

WELCOME

When I first saw HONOUR in 2010 and subsequently rereading over the years, I found it a most thrilling take on a universal story. The play sets up the premise but leads you down a fascinating path, partly because of the very nature of the character of Honor herself, but mostly because Joanna Murray-Smith has a unique take on anything she writes. Her language is rich, her characters leap off the page into reality and their arguments allow you to see personal perspectives questioning your original convictions and bias.

This is an honest, moving play and, given the nature of the theme, surprisingly funny. I am so happy after all this time to be able to watch this beautiful production with a very talented creative team lead by Kate Champion, and question once more the very idea of human relationships. Enjoy.

Mark Kilmurry
Artistic Director



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

To quote from the character Claudia - I think each of us at some time or other wonder about 'lives unlived'. Whether we've made the right choices in life and, if we haven't, whether it's ever too late to make a change. What compromises are we willing to accept in order for a relationship to endure? Do such compromises eat away at the relationship over time or are they part of a necessary collusion between two people in order to survive – even flourish. If we do choose to change our lives then what is the fallout from such a decision – whose needs take precedence and why?

HONOUR is at surface value a very familiar story but, in the hands of such a gifted playwright as Joanna Murray-Smith, it surprises us with multiple insights, even contradictory perspectives. Its subject is a perennial dilemma and a universally relevant conundrum which fuels this sharp and darkly humorous play.

It's been such a delight to work with this extraordinary cast, crew and creative team who have each collaborated generously to bring this modern classic to Ensemble – such a fitting stage for this acclaimed play. It's been an honour!

Kate Champion

Ensemble Theatre proudly acknowledges the Cammeraigal people of the Eora nation as customary owners of the land on which we work and share our stories. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.



SYNOPSIS

Honor and George have been married for 32 years, and as in all good marriages, they've made some compromises along the way. While George forged his career as a successful columnist, Honor left a promising literary career of her own when she became pregnant with their daughter Sophie.

The equilibrium of their seemingly perfect lives is thrown into disarray when George's head is turned by young, tenacious Claudia. George is attracted to her beauty and ambition. Claudia is drawn to his intellect and status. After the shock of George's infidelity settles, all must find a way to make meaning of the painful consequences that follow.

CAST

CLAUDIA AYEESHA ASH HONOR LUCY BELL GEORGE HUW HIGGINSON SOPHIE POPPY LYNCH

DIRECTOR KATE CHAMPION
SET & COSTUME DESIGNER SIMONE ROMANIUK
LIGHTING DESIGNER DAMIEN COOPER
COMPOSER & SOUND DESIGNER NATE EDMONDSON
STAGE MANAGER ERIN SHAW
COSTUME SUPERVISOR RENATA BESLIK
STAGE MANAGEMENT SECONDMENT ISAAC BARRON
SOUND DESIGN SECONDMENT ZACHARY SARIC

RUNNING TIME

APPROX. 90 MIN NO INTERVAL

SPECIAL THANKS

Peter Bartlett & Lyn Rowland, Pier Productions

Rehearsal images by Prudence Upton





PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE

There's nothing original about the skeleton of HONOUR, the play. The story of the man who leaves his wife for a younger woman is well worn. My ambition was to tell a familiar story in an unfamiliar way: through the prism of all four characters at its heart and with a particular tilt towards the wife. I grew up in a household of teachers, educators, intellectuals... and I observed that many of my parents' male friends, who were in the public eye and immensely lauded, were married to women who were at least as intelligent as they were, but their wives never got any of the public acclaim. Then at the point when the women who had dedicated themselves to their husbands and raising their children should be reaping the rewards of that self-effacement, the husbands would leave them. I was intrigued to know what those ferociously intelligent abandoned women made of their decision to stand by their husbands and give up their own careers, even if it had been done willingly at the time.

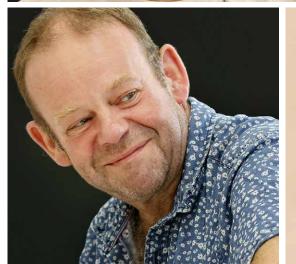
HONOUR is a boxing match of a play, a series of scenes in which different combinations of the four characters grapple with the

aftermath of this act of betrayal. All four are struggling with the meaning and stamina of love in all its forms: marital, long-term, new, passionate, parental and so on. The play commences when life throws a grenade into one small world and its inhabitants have to respond in the moment. I hope the audience can identify with the characters on stage and feel their own vulnerability to life's complexities. Part of the success of the play — one of my first and probably my most successful — is that no one is all good or all bad. We struggle and submit to the painful choice, even when we see it happening, because we are compelled by forces greater than our will.

