

Soft Tread presents

THE WHARF REVUE

**T
H E
E N D
O F T H E
W H A R F A S
W E K N O W I T ! ! !**

**LAST
SHOW
EVER!**



CREATED BY JONATHAN BIGGINS,
DREW FORSYTHE AND PHILLIP SCOTT

 **SOFT TREAD**

**THE
WHARF
REVUE**

Creators' Note

It's hard to believe that The Wharf Revue, this venerable institution of political satire, has been running since 2000. It seems like a mere 25 years since we (with the sterling initial help of Linda Nagle) first put on a show. The late-night experiment was performed on the set of another play at the Wharf Theatre to a small – well, 'crowd' is not the right word – shall we say 'gathering' of satire devotees. Little did we think that the sequels would largely consume our creative lives for the next quarter of a century.

In our time, we've seen seven Australian Prime Ministers, eight British leaders, five US Presidents and, funnily enough, only two Russian Presidents. We've witnessed the demise of the Australian Democrats, the rise of the Teals, the short-lived glory of the Australian Motoring Enthusiast Party and the Jacqui Lambie Network that doubled in size and then halved again overnight. We've seen the rise and fall and rise of Trump and, just as we exit stage right, there's the existential threat of Artificial Intelligence.

Ironically, behind the insidious rise of AI lies a more human truth. People still like to gather together in a room to listen to other people standing in front of them; to be entertained and reassured that the world and the problems they're confronting are shared by others; and to find common ground and a sense of release through collective laughter. The longevity of the Revue is testament to that and it's a point AI will never – and can never – reach.

Contemporary satire's strength is not so much its capacity to show how bad the world is but its ability to show that the world isn't that bad if we can still laugh about it. And that's been our guiding principle for 25 years.

Material has never been a problem. The hard part is finding new ways to frame it. We've tackled almost every genre, from Verdi to Shakespeare, from G&S to David Williamson, from the Wild West to outer space, from *Les Misérables* to Lewis Carroll. We've used video sequences shot by the talented Todd Decker and backing tracks by Andrew Worboys. Beginning as an almost guerilla operation at the STC, the shows have been collectively built from the ground up by a great bunch of scenic artists, costume makers, lighting designers, prop makers and stage managers. Since 2020, we've been out on our own, produced by the indefatigable Jo Dyer and technically overseen by Barry Searle. Our crew and collaborators have been fantastically loyal and we hope they have enjoyed the ride as much as us. We've been lucky to have the vastly talented Mandy Bishop with her uncanny skills of mimicry join us for many shows, and David Whitney has been a welcome addition to our cast these last two years.

And finally to the other vital ingredient: our audience. None of this would have been possible without the support of the punters who have bought the tickets, year in and year out. Theatre is nothing without the people you're doing it for. So we thank you.

Artist Biographies



Jonathan Biggins

Writer/Creator/Co-Director/Performer

Jonathan Biggins is an award-winning writer, director and performer, perhaps best known as one of the creators and performers for Sydney Theatre Company's long-running and much loved

annual political satire, *The Wharf Revue*, which celebrated its 21st Anniversary in 2021 after which it started a new life as an independent venture. As an actor Jonathan has also worked with all of the major theatre companies, including Sydney Theatre Company, Melbourne Theatre Company and the State Theatre Company of SA, and has appeared on multiple comedy shows on the ABC. He is the winner of two Australian Writers' Guild awards for *The Republic of Myopia* and for a new libretto for *Orpheus in the Underworld* (with Phil Scott), and a Helpmann Award for Best Director for *Avenue Q*. His two full-length plays, *Australia Day* (2012) and *Talk* (2017) both premiered at Sydney Theatre Company before touring nationally. His most recent play, *The Gospel According to Paul*, a one-man play about the life and political legacy of Paul Keating in which he also starred, was a smash hit that played to sold out houses across the country.



Drew Forsythe

Writer/Co-Director/Performer

Drew is a graduate of NIDA. He was a company member of the Old Tote Theatre Co and Nimrod Theatre Company and appeared in the productions that opened Sydney Opera House's Drama Theatre,

Sydney Theatre Company's Wharf Theatre and Belvoir Street Theatre (then the New Nimrod). Across his storied career he has won awards including AFI and Green Room awards and has worked with most of Australia's major theatre companies. He co-created *The Wharf Revue* for Sydney Theatre Company and has performed in most of its 26 productions, and for STC also appeared in many productions including *Hedda Gabler*, *The Way of the World* (1983), *Amadeus*, *Emerald City*, *Big and Little* and *The Republic of Myopia*. He has appeared in musicals including *Strictly Ballroom*, *The Threepenny Opera*, *The Mikado* and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. His screen appearances include the films *Newsfront*, *Burke and Wills*, *Travelling North*, *Billy's Holiday* and *Ned*, and the TV series *Devil's Dust*, *David Tench Tonight*, *The Dingo Principle*, *The Party Machine*, *Whose Baby* and *Three Men a Baby Grand*.

