

LA BOITE & STATE THEATRE COMPANY PRESENT

STRAIGHT

WHITE MEN

BY YOUNG JEAN LEE

PROGRAM



LA BOITE
THEATRE COMPANY

STATESA
THEATRE
COMPANY

CAST

ED ROGER NEWCOMBE
MATT HUGH PARKER
JAKE CHRIS PITMAN
DREW LUCAS STIBBARD
STAGEHAND-IN-CHARGE MERLYNN TONG

PRODUCTION TEAM

PLAYWRIGHT YOUNG JEAN LEE
DIRECTOR NESCHA JELK
SET & COSTUME DESIGNER VICTORIA LAMB
LIGHTING DESIGNER BEN HUGHES
COMPOSER BUSTY BEATZ
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR ALEXIS WEST
ACCENT COACH SIMON STOLLERY
FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER DUNCAN MAXWELL
STAGE MANAGER GABRIELLE HORNHARDT
HEAD SOUND ANDREW HOWARD
HEAD LIGHTING SUE GREY-GARDINER
COSTUMES MADE BY STATE THEATRE COMPANY
..... WARDROBE
SET MADE BY STATE THEATRE COMPANY
..... WORKSHOP
LA BOITE PRODUCTION TEAM
HEAD OF PRODUCTION DON MACKENZIE
HEAD TECHNICIAN KEITH CLARK
WORKSHOP COORDINATOR ANDREW MILLS

FRONT COVER IMAGE BY DYLAN EVANS
PHOTOGRAPHY KATE PARDEY



FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

YOUNG JEAN LEE

When starting a play, I ask myself, “What’s the last show in the world I would ever want to make?” Then I force myself to make it. I do this because going out of my comfort zone compels me to challenge my assumptions and find value in unexpected places. I feel a lot of resistance towards the idea of identity-politics art, which is why I make so much of it. For *Straight White Men*, I asked myself, “What’s the last identity I would ever want to make an identity-politics show about?” I had never written a straight linear play before and had no interest in doing so, but I saw the traditional three-act structure as the “straight white male” of theatrical forms, or the form that has historically been used to present straight white male narratives as universal. And I thought it would be interesting to explore the limits of that form at the same time as its content - to bring the two together into one big nightmare.

With all my shows, I cast the show first, and then write it in collaboration with the performers, my artistic team, and workshop audiences. Normally when I have conversations about identity with female, queer, or minority cast members, we end up with an avalanche of intense political material to dig into. But the conversations with straight white male actors didn’t generate the same kind of material, because they had spent so much less time thinking about straight white male identity. So starting very early on, we opened up the conversation to other collaborators of diverse identities and backgrounds. The character of Matt came out of a workshop that I was doing at a university. The students, who were very diverse, were extremely hard on straight white men. So I asked them to make a list of all the things they wished straight white men would do, which included things like keeping quiet and staying out of the way. Then I took that list and

created Matt. Interestingly, they all hated him, because they felt he was a loser for not behaving the way a “normal” straight white male should. And that’s what made me realize that, in spite of all these social-justice values, in our peer group, being a loser is worse than being a jerk. It kind of revealed our continuing investment in the patriarchy.

Straight White Men isn’t “about” privilege or attempting to reveal anything new about it or solve it. I was more curious about the question, “If I woke up tomorrow and I was a straight white man, what would I do?” That’s where the existential crisis came up for me, because it would be one thing if I woke up as a straight white man who never thought about his identity and enjoyed his privilege unthinkingly—that might feel kind of good. But if I were to wake up with my own brain in a straight white male body, it would be completely problematic. So it was less that I was trying to create sympathy for straight white male identity, than I was trying to inhabit that identity as a woman of color. SWM is designed to make audiences notice their own responses and think about their relationships to their own privilege.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

NESSCHA JELK

While writing *Straight White Men* Young Jean Lee asked herself: "If I woke up tomorrow as a straight white man what would I do?" In the play, she asks the audience: "What should straight white men do?" "Do we have conflicting desires for the straight white men of the world to make space for others and for the straight white men in our own lives to succeed?" "How much are you willing to give up to achieve true equality in the world?"

Despite the fact that I am not a straight white man, I will say very honestly that I am uncomfortable with the privilege I already have as a middle-class straight white woman. I find it uncomfortable to know that my whiteness, my class and my sexuality have contributed to the successes and benefits that I have experienced in my lifetime. That the prejudices that value these qualities in me have oppressed others. It is confronting and upsetting to know that there are people in the world who have worked as hard (and harder) than I have, yet have not had access to the same privileges as I due to their identity.