It's such a pleasure for me to be back at the Ensemble, surely one of the prettiest theatre companies in the world. I have always enjoyed working here and the company has always made artists feel welcome. After the last year, it's so wonderful to be back on the stage and I'm indebted to the fantastic audiences who continue to support our theatre makers.

Joanna Murray-Smith









JOANNA MURRAY-SMITH PLAYWRIGHT

Produced and translated all over the world in over two dozen languages, Joanna's plays have been produced throughout Europe, the United

States, the UK and Asia and on Broadway, the West End and at the Royal National Theatre in London and been read or performed by many of the world's leading companies and actors including Meryl Streep, Annette Bening, Laura Linney, Corin Redgrave, Dame Eileen Atkins, Dame Diana Rigg and many others. They include the upcoming BERLIN (MTC, April 2021): L'APPARTEMENT, AMERICAN SONG, THREE LITTLE WORDS (Currency 2019), SWITZERLAND (NHB London, 2018), TRUE MINDS (Currency 2014), PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE (Currency 2016), FURY (Currency 2014), SONGS FOR NOBODIES (Currency 2010), DAY ONE - A HOTEL - EVENING (Currency 2014), THE GIFT (Currency 2011), ROCKABYE (Currency 2009), THE FEMALE OF THE SPECIES (published NHB 2008), NINETY (Currency 2009), BOMBSHELLS (Currency 2004), RAPTURE (Currency 2002), NIGHTFALL (Currency 1999), REDEMPTION (Currency 1997), FLAME, LOVE CHILD (Currency 1993), ATLANTA (Currency 1990), HONOUR (Currency 1995; Dramatist's Play Service, 1999) and ANGRY YOUNG PENGUINS (1987). She has also adapted HEDDA GABLER (for the State Theatre Company of South Australia) and Ingmar Bergman's SCENES FROM A MARRIAGE for Sir Trevor Nunn (Coventry/London). The inaugural winner of the Mona Brand Award, Joanna was also the recipient of the University of Melbourne's Arts Lifetime Achievement Award in 2019 and three Premier's Literary Awards. She has been nominated for many other awards, including London's Olivier Awards, and has been awarded a Commonwealth Medal for Services to Playwriting.



KATE CHAMPION DIRECTOR

Kate was the founding Artistic Director of Force Majeure (2002-15) creating and directing numerous award winning productions in Australia and touring internationally.

Productions included SAME, SAME BUT DIFFERENT, THE AGE I'M IN, NEVER DID ME ANY HARM and FOOD. Her directing credits include SWALLOW for the National Theatre of Parramatta, THAT EYE THE SKY and A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE for State Theatre Company of South Australia, the world premiere of the musical EVIE MAY for Hayes Theatre, EVERY BRILLIANT THING and MY BRILLIANT CAREER for Belvoir, MEAT EATERS for NIDA, FULLY COMMITTED for Ensemble, THE RISE AND FALL OF ST GEORGE (Sydney Festival 2020) for Performing Lines and recently BACK with Sinsa Mansell for Tasmania Performs.



AYEESHA ASH CLAUDIA

Ayeesha is a proud Maori/ Grenadian interdisciplinary artist. She trained at WAAPA (Acting) and studied at UTS (Communications: Social & Political Sciences), Ayeesha's

theatrical work includes DAISY MOON WAS BORN THIS WAY (Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre), THE SEAGULL (Now Look Here Theatre Co.), RENT (Highwayrun Productions & Hayes Theatre Co.), THE PLAYERS (Bell Shakespeare) and DRIFT (Two Peas). For La Boite Theatre Company (Brisbane) she was Assistant Director on THE VILLAGE (2017), a facilitator for OPEN HOMES (2019) and co-curated HOLDUP (2020). She has written for the Sydney Morning Herald and created content for BuzzFeed and Pedestrian. Ayeesha is the Artistic Director of BLACK BIRDS, with which she has devised, directed and performed in a variety of works including BROWN SKIN GIRL (Griffin Theatre, Festival Fatale, The Old Fitz) and RECLAIM (PACT), which won FBi Radio's SMAC Award for Best On Stage (2020). BLACK BIRDS is currently creating SEEN, a television show inspired by BROWN SKIN GIRL.



