

**NEW
THEATRE**

**THE
SILVER GULL
PLAY AWARD
2024**

MONDAY 14 OCTOBER 2024



THE SILVER GULL PLAY AWARD 2024

WELCOME

Louise Fischer, Artistic Director, New Theatre
Helen Tonkin, Literary Manager, New Theatre

READINGS OF EXTRACTS FROM THE SHORTLISTED PLAYS

Directed by Joseph Tanti

Actors: Saif Alawadi, Kate Bookallil, Barry French,
Luisa Galloway, Will Mears and Helen Tonkin

WINNER OF THE SILVER GULL PLAY AWARD 2024 ANNOUNCED

2024 SHORTLISTED PLAYS AND PLAYWRIGHTS

6069 and Counting by James Balian and Roger Vickery

Fortress by Erica J. Brennan

Noah's Ark by Champion Decent

Rehearsing Julie by Noel Hodda

Roslyn Gardens by David McLaughlin

Macaroni and Dead Things by Miranda Michalowski

THE JUDGES

New Theatre's Play Assessors Panel (John Keightley, Annie Bilton, Michael Briggs,
Douglas Cairns, Susan Jordan, Sahn Millington, Rayma Watkinson)

Joy Minter (Sponsor of The Silver Gull Play Award)

Louise Fischer (Artistic Director, New Theatre)

Margaret Thanos (Artistic Associate, New Theatre)

Helen Tonkin (Literary Manager, New Theatre; Curator, The Silver Gull Play Award)

Saro Lusty Cavallari (Freelance director & writer; Artistic Director, Montagu Basement)

Patrick Howard (Freelance theatre-maker; Arts on Tour Program Manager)

Siobhan Lawless (actor; Co-Artistic Director, Flight Path Theatre)

THE SILVER GULL PLAY AWARD IS GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY JOY MINTER

Hero image: © Michael Tonkin

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the country on which we meet today,
the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, and recognise their continuing connection
to land, waters and culture. We pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

THE SILVER GULL PLAY AWARD

The Silver Gull Play Award was established by Paul Gilchrist and Daniela Giorgi of subtluance theatre in 2015, with the generous sponsorship of Joy Minter, who continues her support to this day. After five years, New Theatre was thrilled to take over the administration of the award in 2020.

Open to playwrights over 18 years of age and resident in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, the award seeks to recognise unpublished, unproduced scripts of 60 minutes or more duration, that speak to New Theatre's ethos of 'Plays With a Passion'.

In the nine years of its history, many of the plays originally entered for the award have gone on to be realised in full productions both in Sydney and interstate. These include: *Superheroes* by Mark Rogers at Griffin, *Between The Streetlight and the Moon* by Melita Rowston at KXT, *The Block Universe* by Sam O' Sullivan at Old 505, *TickTickBoom* by Melissa Lee Speyer, produced by subtluance, and *This, This is Mine* by Duncan Ragg which was presented in Sydney and Melbourne as a site-specific event in apartments.

New Theatre's support of new writing goes beyond simply curating and hosting these awards. Over the past two years, we have mounted full production of five plays from previous years' competitions.

In January 2022, New Theatre produced two plays entered into the 2020 competition: *The Park* by Simon Thomson and *The Chocolate Roster* by Brooke Robinson; in July we produced the world premiere of the 2020 winner, *Gods and Little Fishes* by Jamie Oxenbould and Richard Sydenham; and in September, as part of the Sydney Fringe Festival, we produced the world premiere of the 2021 winner, *The Other End of the Afternoon* by Bokkie Robertson. In July 2023, we produced the world premiere of *Off the Record* by Chris Aronsten, which was shortlisted in 2021.

