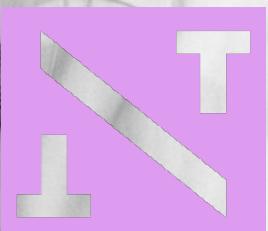


LOVE MARDI GRAS \*

# PERFECT ARRANGEMENT BY TOPHER PAYNE

PRESENTED AS PART OF MARDI GRAS+



## CREATIVES

Director/Designer **Patrick Kennedy**  
Associate Set Designer **Tom Bannerman**  
Associate Lighting Designer **Jay Murrin**  
Intimacy Director **Shondelle Pratt**

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## CAST

Bob Martindale **Luke Visentin**  
Millie Martindale **Jordan Thompson**  
Jim Baxter **Brock Cramond**  
Norma Baxter **Dominique Purdue**  
Theodore Sunderson **Huxley Forras**  
Kitty Sunderson **Brooke Ryan**  
Barbara Grant **Lucinda Jurt**

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## PRODUCTION TEAM & CREW

Stage Manager **Erin Mahoney**  
Deputy Stage Manager **Thomas Fullerton**  
Assistant Stage Manager **Emily Saint-Smith**  
Technicians **Ron Abuhalaiqa, Jayden Naimo**  
Set Construction Team **Rodger Wishart, Barry French, David Marshall, Martin**

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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.

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**Running time:** 2 hours and 10 minutes including one interval of 20 minutes

**Please note:** this production contains smoking, flashing lights, coarse language, intimate scenes and adult themes.



## PLAYWRIGHT NOTES

Topher Payne (born 1979 Mississippi USA)

Topher Payne is a writer, actor and director. His theatrical career began at First United Methodist Church in Kosciusko, Mississippi. He played a sparrow. At age 17, he apprenticed at Mississippi's professional theatre, New Stage Theatre. Two years later, he made his home in Atlanta, working as an actor, director, designer, and writer- basically, anything people would let him do.

His best -known plays are *PERFECT ARRANGEMENT*, which premiered Off-Broadway and *Angry Fags*, which was produced at Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre. *PERFECT ARRANGEMENT* was awarded the M. Elizabeth Osborn Award for best new play by an emerging playwright by the American Theatre Critics Association. His latest play, *A First Lady's Guide to Killing the President*, premiered in September 2025.

As a screenwriter, Topher has scripted six films for The Hallmark Channel. His most recent, *The Christmas Baby*, is a 2026 GLAAD Media Award Nominee for Outstanding Film for Television. He is a member of the Dramatist's Guild of America. In 2018, Topher was inducted into The Georgia Theatre Hall of Fame. He married artist & playwright Charlie James Cote in 2022. They live outside Atlanta with a dog, a cat, and imaginary friends.

Topher's emphasis as a playwright is on comedy, believing that laughter is crucial for audience engagement. "If you can make someone laugh, they listen. And they lean in and they want to hear more. And once you have that level of engagement, then you can start layering in a message that you want them to take away. You can do that in film. You can do that in a book. But the act of being in the same room with the storyteller is just fundamentally different. It lands differently."

More from Topher Payne-

*"I've always used writing as my means toward figuring out the world, considering another perspective. And all I ever wanted to do was forge a connection with other people, figure out how things work and why."*

*"What the hell made everybody so fearful, and what we can we do about it - it's a through-line in my work. I write cautionary tales about what happens when decisions are driven by fear, or anger. There is no shortage of kindness in this world; there is an abundance of it. But making yourself open to kindness requires bravery. It requires a belief that people are fundamentally decent and fair, when given the opportunity. And I believe nearly every conflict arises from someone feeling they aren't being heard. That's where plays come in handy. We shine a light on a human experience, we breathe the same air as you, we tell your story."*



## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

PERFECT ARRANGEMENT emerges from a chapter of history that remains curiously under-examined: the Lavender Scare. Overshadowed by its better-known twin, McCarthyism, this systematic purge of queer people from public life in mid-century America was a catalyst, not a footnote. It forced secrecy into architecture, love into code, and desire into performance. Paradoxically, it also generated the early rumblings of collective resistance, laying the groundwork for what would later become the gay rights movement. To stage this play is to insist that queer history did not begin with pride but with survival.

