A man and a woman are shown from the chest up, standing in front of a whiteboard. The woman, on the left, has brown hair and is wearing a tan turtleneck sweater. The man, on the right, has dark curly hair and is wearing a grey jacket. Both are looking off-camera to the right with serious expressions. The whiteboard behind them is covered in faint, handwritten text in various colors, including phrases like "listen to the sound inside" and "the sound inside".

THE SOUND INSIDE

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.

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.

COVID-19 Arts Sustainability Fund
– an Australian Government initiative



Australian Government
Sustainability Fund

Melbourne Theatre Company presents

THE SOUND INSIDE

BY **Adam Rapp**

DIRECTED BY **Sarah Goodes**

20 May—2 July 2022

Arts Centre Melbourne, Fairfax Studio

ABOUT THE PLAY

When the brash and enigmatic Christopher barges into the office of acclaimed author Bella Baird, the two misfits find in each other an unexpected intellectual match. Over the ensuing weeks, the young man breaks down Bella's defences and a tentative friendship forms. But will it be strong enough to withstand an impossible choice?

CAST

Bella Catherine McClements
Christopher Shiv Palekar

CREATIVE TEAM

Director Sarah Goodes

Set Concept & Design

Elizabeth Gadsby

Costume Designer & Set Design Realisation Jo Briscoe

Lighting Designer Paul Jackson

Composer Steve Francis

Sound Designer Danni A. Esposito

Voice & Dialect Coach Amy Hume

Voice & Dialect Coach (pre-rehearsal) Geraldine Cook-Dafner

Stage Manager Pippa Wright

Assistant Stage Manager Vivienne Poznanski

Standby Cover (Bella) Kate Cole

Standby Cover (Christopher) Gispa Walstab

Rehearsal Photography Charlie Kinross

Production Photography Jeff Busby

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

The running time for this production is approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes with no interval.

The Sound Inside deals with content that some audience members might find distressing.

If you or someone you know needs information or support, these organisations are there to help:

BEYOND BLUE Call 1300 22 4636 or visit beyondblue.org.au

LIFELINE Call 13 11 14 or visit lifeline.org.au

HEADSPACE Visit headspace.org.au

The Sound Inside is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. www.concordtheatricals.com

Original Broadway Production Produced by Jeffrey Richards, Lincoln Center Theater, Rebecca Gold, Evamere Entertainment, Eric Falkenstein, Salman Vienn Al-Rashid, Spencer Ross, FilmNation Entertainment/Faliero House, Jane Bergère, Caiola Productions, Mark S. Golub and David S. Golub, Ken Greiner, Gemini Theatrical Investors, Scott H. Mauro, Jayne Baron Sherman, Czekaj Productions, Wendy Morgan-Hunter, Kristin Foster, Jacob Soroken Porten, and Williamstown Theatre Festival, Mandy Greenfield, Artistic Director.

The World Premiere of *The Sound Inside* was produced by Williamstown Theatre Festival in July 2018.

The Sound Inside was originally commissioned by Lincoln Center Theater.

Schwartz



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Shiv Palekar



DIRECTOR'S NOTES

A HAUNTED REFLECTION

The Sound Inside is a gripping, contemplative drama that invites its audience to enter the inner world of a soul in free fall and be drawn into a fascinating mystery layered with stories, clues and memories.

By Sarah Goodes



We first had a reading of *The Sound Inside* at Melbourne Theatre Company back in 2019. It packed a punch and Artistic Director at the time Brett Sheehy and I kept returning to it – like all great writing it haunted us. When he eventually asked me to direct it as part of his final season, I was thrilled.

The Sound Inside by Adam Rapp is part thriller, part study of a soul in free fall. The world of writers is a fascinating place – they conjure into being entire universes, characters so full

of brilliant contradictions they are both impossible and perfect. Writers are bowerbirds weaving together fragments from their own lives and others into glorious webs of craft, imagery and story. What is so beautiful about this piece is that it examines the active and deep contract between the reader and the writer and, of course, performer and audience – a few telling clues and you'll do the rest.

There is a dislocation and stillness at the centre of the piece that I feel speaks very directly to the strange experience of the past two years. *The Sound Inside* reaches towards us, awakening the exchange between humans – like really good poetry it makes you feel or sense the multitude of possibilities rather than just tell you what it is. As James Salter says in his book *The Light Years*, 'How can we imagine what our lives should be without the illumination of others?'

