

BY THEATRE WORKS

MASTERPIECES OF THE ORAL AND INTANGIBLE HERITAGE OF HUMANITY

THEATRE WORKS PRESENTS

MASTERPIECES OF THE ORAL AND INTANGIBLE HERITAGE OF HUMANITY

BY HEATHER MCDONALD | DIRECTED BY NADIA TASS

22 JULY - 1 AUGUST | THEATRE WORKS

theatre works, 14 acland street, st kilda



ABOUT THEATRE WORKS

Theatre Works is Australia's home of independent theatre: a creative precinct where artists take risks, new stories are born, and audiences discover the bold voices shaping contemporary culture. For more than 45 years, Theatre Works has supported artists to develop, make, and share ambitious new Australian work. Today, our precinct is stronger and more interconnected than ever.

Located in the heart of St Kilda, the Theatre Works Precinct brings together four purpose-built venues: the Main Theatre, the Explosives Factory, the TWiSK Rehearsal Space, and the Black Box Café & Outdoor Stage. Each space plays a distinct role in the creative lifecycle, providing artists with everything they need to move from idea, to development, to premiere, to tour; all within a single, supportive ecosystem.

Our model is simple but rare: we share investment and risk with independent artists. Through co-producing, commissioning, and tailored producing support, we ensure artists are backed by real resources: free development space, professional equipment, rehearsal infrastructure, marketing, ticketing, and technical support. This gives artists the freedom to take creative risks while removing the financial and logistical pressures that so often limit independent work.

Every year, more than 600 artists pass through our precinct, developing and presenting work across 50+ productions.

Many go on to regional and national touring, VCE Playlist recognition, and major awards. Our audiences are equally diverse: from loyal locals to school groups, visiting families, and new theatre-goers who discover us through the café, bar, or festival partnerships.

The precinct allows us to operate at a scale unique in Victoria's independent sector. The Main Theatre offers a fully equipped black box for bold, ambitious work; the Explosives Factory provides a home for experimentation, residencies, and intimate performance; the TWiSK Rehearsal Space offers year-round free development space; and the Black Box Café & Outdoor Stage connect the precinct to the daily life of St Kilda, welcoming more than 20,000 visitors each year.

Together, these venues form a pipeline that supports artists at every stage of their practice while building community, diversifying income, and embedding independent theatre deeply into the cultural fabric of St Kilda. This integrated precinct model - development to presentation, bar to black box, artist to audience - is what makes Theatre Works unique.

This is the heart of Theatre Works: a place where artists are held, supported, and challenged; where audiences encounter work that surprises and moves them; and where community grows, one story at a time.

Theatre Works respectfully acknowledges First People's sovereignty and recognise the continuing connection to lands, waters and storytelling by Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia.

We pay our respects to the many clans and language groups in Victoria, to their elders past and present, and acknowledge the strength and resilience of all Aboriginal peoples.

Always was, always will be Aboriginal land.

TEAM THEATRE WORKS

KRYSTALLA PEARCE (she/her) Artistic Director

DIANNE TOULSON (she/her) Executive Director / Creative Producer

ADAM GARDNER (he/him) Marketing / Graphic Design / Box Office Manager

JADE HIBBERT (she/her) Company Producer

CHRIS PATRICK HANSEN (he/him) Marketing and Producing Associate

BEK SCHILLING (they/them) Front of House Co-Ordinator

ANNE HENDERSON (she/her) Finance Administrator

MASTERPIECES OF THE ORAL AND INTANGIBLE HERITAGE OF HUMANITY

PLAYWRIGHT

Heather McDonald

DIRECTOR

Nadia Tass

LIGHTING DESIGNER

David Parker

SOUND DESIGNER

Daniel Nixon

SET & COSTUME DESIGNER

Ishan Vivekanantham

CAST

Kate Cole

Laila Thaker

Jane Montgomery-Griffiths

STAGE MANAGER

Perri Hobbs

PUBLICITY

Eleanor Howlett, Sassy Red PR

PRODUCED BY

Dianne Toulson

Theatre Works

MASTERPIECES IS A **BY THEATRE WORKS** PRODUCTION

Shows in the **BY THEATRE WORKS** stream are produced and presented by Theatre Works in-house, lead by artists who are either on staff and/or alumni of our professional development programs.