Drew's writing credits include *The Wharf Revues*, *The Republic of Myopia*, *Three Men and a Baby Grand* and *The Last Man Standing*.



Phillip Scott

Writer/Creator/Musical Director/Performer

Phillip Scott is a writer/actor/composer/pianist, best known for the annual Wharf Revues. His cabarets include the award-winning solo show

Reviewing the Situation, *Mario* (with Blake Bowden), *Newley Discovered* (with Hugh Sheridan), and *No Cabaret for Old Men* (with Jonathan Biggins). He worked with director Ted Robinson on many ABC TV series including *The Gillies Report*, *The Big Gig* and *Good News Week*.

Phil was Script Consultant on *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert – The Musical*. He co-wrote and composed the musicals *Safety in Numbers* and *The Republic of Myopia* and wrote the music and lyrics for Monkey Baa Theatre's children's shows including *Pete the Sheep* and *Josephine Wants to Dance*. With Trevor Ashley he co-wrote the adult pantos *Fat Swan*, *Little Orphan Trashley*, *The Bodybag*, and *The Lyin' Queen*.

Phil recently played Dr. Pangloss and Narrator in Leonard Bernstein's *Candide* at the Sydney Opera House and was Musical Director/Arranger of *Torch Song Trilogy* for the Darlinghurst Theatre Company. With Catherine Alcorn, he appeared at the Hayes Theatre in *30 Something*, set on New Year's Eve 1939. Phil has published four novels, and is also a music reviewer for *Limelight* and *Fanfare* magazines.



Mandy Bishop

Performer

Mandy Bishop dearly loves performing in the wonderful Wharf Revue and – like the audiences – will be bereft when it finally closes. She thanks the Creators for their long-standing contribution to the

Australian theatre landscape – for the unparalleled opportunities in creation of characters, reflection of politics and genres of performance, unique to Revue. May the legacy of Phil Scott, Drew Forsythe and Jonathan Biggins inspire many future works. Her thanks to Jo Dyer, and previously Sydney Theatre Company, for producing and supporting this art form. Mandy assists in Revue choreography and works in Australian and New York theatre and television. Her credits include AACTA, MEAA, ASTRA, AWGIE, Logie Awards & Nominations. She will next appear in the inaugural Suzie Miller Playwright's Award winner, Mary Rachel Brown's *Chicken In A Biscuit*.



David Whitney

Performer

David Whitney is a graduate of the National Institute of Dramatic Art. He is delighted to return to The Wharf Revue, having appeared in the Seymour Centre season of *Goodnight and Good Luck* in 2021 and *Pride in Prejudice* in 2023/24. David has appeared for Opera Australia in roles including Monsieur Firmin in *The Phantom of the Opera*, Baron Zeta in *The Merry Widow*, Doc in *West Side Story* on Sydney Harbour and as Zoltan Karparthy in *My Fair Lady* directed by Dame Julie Andrews. Other music theatre credits include: *Saint Joan*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Mrs Warren's Profession*, *Summer Rain*, *Woman In Mind*, *Darlinghurst Nights* (STC); *Luna Gale*, *Relatively Speaking* (Ensemble); *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Tempest*, *The Alchemist*, *The Duchess of Malfi* (Bell Shakespeare); *The Power of Yes* (Belvoir); *Cho Cho* (National Theatre of China).

TV appearances include: *A Place to Call Home*, *Love Child*, *Wonderland*, *Fatal Honeymoon*, *Home & Away*, *McLeod's Daughters*.



Matt Cox

Lighting Designer

Matt Cox has designed numerous productions for Australia's leading performing arts companies. A selection of his extensive credits is: for Bangarra Dance Theatre: *Dubboo*, *One's Country*, *Blak*, *Belong*. For the Hayes Theatre Company: *She Loves Me*. For Ensemble: *Diplomacy*, *Murder on the Wireless*. For Marrugeku: *Burrbgaja Yalirra*. For Bell Shakespeare: *The Miser*, *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*. For Monkey Baa: *Possum Magic*, *The Unknown Soldier*, *Diary of a Wombat*. For Sydney Theatre Company: *Wharf Revues 2018 - 2020*, *Ruby Moon*. For Louise Withers and Associates: *The Mousetrap*, *A Murder is Announced* for Belvoir: *The Seed*. For Sydney Festival: *The Famous Spiegel tent* (2016 -17). For the Sydney Chamber Opera: *His Music Burns*.



Todd Decker

Video Designer

Todd has been a Television Director for 25 years and has worked with The Wharf Revue team for over a decade. He also works for ABC TV, SBS, The Sydney Opera House, the Seven

Network and Network Ten, directing live broadcasts and recorded programs. Productions include *Q+A*, *Yo-Yo Ma Six Suites for Unaccompanied Cello*, *Lea Salonga in Concert*, *Audra McDonald & the Sydney Symphony Orchestra*, *Bangarra Dance Theatre*, *Paul Kapsis and Emma Pask Live*, *Play School*, *Whovians*, *2020 Tokyo Olympic Games*, *All About Women*, *Festival of Dangerous Ideas*, *Antidote* and *Stereosonic*.

