



46

M E D E A

BY EURIPIDES IN A NEW VERSION BY SUZIE MILLER

PROGRAM

Presented by La Boite Theatre Company
30 May - 20 June 2015 at the Roundhouse Theatre

CAST

Jason
Glauce/Nurse
Medea

Damien Cassidy
Helen Christinson
Christen O'Leary

Chorus

Simon Carl
Connor D'Netto
Annika Hinrichs
Yasmin Powell



PRODUCTION TEAM

Writer **Suzie Miller**

Director **Todd MacDonald**

Set Designer **Sarah Winter**

Costume Designer **Nathalie Ryner**

Costume Cutter/Maker **Bianca Bulley**

Costume Cutter/Maker **Leigh Buchanan**

Makeup Consultant **Katrina Anger**

Lighting Designer **Ben Hughes**

Lighting Design Secondment **Christine Felmingham**

Composer **Gordon Hamilton**

Stage Manager **Heather O'Keeffe**

Assistant Stage Manager **Maddie Nixon**

Stage Management Secondment **Nicole Neil**

Rehearsal Photography **Dylan Evans**

Special thanks to **Dogstar, Indooroopilly Golf Club, Alistair Murray, Opera Queensland, SHOW technology & Melody Woodnutt.**

PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTES

Suzie Miller

In an era where women in politics or positions of power are constantly attacked by the Australian media as monsters or crazy women, I wanted to prise open the character of the ultimate female politician, explore her strength, her power, her capacity for terror and need for justice.

Rather than being limited to merely a monster or a crazy jilted lover, I wanted to look beneath her skin, allow her to tell her story, and find the complex woman and mother within it.

It was Euripides who invented the version of *Medea* well known to the theatre; yet it is modern television that has brought us the strategic, political and brilliant women of the modern era, who can grab power where it is available, yet twist accepted strategies inside out (think Robin Wright playing Claire Underwood in the *US House of Cards*; various plot lines in *Game of Thrones*), and I feel the time is right to explore a feminist interrogation of Euripides' version. Rather than allowing an audience to dismiss *Medea* as wild and crazy, I wanted to explore the range of elements in her character, her inner life and politic, and to avoid underestimating this multidimensional woman.

All the research lead me to a mightily intelligent *Medea*; strategic, ambitious, political and passionate; sharp, quick and strong. Indeed the passionate union of *Medea* and *Jason* is one that allows her to invest in the very empire building she was made for. In *Jason* she has met her ambitious and strategic equal, as well as a lover and passionate love match that was indeed an unlikely union between the foreign dark and misunderstood outsider *Medea*, and the all-Greek golden boy *Jason*.

When *Jason* betrays *Medea*, she is outraged – for he has betrayed her as a husband, but more importantly he has also betrayed his oath, their pact, their very empire, and in his desertion denied *Medea* all sources of power in this patriarchal Greek world of Corinth. So too has he set in motion the fate of his sons, who are now, unacknowledged by him, relegated a latent threat in this land.

We know from her past deeds that *Medea* will not abide by injustice or broken oaths and will be compelled to balance the scales. So we watch as this modern character plots to cut *Jason* down and to protect her sons from the horrors of torture and death. For the first time we

also watch what Medea will do when faced with the woman that is now her rival – Princess Glauce. While absent as a young innocent in Euripides version, the Princess Glauce is brought face to face with Medea in this version, wielding her own power and strategies. Utilising research that suggests the daughter of Creon was a motherless princess schooled by Medea in courtly ways, we see that this young student has grown up to challenge her teacher, and we watch a power struggle between two women both hungry for power.

Audiences for all time have been fascinated and horrified by Medea's most famous deed, so what happens when we weave that same terrible act around this complex character of a woman who existed well before our modern times? When we put Medea in a position where her children are about to be torn limb from limb by angry crowds, is it not the most compassionate thing she can offer them – a calm, kind and loving death? Indeed this is what the infanticide defence in our modern criminal law is based upon.

