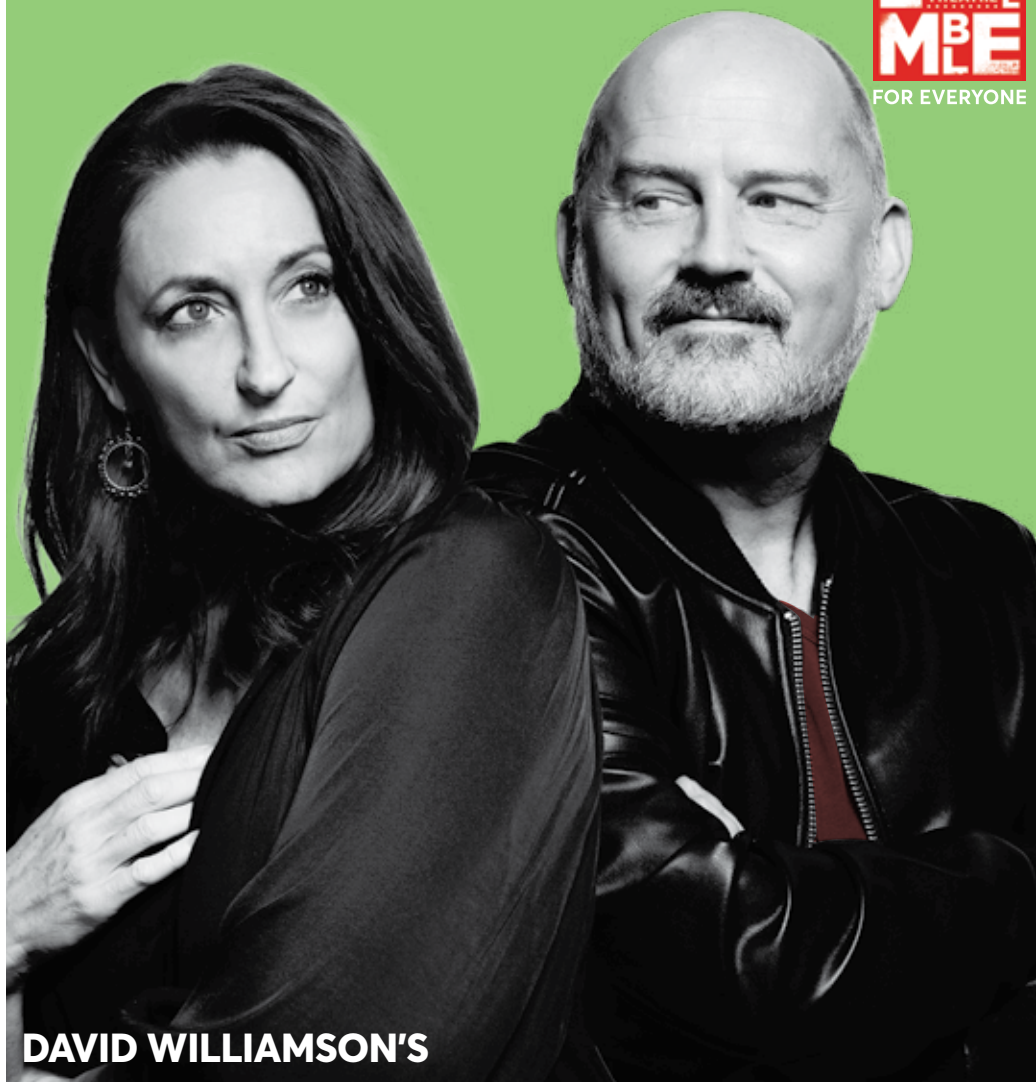


10 MAR – 29 APR

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DAVID WILLIAMSON'S

# RHINESTONE REX AND MISS MONICA

DIRECTED BY MARK KILMURRY



## WELCOME & DIRECTOR'S NOTE

As a director it is always wonderful to revisit a successful play and bring it to the stage. RHINESTONE REX AND MISS MONICA was originally directed by Sandra Bates and I liked David Williamson's conceit of two opposites locked in a battle of wits, not just because of personality, but also with an added special layer of musical taste. I have often mused on the idea of not being able to have a relationship with someone who has the complete collection of Michael Bolton albums (apologies MB fans) and how popular taste, while seemingly insignificant at first, can become a huge chasm as a relationship grows. David Williamson's clever play explores this idea and piles on the comedy and charm with two engaging and witty, articulate characters, which is a dream for our two fabulous actors Glenn Hazeldine and Georgie Parker, interestingly revisiting their roles after more than a decade. With this creative team and some wonderful music from different genres, I am so thrilled we have RHINESTONE REX AND MISS MONICA once more in our theatre. Enjoy!

