

MEDIA KIT

ANTHEM

ANDREW BOVELL, PATRICIA CORNELIOUS, MELISSA REEVES, CHRISTOS TSIOLKAS & IRENE VELA
HEATH LEDGER THEATRE
PERTH FESTIVAL CO-COMMISSION
THUR 12 – SUN 16 FEB
TICKETS: \$39 - \$89

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ANTHEM

The long-awaited follow-up to one of Australian theatre's most acclaimed collaborations asks a bold question: does Australia share a dream and do we really sing with one voice?

Twenty-one years ago four playwrights and a composer came together to create *Who's Afraid of the Working Class?*, a series of powerful interwoven vignettes that captured the zeitgeist of Australia in the 1990s. Now the same team reunites to take the pulse of our nation today in *Anthem*.

What emerges is a portrait of a country unable to reconcile its past, uncertain of its future and political vision. The play takes the image of a train as its central metaphor, the meeting place for all the identities of the city with people coming together on their commute united by their common need to make ends meet. The colliding voices that make up this anthem might not always be in harmony, but they cannot be silenced.

Susie Dee (Love, SHIT) directs an extraordinary ensemble of performers and musicians to give voice to this important work. The diverse and multi-generational cast includes Amanda Ma, Maude Davey, Tony Nikolakopoulos, Eva Seymour, Carly Sheppard, Maria Mercedes, Reef Ireland, Thuso Lekwape, Osamah Sami, Eryn Jean Norvill, Sahil Saluja and Ruthy Kaisila.

Who's Afraid of the Working Class? was an ode to tiny struggles writ large; *Anthem* turns up the volume on the everyday injustices we choose not to hear. Susie Dee directs an extraordinary ensemble of performers and musicians to give voice to this work.

To mark its 20 year anniversary, Arts Centre Melbourne commissioned the same team of some of Australia's greatest contemporary playwrights Andrew Bovell (Things I Know to be True), Patricia Cornelius (SHIT), Melissa Reeves (Happy Ending), Christos Tsiolkas (The Slap) and Irine Vela (The Audition) reunite to take the pulse of our nation today.

"When we came together for this collaboration it quickly emerged that we wanted to write a play that took class seriously, that took the destructiveness of inequality seriously; and we also wanted to write a play that was not safe," said Christos Tsiolkas.

COMPANY CREDITS:

Writers Andrew Bovell, Patricia Cornelius, Melissa Reeves, Christos Tsiolkas & Irine Vela

Director Susie Dee

Designer Marg Horwell

Lighting Designer Paul Jackson

Music Director & Sound Designer Irine Vela

Movement Consultant Natalie Cursio

Assistant Director Sapidah Kian

Aboriginal Cultural Dramaturg Bryan Andy

Cast Maude Davey, Reef Ireland, Ruthy Kaisila, Thuso Lekwape, Amanda Ma, Maria Mercedes, Tony Nikolakopoulos, Eryn Jean Norvill, Sahil Saluja, Osamah Sami, Eva Seymour, Carly Sheppard, Jenny M. Thomas & Dan Witton

PERFORMING LINES

Performing Lines produces provocative contemporary performance by Australia's most audacious independent artists.

We curate a portfolio of work that is propelled by pressing questions and new ways of seeing the world. We champion the unconventional, the marginal, the rebellious and the new.

Our purpose is to champion risk and to ensure that the breadth and plurality of Australia's creative potential is represented and celebrated.

Performing Lines is led by Executive Producer Marion Potts, and manages teams in Sydney, Perth and Hobart, with a network of producers and presenters around the country and the world. In everything we do, we acknowledge that we live on Aboriginal land and constantly learn from the wisdom of our First Peoples. Where we are and the history that precedes us informs how we work and how we move forward.

SUSIE DEE | DIRECTOR

Susie has worked extensively in the theatre as a performer, deviser and director in Australia and overseas for the past thirty years. She has been the Artistic Director of three theatre companies: Melbourne Workers Theatre (MWT), Union House Theatre (UHT) and Institute of Complex Entertainment (ICE), whose projects went on to win various awards and received many accolades for their ground-breaking site-specific work. In 2011, Susie was the recipient of the Australia Council residency at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris. She has directed works for MTC, Malthouse Theatre and many independent theatre companies and has been nominated for and won numerous awards. She recently directed Patricia Cornelius' plays, SHIT and Love, both touring to the 2019 Venice Biennale Theatre Festival.