In this version Medea does not hover as a wild terrifying beast but grasps ownership of her actions and her power, deciding to live on afterwards, and bear witness to her horrific deed, mourn her sons and just as surely own her own narrative rather than letting men write her story for her. Underestimate her power at one's peril.

In Todd MacDonald I have found a director who embraced this furious version of Medea, and interrogated it with great insight and talent. Christen O'Leary has embodied Medea and found expression for the character with breathtaking power, while Helen Christinson embodied Glauce with womanly strength and Damien Cassidy put the grit and passion into Jason himself. I thank them all along with Gordon Hamilton for the beautiful chorus, the creative design team, stage management team and indeed all of La Boite Theatre Company, a terrific Australian company, engaging with new work and taking exciting risks.



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Todd MacDonald

How and why do we keep the classics relevant? What do they offer us now? Certainly there are undeniable universal truths about the human condition that are ageless – and the classics can offer us an opportunity to remember our struggles and triumphs.

In *Medea* the trials of these people are so intense and confounding that we are drawn to them as to a horrific accident – I suppose to reaffirm our own lives, to reassure ourselves of just how hard life could and can be.

As a father I am constantly confronted with how to raise our girls in this world. How do you empower them and ensure they are not abused by a world that still preferences men, in a world that holds you to a conformity of gender, sexuality and basic equality and a country where today more than one woman is killed every week by domestic violence. The strains of the modern era sees infanticide still making headlines and parents pushed to the limits of decency and 'civilized' behaviour. *Medea* wrestles with this, rips it open and stares at it. It's never a justifiable act but we must consider its truth and accept its reality and ask "how has it come to this?" Indeed it is too easy to make *Medea* "mad" - it is far more difficult to try to understand or unpack her reality.

In this production we have chosen not to totally domesticise or modernise the dialogue and setting instead to trust and undress the realities of the situation. To use the raw human voice to cut through to an audience, in the hope that it will resonate in your skin a little longer.

Thank you to Chris Kohn for initiating this commission with the wonderful Suzie Miller. I have been privileged to work with an amazing team on this production- most for the first time and I want to thank them and commend them for their commitment, vulnerability and hard work.







Suzie Miller

Playwright

Suzie is a multi-award winning Australian/International playwright who has recently been in residence and/or attached to the following theatres: Ex Machina Quebec with Robert Lepage (2012), National Theatre in London (2011 and 2009), National Theatre of Scotland (2013), Ransom Theatre in Ireland (2009), Critical Stages NSW (2013), Theatre Gargantua Toronto (2013), and was the 2012 year long resident writer at Griffin Theatre in Australia. She is currently commissioned by companies in Australia (NSW, WA and QLD), England, Scotland and Canada.

Miller has had over 30 productions of her works in theatres and festivals around the world in Australia (Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth), UK, Ireland, Canada, London and NY. She was educated at NIDA, has an MA from UNSW in Theatre, an Honours degree in Science and a Masters of Law. Recent shows include *DUST* Black Swan Theatre company Perth (2014), *onefivezeroseven* PIAF (2014), *Driving Into Walls* PIAF & Sydney Opera House (2013); *Caress/Ache* Griffin theatre Sydney, (2015); *The Sacrifice Zone* Theatre Gargantua Toronto (2013); *Medea* for La Boite theatre in Brisbane (2015), an opera with Queensland Opera and a London world premier production of *Two Geordie Boys*.

Amongst other awards and nominations Suzie has won the 2008 National Kit Denton Fellowship for writing with courage; shortlisted for the 2010 and 2008 Australian Writers Guild Award for drama, Qld Premier's Awards, Rodney Seaborne Awards and won an AWGIE in 2013; shortlisted for the Griffin Award 2009; Winner of Inscription 2009; and 2006: mentored by Edward Albee 2009; 2012 Best New Play Irish Times; Winner 2008 New York Fringe Festival 'Overall Excellence Award for Outstanding Playwriting'; Arts Hub top 10 productions 2014 and in 2005 winner of the Theatrelab award. Productions of her plays have won 9 equity awards, various Helpman awards and have been in the yearly awards of media lists. She sits on the theatre committee of the AWG and the boards of various theatre companies.