**MARK KILMURRY**  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

## WRITER'S NOTE

I've never written a romantic comedy before and I didn't think I was writing one when I started to write RHINESTONE REX AND MISS MONICA back in 2010. It was actually based on a real story; I'd heard of a well-known woman in the arts who had renovated her house and eventually fallen in love with the guy who came to do it. I loved the feel of the story. It's one of connection between two lonely people with a sort of happy ever after ending as their relationship did last many years. But as I started to write my fictional version, I realised I was following age-old conventions. In good rom-coms, it's never love at first sight. In extreme versions of the genre, it's almost hate at first sight. In my fictional case, it wasn't at all hate. It wasn't even dislike of each other. It's just that they very much disliked each other's musical tastes. Gary, AKA Rhinestone Rex, is a minor country and western star having been nominated for a golden guitar once at Tamworth. Or that's his story. Monica on the other hand was a top-ranking classical violinist who played in the Sydney Symphony Orchestra until tendonitis of the shoulder recently cut short her career. When Gary starts renovating Monica's kitchen with his bluetooth speaker

belting out his favourite country tracks, a showdown is inevitable. The play turned out to be one of my personal favourites. For sure it's an eternal and often told story, but I enjoyed writing it for its humanity and warmth. What made it extra special for me was that two of my favourite actors of all time, Georgie Parker and Glenn Hazeldine, made my two characters come achingly and lovingly alive under the direction of one of my favourite directors Mark Kilmurry.

She was grieving for a career that was effectively over, he was grieving over a broken marriage and the guilt of running out on a disadvantaged son. They were both searching for connection and love. It's a great thrill for me to see the play remounted with the original cast and Mark Kilmurry directing, so I can experience again, as can a new audience, their great talents. So huge thanks to all of you. And to the marvellous Ensemble Theatre who for well over sixty years has survived by choosing plays that allow us to reflect on what a strange and complex and ever-fascinating species we are.

**DAVID WILLIAMSON AO**

## WRITER'S THANKS

When writing this play, I received great help from some of Australia's top classical violinists who gave me a warts and all understanding of the realities of their trade. In particular, I'm indebted to Monica Curro and Satu Vanska, two of our nation's finest violinists, who were totally honest about the highs and lows of their profession. I named my violinist Monica to honour Monica's help and, while my character is decidedly fictional, I do hope a little of the life force and spirit of these two talented women have seeped into my character. I would also like to thank my brother-in-law Chris, a virtuoso bass guitarist, for giving me an insight into the country music world. I'd also like to thank country music producer Matt Fell for alerting me to the new talent in the country scene and Thomas Busby for getting me up to speed on the new talent in 2023. Also, thanks to that enduring princess of theatre Diana Simmonds for suggesting some good edits to the original version which I've incorporated into this one.

# SYNOPSIS

What do a classical violinist and country western lover have in common?

Monica, a highly strung member of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, is forced to give up the violin because of her RSI. Left to mope around her Glebe apartment full of resentment and anger, renovating her kitchen seems like a good distraction.

Enter Gary, AKA Rhinestone Rex, the little known Tamworth country singer turned tradie turned DJ who has been tasked with the job. While they may be polar opposites with seemingly nothing in common, except a love of music, is there something deeper that ties them together?

Glenn Hazeldine and Georgie Parker reprise their 2010 performances in this updated David Williamson social comedy, complete with a musical trip down memory lane.

## CAST

**GLENN HAZELDINE** GARY  
**GEORGIE PARKER** MONICA

## CREATIVES

**DIRECTOR**  
**MARK KILMURRY**  
**SET & COSTUME DESIGNER**  
**VERONIQUE BENETT**  
**LIGHTING DESIGNER**  
**TRUDY DALGLEISH**  
**SOUND DESIGNER**  
**DARYL WALLIS**  
**STAGE MANAGER**  
**RUTH HOLLOWES**  
**COSTUME SUPERVISOR**  
**RENATA BESLIK**

## UNDERSTUDIES

**MATT MINTO**  
**RACHEL GORDON**

## VOICEOVER ARTISTS

**TONY COGIN**  
**RUTH HOLLOWES**  
**MARK KILMURRY**  
**DARYL WALLIS**

## RUNNING TIME

**APPROX. 2 HRS INCL. INTERVAL**  
**REC. AGES 14+**  
**SEXUAL REFERENCES**

THE RITE OF SPRING by Igor Stravinsky is used by permission of Hal Leonard Australia Pty Ltd, exclusive agent for Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd of London