This was the challenge of the piece from a design perspective. The springboard creatively for the design team was a couple of sentences from *The Light Years*, the novel our protagonist Bella reads every year:

They drove home in a night that was cold and immensely clear. The blocks of apartments, great darkened hives, floated above them. In the distance the bridge was a line of light.

Across the river the road became empty. The moon was above it, the entire sky white. The car was filled with the faintest aroma of tobacco, of perfume. Like the compartment of a train. If one were standing in the darkness watching, they passed in an instant, the brilliant headlights pouring before them, a moment's glimpse of them, no more. In the cold sound vanishes, then even the brilliant red of taillights is gone. Silence. Overhead perhaps the faint noise, brushing the stars, of a plane.

Shiv Palekar





Catherine McClements

What we loved about this quote was how the perspective goes from inside the car out onto the street then up into the sky. We wanted to create a psychological space of Bella's internal world where perspective can shift in the way memory can – throwing details up before you like debris on a beach after a storm – and where things can orbit towards her and away from her. We decided to use theatrical devices, such as revolves and snow, to explore her dislocation from the world – the death of her mother and her own diagnosis but also the intimacy and connection that evolves through her friendship with Christopher.

The design team are a collection of artists who I have been working with for many years, including Elizabeth Gadsby, Steve Francis and Paul Jackson. We are continuing to explore

ideas around sonic intimacy, devices like the revolve to track emotional journeys, and psychological landscape through light that we have touched on in previous productions such as *The Children*, *Switzerland* and *John*. Costume Designer and Set Design Realisation Jo Briscoe and I started our work together in Sydney many moons ago and we are delighted to be working together again. We also welcome newcomer Danni A. Esposito as Sound Designer.

‘The tragedy of the alienated individual is resolved only by rediscovering a sense of compassion and responsibility towards fellow human beings.’

— Fyodor Dostoevsky

However, the piece would not be possible without the extraordinary talent of one of Australia’s most gifted actors Catherine McClements. Joining her is Shiv Palekar in his MTC debut, someone you will see much more of and who will soon be a household name.

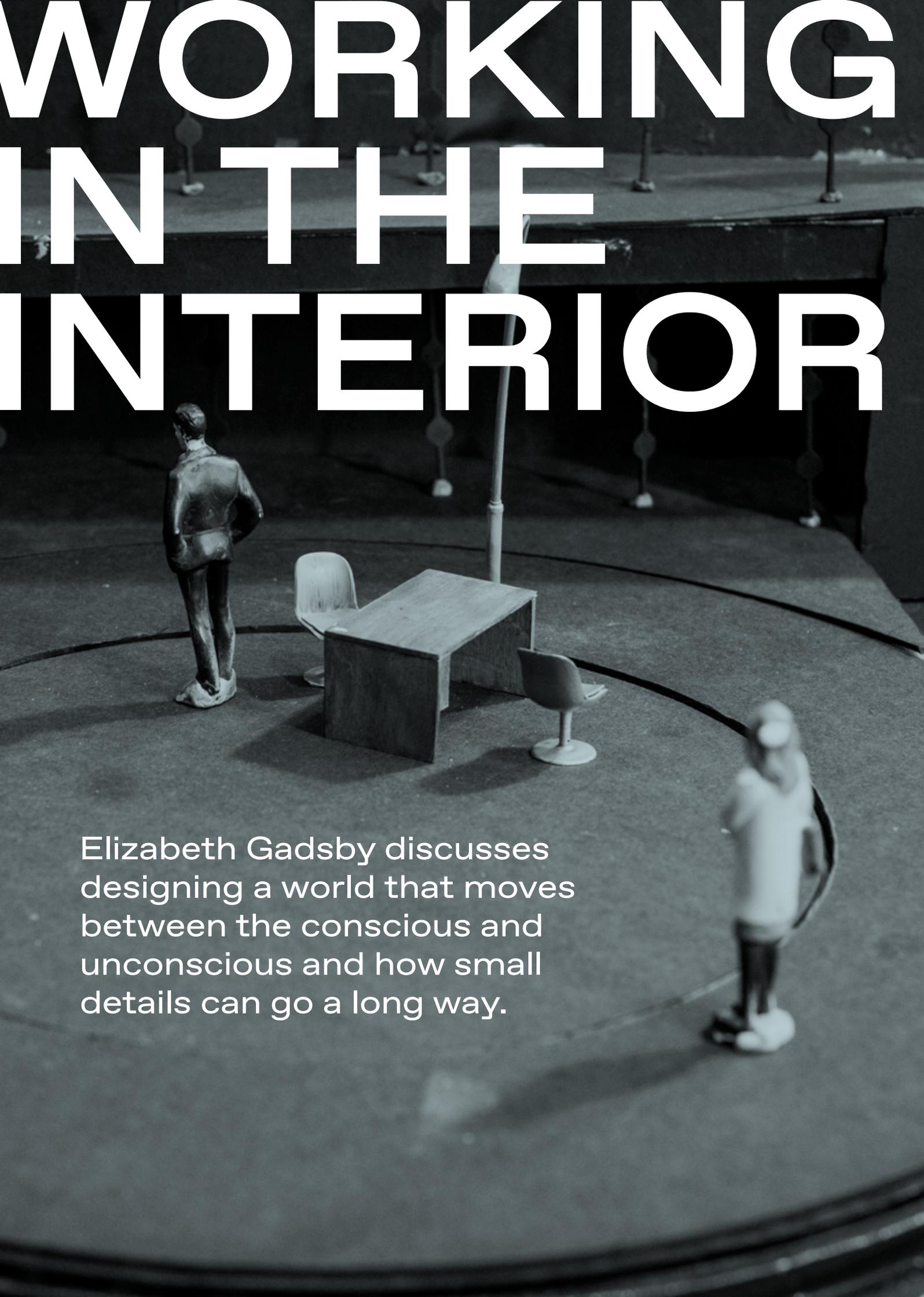
A big thank you to the incredible stage management team Pippa Wright and Vivienne Poznanski and the production and artistic departments at MTC for surviving the storm and still being here to produce great theatre!