Helen Tonkin
Literary Manager, New Theatre; Curator, The Silver Gull Play Award



Gods and Little Fishes. Photo: Bob Seary



JAMES BALIAN

James is an Australian/Armenian from Baghdad, Iraq who arrived in Sydney as a teenager. He speaks English, Armenian and Arabic. Since graduating with a BA (Communications), James has enjoyed a rich and varied creative career. Recent stage credits include co-writing with Roger Vickery: *A Nest of Skunks* (2016) and *Mum Me and the IED* (2018). His monologue, *Crossing the Bridge*, was selected for the 2018 LA Raw Bites Road-Trip Show. In 2014 he produced his play *Brother Daniel* at the Tap Gallery. For the Sydney Fringe Festival, he wrote and directed two plays, the *Viagra Monologues* and *The New Deal*. His film credits include writing

(and directing) *Saturday Night*, a feature film screened on SBS and selected for the San Jose Cinequest Film Festival; *Thank You Jack*, a telemovie directed by Rolf de Heer; *An Electric Day*, a teleplay (both screened on ABC TV) and five documentaries. James is currently developing various projects for Film, TV and Stage.



ROGER VICKERY

Roger grew up in country towns and now lives in Sydney on unceded Gadigal land. He has won many major awards for fiction, poetry, plays, scripts and legal texts, and his work has been published/performed/screened in Australia, Ireland, UK, USA and SE-Asia. In 2023, he won the Marjorie Barnard Short Story Award, was a runner up in the Irish-based Fish International Short Story Prize and was shortlisted for the Bridport Poetry Prize. His plain English textbook on business law has sold more than 160,000 copies. His previous stage collaborations with James Balian: *A Nest of Skunks* and *Mum and Me and the I.E.D*, revolve around

future refugees on the run, and PTSD in Australian Afghanistan soldiers. Both were inspired by two of his award-winning stories.



ERICA J BRENNAN

Erica is a writer, director, performer and a proud Gamilaroi woman living on Gadigal country. She holds a Bachelor of Performance from Theatre Nepean (WSU 2008) and a Master of Applied Theatre Studies (UNE 2019). Her writing credits include *A Feat Incomplete* (2013), short works *Hero* and *Companion* (2017), *This is Not Mills & Boon* (2017) and *The Hero Leaves One Tooth* (2023). Her plays have been read at Storytellers Festival in both 2022 and 2023. Her eco-noir animation project *Pregnant Detective* was developed with a Fresh Start Grant from the ABC. She received a Highly Commended for the Griffin Award in 2024 for *Jurassic Bark*, an

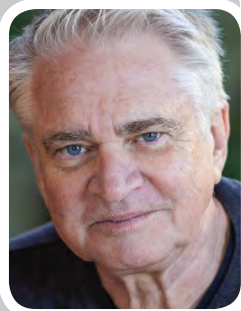
action-adventure play reimagining the rescue of the Wollemi pine trees from the 2019 super fires from a First Nations perspective. In 2024, she was an artist in residence with the Ethics Centre for a new solo work *Better She Was Never Born*, unpacking the pervasiveness of pronatalism. She has also completed residencies for new works with Shopfront Theatre PACT Space Program, The Sydney Fringes Artist in Isolation Residency and First Stories Festival with Theatre Works. She is a founding member and lead devising artist for physical theatre ensemble Ninefold (est. 2012) and has performed in and directed works for a variety of companies and events.



CAMPION DECENT

Campion is a playwright and dramaturg. His most recent play, *Unprecedented* premiered at HotHouse Theatre in 2023 and was subsequently shortlisted for the Nick Enright Prize for Playwriting at the 2024 NSW Premier's Literary Awards. Earlier work (including *The Campaign*, *Unholy Ghosts*, *Embers*, *Baby X*, *Shootings*, and *Three Winters Green*) has been produced by, among others, Sydney Theatre Company, Griffin Independent, HotHouse Theatre, ABC Radio National, Playbox Theatre, Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras, Tasmanian Theatre Company and White Box Theatre. Campion has been awarded an AWGIE and the Queensland

Premier's Literary Award for Drama Script (*Embers*), the Rodney Seaborn Playwrights Award (*Unholy Ghosts*), and Best New Writing at the Tasmanian Theatre Awards (*The Campaign*). As a dramaturg and/or script assessor, Campion has worked for the Australian National Playwrights' Centre/Playwriting Australia, Griffin Theatre, HotHouse Theatre, Malthouse, NIDA and STC. He has also worked in the arts in a variety of other roles, including Artistic Director of HotHouse Theatre, Literary Manager at STC, Artistic Director of Next Wave Festival, and Festival Director for SGLMG. He is a graduate of the NIDA playwrights' studio and holds a BCA from the University of Wollongong, an MA (Theatre Studies) from the University of NSW, and a PhD from La Trobe University.