Todd MacDonald

Director

Queensland Theatre Company: Artistic Associate (2011 – 2014). As Director: *The Mountaintop*, *Kelly*, *An Oak Tree*. As Actor: *The Button Event* (co-devised with Bagryana Popov), *Venus in Fur*. **Other Credits:**

As Director: *Conquest of the South Pole* Assistant: *Sleeping Beauty*.

As Actor: *Progress and Melancholy*, *Bare Witness*, *Strangeland*, *Construction of the Human Heart*, *Blowback*, *Ride*, *Julia 3*, *Language of the Gods*.

For Companies: Not Yet It's Difficult, Melbourne; Playbox Theatre, Company B Belvoir, Melbourne Theatre Company, Railway Street Theatre Company, Melbourne International Arts Festival, Adelaide Festival. **Film:** *The King*, *Salem's Lot*, *On the Beach*, *Sahara*, *Belladonna*, *The Jammed*, *Guru Wayne*. **Television:** *The Secret Life of Us*, *Tangle*, *Satisfaction*, *Rush*, *Blue Heelers*, *Neighbours* and *Bed of Roses*. **Positions:** Current Artistic Director – La Boite Theatre Company, Co-founder and Artistic Director – The Store Room Theatre, Melbourne.

Awards: Green Room Award - Outstanding Contribution to Fringe, Green Room Award – Best Male Performer *Progress and Melancholy*, Matilda Nomination – Best Actor *Venus in Fur*.





Damien Cassidy

Jason

Damien is a broadly experienced writer, performer and creative producer. For La Boite he last appeared in 2014's *A Doll's House* for which he received a Matilda Award. Screen performances include roles in *Kokoda*, *Sea Patrol*, *The Strip* and the shorts *Seersucker* and *When the Tide Turns* and *Clowntown* which he also wrote and produced.

As an event producer Damien has developed and presented festival works, regional tours, music programs and a range of other live media. He has worked as a producer for some of Queensland's flagship cultural organisations including Queensland Theatre Company, Brisbane Festival and Brisbane Powerhouse - where he produced the 2014 World Theatre Festival.





Helen Christinson

Glauce/Nurse

Helen is a graduate of the QUT Creative Industries Bachelor of Fine Arts Acting program. In 2014, she played Nora Helmer in *A Doll's House* for La Boite and Brisbane Festival, her performance earning her a Matilda Award for Best Actress. Other theatre credits include *Caress/Ache* and *The Cold Child* at the Griffin Theatre, *Secret Bridesmaid's Business* for Kay & McLean Productions, *Macbeth*, *Private Lives* and *John Gabriel Borkman* for QTC, *The 39 Steps*, *Apologia* and *The Joy Of Text* for MTC and *The 39 Steps Australasian Tour* for Tinderbox Productions. On television Helen has featured in *Through My Eyes* and the ABC's *Sisters Of War*. Short films credits include *Stay Awake*, *The Pitch* and *Misfortune*. Helen has appeared in several feature films including *Reef n Beef*, *Harrisville*, *Endurance Island*, *The Underdog's Tale* and *Rapid Fear*. She has been nominated twice for Matilda Best Actress Awards, in 2006 for *The Drowning Bride* at La Boite and in 2010 for her *Lady Macbeth* at QTC.