And to you the audience for coming back and joining us in the theatre. In the words of Dostoevsky, ‘The tragedy of the alienated individual is resolved only by rediscovering a sense of compassion and responsibility towards fellow human beings.’ ■

Catherine McClements and Shiv Palekar



WORKING IN THE INTERIOR



Elizabeth Gadsby discusses designing a world that moves between the conscious and unconscious and how small details can go a long way.



Catherine McClements, Shiv Palekar and Director Sarah Goodes

What were your first impressions after reading the script and what immediately jumped out for you in terms of design?

It's such a text-based and interior piece and, in a way, you don't need to stage it. The text creates this internal world that you can sit in. It's almost like reading a novel where you go through layers of character and there's enough image-making in the text itself to create those images in your mind. So it's one of those really delicate pieces where the design can't be too heavy-handed otherwise it will swamp the text and structure of the play.

I really responded to the image that the play builds toward, that of an impression of a body in the snow. It reminded me of the performance works by Ana Mendieta. She did a lot of body-based work that would leave impressions in the landscape or impressions in an environment.

That particular image resonated with me because the work feels like this accumulation of experience that makes an impression on someone's psyche. Even when they move on with their life or past a certain point, the experience still resonates and has this kind of echo to it. They are memories you carry around within yourself and they rear their head again and again, at different points in time.

How do you reconcile with the interior and delicate nature of this play when designing the set?

To a certain extent, some of the scenes are quite naturalistic. So even though we're sliding through different layers of storytelling there are moments that feel very grounded in naturalism – for instance, sitting in an office or a lounge room – that do need certain objects to give them grounding in the space. But we knew that there should be enough space around those things, so that the characters can step in and out of the solid moments and into the more slippery ones.

Can you expand a little more about how you evoke the sense of Bella's internal world in the set design?

We discussed image making that was more psychological than naturalistic. For example the snow fall. When you have snow falling on indoor objects, it signifies to the audience that they are not in a naturalistic space anymore. That the snow isn't snow, it's something more psychological, echoing the character.

There are two moments where it feels like Bella is going through a tunnel and she describes going down into a kind of cosy softness. In these moments, the substance of snow and the way that it fills the space evokes this by closing everything in.



Both the image
+ the teller of
the image

For many of us the only
space of authenticity is
the distance.

For one may be fashion
and also practice of
is critical to the work

Catherine McClements,
Shiv Palekar and
Director Sarah Goodes



Catherine McClements



Shiv Palekar



How do you collaborate with Director Sarah Goodes on the set design and concept for this play?