NOEL HODDA

Writing produced includes the plays *The Secret House* (Griffin; Hole In The Wall; Playbox; National Theatre Drama School), *Half Safe* (Riverina Theatre Co; Griffin Theatre Co), *Photographs* (Charles Sturt University), *On The Public Record* (University of Wollongong), *Across The Water* (Valley Artists), *Never a Moment's Peace* (East Coast Theatre Co) and *The Sculpture Garden* (Valley Artists) and for television episodes of the acclaimed ABC medical drama *GP*. The short film *Norma* was adapted from his play of the same name. His play *Later* (now known as *Across The Water*) represented Australia at the prestigious Banff playRites Colony

in Canada where it received universal praise from the selection committee. His play *In This Light* premiered at Flight Path Theatre in 2022. He has been dramaturge on numerous institutional and private projects. Noel has also enjoyed 45 years as a professional actor after graduating from NIDA in 1980. He was a founding year member of The Riverina Theatre Co. and is an Honorary Life Member of Griffin Theatre Co. of which he is an ex-Board Member, Chair of the Board and Director of D-Week.



DAVID MCLAUGHLIN

David is a Sydney based actor and writer. He trained in performance at Theatre Nepean and has a BA in English literature and drama. He has devised and performed two solo shows, *The Cabin* and *Talking Deads* for the Mardi Gras and Midsumma Festivals, and has collaborated on various other comedy shows, including *Tangara* for the Sydney and Melbourne Comedy Festivals and *Monster/Woman* for the Melbourne Writers' Festival. *Roslyn Gardens* is his second full length play, with a third in development.



MIRANDA MICHALOWSKI

Miranda is a writer and performer living on unceded Gadigal land. She is passionate about telling heartfelt, funny and strange stories about women and queer characters. In 2021, Miranda was selected as one of 20 young writers for the esteemed ATYP National Studio. Her first play, *Young Bodies/Somebody's*, debuted at Flight Path Theatre in 2022 and is published by Playlab, with recent productions on the Central Coast and in Brisbane. Miranda's second play, *Saturday Girls*, was shortlisted for the Rodney Seaborn Playwright's Award and debuted at Belvoir Downstairs in 2023, leading to a mentorship with acclaimed playwright Suzie Miller. Miranda was

recently selected for ATYP's 2024 Fresh Ink program. She is currently developing comedy projects across stage and screen, including a magical realist play about pregnancy, *The Kid*.

A photograph of a theater production. Three actors are in a scene. One man in a top hat and pink shirt looks towards the camera. Another man in a grey suit and glasses is in the foreground, looking down. A woman in a dark jacket is on the left, looking towards the camera. The scene is lit with warm stage lights.

The Other End of the Afternoon. Photo: Troy Kent

WHO'S WHO AT NEW THEATRE 2024

STAFF

THEATRE MANAGER &
PRODUCTION COORDINATOR
Gemma Greer

PUBLICIST
Alice Livingstone

TECHNICAL MANAGER
Mehran Mortezaei

FRONT OF HOUSE MANAGERS
Eddy S Dharmadji (Coordinator)
Harlee Timms
Marica Fumanti

PLAY ASSESSORS

John Keightley (Coordinator)
Annie Bilton
Michael Briggs
Doug Cairns
Susan Jordan
Sahn Millington
Rayma Watkinson
Raymond Patman (Administrator)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

PRESIDENT
Rosane McNamara

VICE PRESIDENT
Elizabeth Ivory

TREASURER
Michael Pedersen

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
Louise Fischer

ARTISTIC ASSOCIATE
Margaret Thanos

LITERARY MANAGER
Helen Tonkin

PREMISES MANAGER & LICENSEE
Dr David Marshall-Martin JP

SECRETARY (EX-OFFICIO)
Gemma Greer

EMERITUS THEATRE CAT
'Mouse'



Off the Record. Photo: Bob Seary