Christen O'Leary

Medea

Theatre: La Boite Theatre Company: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. HIT Productions: *Bombshells* (Tour). Queensland Performing Arts Centre/Queensland Theatre Company: *End of the Rainbow*. Queensland

Theatre Company: *Gloria*, *Bombshells*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *The Game of Love and Chance*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Beaux Stratagem*, *Gilgamesh*, *The Threepenny Opera*, *The Woman Before*, *The Sunshine Club*, *Seven Little Australians*, *The Crucible*, *A Month in the Country*. Melbourne Theatre Company: *Ruby Moon*, *Don Juan in Soho*, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, *The World's Wife*, *Urinetown*, *Hinterland*, *Laughter on the 23rd Floor*, *Man the Balloon*, *Company*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *A Little Night Music*, *Così*, *Wednesday to Come*, *Assassins*. The Production Company: *The Boy From Oz*, *High Society*, *Hello Dolly*. Malthouse Theatre: *Porn Cake*, *Goodbye Vaudeville Charlie Mudd*. Sydney Theatre Company: *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, *Urinetown*, *Threepenny Opera*. **Film:** *Pinch Me*.

Television: *Wentworth*, *Rush*, *Neighbours*, *Blue Heelers*, *MDA*, *Worst Best Friends*, *Crashburn*, *Seachange*, *State Coroner*, *Raw FM*. Awards: Christen has won a Gold Matilda Award for *End of the Rainbow*, as well as receiving a Helpmann Award nomination. She won a Helpmann Award for her performance in *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* and has been nominated for *Goodbye Vaudeville Charlie Mudd* and *Urinetown The Musical*. She has been nominated for seven Greenroom Awards, winning twice for her work in *A Little Night Music* and *Company*. **Training:** Diploma of Arts [Creative.]USQ.



The Australian Voices Chorus

It is with high artistic energy that The Australian Voices (now in its 21st year) commission and perform the works of Australian composers.

Recently The Australian Voices have recorded new works intended for “performance” on YouTube. Hamilton’s composition *The 9 Cutest Things That Ever Happened* (2013) has been viewed over one million times. In 2014 they made international headlines with a video of Rob Davidson’s *Not Now, Not Ever!* (2014), a musicalisation of Julia Gillard’s ‘misogyny’ speech.

Their album for Warner Classics (2012) was observed by Gramophone Magazine to “boast a crisp, resonant delivery of the sonic goods under Hamilton’s confident direction.” In 2013 they released a songbook with Edition Peters.

Recently the group has brought their distinct sound to China, the UK, Germany, USA and Palestine. In 2015 they will collaborate with Topology in *Unrepresentative Swill*, a concert inspired by prime-ministerial speeches.





Sarah Winter Set Designer

Sarah is a designer, performance-maker and installation artist with “a refined understanding of visual dynamics and poetics” (Time Off). Her practice focuses on memory and the audience experience in immersive installations and the creation of lived, participatory environments. She has recently completed her PhD in Performance Studies at QUT investigating solo participatory installation environments. **As a solo artist:** Co-designer of *From Home, With Love* for SLQ Distant Lines exhibition, Site Designer for *Bleach Festival* (2015), Designer for *Studio 4101 Opera Qld* (2015), Presenter at TaPRA Conference for Scenography, Royal University of Holloway London (2014), Designer for *Deluge* for Brisbane Festival/Motherboard Productions/Korea tour Seoul SIDance Seoul International Dance Festival (2014) and Seoul Foundation for the Arts Korean tour (2015), created, designed and facilitated *A library for the end of the world* for Anywhere Theatre Festival (2014); Site designer at Metro Arts for Brisbane Festival (2013); Food artist on *The Last Supper* (Reckless Sleepers/WTF2013); S.E.A.S residency at Nes Res in Iceland; *Tend & Sow* hanging garden design (2012) at Queensland Theatre Company with horticulturalist Alister Murray. Curator and site designer for *Cross-Stitch : Night of the Dead Trees* (2012) at Metro Arts, *A dinner with gravity* at La Boite (2012). La Boite Associate Artist (2011) performative installations *1000 ways to say I miss you* (2011), and *a dinner with gravity* (2011). **With collaborator Tess Mallet:** *Venn* (2009) as part of Brisbane Festival’s Under the Radar. **With the Escapists:** *Elephant Gun* (The Escapists/Brisbane Powerhouse WTF2011), *Elephant Gun* (The Escapists/Brisbane Powerhouse WTF2012), *boy girl wall* (The Escapists/Metro Arts/La Boite/Critical Stages Tour), *Neridah Waters Is Dodgy* (The Escapists/Metro Arts Free Range Festival), *Suburbia* (The Escapists/Metro Arts). Awards: 2011 Matilda Award for Devising and Producing (*boy girl wall*). 2011 Matilda Commendation for Best Independent Production (*boy girl wall*). 2011 Matilda Commendation for Best New Australian Work Shortlist (*boy girl wall*). 2011 Groundling Award for Best Production (*boy girl wall*).