DIRECTOR'S NOTE

NADIA TASS

Although the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East have received plenty of media coverage over the past few years, conflicts in Haiti, Sudan, Syria, Myanmar, Somalia and Yemen have persisted for years.

Wars do not just harm populations in the moment, causing injury, death and destruction; the mental and physical consequences ripple across time for generations.

By introducing Art into a chaotic war-torn world, "Masterpieces" becomes an examination of what it is to be civilised.

When everything we love in this world is lost; where can we find hope? What is there to live for?

In a world ravaged by war, hatred and destruction we must find a path to the fundamental principle of communication and unity if we are going to survive as a human race. In this play, each of these three women is from a very different world but they find common threads of humanity through the majesty of the restoration of a painting.

I believe that beauty can transcend insurmountable boundaries and at the same time tap into the humanity of each person and counterbalance the bleakness and fear in today's world.

Thank you for coming to the theatre.

WRITER'S INSPIRATION

HEATHER MCDONALD

About suffering they were never wrong,
The Old Masters: how well they understood
Its human position; how it takes place
While someone else is eating or opening a window
Or just walking dully along;

W.H. Auden, "Musee des Beaux Art"

A time between ashes and roses is coming
when everything shall be extinguished
when everything shall begin.

The Syrian poet, Adonis

"Drama is about the edge of the universe and the kitchen table."
Edward Bond

To whom do we tell what happened on the
Earth, for whom do we place everywhere huge
Mirrors in the hope that they will be filled up
And will stay so?

Czeslaw Milosz, "Annalena"

"Seymour once said that all we ever do our whole lives is go from one
little piece of Holy
Ground to the next. Is he ever wrong?"

J.D. Salinger, "Seymour: An Introduction"



HEATHER MCDONALD

PLAYWRIGHT

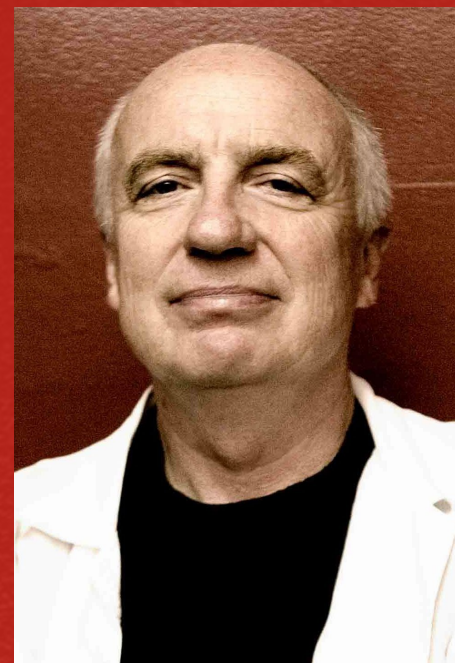


Heather McDonald is an award-winning, widely-produced playwright. Her plays have been presented nationally, internationally, on Broadway, and in alleyways. She can make a play for \$100 out of a suitcase or one starring Kevin Bacon. Her work has been honored with a nomination for the Pulitzer Prize and several National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Playwriting Fellowships.

Heather McDonald's plays include Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, An Almost Holy Picture, When Grace Comes In, Dream of a Common Language, Available Light, The Rivers and Ravines, Faulkner's Bicycle, The Two Marys, Rain and Darkness and, upcoming, The Suppressed-Desire Ball (developed at Sundance - Ucross Writers Retreat). Her work has been produced on Broadway (starring Kevin Bacon) and Off Broadway and at such theatres as The Roundabout Theatre, Arena Stage, The McCarter Theatre, Center Stage, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Indiana Rep, California Shakespeare Theatre, Round House Theatre, Signature Theatre, Yale Repertory Theatre, The Actors Theatre of Louisville – Humana Festival of New Plays, The La Jolla Playhouse and internationally in Italy, Spain, Portugal, England and Mexico.