Its relevance in 2026 feels unavoidable. We are living in a moment where rights once assumed stable are again being contested, reframed, or quietly eroded. The language may be more polished and the mechanisms more diffuse, but the impulse toward control, toward conformity, remains familiar. Perfect Arrangement also speaks to a more intimate contemporary condition: the masks we wear. We learn early how to modulate ourselves for the comfort of others, and nowhere is this more pronounced than online, where we curate immaculate versions of our lives. Perfect arrangements designed to be consumed, approved, and believed.

As both Director and Designer (alongside my associates), I've approached the world of the play through a semiotic rather than naturalistic lens. The scenography draws from mid-century interiors and Bauhaus lineage not as nostalgia but as ideology. Bauhaus sought clarity, legibility, and order; here, those same principles become quietly oppressive. The space is graphic, symmetrical, and deliberately artificial. Light behaves architecturally rather than emotionally, exposing rather than softening. Primary colours function symbolically, not realistically, resisting emotional shorthand. This is not a room to disappear into but one to be examined. The symmetry encourages observation over immersion; the artifice asks what must be concealed in order to belong.

I hope audiences leave with a deeper understanding of this pivotal era in queer history and with the quiet, persistent sense that progress is never complete.

There is always more work to be done.

Patrick Kennedy



## BIOGRAPHIES



### PATRICK KENNEDY DIRECTOR/DESIGNER

Hailed as 'one of the country's most fascinating theatre practitioners' (British Theatre) who 'delivers exciting theatremaking stuffed with visual delights' (Time Out), Patrick is a British-Australian theatre director and producer recognised as one of the major figures of the twenty-first century European avant-garde. He is the founder of Patrick Kennedy Theatre Machine and is a leading expert on the work of New York downtown doyenne Richard Foreman. He has produced nine of his works in collaboration with Foreman across the world.

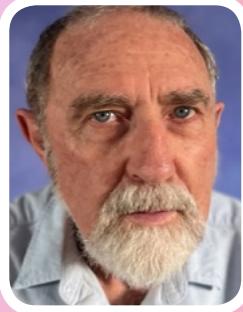
Originally trained as a director of classical work by the Globe Theatre, Kennedy's work has since spanned fifteen years and includes reinventions of Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*, radical film-theatre projects and creating a sell out new musical based on the women of the Weimar era which played in London's West End.

When not inside a theatre making work, he is the CEO of Sydney Fringe, NSW's largest independent arts festival.

Recent theatre credits include *The Flea* (New Theatre); *Did You Mean To Fall Like That?* (KXT On Broadway); *Sophia=(Wisdom): The Cliffs* (New Theatre); *Halbwelt Kultur* (The Other Palace, London); *Zomboid!* (New Wimbledon Theatre, London); *Elephant Steps: An Occult Opera Upon Perception* (Arcola Theatre, London).

Upcoming productions: *Paradise Hotel*, December 2026, KXT On Broadway.

For more information please visit [www.patrickkennedythemachine.com](http://www.patrickkennedythemachine.com)



## TOM BANNERMAN ASSOCIATE SET DESIGNER

Tom's attraction to set-design began while a senior student at Balgowlah Boys H.S. in 1970/71. His first design, for Shaw's *Saint Joan*, won a state award, thus prompting a long and unbroken fascination with the practice. In 1977, he was invited by John Bell to design Sydney's premiere of Williamson's *The Club* (Nimrod). His set was acclaimed and the production itself exceeded all expectations, touring NSW before crossing the globe to London's Hampstead Theatre, then transferring for its ultimate season at the Old Vic.

Recent theatre credits as Set Designer include *Ink*, *Hangmen*, *Fighting*, *In the Next Room*, *The Frogs*, *Present Laughter* (New Theatre); *Isolde and Tristan* (Sport for Jove); *Eight Gigabytes of Pornography* and Mark Colvin's *Kidney* (Mullumbimby's Drill Hall); and as Associate Set Designer include *The Flea* (New Theatre).

Tom's New Theatre debut as a Set Designer was in 1980 with, *We Can't Pay, We Won't Pay*, directed by Jock Levy. Since then, he has designed 84 sets for the theatre, drawn by its enduring Inner-West ethos.

His academic credentials include a MA in Theatre Studies (UNSW).





