwrights Jeremy Kareken, David Murrell and Gordon Farrell. ‘I was not involved at all. I didn’t even see the script before seeing the play,’ Fingal says. Once a year, he’d receive a cheque to extend the royalties, but after the experience they had with the book, he frequently assumed it was never going to happen. It was a pleasant surprise, therefore, that his first experience of the play was when he was flown to New York to do a photo shoot for *The New York Times* with the original Broadway cast of Bobby Cannavale, Cherry Jones and Daniel Radcliffe (who was playing Fingal).

D'Agata was a bit more involved with the playwrights, Fingal says. 'John gave his blessing for them to do whatever they wanted or needed with it – in the spirit of the essay and of the book – in order to make it interesting and successful on the stage. And I think he went to a table reading, so he was more aware of what was going on. But I think he still largely ceded to the experts in how to make an engaging and successful stage performance.'

As to how he felt when he finally saw it, he laughs. 'I enjoyed it, but the character is a fictionalised version of a fictionalised version of me, so I don't feel like it misrepresents me in any way because that was never the point.'

'The character is a fictionalised version of a fictionalised version of me, so I don't feel like it misrepresents me in any way because that was never the point.'

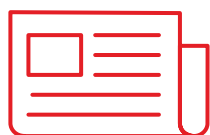
In 2021, *The Lifespan of a Fact* is being staged by both MTC and Sydney Theatre Company, in two separate productions. Asked what he thinks it is about this work that resonates so much right now, Fingal becomes reflective. 'It's ironic. *What Happens There* was closed in 2006 or 2007 but didn't get published until 2010 because in the aftermath of the Iraq invasion and WMDs, *The Believer* considered it not the right time to publish an experimental commentary on truth in

what might be mistaken as journalism. The play first came out in 2018, which I have to imagine was related to Trump. So if the Broadway performance was a kind of slow echo 2016, I could see this being a faster ripple from 2020. Either way, it's something that sadly is evergreen.'

Today, Fingal works in IT but he keeps his publishing hat on as co-founder of a magazine about technology. He remains friendly with D'Agata, who is now the director of the non-fiction writing program at the University of Iowa's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. He's 'a very successful teacher whose students love him,' Fingal says but he is yet to publish another book (although he is apparently working on a translation of Plutarch). 'He no doubt has his own reasons,' Fingal muses, 'but I imagine some amount of it was him wanting to make sure the next one is something like a lost history, something less personal.'

Elaborating, he explains that the end result of this long journey appears to have been less positive for D'Agata, who was often pilloried by readers and reviewers – of the book more than the play – who 'interpreted him as [someone] who is mean to interns, and who holds ludicrous views'. Both authors were surprised by this reaction, and Fingal muses on the irony that so many people were ready to write about the book without reflecting all that deeply about its text; without fact checking it.

Words: Melanie Sheridan



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(Above) Nadine Garner;
(below) Steve Mouzakis





Steve Mouzakis

Steve Mouzakis, Karl Richmond
and Nadine Garner



Steve Mouzakis, Nadine Garner and
Karl Richmond with Director Petra Kalive



'The essence of our points of view are in the characters of Jim and John in the book ... We tried to make it fair, that there wasn't a clear winner. But I certainly played up my saltiness and John says that he let his inner diva come out in the John character.'

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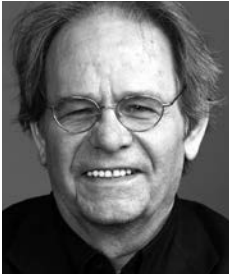
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PLAYWRIGHTS



GORDON FARRELL — PLAYWRIGHT

Trained as a playwright at the Yale School of Drama, Gordon Farrell received an MFA in 1986 and went from there to work with major Hollywood studios, initially as a story analyst for Warner Brothers and Columbia Pictures, and eventually as a screenwriter. He has written for hire and sold screenplays to Universal Pictures, Warner Brothers, MGM and ITC. He has worked with Robert Simonds (producer of *The Wedding Singer*, *Molly's Game*, *Mile 22*); Neal Moritz (producer of *XXX*, *I Know What You Did Last Summer*, *Fast and Furious*) and Bruce Berman (producer of *The Matrix*, *Three Kings*, *Mad Max: Fury Road*). In independent film, Gordon has written for and sold projects to Norman Twain (producer, *Lean on Me*, *Boycott*, *My Dog Tulip*). His first independent screenplay, *Girls Who Smoke*, premiered in 2011. It went on to be an official selection at over a dozen film festivals, winning the Audience Choice Award in Seattle at the Post Alley Film Festival. As a playwright, from 2009 to 2013, Gordon worked with dozens of women on New York's Lower East Side who wanted to tell their personal stories on stage. The series of monologue plays that grew out of it was called *In the Red Room/Every Woman Dances for Someone*. In May 2019 the fully dramatized version, *Girls Who Walked on Glass*, played to rave reviews. His other plays have been produced in San Francisco, at the Alleyway Theatre, at the Yale School of Drama, and at Primary Stages in New York. He is the author of *The Power of the Playwright's Vision*, published by Heinemann Press in 2001. It has been translated internationally and become a standard playwriting text at colleges and universities in North America, Europe and Asia.