DAVID PARKER

LIGHTING DESIGNER



David was a stills photographer until he wrote, shot and produced his first movie, Malcolm in 1985. Other films as producer/writer/cinematographer include Rikky And Pete, The Big Steal, Amy, Matching Jack. Cinematography credits include Mr Reliable, Stark, Pure Luck, John Doe, Kath & Kimderella and six high-end US dramas for Disney, Warner Brothers and Lifetime. Parker produced Hotel de Love, Irresistible The Gates Of Hell; and directed features: Hercules Returns, Diana & Me and The Menkoff Method. He wrote the stageplay for The Lion, The Witch And The Wardrobe in 2002. Parker's previous theatre work as Lighting Designer includes The Flick, Out of the Water, Extinction, Disgraced, Uncle Vanya, Job.

NADIA TASS

DIRECTOR



Recently awarded Screen Producers' Association Lifetime Achievement Award and recipient of VicScreen's Screen Leader Award for Outstanding Leadership, Nadia Tass is one of Australia's most iconoclastic directors of both stage and screen.

Nadia is a multi-award winning film director. Her films include Malcolm, Rikky and Pete, The Big Steal, Pure Luck, Mr Reliable, Amy, Matching Jack. She directs films for major studios & networks in America; Universal, Disney, Warner Bros, CBS, A&E Network and BBC including The Miracle Worker, Samantha: An American Girl Holiday, Felicity: An American Girl Adventure, Stark.

Nadia's experience as theatre director is extensive and diverse, ranging from improvised, classic, to contemporary and musical theatre. In recent years Tass has directed productions in London and various cities in America and Australia including Job, This F***ing Lady, Uncle Vanya, The Book Club, Ear To The Edge Of Time, Fern Hill, The Other Place, The Aliens, Disgraced, Extinction, The Lion The Witch and The Wardrobe (for which she received a Helpmann Award Best Director nomination).

Nadia directed the world premiere production of "Masterpieces" for Signature Theatre in Washington DC.

DANIEL NIXON

SOUND DESIGNER



Daniel is an award winning composer, sound designer and multi instrumentalist. He has performed with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra Victoria, John Farnham, Yothu Yindi, Sebina Meyer, Mikko Frank and many others. He has written and recorded multiple albums and worked extensively as a session player, programmer and producer. He has scored and designed numerous films, plays and dance works, including work with Flashgun Films, Cascade Films, Little Ones Theatre, A Daylight Connection, Red Stitch Actors Theatre, Universal Television, Disney Pictures, Al Jazeera, The National Gallery Australia, Melbourne Theatre Company, Queensland Theatre, Malthouse Theatre, Chunky Move, Joel Bray Dance, Ngioka Bunda-Heath, Dirty Pretty Theatre, Griffin Theatre Company, Ensemble Theatre, Madman Entertainment, NBCU, ABC, Netflix, Arts House, HBO, Films by Jove and many others.

ISHAN VIVEKANANTHAM

SET & COSTUME DESIGNER



Ishan Vivekanantham is a set and costume designer specialising in creating visually striking and immersive worlds for live performance. A graduate of the Master of Production Design at the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA), his craft has been recognised with the Cassidy Bequest – Production (2022) and Trina Parker (2023) scholarships for design excellence.

In 2025, he joined the Melbourne Theatre Company as a part of the Future Creatives program and was awarded the inaugural Truscott Prize, supported by the Truscott Design Foundation.