Nathalie Ryner

Costume Designer

Nathalie is a Brisbane based costume designer/supervisor who has worked in the performing arts industry for over 15 years. With a Fashion Design Diploma from Ecole Jeoffrin Byrs International Paris, and a Diploma in Theatre Costume from S.I.T. Nathalie's costume film and television credits include; *Star Wars: Episode III – Revenge of the Sith* (2005), *The Matrix Reloaded* (2003), *The Matrix Revolutions* (2003), *Dynasty: The Making of a Guilty Pleasure* (2005), *The Frontier* (2012) and both local and U.S productions of the children's television program Hi-5. Focussing on live performance Nathalie has worked for companies such as Opera Australia, Bangarra, La Boite Theatre Company, Bazmark Productions, QPAC, Belvoir Street Theatre, The English National Ballet, Expressions Dance Company, Jupiters Casino, SEL Ltd, Opera Queensland, Circa, Elision Ensemble, and Queensland Theatre Company. Her work has taken her to Russia and South East Asia. Nathalie was recently nominated for a Matilda Award for her co-design for the Danger Ensemble's production of *Caligula*.



Ben Hughes

Lighting Designer

Ben is a freelance Lighting Designer; he is also Associate Artistic Director of The Danger Ensemble. For La Boite Ben has created the lighting for *Samson* (co-production with Belvoir), *A Doll's House*, *Cosi*, *Statespeare*, *Kitchen Diva*. Other lighting credits include Queensland Theatre Company: *The Button Event*, *The Effect* (co-production with Sydney Theatre Company), *The Mountaintop*, *Black Diggers* (co-production with Sydney Festival), *Design for Living*, *1001 Nights*, *Trollop* (as Co-Director/Designer), *The Lost Property Rules*, *Orbit*, *Mother Courage and Her Children*, *The Pitch & The China Incident*, *Kelly*, *Head Full of Love*, *Fractions* (co-production with Hothouse Theatre), *Orphans*, *An Oak Tree*, *Sacre Bleu*, *Fat Pig*, *Let The Sunshine* (co-production with Melbourne Theatre Company), *The Crucible*, *25 Down*, *Stones in His Pockets*, *I Am My Own Wife*, *John Gabriel Borkman*, *The Estimator*, *Private Fears in Public Places*, *Man Equals Man*, *Waiting for Godot*, *Eating Icecream with Your Eyes Closed*, *The Exception and The Rule*, *Ruby Moon*; The Danger Ensemble: *CALIGULA* (also co-set designer), *The Wizard of Oz* (co-production with La Boite & Brisbane Festival), *Sons of Sin*, *Children of War*, *Loco Maricon Amor*, *The Hamlet Apocalypse*; Expressions Dance Company: *The Host*, *Carmen Sweet*, *Propel*; Queensland Ballet: *Flourish*, *Giselle*, *A Classical Celebration*, *...with Attitude*, *...live Attitude*; The Nest Ensemble: *Home*; Zen Zen Zo Physical Theatre: *Cabaret*, *Dracula*, *Zeitgeist*, *My Sublime Shadow*; Woodford Folk Festival: *Fire Event 2012 & 2013*; Cre8ion: *Fluff*. As Associate Lighting Designer credits include *The Navigator* (Elision Ensemble), *The Oracle* (Meryl Tankard), *Aida* (Opera Queensland), *Toy Symphony*, *Heroes* (Queensland Theatre Company), *Where The Heart Is* (Expressions Dance Company). In 2013 Ben was Resident Lighting Designer and in 2014 and 2011 an Affiliate Artist with Queensland Theatre Company. Ben currently lectures in Lighting Design and Technical Production at Queensland University of Technology and is a professional member of the Association of Lighting Designers.