## SPECIAL THANKS

Thomas Busby

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

Rehearsal images by Prudence Upton





## DAVID WILLIAMSON AO PLAYWRIGHT

David Williamson is Australia's best known and most widely performed playwright. Some of his 56 produced plays over the

last 50 years include THE COMING OF THE STORK, THE REMOVALISTS, DON'S PARTY, THE CLUB, TRAVELLING NORTH, MONEY & FRIENDS, DEAD WHITE MALES, THE JACK MANNING TRILOGY, UP FOR GRABS, SOULMATES, NOTHING PERSONAL, WHEN DAD MARRIED FURY, RUPERT, CRUISE CONTROL, DREAM HOME, ODD MAN OUT, SORTING OUT RACHEL, NEARER THE GODS, THE BIG TIME, FAMILY VALUES and CRUNCH TIME. His plays (also in translation) have been performed internationally, including in London, Los Angeles, New York and Washington. David has adapted many of his plays into feature films to great acclaim and his many original feature screenplays include GALLIPOLI, PHAR LAP, THE YEAR OF LIVING DANGEROUSLY, and BALIBO (as co-writer) and ON THE BEACH (adapted for television). David's many awards include 12 Australian Writers' Guild Awards, 5 Australian Film Institutes' Awards for Best Screenplay and, in 1996, the United Nations Association of Australia Media Peace Award. David's memoir HOME TRUTHS was published by Harper Collins in 2021 and was shortlisted for the 2022 National Biography Awards.



## MARK KILMURRY DIRECTOR

Mark is the Artistic Director of Ensemble Theatre. Recent directing credits include: BOXING DAY BBQ, A DOLL'S HOUSE, THE

WOMAN IN BLACK, OUTDATED, KENNY, CRUNCH TIME, THE ODD COUPLE, THE LAST WIFE, MURDER ON THE WIRELESS, THE BIG TIME, THE NORMAN CONQUESTS, SHIRLEY VALENTINE, TAKING STEPS, NEVILLE'S ISLAND, TWO, ODD MAN OUT,

RELATIVELY SPEAKING, BAREFOOT IN THE PARK, BETRAYAL, GOOD PEOPLE, MY ZINC BED, EDUCATING RITA, ABSENT FRIENDS, OTHER DESERT CITIES, THE ANZAC PROJECT, RICHARD III, THE GLASS MENAGERIE, FRANKENSTEIN, MANAGING CARMEN, RED, THE SPEAR CARRIER and HAMLET. Mark's feature film; BEING GAVIN, co-directed with Owen Elliot, and starring Catherine Moore and Jamie Oxenbould, is playing as a finalist in many international festivals and has American distribution. Mark is the recipient of many awards and recently the North Sydney Community Award. Mark recently illustrated Tracey Trinder's children's book CAPTAIN COURAGEOUS which has been published by Popcorn Press/Fairplay Publishing, with all proceeds going to the Northern Beaches Community Cancer Charity, which helps people living with cancer on Sydney's Northern Beaches and helped look after Tracey.



## GLENN HAZELDINE GARY

Glenn celebrates a career-long association with David Williamson, beginning with his professional debut in STC's national tour of DEAD WHITE

MALES shortly after he graduated from NIDA in 1994. He has since appeared in more plays by this writer than any other actor. For the Ensemble, productions include SANCTUARY, THE JACK MANNING TRILOGY, MANAGING CARMEN, HAPPINESS, SORTING OUT RACHEL, BIRTHRIGHTS and the original production of RHINESTONE REX & MISS MONICA. For STC, recent productions include NO PAY? NO WAY!, THE FATHER, BLITHE SPIRIT, COSI, AWAY, ARCADIA, DISGRACED, LOVE AND INFORMATION and DON'S PARTY. He also appeared in AMADEUS for Red Line/Sydney Opera House and Williamson's RUPERT for Daniel Sparrow Productions. Glenn is the Deputy Chair of the Actors Benevolent Fund of NSW and President of the NSW branch of Actors Equity.