JEREMY KAREKEN — PLAYWRIGHT

Jeremy Kareken is a playwright living in New York and Baltimore. His short plays *Hot Rod*, *Big Train* and *80 Cards* have been performed around America and internationally. He served as a speech writer and policy analyst for two presidential campaigns. His awards include the Sewanee Conference's Dakin Fellowship for *Farblondjet*, and Guthrie/Playwrights Center's Two-Headed Challenge for *The Sweet Sweet Motherhood*. The Hamptons Film Festival Screenwriters Conference selected Jeremy and David Murrell for their horror-comedy script about haunted breast implants, *THESE! Conquered the Earth*. In 2018, PlayPenn shortlisted Jeremy's new political satire about an illiterate king, *The Red Wool*. A graduate of the University of Chicago, he has taught at NYU, NYIT, the Actors Studio Drama School, and currently teaches at the Acting Studio—New York. A lifetime member of The Actors Studio, Jeremy occasionally acts and for 18 years served as the researcher for Bravo TV's *Inside the Actors Studio*.

DAVID MURRELL — PLAYWRIGHT

David Murrell was born and raised in New York City. He graduated from Stuyvesant High School and the University of Chicago, currently lives in Queens, and has written a sea chest's worth of TV and film treatments and spec scripts. Access Theater (NYC) and the Cleveland Public Theatre each produced his play *Ductwork*, and the Hamptons Film Festival Screenwriters Conference selected his and Jeremy Kareken's feature screenplay about haunted breast implants, *THESE! Conquered the Earth*. In 2019, the Outer Critics Circle co-awarded David its John Gassner Playwriting Award for *The Lifespan of a Fact*.

CAST & CREATIVE TEAM



NADINE GARNER — EMILY PENROSE

Nadine Garner's credits at MTC include *The Well*, *Emerald City*, *Photograph 51*, *Di and Viv* and *Rose*, *The Distance*, *The Weir*, *Private Lives*, *Three Sisters*, *The Balcony*, *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, *Così* and *The Cherry Orchard*. Other theatre credits include *Emerald City* (Queensland Theatre);

A Little Night Music (Watch This National Theatre); *Zebra!* and *Life After George* (STC); *Birds Eye View* (Old Fitz Theatre); *Miss Julie* (Perth Theatre Company); *The Taming of The Shrew* (EHJ Productions); *Cabaret* (IMG Entertainment); *The Three Sisters* (20/20 Theatre); *Romeo and Juliet* (Elston Hocking & Woods). Her TV credits include *With Intent*, *Part Time Private Eyes*, *My Life is Murder*, *Mr Black*, *It's a Date*, *The Doctor Blake Mysteries*, *City Homicide*, *Blue Water High*, *Boys from the Bush*, *Class Act* and *Henderson Kids*. Her film work includes *Broken*, *Celeste*, *The Wedding Party*, *Razzle Dazzle*, *The Book of Revelation*, *Metal Skin* and *Mull*. Nadine received a Helpmann Award and Green Room Award for *Cabaret*, a New York City International Film Festival Award for *The Wedding Party*, and an AFI Award for Best Actress for *Mull*.



STEVE MOUZAKIS — JOHN D'AGATA

Steve Mouzakis returns to MTC following previous roles in *Golden Shield*, *Death and the Maiden* and *The Cherry Orchard*. Other theatre credits include *Melancholia* (Malthouse Theatre) and *Café Rebetika* (Arts Centre). His screen credits include US series *Clickbait* and *Prison Break* as

well as films *The Unknown Man*, *I*, *Frankenstein*, *Where the Wild Things Are*, *Darkness Falls*, *Sugar Mountain*, *My First Summer*, *Acute Misfortune*, *Scare Campaign*, *Downriver*, *The Suicide Theory*, *Big Mamma's Boy* and *296 Smith Street*. His TV credits include *Why Are You Like This*, *Ms Fisher's Modern Murder Mysteries*, *Wentworth*, *Jack Irish*, *Fat Tony & Co*, *The Slap*, *Killing Time*, *Rush*, *Very Small Business*, *Satisfaction*, *Kick* and *The Secret Life of Us*. Awards include a Green Room Award for Best Male Performer for *The Cherry Orchard*, the MIFF Inaugural Award for Best Actor in a Short Film (*296 Smith Street*), and Best Actor at the St Kilda Film Festival for *Joey*.