When Sarah and I work together we talk around the ideas of the work a lot before we settle on anything physical. Sarah always starts with a feeling – a feeling she wants to create for a particular character and the specific feeling that she wants an audience to tap into. And they are often small and quiet. I think primarily she's really interested in psychology and self-knowledge. So when we're developing a work, our conversations are not often about big gestures, it's really about what can we do to get the quiet, small moments – where something in a character shifts or drops – to really sing.

'... it's really about what we can do to get the quiet, small moments – where something in a character shifts or drops – to really sing.'

— Elizabeth Gadsby

Sarah is always thinking about small details and in a way that helps us create the guiding design principles for the work. For example, at one point we were talking about if we want to leave props and objects on stage, or do we try and get them off stage. On one hand, there's a practical concern, because it is clunky getting stuff on and off stage and the less we can do the better. But it is also a dramaturgical decision. We felt that the things that remained on stage support the emotional heart of the work. They are symbols of possible connection between the two characters. It's like each object becomes a

little beacon, or a little reminder, of either the moment that could have been or one that did actually occur. Those objects can revolve past them even though it's not happening in the present moment. It also allows the audience to compile an image in a nonlinear way, the way that memory works. You don't often remember things in a logical, linear manner. It's a series of images or experiences or sounds that start to sit on top of one another.



Catherine McClements
and Shiv Palekar

You mentioned that the objects sometimes revolve past the characters. Can you talk a little bit more about how the revolve works within the play?

The revolve allows us to create a force in the show that exists outside of the characters; that there are certain things beyond their control. It was partly to do with the character of Christopher. We wanted the ability for him and Bella to move away from one another, or toward one another, without having to physically walk through the space. It's almost like they're these little atoms that are being drawn apart and together again. And what we really liked about the revolve was, again, it places us in a space where these characters can be both naturalistic and then also feel more like an idea or a memory because they can float away in a non-naturalistic way. It allows the same thing with the prop elements in the space. We have the ability to move things through space to come together to create an image then move them apart again. So having that mechanism really helps to create the rhythm in the text, where you're in something for one moment, and it's very present and naturalistic, and then that moment passes and you slide into another train of thought. ■



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cast and creative team at
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Cast & creative team



CATHERINE McCLEMENTS — BELLA

Catherine McClements has previously appeared on stage with Melbourne Theatre Company in *Three Little Words*, *The Other Place*, *Cruel and Tender* and *Angels in America*. Catherine's other theatre credits include *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Phèdre* (Bell Shakespeare); *The Events*,

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?, *Suddenly Last Summer*, *The Blind Giant is Dancing*, *Macbeth* (Belvoir); *The Crucible* (Sydney Theatre Company); *The Events* (Black Swan State Theatre Company of WA); and *It Just Stopped* (Malthouse Theatre). Catherine's television credits include *Pieces of Her*, *Ms Fisher's Modern Murder Mysteries*, *The Leftovers*, *Sisters*, *The Beautiful Lie*, *The Time of Our Lives*, *Wentworth*, *Tangle*, *Rush*, *The Pacific*, *CrashBurn*, *The Secret Life of Us*, *Water Rats*, *The Broken Shore*, *After the Deluge* and *Mary Bryant*. Her film credits include *Weekend with Kate*, *Floodhouse*, *Better Than Sex*, *The Right Hand Man*, *Struck by Lightning* and *Just Us*. Catherine has received numerous awards for her work including AFI Awards for *Tangle*, *The Secret Life of Us* and *Weekend with Kate*, and a Silver Logie Award for *Water Rats*.



SHIV PALEKAR — CHRISTOPHER

Shiv Palekar was born in India, raised in Hong Kong and is now based in Sydney. Since graduating from NIDA, Shiv has appeared in *Disgraced*, *The Real Thing* and *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* (Sydney Theatre Company); *The Almighty Sometimes* (Griffin Theatre Company); *Counting and Cracking* (Belvoir); and has toured nationally twice in *The Merchant of Venice* and *The Players* (Bell Shakespeare).

For his work in *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* and *Counting and Cracking*, he received two Sydney Theatre Award nominations for Best Supporting Actor and Best Actor respectively. Shiv made his feature film debut in *The Greenhouse*. He is an associate artist and founding member of theatre ensemble The Corinthian Food Store Collective, for whom he has starred as Lester in *This, This is Mine*.