LUCY BELL HONOR

Lucy has performed extensively on stage including MARJORIE PRIME for Ensemble Theatre; ROMEO AND JULIET, PERICLES, TWELFTH NIGHT and DUCHESS OF MALFI for Bell

Shakespeare; DARLING OSCAR, THE CHERRY ORCHARD, AS YOU LIKE IT and APPROPRIATE for STC; TWELFTH NIGHT, BLUE MURDER, SCENES FROM AN EXECUTION for Belvoir; SPLINTER, SPEAKING IN TONGUES, THROUGH THE WIRE, THE FALLS, DREAMS IN WHITE, EMERALD CITY, WOLF LULLABY for Griffin. Lucy has also appeared in numerous films and tv productions, most recently, FIGHTING SEASON and AMAZING GRACE.



HUW HIGGINSON GEORGE

Huw trained at The London Academy of Dramatic Art and has worked consistently in television, film and theatre both in the UK and Australia, and has become one of the

best-known actors on international television for playing PC George Garfield in ABC/ITV's THE BILL in which he appeared in over 600 episodes spanning ten years. Television includes EASTENDERS, DA VINCI'S DEMONS, CASUALTY, HOLBY CITY, DOCTORS, RAILWAY MURDERS, BIG DEAL, THE SARAH JANE ADVENTURES, BY ANY MEANS, LIVING IT, BLESSED LEWIS, HEARTBEAT, THE HUNT, THE GIBLETS and PEEP SHOW. Theatre includes ABIGAIL'S PARTY, MEETING JOE STRUMMER. IN THE CLUB. RATTLE OF A SIMPLE MAN, ARSENIC AND OLD LACE, WHAT THE BUTLER SAW (West End) and for the BOLTON OCTAGON, ALL MY SONS, COMEDIANS, AND DID THOSE FEET, DEMOLITION MAN, THE WINSLOW BOY and A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE (nominated for a MEN award for Best Supporting Actor). THE KITCHEN SINK, HULL, PLENTY, SERGEANT MUSGRAVES DANCE, BREEZEBLOCK PARK, LONE STAR, GREAT EXPECTATIONS, ON THE SHORE OF THE WIDE WORLD, HOUSE ON THE LAKE (for which he won Best Actor in the GLUG Awards) LOVE LETTERS, MR STINK and GLORIA. Recent television has included ABCTV's HIDING, RAKE, MISS FISHER'S MURDER MYSTERIES; SECRET CITY, SECRET RIVER, MARY: MAKING OF A PRINCESS, HOME AND AWAY, JANET KING 3, A PLACE TO CALL HOME, THE LEFTOVERS, JESSICA, DEADLINE, GALLIPOLI, PICNIC AT HANGING ROCK. Films include THE NIGHTINGALE and TOP END WEDDING, and Huw is currently filming season 2 of TOTAL CONTROL for the ABC.



POPPY LYNCH SOPHIE

Poppy Lynch graduated with a Bachelor of Arts (Acting) from WAAPA in 2019. Since graduating, her screen credits include BACK TO THE RAFTERS for Channel 7 Studios and

theatre credits include DISTORTED Dir. Richard Hilliar. Before starting her studies at WAAPA she performed in multiple shows at Kings Cross Theatre including LEAVES Dir. Rachel Chant and OSAMA THE HERO Dir. Richard Hilliar. She has been a valued member of ATYP since 2015 and performed in their show ALL GOOD THINGS Dir. lain Sinclair. Film credits include the short film BE FAMOUS which was an entrant in the Cannes Short Film Festival Corner, and HY_BRAIN for WASA. She is so excited to be performing in HONOUR for her main-stage debut.



SIMONE ROMANIUK SET & COSTUME DESIGNER

Simone Romaniuk is a live performance designer for theatre, opera and festivals. Ensemble Theatre designs include KENNY, THE LAST

WIFE, LUNA GALE, SHIRLEY VALENTINE, FRANKENSTEIN and CASANOVA. She has designed over 50 productions for performing arts companies including State Opera South Australia, Opera Queensland, Queensland Theatre, Sydney Theatre Company and Brisbane Festival. She was resident designer with Queensland Theatre in 2011-2012. From 2015-2019 she was Creative Director of Adelaide Festival Centre's OzAsia Festival. OzAsia Festival won Best Major Event in the South Australian Tourism Awards 2019 and was shortlisted twice for event design in the APDG Awards. Simone has won four Matilda Awards for Queensland Theatre productions and was a Manchester Theatre Awards design finalist in 2017. She holds design degrees from QCA and NIDA.