KARL RICHMOND — JIM FINGAL

Ko Hongoeka te marae Ko Ngāti Toa Rangatira te Iwi, Ko Karl Orlando Richmond tōku ingoa. Karl trained at the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA), graduating in 2018.

His recent stage credits include *Punk Rock* (Patalog Theatre); *Truly Madly Britney* (Theatre Works); *Peter Pan* and *The Cherry Orchard* (VCA), which he performed at the Asia Pacific Bond Theatre Conference, 2017, Shanghai. Karl's recent TV/film credits include *Clickbait* (Netflix); *Heaven* (Sydney Indie Film Festival, Setting Sun Film Festival); *Fuming* (winner of Melbourne Queer Film Festival 'Keep the Vibe Alive'). Karl would like to thank the Grace Marion Wilson Trust and the entire VCA faculty for their wisdom and teachings during his training. Karl is a proud member of the MEAA since 2018.



PETRA KALIVE — DIRECTOR

Petra is Associate Director at Melbourne Theatre Company and has previously directed *Sexual Misconduct of the Middle Classes*, *Hungry Ghosts* and *Melbourne Talam* (Green Room Award-nominated Best Director) for the Company, as well as *Pandora* for MTC NOW. She has also worked for Sydney Theatre Company, Arena Theatre Company, Complete Works Theatre Company, St Martins Youth Arts Centre, Monash University Centre for Theatre and Performance, La Trobe Performing Arts Department and the Victorian College of the Arts. Recent directorial credits include: *Taxithi* (fortyfivedownstairs – Green Room Award-nominated Best Director); *Oil Babies*, which she also wrote (Lab Kelpie – shortlisted for the NSW Wales Premier's Literary Awards); and *My Brilliant Career*, a musical adaptation by Dean Bryant and Mathew Frank of the Miles Franklin novel (Monash University). Petra was Artistic Director of Union House Theatre from 2014–2019.



ANDREW BAILEY — SET DESIGNER

Andrew Bailey is a Melbourne-based set and costume designer. Some of his recent designs include Melbourne Opera's *Das Rheingold* (Wagner's *Ring Cycle*) and *The Flying Dutchman*; *The Curtain* for fortyfivedownstairs; Melbourne Theatre Company's *Wild*, *Melbourne Talam*, *Double Indemnity*, *Lungs*, *The Boy at the Edge of Everything* (2015 Green Room Award nomination), *What Rhymes with Cars and Girls*, *The Effect* (2014 Green Room Award nomination), *Beached*, *Happy Ending*, *The Golden Dragon*, *On the Production of Monsters* (2012 Green Room Award nomination), *The Joy of Text*, *Songs for Nobodies*, *Ruby Moon* and, for MTC Education, *Explorations: A Streetcar Named Desire*. Some of his other independent/site-specific designs include *Oil Babies* (Darebin Arts Speakeasy Festival); *Grief and the Lullaby* (Theatre Works Flight Festival); *The Stream/The Shore/The Boat/The Bridge* (Next Wave Festival; 2012 Green Room Award); *Southern Crossings* (Green Room Award) and *Pillow Talk*. Andrew currently holds the position of Lecturer in Design at the Victorian College of the Arts.



KAT CHAN — COSTUME DESIGNER

Kat Chan is a set and costume designer for theatre, dance, video and installation. Originally trained as an architect, Kat worked in practices in Adelaide and Tokyo before moving to Melbourne to study a Master of Production Design at the Victorian College of the Arts. Recent/select credits: for MTC, *Torch the Place* (Costume Designer), *Golden Shield* (Associate Designer), *Beached* (Costume Designer); for Malthouse Theatre, *Because The Night* (Costume Designer); for The Australian Ballet, *From Silence* (Set & Costume Designer), *From Something, To Nothing* (Costume Designer); *The Sleeping Beauty* (Design Associate); for IF Theatre + Belvoir, *Mother* (Set & Costume Designer); for Eugenia Lim, Open House Melbourne, *The Australian Ugliness* (Costume Designer/Art Direction/Video Artist); and for AsiaTopa Fed Square with the 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, *The People's Currency* (Set & Costume Designer).