I can understand why some people deny that privilege exists, believing instead that we live in a truly meritocratic society. Because to acknowledge that privilege exists is to acknowledge that we live in an unkind, unfair and oppressive world. It is to acknowledge that others may be more deserving of what you have. And we all want to be one of the good guys.

It is important to note that I am not a victim here. Furthermore, feeling guilty about my privilege isn't useful - it doesn't help anyone or do anything. So what do I do with these feelings? I try to find ways in which I might be able to better the situation; I try to be one of the small cogs in a greater

machine that might make the world a kinder and more inclusive place for us all. As an artist I try to make theatre that opens up progressive ideas and discussions with audiences. But am I really contributing to society? Or am I just furthering my own career? This is just one of the tricky questions that this play compels me to ask myself.

One thing I do know, is that our next step towards a more humane world, is for us all to learn how to work better together. A big part of that process is listening to each other with empathy and to keep imagining ourselves in each other's shoes. This play has challenged my assumptions, made me confront own my privilege and makes me want to try to understand more. I want to keep trying to understand and empathise with both the straight white men and the non-straight white men of the world.

Neither the cast, the creatives or myself have the answers to the questions that Young Jean Lee asks us in this play. So, we're handing them over to you. We hope you enjoy the show.



YOUNG JEAN LEE

Playwright

Young Jean Lee is a writer, director, and filmmaker who has been called “the most adventurous downtown playwright of her generation” by the New York Times and “one of the best experimental playwrights in America” by Time Out New York. She has written and directed ten shows in New York with Young Jean Lee’s Theater Company, and toured her work to over thirty cities around the world. Her plays have been published by Theatre Communications Group (*Songs of the Dragons Flying to Heaven and Other Plays; The Shipment and Lear; and We’re Gonna Die*) and by Samuel French (*Three Plays by Young Jean Lee*). She is currently under commission from Lincoln Center Theater and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and has written a screenplay commission for Plan B/Paramount Pictures. Her first short film, *Here Come the Girls*, was presented at The Locarno International Film Festival, Sundance Film Festival, and BAMcinemaFest. In 2013, she released her debut album, *We’re Gonna Die*, with her band, Future Wife. Lee is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, two OBIE Awards, a Prize in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, a Doris Duke Performing Artist Award, a Doris Duke Artist Residency, a Foundation for Contemporary Arts grant, and the ZKB Patronage Prize of the Zürcher Theater Spektakel. She has also received funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, the Rockefeller MAP Fund, the Andrew Mellon Foundation, Creative Capital, the Greenwall Foundation, the Jerome Foundation, the New York Foundation for the Arts, the Arts Presenters/Ford Foundation Creative Capacity Grant, the Barbara Bell Cumming Foundation, and the New England Foundation for the Arts: National Theater Project Award.



NESCHA JELK

Director

Nescha is the Resident Director at State Theatre Company. She graduated from the Flinders Drama Centre directing course in 2010 with First Class Honours and a University Medal. In 2010 she won Helpmann Academy’s Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Award.

For State Theatre Company, Nescha has directed *Gorgon, Volpone, Krapp’s Last Tape, Othello, Jesikah and Random*. Other directing credits include *Deluge* (Tiny Bricks) as part of 2016 Adelaide Festival of Arts, *Alice and Peter Grow Up* (Milk Theatre Collective), *Hamlet* (The Actor’s Folio), and *Sepia* (RiAus) which was awarded the 2012 Adelaide Fringe Tour Ready Award.

Nescha has worked extensively as an assistant director for numerous companies including State Theatre Company, Eleventh Hour, Brink Productions, Griffin Theatre Company, Belvoir, Bell Shakespeare Company and Sydney Theatre Company.



VICTORIA LAMB

Set & Costume Designer

Born and based in Adelaide, Victoria was educated at the University of South Australia. This year she designed sets for *Cloudstreet* for the State Opera of SA. For State Theatre Company, Victoria has designed set and costumes for *Othello*, *Kryptonite*, *Maggie Stone*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Speaking in Tongues*, *November*, *Entertaining Mr Sloane*, *King Lear*, *Ghosts*, *Blue/Orange*, *Lion Pig Lion*, *Waiting for Godot*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and *Metro Street* for Adelaide and Korean tour. For Sydney Theatre Company she has designed *Kryptonite* and *Loot*.

Other designs include the opera *Undertow* for the 2004 Adelaide Festival (touring to Budapest and Helsinki) concept design and art direction for the Boho Bar on Unley Road, *The City* for NowYesNow. Also *The Business* (Belvoir Street Theatre), And *No More Shall We Part* (Griffin Theatre Company).