Gordon Hamilton

Composer & Sound Designer

Described by conductor and broadcaster Graham Abbott as a “powerhouse of musical ideas,” Gordon Hamilton is one of Australia’s most exciting young composers. He is the artistic director of The Australian

Voices and a sought-after composer by professional orchestras and choirs.

Having freelanced for five years in Bremen, Germany, Gordon moved back to his homeland in 2009 to take over as Artistic Director of one of Australia’s foremost vocal ensembles, The Australian Voices. Of their 2013 US tour the New York Times commented “... it was as if the gates of heaven had opened.”

Gordon’s 2014 work *Ghosts in the Orchestra* (commissioned by the Queensland Symphony Orchestra) sees a choir stand among the orchestra players, prompting them with sung instructions. In 2015 QSO premiered a second commission, *The Trillion Souls*.

Gordon’s 50-minute choral opera *Moon* (2011), relates the story of Diana the lonely moon who sends out her moonbeams in search of love. *Moon* has toured Australia, Germany and to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

Under a more cheeky guise, Gordon reassembles the contributions of unwitting collaborators in ways never intended. In mock-reverence to Ke\$ha, his *Tra\$h Ma\$h* (for choir, 2012) reassembles fleeting grabs from pop songs. His *Toy Story 3 = Awesome!* (for choir, 2011) – lauded by The Sydney Morning Herald as “one of the coolest/nerdiest/funniest music videos doing the cyber rounds” – sets a stream of inane consciousness as spat out by his own Facebook news feed.

In 2013 Gordon composed the score for La Boite’s production of *The Glass Menagerie*, directed by David Berthold, and in 2014 was the Composer and Sound Designer of *Pale Blue Dot*, directed by Michael Fultcher.



Heather O'Keeffe

Stage Manager

Since Graduating from QUT's Bachelor of Fine Arts (Technical Production) in 2013, Heather has enjoyed a strong relationship with La Boite, previously working as an Assistant Stage Manager on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Pale Blue Dot* and *Cosi*. While *Medea* marks her debut as Stage Manager at La Boite, Heather has previous stage managed for Company 27 (*Jingle*) & Lost Boys Theatre Company; (*How to Succeed In Buisness*, *A Very Potter Musical*)

Heather's Assistant Stage Management credits include; Brisbane Baroque Festival; *Faramondo*, Queensland Ballet; *The Nutcracker*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Coppelia* and *Coppelia G20 Riverstage*, Opera Queensland; *The Perfect American*, G20 Cultural event, shake & stir theatre co; *Wuthering Heights*, Queensland Theatre Company; *Orbit*, Theatre Residency Week. As a Secondment, she worked on Opera Australia's *Partenope* & *Ring Cycle*, and QTC's *End of the rainbow*.