ADAM RAPP — PLAYWRIGHT

Adam Rapp is an award-winning playwright and novelist. He is the author of *Nocturne*, *Finer Noble Gases*, *The Metal Children* and *Red Light Winter*. His most recent play, *The Sound Inside*, received its world premiere at the 2018 Williamstown Theatre Festival and was named one of *The New York Times* best plays of 2018. It premiered on Broadway at Studio 54 in 2019 and was nominated for six Tony Awards, including Best Play. His playwriting honours include Boston's Elliot Norton Award, the Helen Merrill Award for Playwriting, the 2006 Princess Grace Statue Award, a Lucille Lortel Theatre Playwriting Fellowship, the Benjamin H. Danks Award, the PEN/Laura Pels International Foundation Theatre Award and a 2021 Arts and Letters Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Born in Chicago and raised in nearby Joliet, Illinois, Rapp now splits his time between New York City and upstate New York.



SARAH GOODES — DIRECTOR

Sarah Goodes is a Helpmann Award-winning theatre director recognised for bringing more than 14 new Australian works to the mainstage. For Melbourne Theatre Company, Sarah's work includes *Home I'm Darling*, *Così*, *Golden Shield*, *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*, *Edward Gant's Amazing Feats of Loneliness* (with La Boite) and *Switzerland*. Sarah's other directing credits include *The Sugar House* (Belvoir); *The Sweetest Thing*, *The Small Things*, *Elling* and *Black Milk* (Downstairs Belvoir); *The Colour of Panic* (Sydney Opera House); and *Grace* (Red Stitch Actors' 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.

Director Sarah Goodes





ELIZABETH GADSBY — SET CONCEPT & DESIGN

Elizabeth Gadsby's previous work with Melbourne Theatre Company includes her design for the Helpmann Award-winning *The Children*. Elizabeth works alongside Sarah Goodes, continuing their extensive collaboration. Resident designer at Sydney Theatre Company for four years, Elizabeth has designed multiple shows for them, including *Seven Stages of Grieving*, *Lord of the Flies*, *Blackie Blackie Brown* and *A Cheery Soul*. Her other design credits include *La Passion de Simone* and *An Index of Metals* (Sydney Chamber Opera); *Firebird* (Louisville Ballet); *Cinderella* (Belvoir); and *poem for a dried up river* (Sydney Festival). Elizabeth holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Painting) from the National Art School and a Bachelor of Dramatic Arts (Design) from NIDA. She is a recent artist in resident with the Sydney Observatory, a past resident of the Sydney City Council and has been the recipient of multiple development and production grants from the Australia Council and Create NSW.



JO BRISCOE — COSTUME DESIGNER & SET DESIGN REALISATION

Jo Briscoe's Australian theatre credits as a set and costume designer include *Cyrano*, *Madagascar* (Melbourne Theatre Company); *La Traviata* (Oz Opera); *Reunion/A Kind of Alaska* (costume) and *Ruby Moon* (Sydney Theatre Company); *The Pillowman* (costume), *The Pianist*, *Italian-American Reconciliation*, *Elling* and *Greek Tragedy* (Belvoir); *Mr Bailey's Minder*, *Nailed*, *October* and *Strange Attractor* (Griffin Theatre); *Citizenship*, *Stories in the Dark* (Australian Theatre for Young People); *Vertigo and the Virginia*, *A Moment on the Lips* (Tamarama Rock Surfers), *The Memory of Water*, *Noir* (Darlinghurst); *Flotsam and Jetsam* (set) and *The Red Shoe* (Jigsaw); and costume design for *On the Case* (Legs on the Wall). Her screen production design credits include *Oddlands*, *Elders*, *Mustangs FC* (season 1), *Please Like Me* (season 3), *The Family Law* (season 2), *Upper Middle Bogan*, *Nowhere Boys* (season 1), *Woodley*, *Little Lunch* and *The Katering Show* (season 2), winner of the APDG Award for Best Production Design on a Television Production.