ANDREW BOVELL | WRITER

Andrew Bovell is the writer of the plays Things I Know to be True and When the Rain Stops Falling. His adaptation of The Secret River will be seen at the Edinburgh Festival and the National Theatre in London in 2019. Other plays include Holy Day, Who's Afraid of the Working Class, Speaking in Tongues, Ship of Fools and After Dinner. He is the writer of the films Lantana, Head On, Blessed, A Most Wanted Man and Edge of Darkness among others.

PATRICIA CORNELIUS | WRITER

Patricia Cornelius is a playwright, screenwriter and novelist. Patricia has written over twenty-five plays, including: The House of Bernadette, adapted from Lorca, In The Club, Big Heart, Shit, Caravan (co-writer), Savages, Do Not Go Gentle, The Call, Love, Fever, Boy Overboard, Slut and Who's Afraid

of the Working Class? (co-written with Andrew Bovell, Christos Tsiolkas, Melissa Reeves and Irine Vela). Her prizes for stage work include the 2019 Windham-Campbell Prize for Drama, the 2011 Victorian and NSW Premiers' Literary Awards, the Patrick White Playwright's Award, the Richard Wherrett Prize, the Wal Cherry Award and eleven AWGIES for stage, community theatre, theatre for young people. Patricia co-wrote the feature film Blessed, based on the play Who's Afraid of the Working Class? (for which she won an AWGIE).

MELISSA REEVES | WRITER

Melissa Reeves is a Melbourne Playwright. Her most recent play is an adaptation of AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE for Belvoir St. directed by Anne Louise Sarkis. Other plays include CARAVAN, which premiered at the 2017 Melbourne Festival, co-written with Angus Cerini, Patricia Cornelius, and Wayne Macauley, HAPPY ENDING, FURIOUS MATTRESS, THE SPOOK – which premiered at Belvoir and was awarded the 2005 Louis Esson Prize for Drama in the Victorian Premiers Awards, and two AWGIES for best new play, SWEETOWN - awarded the Jill Blewitt Memorial Playwrights Award in 1993, IN CAHOOTS, and ROAD MOVIE. She has co-written a number of plays including MAGPIE, (with Richard Frankland) and WHO'S AFRAID OF THE WORKING CLASS and FEVER (both with Andrew Bovell, Patricia Cornelius and Christos Tsiolkas, composer-Irine Vela) – the former of which won best play in the Queensland Literary Awards, two AWGIES for best new play, and the Jill Blewitt Playwrights Award in 1999.

CHRISTOS TSIOLKAS | WRITER

Christos Tsiolkas is the author of five novels: Loaded, The Jesus Man, Dead Europe, The Slap and Barracuda. His other writing work include the short story collection, Merciless Gods, the dialogue, Jump Cuts: An Autobiography, co-authored with Sasha Soldatow, and a monograph on The Devil's Playground for the Australian Screen Classics series. His most recent book is the On Patrick White for the Writers on Writers series. Christos is also a playwright, essayist and film critic, and many of his novels and stories have been adapted for the stage and screen. He lives in Melbourne. Christos' latest novel, Damascus, will be published in November this year.

IRINE VELA | WRITER

Irine Vela is a composer, librettist, creative producer and director. Irine's work emphasises the validity, necessity and excitement that diverse voices and forms bring to the Australian arts. She has collaborated with many of Australia's finest performers, writers, directors and theatre companies.

She works as producer and Artistic Director for Outer Urban Projects on projects including: suBurBan exchange, Melbourne Recital Centre (2011); Urban Chamber – Beyond, Melbourne Festival (2013); Poetic License, Melbourne Writers Festival (2014, 2015 + 2017); and Grand DiVisions, Arts Centre Melbourne (2015). Her film and TV credits include: Head On, Remembering Country, and The Slap. Awards: APRA Screen Music Award – Best Soundtrack Album; Australian Music Centre – Best Composition by an Australian Composer; Tropfest – Best Original Score. Other notable collaborations: Who's Afraid of the Working Class?; Do Not Go Gentle, 1975-A Populist Opera, Little City, and Australia in Danger- a slide night. She performs with the Sevdah Sephardic ensemble Saray Iluminado and is founding member of the haBiBis (winner - ARIA Best World Music Album).

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