DAMIEN COOPER LIGHTING DESIGNER

Damien is a lighting designer working in theatre, opera and dance. In 2021 Damien has designed KENNY for Ensemble, A MIDSUMMER NIGHTS DREAM,

the Benjamin Britten opera at Adelaide Festival, IMPERMANENCE for Sydney Dance Company and SUPERNATURAL for Australian Dance Theatre. Some of Damien's career highlights include Belvoir's COUNTING AND CRACKING; Neil Armfield's productions of THE RING CYCLE (Opera Australia) and EXIT THE KING (Malthouse Theatre and Belvoir) on Broadway; Graeme Murphy's SWAN LAKE (Australian Ballet); Australia's most successful subsidised-theatre show ever KEATING THE MUSICAL (Belvoir); and BIRDBRAIN (Australian Dance Theatre) which played over 60 venues around the world. Damien has won three Sydney Theatre Awards, four Green Room Awards and two APDG awards.



NATE EDMONDSON COMPOSER & SOUND DESIGNER

Nate is an international, multiaward winning composer and sound designer for stage and screen. His scores have

been heard across the world, including multiple Off-Broadway and West End runs of THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR SHOW, and PADDINGTON GETS IN A JAM (Rockefeller Productions). Locally, he has worked on many critically-acclaimed productions, including THE HARP IN THE SOUTH, BLACKIE BLACKIE BROWN, and CLOUD NINE (STC); MARK COLVIN'S KIDNEY, and SEVENTEEN (Belvoir); THE TEMPEST (Bell Shakespeare). Nate was awarded the 2016 and 2015 Sydney Theatre Award for Best Score / Sound Design of an Independent Production: the 2020. 2018 and 2016 Broadway World Award for Best Score / Sound Design of a Play; the 2014 Brian Dyer Trophy for Best Score / Sound Design [UK] (ALL MY SONS). In 2019, Nate was nominated for a Helpmann Award for Best Sound Design for his work on THE HARP IN THE SOUTH. Nate has previously worked with Ensemble on DIPLOMACY, FULLY COMMITTED, BABY DOLL, and KENNY. www.nate-edmondson.com



ERIN SHAW STAGE MANAGER

Graduating from the Technical Theatre and Stage Management course at NIDA in 2016, Erin has previously worked in the industry as a dresser on GIRL ASLEEP (Belvoir); stage

manager on LITTLE BORDERS (The 505), MOTH (ATYP), LOVE, ME (The 505), FOLK (Ensemble Theatre), DIPLOMACY (Ensemble Theatre and Tour), AN INTIMATE EVENING WITH PAUL CAPSIS (Ensemble Theatre), ECHOES OF THE JAZZ AGE (Tour) and KENNY (Ensemble Theatre and Tour); and assistant stage manager on DIPLOMACY (Ensemble Theatre), BLISS (Belvoir), THE WIDOW UNPLUGGED OR AN ACTOR DEPLOYS (Ensemble Theatre), THE NORMAN CONQUESTS (Ensemble Theatre), BABY DOLL (Ensemble Theatre) and A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN (Belvoir). Erin feels privileged to have worked with such an incredible team on this production and looks forward to the season.



RENATA BESLIK COSTUME SUPERVISOR

Renata graduated from NIDA in 2007 with a bachelor in Costume Production. Costume supervising credits include: BETTY BLOKK-BUSTER (Sydney

Festival) OUTDATED, KENNY, CRUNCH TIME, BABY DOLL, FULLY COMMITTED, A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE, THE BIG TIME, LUNA GALE, SHIRLEY VALENTINE, DIPLOMACY, THE KITCHEN SINK, BUYER AND CELLAR, WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF?, ODD MAN OUT, BAREFOOT IN THE PARK, BETRAYAL, A HISTORY OF FALLING THINGS (Ensemble Theatre); A DELICATE FIRE, FARNACE, THE RETURN OF ULYSSES, ARTASERSE, ATHALIA, THE CORONATION OF POPPEA, RAMEAU: ANACREON AND PIGMALION, THEODORA (Pinchaut Opera); FANGIRLS (Belvoir); HENRY V, THE WINTER'S TALE, MACBETH (Bell Shakespeare); THE GOVERNMENT INSPECTOR, STAY HAPPPY KEEP SMILING, THE TEMPEST, WOYCECK, A LIE OF THE MIND, PORT, THE THREESOME (NIDA). Renata is also an accomplished costume maker and milliner.

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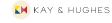
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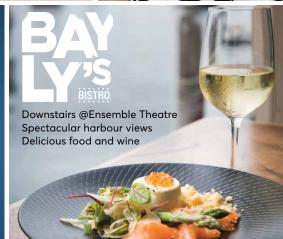
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