LAILA THAKER

PERFORMER



Laila Thaker is a Torres Strait Islander (Meriam/Wagedagam) and Indian (Ratlamwali) performer and has been an industry professional for over a decade. She studied acting at JCU in Cairns and Lesly Kahn in Los Angeles. Her recent Theatre credits include Super (Red Stitch Theatre), The Chosen Vessel (Street Theatre), The Return (Malthouse Theatre) and Coconut Woman (YIRRAMBOI). Her film credits include Careless (Stan), RFDS (Seven), Five Bedrooms (Paramount), Wentworth (Foxtel), Informer 3838 (Nine Network), My Life Is Murder (Channel Ten), Bad Mothers (Nine Network) and House Husbands (Nine Network). Laila's role in Prayers to Broken Stone (Boutique Theatre) won her Best Emerging Indigenous Artist (Melbourne Fringe Awards 2017), and Best Ensemble in Malthouse Theatre's The Return (Green Room Awards 2023).

KATE COLE

PERFORMER



Kate is an award winning actor and founding member of Melbourne's acclaimed Red Stitch Actors' Theatre, where she has performed in dozens of productions. For her one-woman performance in Grounded she was nominated for a Green Room Award, and won Best Actress in an Independent Production 2015 Sydney Theatre Award. Another recent role was the understudy of the role of Martha in Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? At the Comedy Theatre. She has also regularly performed with the Melbourne Theatre Company, most recently as an understudy for The Sound Inside. For musical theatre, Kate has appeared in Groundhog Day, Assassins, Ladies In Black, Sweet Charity and West Side Story. Her television credits include Dear Life, How To Stay Married, Wentworth, The Doctor Blake Mysteries and Seven Types of Ambiguity.

JANE MONTGOMERY-GRIFFITHS

PERFORMER



Jane Montgomery Griffiths has performed with major theatre companies across the UK and in Australia, with Bell Shakespeare (King Lear; Titus Andronicus; Midsummer Night's Dream; Twelfth Night), Belvoir (Wizard of Oz), Malthouse (Sappho in 9 fragments; Wild Surmise; Frankenstein; Antigone); MTC (Macbeth; Story of O) 45Downstairs (Wit); Red Stitch (Good People); Theatreworks (The Human Voice; Australian Open). TV includes Miss Fisher Modern Murder Mysteries; The Rings of Power; Five Bedrooms; Casualty; The Bill; Red Dwarf. Jane has received two Greenroom Awards and numerous nominations for her acting and writing.

PERRI HOBBS

STAGE MANAGER



Graduating from Federation University's Graduate Diploma of Theatre Production in 2024, Perri has been working in multiple facets of theatre, with a focus on design and stage management. Her previous stage management credits include; Assistant stage manager for Melbourne Opera's *La Bohème* and *Samson et Dalila*, and Stage Manager for Federation University Arts Academy's *An Enemy of the People* and *Deadmouse* and *Peabrain Dreams* at Theatre Works.



DIANNE TOULSON

PRODUCER



Dianne Toulson is an experienced creative producer with more than 25 years' experience producing and supporting independent theatre across Australia. She has worked with artists and companies at every stage of development, from new works and emerging practitioners to established productions, helping bring ambitious creative ideas to life. Throughout her career, Dianne has produced and presented hundreds of theatre productions, festivals, tours and special events, with a passion for championing bold new voices and diverse storytelling. Her work spans independent theatre, disability-led practice, community arts and regional touring, and she is recognised for building strong creative partnerships and delivering high-quality productions. Dianne is passionate about creating opportunities for artists to thrive and for audiences to experience engaging, thought-provoking theatre. She believes in the power of live performance to connect communities, spark conversation and celebrate the richness of contemporary Australian storytelling.