PAUL JACKSON — LIGHTING DESIGNER

Paul Jackson is an award-winning set and lighting designer. Selected lighting designs include *Cyrano*, *The Truth*, *Home I'm Darling*, *Arbus and West*, *The Children*, *Gloria*, *Hay Fever*, *Di and Viv and Rose*, *Three Little Words*, *Endgame*, *Miss Julie*, *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, *Double Indemnity*, *The Ghost Writer*, *Ghosts*, *Dinner*, *Frozen*, *The Speechmaker*, *Enlightenment*, *Madagascar*, *Private Lives* (Melbourne Theatre Company); *Death of a Salesman*, *No Pay? No Way!*, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, *Mary Stuart*, *True West*, *The Mysteries* (Sydney Theatre Company); *Cassandra*, *Echo & Narcissus* (Victorian Opera); *Lorelei* (Victorian Opera with Opera Queensland); *Carmen* (Opera Australia). He has also designed for The Australian Ballet, Royal New Zealand Ballet, Berlin Staatsballett, West Australian Ballet, West Australian Opera, Bell Shakespeare, Malthouse Theatre, Belvoir, Queensland Theatre, Circa and Chamber Made Opera. Paul has won a Helpmann Award, two Sydney Theatre Awards, seven Green Room Awards, four Australian Production Design Guild Awards and a Critics' Award for Theatre in Scotland. He has also received a further four Helpmann Award nominations and 32 Green Room Award nominations.



STEVE FRANCIS — COMPOSER

As composer and sound designer for theatre, Steve has worked for Australia's leading theatre companies, both main stage and independent. For Melbourne Theatre Company his work includes *The Children*, *The Weir*, *The Sublime* and *Other Desert Cities*. He has also created work for Sydney Theatre Company, Belvoir, Bell Shakespeare, Queensland Theatre, State Theatre Company South Australia, Griffin Theatre Company, Sport for Jove Theatre and Legs On The Wall. Recent productions for these companies include *Boy Swallows Universe*, *Appropriate*, *My Brilliant Career*, *Cursed*, *No Pay No Way*, *Beauty Queen of Leanne*, *Things I Know to be True* and *Switzerland*. As a composer Steve has created 13 scores for Bangarra Dance Theatre, most recently *Wudjang: Not the Past*, *Sandsong* and *Bennelong*. He has won two Helpmann awards for Original Score with two nominations for Sound Design. Steve has also won two Sydney Theatre Awards for Best Music or Sound.



Director Sarah Goodes with Shiv Palekar and Catherine McClements



DANNI A. ESPOSITO — SOUND DESIGNER

Danni A. Esposito is a non-binary sound designer and composer from Naarm/Melbourne. They specialise in sound design and composition for theatre, immersive works and film. Danni's most notable credits include sound design and composition on *STAY WOKE*

(Malthouse Theatre); Malthouse Theatre's 2020 Season Launch; *Hydra* (Double Water Sign Theatre); *Fast Food* (Red Stitch Actors' Theatre); *SLUTNIK* (Midsumma Festival); *Guerilla Sabbath* (Midsumma Festival); *Cactus* (La Mama Theatre); *Punk Rock* (Patalog Theatre); *Slut* (The Burrow); *The Dream Laboratory* (Essential Theatre); *Treats* (Fever103 Theatre); *Land* (Three Fates Theatre Company); *Never Said Motel* (Writers Festival, OK Motels); *Adam* (Midsumma Festival); *Tram Lights Up* (Bighouse Arts); Western Edge Youth Arts (WEYA — In School, Artist In Residency). Danni is a design graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts, holding a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Production). Danni is a proud alum of MTC's industry leading Women in Theatre Program and a current panel member of the Green Room Theatre Companies Panel for 2022.



AMY HUME — VOICE & DIALECT COACH

Amy Hume is a voice and dialect coach for theatre and screen, and Lecturer in Voice at Victorian College of the Arts. Recent theatre credits include *Fun Home* and *Cyrano* (Melbourne Theatre Company); *An American in Paris* (Australian Ballet and GBS); *Six the Musical*

Australia, *Billy Elliot Australia* (Louise Withers and Associates); *White Pearl* (Sydney Theatre Company); *Merrily We Roll Along* (Hayes) and *Fangirls* (Queensland Theatre/Belvoir). Recent coaching for screen includes *Bad Behaviour* (Stan); *New Gold Mountain* (SBS); and *The Secrets She Keeps* (Network 10). Amy previously taught BFA Acting and MFA Voice students at NIDA from 2015 to 2019. She is a Designated Linklater Teacher and currently serves on the Board of the Voice and Speech Trainers Association (VASTA), the international organisation for voice and dialect practitioners.

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