In 2010 Victoria was awarded the national inaugural Kristian Fredrikson Scholarship for Design in the Performing Arts. She has lectured in Production Design at Flinders University and guest lectured at Carnegie Mellon University Australia and Central Saint Martins University of London.



BEN HUGHES

Lighting Designer

Ben is a freelance Lighting Designer; he is also Associate Artistic Director of The Danger Ensemble. His previous La Boite credits include *Medea*, *Samson* (co-production with Belvoir), *A Doll's House*, *Così*, *Statespeare*, *Kitchen Diva*.

As Lighting Designer Ben has over 100 credits including productions with Queensland Theatre Company, Sydney Theatre Company, Melbourne Theatre Company, Belvoir, La Boite Theatre Company, Queensland Ballet, Sydney Festival, Brisbane Festival, Expressions Dance Company, The Danger Ensemble, HotHouse Theatre, The Nest Ensemble, Zen Zen Zo Physical Theatre, JUTE Theatre, Stella Electrika, Queensland Performing Arts Centre, Queensland University of Technology, Phluxus2 Dance Collective, Collusion Music, Gold Coast Arts Centre, Woodford Folk Festival and Kooemba Jdarra. As Associate Lighting Designer his work includes productions with Meryl Tankard and Barrie Kosky. In 2013 Ben was Resident Lighting Designer and in 2011 and 2014 an Affiliate Artist with Queensland Theatre Company. Ben lectures in Lighting Design and Scenography at Queensland University of Technology and is a Professional Member of the Association of Lighting Designers.



BUSTY BEATZ

Composer

Musical Director, composer and sound designer, Kim 'Busty Beatz' Bowers has been making music and theatre for over 20 years. Busty Beatz is a 2016 Artist-in-Residence at La Boite.

A decade of touring, recording and festivals has been immortalized via her contribution to the Big Day Out book *Peace, Love & Brown Rice* and her place in *Women Who Rock*, photographic exhibition of the Victorian Arts Centre. As a Sound Designer/Composer for theatre she has worked with Belvoir, Sydney Theatre Company, Bell Shakespeare and Queensland Theatre Company. Musical Direction includes *East London West Sydney*, Polytoxic's *The Rat Trap* and the internationally acclaimed *Briefs*. This beat-making Mama is Co Artistic Director of Black Honey Company and Queen Bee of the cultural explosion *Hot Brown Honey*. As well as a performer and creator, Busty Beatz is an infamous DJ leading audiences onto dance floors at festivals around the globe.



ALEXIS WEST

Assistant Director

Alexis is an Aboriginal writer, director, collaborator and performer in film, theatre and dance. Her State Theatre Company credits include Assistant Director for *Zoo Story* and a directing secondment on *King Lear*. She has written and directed plays for No Strings Attached Theatre of Disability, Karrikarrinya Theatre Collective and Kurruru Youth Arts.

Alexis has worked with Vital Statistix as part of ADHOCRACY 2015 with *Crawl me Blood* with Willloh S. Weiland, Halcyon McLeod and writing with Philip Kavanagh.

Alexis worked with SA Writers Centre to help deliver Tarnanthi: Pirrku Warrapina in collaboration with Art Gallery of South Australia. She has delivered spoken word performances for Tarnanthi as well as Dirty Words, Soul Lounge, Al Salam Festival, New Zealand Festival of the Arts and Sydney Writers Festival. Alexis is currently collaborating with Alirio Zavarce, Rosalba Clemente and Matt Crook on new/multi/theatre/media/development.

Alexis has written and directed several short documentaries for NITV, produced and presented for the Arts & Community program *Around the Traps* for NITV and been published in several anthologies as well as having her poetry translated into Polish for '*Poetiks*'.



SIMON STOLLERY

Accent Coach

Simon is a graduate of UWS Nepean (Theatre Nepean) and NIDA Voice Studies and has been a vocational trainer of actors in the specialism of voice since 1995, teaching at the Australian Academy of Dramatic Arts (AADA), the National Academy of Singing and Dramatic Art NZ (NASDA), the Actors' College of Theatre and Television (ACTT) and National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA). Since 2009 Simon has been the lecturer in Voice and Speech at Adelaide College of the Arts (AC Arts). Simon has also worked extensively as a Voice and Dialect Coach. Coaching credits for State Theatre Company include *Entertaining Mr. Sloane*, *The Misanthrope*, *The Zoo Story*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Top Girls*, *Blasted*, *Pornography*, *In the Next Room (or the vibrator play)*, *Random*, *Maggie Stone*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Neighbourhood Watch*, *Volpone* and *Betrayal*. Other Voice and Dialect Coach credits include 2013 Adelaide Festival co-production *Thursday* for Brink Productions and English Touring Theatre. Simon was also the Dialect Coach for *Deadline Gallipoli* (Matchbox Pictures).