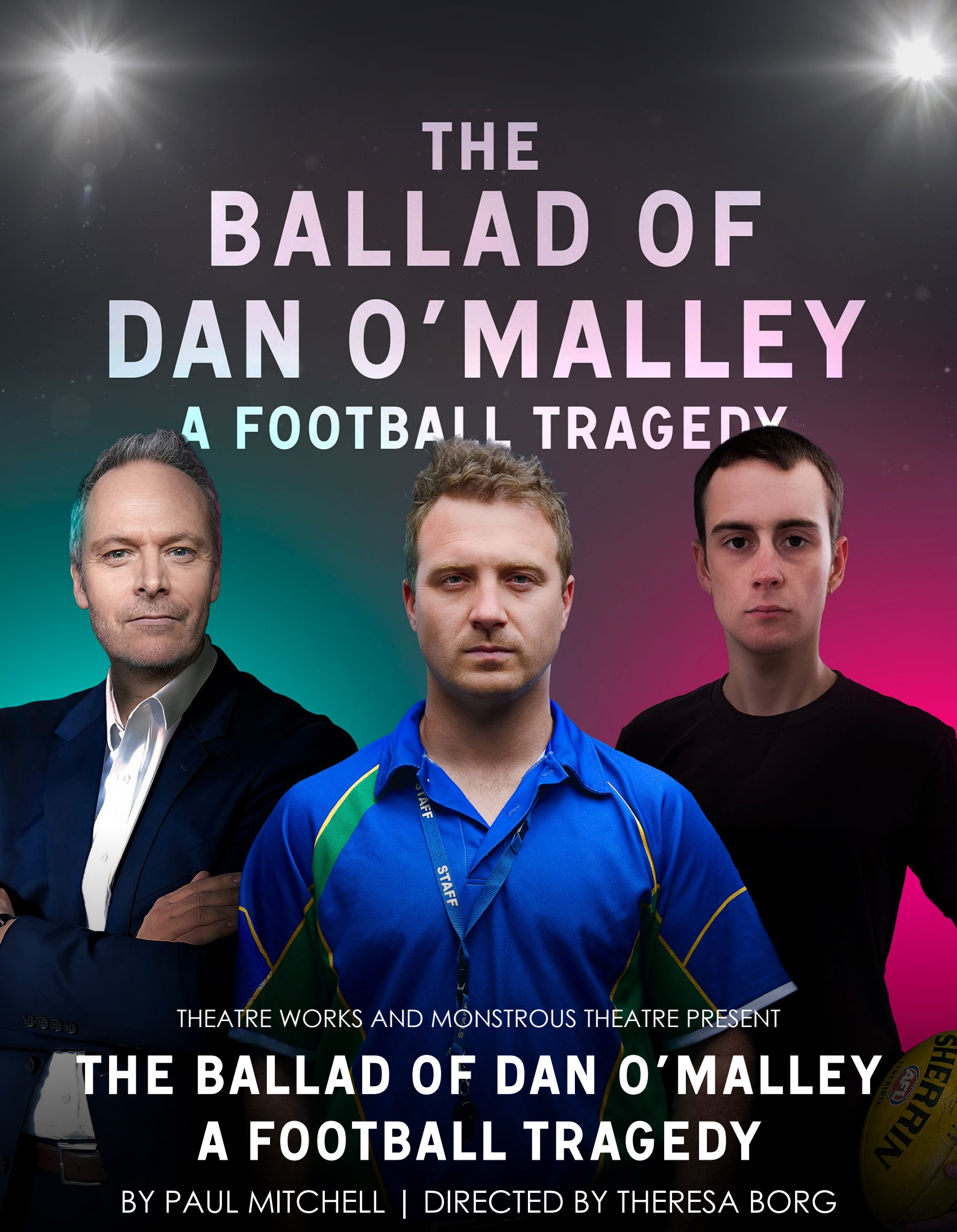


THEATRE WORKS AND THE GHOSTLIGHT LEAGUE PRESENT

**WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S
RESERVOIR DOGS**

BY STEVEN HOPLEY | DIRECTED BY ROB LLOYD

5 - 15 AUGUST | THEATRE WORKS



THEATRE WORKS AND MONSTROUS THEATRE PRESENT

**THE BALLAD OF DAN O'MALLEY
A FOOTBALL TRAGEDY**

BY PAUL MITCHELL | DIRECTED BY THERESA BORG

12 - 22 AUGUST | EXPLOSIVES FACTORY

THEATRE WORKS

ST KILDA

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