PAUL LIM — LIGHTING DESIGNER

Paul Lim is a founding director of Additive, a Melbourne-based company providing innovative lighting design and technical solutions. Paul's lighting design highlights include premiere seasons of *The Magic Flute* (New Zealand Opera); 50th Anniversary Tour of *Hair* (Peace Productions & Sydney Opera House); *Wunderage* (Circus Oz); *The Dark Chorus* and *Make Your Own World* (Lucy Guerin Inc); Black Grace's 20th anniversary work *Siva*, and *Changes* 變; *Fault Lines* (Melbourne Festival & Le Shan Modern Dance Company); *Trapper* and *Robot Song* (Arena Theatre Company); international touring seasons of *Split* (Lucy Guerin Inc); *Hot Brown Honey*, *Briefs: Close Encounters* and *Queen Kong* (Briefs Factory); *Nirbhaya* (Assembly, Riverside Studios & Poorna Jagannathan). Paul's depth of knowledge has provided integrated solutions for ongoing clients in theatre, festivals and events around the world including MONA FOMA, Auckland Arts Festival, Assembly @ Edinburgh Fringe and Melbourne Festival.



EMMA VALENTE — COMPOSER & SOUND DESIGNER

Emma Valente is a freelance director, dramaturg, lighting designer, sound designer and occasional trouble maker. She is the Co-Artistic Director of feminist theatre company THE RABBLE. This is Emma's first sound design at Melbourne Theatre Company. As a sound designer, her recent credits include *Unwoman*, *Joan* (THE RABBLE); *My Dearworth Darling*, *Made in China 2.0* (Malthouse Theatre); *Lone* (Arts House); *Cain and Abel* (THE RABBLE/Belvoir Theatre). As a lighting designer, her most recent credits include: *Hungry Ghosts*, *The Golden Dragon* (MTC); *Calamity!*, *Myth Project: Twin*, *Story of O* (MTC/NEON); *How To Rule the World*, *Testament of Mary*, *Manna* (Sydney Theatre Company); *Hedda* (QT); *Fan Girls* (QT/Belvoir); *Wizard of Oz* (Belvoir); *Little Emperors*, *My Dearworthy Darling*, *Revolt She Said*, *Revolt Again*, *Frankenstein* and *Orlando* (Malthouse Theatre). Emma is a Sidney Myer Fellow and has been awarded Creative Victoria's Creators Fund Fellowship.



GERALDINE COOK-DAFNER — VOICE & DIALECT COACH

Geraldine Cook-Dafner previously worked for MTC on *Home*, *I'm Darling*, *Golden Shield*, *Wild*, *The Children*, *Hay Fever*, *Di and Viv* and *Rose*, *Melbourne Talam*, *John*, *The Odd Couple*, *Straight White Men*, *The Distance*, *Birdland*, *The Waiting Room*, *Top Girls*, *The Heretic*, *The Swimming Club*, *The 39 Steps*, *The History Boys*, *All My Sons*, *The Clean House*, *Boy Gets Girl*, *Take Me Out* and *The Glass Menagerie*. She trained at Middlesex University, the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and has a doctorate from the University of Melbourne. Geraldine also works for independent theatre companies Red Stitch and Hit Productions and as a voice consultant in film, ABC Radio, SBS Radio and for local corporate and government bodies, NGOs and charities. Geraldine is an Honorary Senior Fellow in the theatre department at the Faculty of Fine Arts and Music at the University of Melbourne, where previously she held positions as Head of Voice, Head of School of Performing Arts and Associate Dean. She is currently voice and dialect coach for *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*.



ALICE QIN — ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Alice Qin is a Melbourne-based actor, theatre-maker, educator and occasional Dinosaur puppeteer (Erth Visual Physical/Melbourne Zoo 2019). She was the associate director on *Golden Shield* (MTC 2019) and a participant in the MTC x CAAP directing initiative. She was the directing mentor on the award-winning 2020 Melbourne Fringe show *Getting Home*. Her Australian acting credits include *The Enlightenment of the Siddhartha Gautama Buddha and the Encounter with the Monkey King*, *Great Sage Equal of Heaven* (Elbow Room 2021); *Mad as a Cute Snake* (Theatre Works 2019); *Atomic* (Malthouse Theatre 2018/2019); *Little Emperors* (Malthouse Theatre 2017). She was previously based in New York, where she worked as an actor and an associate physical acting teacher at the Stella Adler Studio New York under the tutelage of Joan Evans. Theatre credits in New York include *Is It already Dusk?* (Herald Clurman Ensemble/Irondale Theatre, New York 2013); *Romeo and Juliet/Richard II/Love's Labour's Lost* (Hamlet Isn't Dead 2015). She is a current teaching artist at St Martins Youth Arts Centre, and House of Muchness.

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