DUNCAN MAXWELL

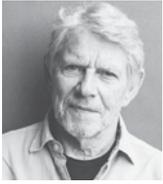
Fight Choreographer

Duncan Maxwell has been involved in athletic performance for most of his life. Growing up in the ski resort of Whistler B.C. Canada, Duncan was immersed in one of the world's great recreation communities where he became an accomplished downhill ski instructor by 15 and provincial 100m champion at 16. Duncan moved to Australia in 1991 to play rugby union and then spent the next several years backpacking around the country doing odd jobs including an 18 month stint as a stage hand with Weber Bros. Circus.

In 1994 Duncan moved to Adelaide where he started a 4 year, full time apprenticeship with Martial Arts Guru Nino Pilla. During this period Duncan competed in several different disciplines including; Tae kwon do, full contact Stick Fighting and All Styles open weight division competitions.

Through MASK (Martial Art Stunt Krew), Duncan completed his level 2 stunt certification and went on to work in live stunt performance shows, short film and music videos with bands such as the Hilltop Hoods. Duncan has worked with State Theatre Company as a stunt coordinator on *Othello*, *The Things We Do For Love*, *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* and *Volpone*.

Duncan enjoys developing stunt choreography and spends most of his time at his fitness centre, The Energy Clinic in Mile End.



ROGER NEWCOMBE

Ed

Roger was born in England in 1941, emigrated to Canada in 1955 then to Australia in 1968. He started out in amateur theatre in 1970 and turned professional in 1972. He has performed with the Queensland Theatre Company, The Old Tote, Nimrod Street Theatre Company, State Theatre Company and many independent theatres.

His State Theatre Company credits include *The Crucible*, *The Great Man*, *Trojan Women*, *The Government Inspector*. Other performances in Adelaide include *The Drawer Boy* and *Educating Rita* at The Bakehouse.

Television credits include *The Box*, *Cop Shop*, *The Restless Years*, *Kingswood Country*, *Blue Heelers* and many more. Films include *Phar Lap*, *Odd Angry Shot*, *Marriage of Figaro*, to name a few.



HUGH PARKER

Matt

Hugh trained as an actor at Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, London.

Previous credits for La Boite Theatre Company include *A Doll's House*, *Pale Blue Dot*, *Julius Caesar*. Previous credits for Queensland Theatre Company include *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Seagull*, *Brisbane*, *The Pitch*, *Kelly*, *Fractions* (co-production with Hothouse Theatre), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *The Clean House* (co-production with Black Swan State Theatre Company), *Betrayal*, *25 Down*.

Other theatre credits include *Hotel Beche de Mer* (The Arts Centre Gold Coast); *1984* (Shake and Stir Theatre co); *The Blind Date Project* (Ride On Theatre); *The Thirty Nine Steps* (The Byre Theatre St Andrews - UK); *Cream of British Comedy* (Teenage Cancer Charity Trust / Steve Coogan - UK); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (The Royal Shakespeare Company - UK). Film credits include *Space/Time*, *Bullets for the Dead*, *My Mistress*, *Fatal Honeymoon*, *Crooked Business*, *Sinbad and the Minotaur*.

Television credits include *Hoges*, *The Family Law*, *Gallipoli*, *Secrets and Lies*, *The Killing Field*, *The Strip*, *Sea Patrol*. UK Television credits include *Vincent*, *Casualty*, *Doctors*, *Monarch of the Glen II*, *EastEnders*, *Smoke*, *Jonathan Creek*, *Broken News*, *2 Pints of Lager and a Packet of Crisps*, *The World According to Bex*, *Wild West*, *15 Storeys High*, *Doctors and Nurses*, *The Office*, *People Like Us*, *Beast*, *The Peter Principle*, *I'm Alan Partridge*, *Black Books*, *Lucky Jim*.

Writing Credits include BBC: *Bruiser*, *The Fast Show* ; Channel 4: *Comedy Nation*.