## GEORGIE PARKER MONICA

Georgie Parker has been working in television, film and theatre for 38 years. She's been nominated for a Logie Award 11 times and

won 7, two of them Gold for her television work. Her television work includes BARLOW AND CHAMBERS, RAFFERTY'S RULES, A COUNTRY PRACTICE, ACROPOLIS NOW, THE GLYNN NICHOLAS SHOW, ALL TOGETHER NOW, GP, OVER THE HILL, FIRE, ALL SAINTS, STUPID STUPID MAN, THE FALLS, SOCIETY MURDERS, STEPFATHER OF THE BRIDE, SCORCHED, CITY HOMICIDE, PLAY SCHOOL and HOME AND AWAY. Theatre credits include NUNSENSE, HOW TO SUCCEED IN BUSINESS WITHOUT REALLY TRYING, HIGH SOCIETY for MTC, ALL IN THE TIMING and SCENES FROM A SEPARATION for STC, THREEPENNY OPERA for QTC, CRAZY FOR YOU, MAN FROM SNOWY RIVER. For the Ensemble Theatre she appeared in CHAPTER TWO, THEY'RE PLAYING OUR SONG, LET THE SUNSHINE, RABBIT HOLE, RHINESTONE REX AND MISS MONICA, LUNA GALE, RAPTURE BLISTER BURN and MURDER ON THE WIRELESS.



## MATT MINTO UNDERSTUDY

Matt's theatre credits include THE BIG TIME, ODD MAN OUT, CRUNCH TIME for Ensemble Theatre; ANGELS IN AMERICA PARTS ONE

and TWO for Silo Theatre; EVERYTHING AFTER for Q Theatre, COCK for Auckland Live; RABBIT for Circa Theatre; THE PRIDE for Darlinghurst Theatre; COCK for Red Line productions; TWELFTH NIGHT for Bedlam Theatre Edinburgh. TV and film credits include THE BAD SEED, THE BLUE ROSE and SHORTLAND STREET for South Pacific Pictures; HOME AND AWAY for Seven Network; INFINI for Storm Alley Entertainment. Matt Minto is a graduate of The Actors Centre Australia.



## RACHEL GORDON UNDERSTUDY

Ensemble Theatre Credits: OUTDATED, MONEY AND FRIENDS, THE NORMAN CONQUESTS TRILOGY, ODD MAN OUT, MANAGING

CARMEN, WIT; Other Theatre Credits: Queensland Theatre: THE ALMIGHTY SOMETIMES, BOSTON MARRIAGE, LET THE SUNSHINE, NINETY; Sydney Theatre Company: THE REAL THING, CONCUSSION, DON JUAN; Griffin Theatre Company: BETWEEN TWO WAVES, CONCUSSION, LIGHT PARTICLE; Melbourne Theatre Company: JASPER JONES, LET THE SUNSHINE, NINETY; Darlinghurst Theatre Company: DAYLIGHT SAVING; Bell Shakespeare: KING LEAR, MACBETH. Television: QUEEN OF OZ, BACK IN VERY SMALL BUSINESS, THE SECRET DAUGHTER, THE LETDOWN, THE MOODY'S, THE GENTLEMEN'S GUIDE TO KNIFE FIGHTING, A MOODY CHRISTMAS, HOME & AWAY, NEIGHBOURS, BLUE HEELERS, ALL SAINTS. Film: ANGEL OF MINE, THUNDERSTRUCK.



## VERONIQUE BENETT SET & COSTUME DESIGNER

Veronique is a lighting, set and costume designer. As a lighting designer, Veronique's credits include: THE JUNGLE AND THE SEA, TELL ME

I'M HERE, THE WOLVES for Belvoir; HAPPY DAYS, CHORUS for Red Line; SACRE for Circa; BANGING DENMARK for Sydney Theatre Company; NEARER THE GODS for Ensemble Theatre; THE SMALLEST HOUR for Griffin; JOHN for Outhouse Theatre Co.; THE LIFE OF US for Hayes. Veronique designed costumes for MUSEUM OF MODERN LOVE for Seymour Centre/Sydney Festival and AS YOU LIKE IT for Sport for Jove; set and lighting design for EXIT THE KING for Red Line and ULSTER AMERICAN for Outhouse Theatre Co; set and costume design for A BROADCAST COUP, THE CARETAKER, A DOLL'S HOUSE For Ensemble

Theatre; OUR BLOOD RUNS IN THE STREET for Red Line. Veronique has been nominated for four Sydney Theatre Awards. Veronique completed a Master of Fine Art (Design for Performance) majoring in lighting and holds a Bachelor of Fine Art (Technical Theatre and Stage Management) from NIDA..



**DARYL WALLIS**  
SOUND DESIGNER

Daryl Wallis is a composer, sound designer, keyboard musician, vocal coach and musical director. He won the 2013 Sydney Theatre

Award for Best Score & Sound Design in a Mainstage Production with Elana Kats-Chernin for the Ensemble production of FRANKENSTEIN, and the Green Room award as musical director for THE STRANGE BEDFELLOWS. Current projects include the cabarets DISENCHANTED & CARMEN THE CABARET with Eliane Morel; SOMETHING THAT HAPPENED with The Strangeways Ensemble; and THE HOUR OF LAND, a personal meditation and musical dialogue between Yosemite National Park and the Royal National Park in Sydney.