### LUKE VISENTIN BOB MARTINDALE

Luke Visentin is a theatre maker, actor, director, teacher and coach, with a BFA in Acting from NIDA. Luke has worked previously with Patrick Kennedy on *Sophia=Wisdom: The Cliffs* (Patrick Kennedy Theatre Machine); *Did You Mean To Fall Like That* (KXT) and *The Flea* (New Theatre).

Other theatre credits include *Present Laughter*, *Hir*, *The Vibrator Play, Control, and Atlantis* (New Theatre); *The Seagull*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Black Rock*, *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, *Summer and Smoke*, and *Next to Normal* (NIDA); *Hamlet* and *Cinderella* (Opera Australia); *Come Again, Lunch with Bernays, and Rhomboid* (KXT); *Manic Pixie Meltdown* and *Fairytales of My Life* (Shopfront Arts Co-op), *Chasing Dick* (Melbourne Fringe); *A Czar is Born* (Sydney Fringe); *Morning to Midnight* (The Opera Centre); assorted puppet shows (Horizons Theatre); *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Hamlet* tours (Such Stuff Productions); *Wind in the Willows*, and school incursions of the major Shakespeare plays (The Australian Shakespeare Company).

Screen credits include short films *Icarus*, *Puncture*, *Lady May*, *Salt and Death Drive*.

Luke was also Assistant Director for *The Pigeons* (KXT), and acting coach for *The Tempest* (Such Stuff) as well as an acting teacher (Drama Scene, Darlo Drama and Musical Theatre for Kids), and a teaching artist specialising in Shakespeare (Sport for Jove).



### JORDAN THOMPSON MILLIE MARTINDALE

Jordan Thompson studied at Screenwise School of Film and Television (2021), specialising in screen technique and character portrayal. Since graduating, she has worked across a range of short films and independent feature film projects, and more recently has been applying her on-screen experience to live performance.

Theatre credits include *L-O-V-E* (The Americas Theatre Co/KXT); *No Direction Home* (The Americas Theatre Co/The Living Room); *Miss Jean Kerr: Conscience* (Joining the Dots/The Greek Theatre).

PERFECT ARRANGEMENT is Jordan's New Theatre debut.



### BROCK CRAMOND JIM BAXTER

Brock is a fervent and disciplined performer with artistic roots across the performing arts, from acting and singing to music, and composition. Born and bred in Sydney, he discovered the arts early in life, using his passion for storytelling and performance as a medium of self-discovery and empathy. These traits were later honed at Actors Centre Australia (ACA), one of Australia's top acting institutions, where he completed a Bachelor of Performing Arts (Stage and Screen).

Theatre credits include *When the Rain Stops Falling*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *The Winter's Tale*, *A View from the Bridge*, and *The Importance of Being Earnest* (ACA); *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime* (Genesian Theatre); *Treasure Hunt* – statewide tour (Perform! Education).

PERFECT ARRANGEMENT is Brock's New Theatre debut. As a queer man, he is exhilarated to be working on this exciting project in association with Mardi Gras +.



### DOMINIQUE PURDUE NORMA BAXTER

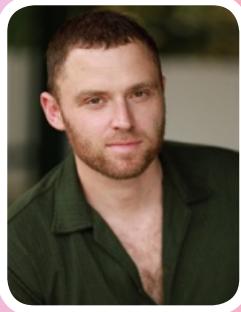
Dominique is a Filipino-Australian actor and director based on Gadigal land. She has trained in Manila (the Philippines), New York, London and Sydney.

Theatre credits as actor include *The Other End of the Afternoon*, *Significant Other* and *Collaborators* (New Theatre). *The Players* (Bell Shakespeare); *Posh* (Queen Hades Productions); *Dumb Kids* (Legit Theatre Company); *Short Blanket* (Slanted Theatre Company) and *Much Ado About Nothing* (Blinking Light Theatre Company).

Theatre credits as Director include Dir: *Origin Story* (Everything but the Kitchen Sink Festival); Asst Dir: *Atlantis* (Dir: Tiffinay Wong, New Theatre); Asst Dir: *Furious Mattress* (Dir: Margaret Thanos, Belvoir 25A); Asst Dir: *Posh* (Dir: Margaret Thanos, Old Fitz). Upcoming director credit: *3 Billion Seconds* (KXT).