CHRIS PITMAN

Jake

Chris is a 1997 WAAPA Acting Graduate. His State Theatre Company credits include *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, *Othello*, *The Seagull*, *Babyteeth*, *Speaking in Tongues*, *Toy Symphony*, *Ghosts*. Other selected theatre credits include *Skip Miller's Hit Songs* for Brink; *Our Town*, *Don's Party*, *Boy Gets Girl*, *Republic of Myopia*, *Harbour* and *Love for Love* for Sydney Theatre Company; *A Number*, *Capricornia*, *Sapphires*, *In Our Name*, *Rhinoceros*, *La Ronde* and *Cloudstreet* (Australian and International tours) for Belvoir; *Macbeth* for Melbourne Theatre Company; *The City* for nowyesnow.

Television credits include *Young Lions*, *All Saints*, *Farscape*, *White Collar Blue*, *Go Big*, *Scorched*, *McLeod's Daughters*, *Deadline Gallipoli*.



LUCAS STIBBARD

Drew

Lucas Stibbard makes theatre and performance work. This has included work as an actor, director, writer, dramaturg, teacher and producer. He has toured extensively domestically and internationally. Previous La Boite credits include *Attack of the Attacking Attackers*, *boy girl wall*, *The Danger Age* and *Zig-Zag Street*. Other credits include *The Seagull*, *Macbeth*, *Eating Ice-Cream With Your Eyes Closed*, *Richard II* (Queensland Theatre Company), *Richard III*, *The Alchemist* (Bell Shakespeare), *North By Northwest* (Melbourne Theatre Company), *Grug* (Windmill Theatre) & *Hamlet* (State Theatre Company of South Australia).

He is co-founder of The Escapists collective whose work includes the Helpmann award-nominated *boy girl wall* (co-written with Matthew Ryan, co-directed and performed by Lucas) which has been published by Currency Press and is now in its fourth printing.

Lucas is the outgoing Artistic Director of the Festival of Australian Student Theatre, an Arts Queensland peer and Associate Artist at Queensland Theatre Company, he has been the recipient of numerous awards including the Jean Trundle Memorial Bursary, The Empire Theatre's Brian Boak Memorial Bursary and a NIDA Fellowship. Lucas is currently undertaking a Masters in Cultural Leadership at NIDA.

Lucas is a member of the Backbone Youth Arts Management Committee and Queensland Theatre Company's National Artistic Team.



MERLYNN TONG

Stagehand-in-charge

Merlynn Tong is a Chinese Singaporean Actor and Playwright based in Brisbane, Australia. Some of her recent performances include *Ma Ma Ma Mad* (2015, Wonderland Festival, Brisbane Powerhouse), *The Theory of Everything* (2015, Brisbane Festival), *The Wizards from Oz* (2015, Taiwan, Taoyuan International Children's Festival), *Hot Brown Honey* (2015, Judith Wright Centre), *The C Word* (2014, Dir: Todd MacDonald, Metro Arts), *American Music Club* (2014, Brisbane Festival), *The Golden Show* (2012, Japan, Dairakudakan Dance Group) and hosting *Out of the Box Children's Festival* (2014, QPAC).

As a playwright, she has recently published two of her one-woman shows, *Ma Ma Ma Mad* (2015) and *Blue Bones* (2016). She is currently working with Playlab and Playwriting Australia (Lotus Programme) to create her third play, *Hot Wet Void*, a sticky journey through the confessions of migrants living in humid Singapore.



GABRIELLE HORNHARDT

Stage Manager

Gabrielle graduated from the Adelaide Centre for The Arts in 2005 with an Advanced Diploma in Technical Production (Stage Management). She is currently the Deputy Production Manager at State Theatre Company. Her Stage Management credits for State Theatre Company include *Kryptonite*, *Little Bird – Geelong Tour*, *Pinocchio*, *The Give and Take*, *Little Women* and *The Government Inspector*. Production Manager credits include *Gorgon*, *Volpone* and *This is Where We Live*.

Other Stage Management credits include *Pinocchio*, *Girl Asleep*, *School Dance*, *Fugitive*, *Big Bad Wolf*, *Grug*, *Escape From Peligro Island*, *Girl Who Cried Wolf*, *Nyuntu Ngali* and *The Wizard of Oz* (Windmill Theatre), *Me and My Shadow - USA Tour* (Patch Theatre), *Skeleton* (Larissa McGowan) *Spectra* (Dancenorth) Company Manager credits; *G, Be Your Self – European Tours* (Australian Dance Theatre).

Gabrielle has also worked on a wide range of events and festivals in Coordinator and Stage Management roles including the Adelaide Festival, WOMAdelaide Adelaide Film Festival, Australia's Performing Arts Market, Adelaide Cabaret Festival, Adelaide Fringe Festival, Feast Festival, Adelaide International Guitar Festival and OzAsia Festival.





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