**TRUDY DALGLEISH**  
LIGHTING DESIGNER

Trudy Dalglish's many awards for Lighting Design include a Helpmann Award for THE WHITE DEVIL (Best Lighting Design, Theatre), an 'Entech Award for Best Lighting Designer - Live Events, the John Truscott Design Award for Excellence, and two Green Room Awards for EUREKA and HAIRSPRAY. Trudy is Associate Lighting Designer for the Gordon Frost productions of SHREK, CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY and CINDERELLA around Australia. Recent lighting designs include THE MOUSETRAP for Skyline Theatricals, PHOTOGRAPH 51 for Ensemble Theatre, CUNNING LITTLE VIXEN for Victorian Opera, West Australian Opera State Opera South Australia, SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER for Gordon Frost

Organisation, and IN THE HEIGHTS for Hayes Theatre and Sydney Opera House..



**RUTH HOLLOWS**  
STAGE MANAGER

Ruth Hollows is a Stage Manager at the Sydney Opera House and her theatre credits include, for Bell Shakespeare; HAMLET 2020 - 2022, TITUS

ANDRONICUS 2019, ROMEO AND JULIET 2018, MACBETH 2017 and THE PLAYERS (2017, 2018 and 2021). For Ensemble; AN EVENING WITH URSULA YOVICH 2022, JOHN BELL: AND ANOTHER THING 2022 and THE WOMAN IN BLACK 2021. For City of Sydney; Volunteer Coordinator 2022 SYDNEY NEW YEAR'S EVE, SYDNEY CHRISTMAS and VILLAGE CONCERTS 2017 - 2019 and SYDNEY LUNAR FESTIVAL 2017 & 2021.

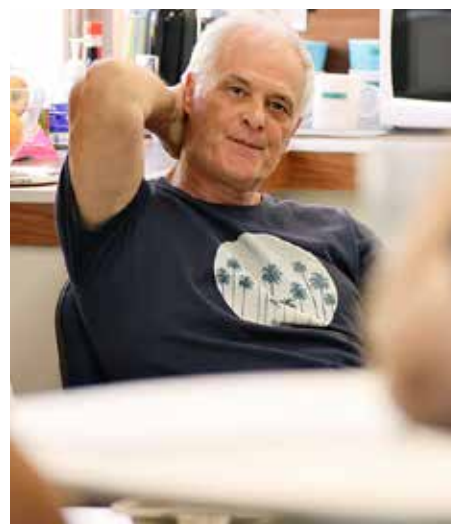
Other credits include; ROSALINE (KXT 2019), THE HAPPY PRINCE (Griffin 2019), SENIOR MOMENTS (Rapid Fire Productions 2019) and EAR TO THE EDGE OF TIME (Sport for Jove 2018).



**RENATA BESLIK**  
COSTUME SUPERVISOR

Renata graduated from NIDA in 2007 with a Bachelor in Costume Production. She has supervised costumes on over twenty shows for Ensemble

Theatre most recently THE CARETAKER and PHOTOGRAPH 51. Other supervising credits: ORONTEA, PLATEE, APOLLO AND DAFNE, A DELICATE FIRE, FARNACE, THE RETURN OF ULYSSES, ARTASERSE, ATHALIA, THE CORONATION OF POPPEA, RAMEAU: ANACREON AND PIGMALION, THEODORA for Pinchgut Opera; BETTY BLOKK-BUSTER for Sydney Festival; FANGIRLS for Belvoir; HAMLET, HENRY V, THE WINTER'S TALE, MACBETH for Bell Shakespeare; THE GOVERNMENT INSPECTOR, STAY HAPPY KEEP SMILING, THE TEMPEST, WOYCECK, A LIE OF THE MIND, PORT, THE THREESOME for NIDA. Renata is also an accomplished costume maker and milliner.





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Joe Sbarro  
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Since 2016, Ensemble has commissioned 14 new Australian plays and premiered 16, with another 5 new productions to premiere by the end of 2023. We've commissioned playwrights such as Joanna Murray-Smith, Steve Rodgers, Hilary Bell, Melanie Tait, Geoffrey Atherden and Vanessa Bates to name but a few.

The Commissioners' Circle will comprise a group of likeminded Ensemble supporters who are passionate about storytelling and supporting artists to create new work for our stage.

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BY LYNN NOTTAGE

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