Dominique made her playwriting debut in 2022 with *Misc*, which enjoyed a sold-out season as part of the Panimo Pandemonium Festival at KXT.

She is represented by Smith and Macdonald Creative Management.



### **HUXLEY FORRAS THEODORE SUNDERSON**

Huxley is an Australian actor whose love for performance began in the family backyard, where impersonations and playful skits sparked his passion for comedy and storytelling. Known for his grounded energy, he brings warmth and versatility to every role. Based in Sydney, he is available for projects nationwide and remains passionate about purposeful storytelling and volunteer work in community initiatives abroad. Huxley trained at the Actors Centre Australia (ACA).

Theatre credits include *Crimes of the Heart*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Don's Party*, *Ivanov*, *Macbeth*, *The Zoo Story*, *Our Town*, and *All My Sons*.

Screen credits include Jaime Hyatt: *Neighbours*.

PERFECT ARRANGEMENT is Huxley's New Theatre debut.



### **BROOKE RYAN KITTY SUNDERSON**

Since graduating from Theatre Nepean (UWS) in 2006, Brooke has pursued a diverse career across theatre, film, and television, drawn to bold roles and character-driven stories.

Theatre credits include Sherbert Gravel: *The Fastest Clock in the Universe* (Newtown Theatre); Claire: *Year of the Family* (Tooth and Sinew/bAKEHOUSE Theatre); Tina: *Metaphysics at Gunpoint* (Crack X/This Is Not Art Festival Newcastle), Dee: *Flat Meat Society* Tom Coash (Hear Me Out Monologue Festival USA / & Short + Sweet Sydney); Mrs Edna Barnes: *The Lady Vanishes* (Genesian Theatre).

PERFECT ARRANGEMENT is Brooke's New Theatre debut. She is thrilled to be playing the indelible Kitty Sunderson, continuing her tradition of bringing to life women who colour outside the lines, balancing heart, humour, and just the right amount of chaos.



### LUCINDA JURD BARBARA GRANT

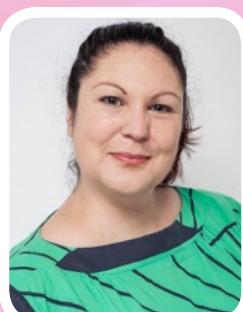
Lucinda is a stage and screen actor based on Gadigal land in Sydney. Lucinda grew up on Bundjalung country (Byron Bay) and worked as a lawyer before returning to acting, studying at the Actors' Centre Australia. Lucinda speaks English, Spanish and French.

Recent theatre credits include *Othello* (Diana Paola Alvarado, Flight Path), *A Czar is Born* (Laurence Rosier Staines, Eternity Playhouse), *Fool For Love* (Donald Woodburn, Redfern Theatre), *The House of Bernarda Alba* (Kim Hardwick, Flow Studios), *The Waves* (Theo Carroll, KXT Broadway), *Brief Candle* (Kurtis Laing, Old Fitz), *Hello and Goodbye* and *Road to Mecca* (Donald Woodburn, Redfern Theatre). Lucinda was in *A Bicycle Built For Two* and *Dating App Crap*- respectively finalist and semi-finalist in the 2025 Short & Sweet Festival.

Recent screen credits include *Penelope*, *In Custody*, *Megafauna*, *The Building*, *Third Draft*, *Envy*, *Le Diner*, *Disco Jones* and the award-winning *Runaway*.

Lucinda appears in episodes of *Roommate Wanted*, *Creepy Crawlies*, *Divorced Queen* and *The Wrap Up*.

PERFECT ARRANGEMENT is Lucinda's New Theatre debut.



### EMILY SAINT-SMITH ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

Emily Saint Smith is an actor, director, marketer, writer and props enthusiast! In 2025, her short play *Don't <Blank> the Messenger*, which she also directed and performed in, received the Crew Choice Award in the inaugural Short + Sweet + Shakespeare program. This is her second production with New Theatre following a recent stage debut, and she is delighted to utilise her prop-making talents to help bring this production to life.

Recent theatre credits include Dir: *The Lady Vanishes*, Ass Dir: *Steel Magnolias* (Genesian Theatre); Mrs Fred: *A Christmas Carol* (New Theatre).



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