Maddie Nixon

Assistant Stage Manager

Maddie is a Brisbane based Stage Manager, who has recently started undertaking roles in writing and dramaturgy. In 2015 she will be participating in the Australian Theatre for Young People's *Fresh Ink* program and is undertaking dramaturgy mentorships under Kathryn Kelly and David Burton. Her credits include **Stage Manager:** Queensland Theatre Company's *Seven Stages of Grieving*, *Saison de L'amour*, and the 2014 Queensland Premier's Drama Awards; La Boite Indie's *Hedonism's Second Album*, *Awkward Conversation's Medea Redux*, *Imaginary Theatre's The Voice in the Walls*, and The 2014 King George Square *Lighting of the Christmas Tree*. **Assistant Stage Manager:** Queensland Theatre Company's *Black Diggers*. **Producer/ Dramaturg:** *Four Stripes* and Adelaide Fringe *The Show Must Go On*. **Assistant Dramaturg:** Metro Arts and Victoria Carles's *What Was Left*. **Contributing Writer:** Digi Youth Atrs' *The Children's Monologues*. **Training:** Bachelor of Arts (Drama) - QUT.





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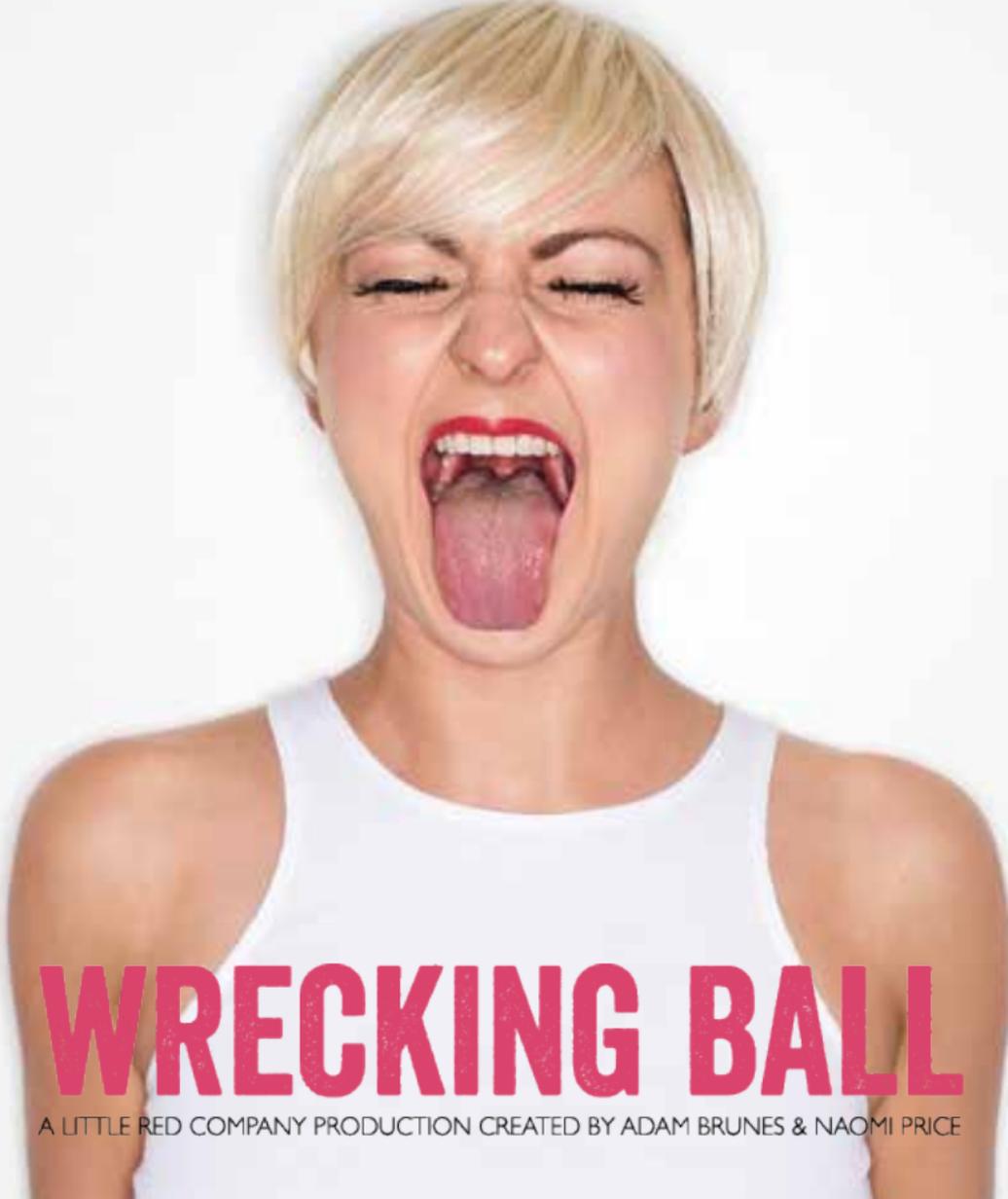
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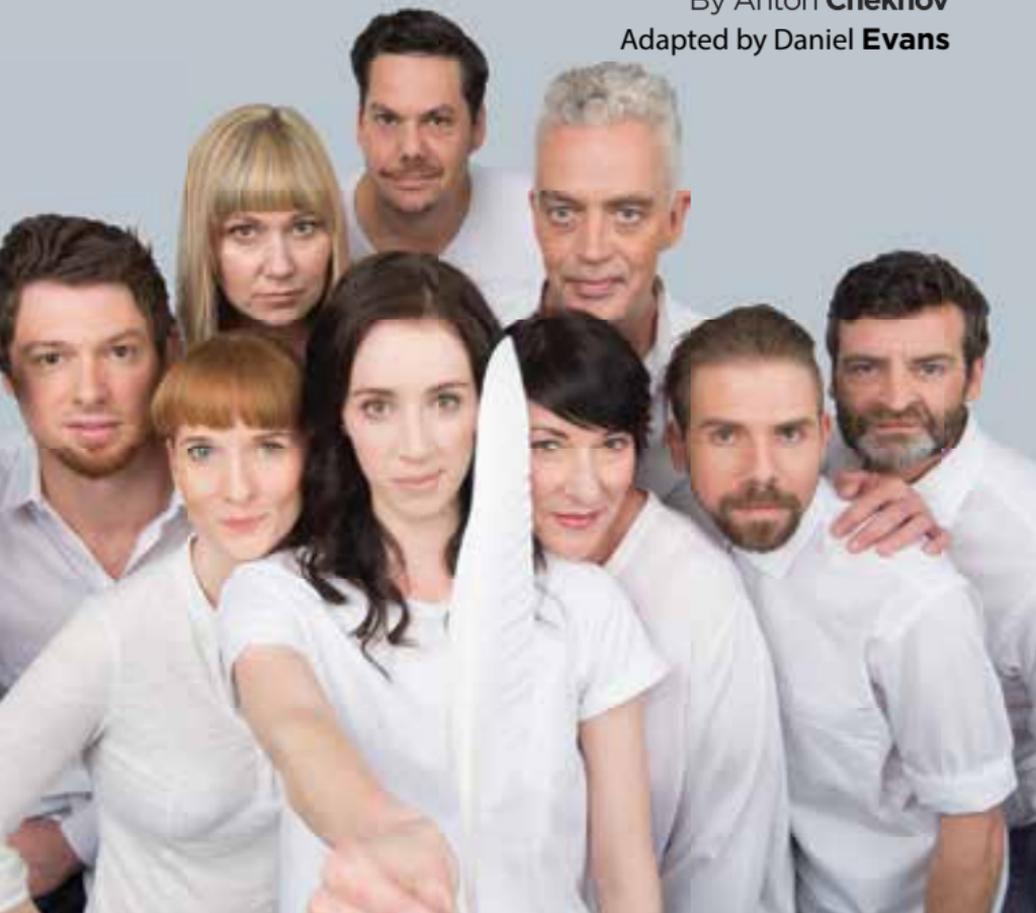


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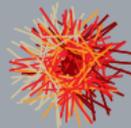


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