Todd has also been a tutor at AFTRS in Advanced Presenter Training.



Hazel Fisher

Costume Designer

Having made her home here in Sydney for the past 34 years, Hazel has come full circle in her working life: she started work in repertory theatres in the UK, then

moved onto small business, teaching and production management in slow fashion and then found herself back in theatre. She has loved being part of The Wharf Revue team for the past 4 years.



Scott Fisher

Costume Designer

Scott, a native of Adelaide, spent his formative years in theatre working on shows including *Cats* and *Les Miserables* as well as a stint as a tailor's assistant at the National

Theatre of Great Britain. He joined Opera Australia in 1989 as a wardrobe assistant before moving to the roles of buyer and then coordinator for the wardrobe department. He has spent the past 22 years as manager of Sydney Theatre Company's costume department where he was introduced to the Wharf Revue team. The rest, as they say, is history.



Cameron Smith

Sound and Video Systems Designer

Cameron is a sound and video designer and technician with an extensive music and musical theatre background. After completing a

Bachelor of Fine Arts (Technical Theatre and Stage Management) from NIDA, he has worked for numerous companies around Sydney, including Sydney Theatre Company, Sydney Dance Company, Monkey Baa, Sydney Festival, Channel 7, Pinchgut Opera, Bangarra, EndemolShine Australia, and more.

A passionate and dedicated video and sound creative, he is interested in new and innovative technology and ideas that aim to redefine art forms. He wants to bring new and exciting experiences to a wide range of audiences that challenge and exceed expectations. While his focus has been primarily on theatre, he is always looking to explore other mediums and art forms and ways to bring them together.

As Video and Sound Designer: *Wharf Revue 2023: Pride In Prejudice and Wharf Revue 2022: Looking For Albanese* (SOFT TREAD), *Diana* (NIDA). As Video Designer: *The Linden Solution* (RATCATCH), *Dracula* (NIDA), *Icarus* (NIDA), *When The Rain Stops Falling* (NIDA). As Associate Video Designer: *Kulka* (Bangarra). As Video Editor: *Masterchef S16* (ESA), *Dessert Masters S2* (ESA), *The Country Music Awards 2024* (Big Day Media), *Julius Caesar* (STC). As Sound Designer: *One Who Wants To Cross* (Lost Thought Arts), *The Making of Sasha Fein* (Moira Blumenthal Productions) *Pagliacci* (NIDA), *God of Carnage* (NIDA).



Jo Dyer

For Soft Tread Enterprises: Producer

Soft Tread is an independent production house working across theatre and film led by Jo Dyer, former Executive Producer of Sydney Theatre

Company, General Manager of Bangarra Dance Theatre and CEO of Sydney Writers' Festival. Its recent productions include Jonny Hawkins' *Maureen: Harbinger of Death*, which premiered at the Sydney Festival in 2021 before playing at Melbourne's RISING Festival and Darwin Festival in 2022 and the Adelaide Festival and Edinburgh Fringe in 2023, and *The Gospel According to Paul*, by and starring Jonathan Biggins, that premiered to great acclaim in 2019, before touring nationally. Its feature film co-production with Adelaide's Windmill Theatre Company, *Girl Asleep*, had its international premiere at the Berlin International Film Festival before screening at Festivals across Australia and the world. The film went on to win the Best Film Award at the Seattle Film Festival and was nominated for Best Film at the 2016 AACTA awards.

As well as the annual Wharf Revue, recent projects include a season at the Brooklyn Academy of Music of legendary performer Meow Meow's *A Very Meow Meow Christmas Show*. In 2024, Soft Tread produced a national tour of Emmanuelle Mattana's incendiary play, *Trophy Boys*, and will tour it again in 2025.

Program

Running Time: 100 minutes (no interval)

The Hon Paul Keating

Introduction

3M Advertising Agency

Miriam Margolyes in the Outback

The Democrats Go Teal

Hindsight: Leadership

Angus Taylor Swift

The Ballad of Gina and Clive

Labor Youth

Hindsight: The Economy

Hockey & Cormann

Boomer Song

Jacqui Lambie at the Midwinter Ball

Tech Aliens

Hindsight: The Environment

America

Hindsight: Foreign Affairs

Pauline in Cabaret

I'm Bandt

Homer Dutton

Finale

Soft Tread presents

THE WHARF REVUE: The End of The Wharf As We Know It

Writers: Jonathan Biggins,
Drew Forsythe and Phillip Scott

Co-Directors: Jonathan Biggins and Drew Forsythe

Musical Director: Phillip Scott

Lighting Designer: Matt Cox

Video Designer: Todd Decker

Sound and Video Systems Designer:
Cameron Smith

Costume Designers: Hazel and Scott Fisher

Cast: Jonathan Biggins, Mandy Bishop,
Drew Forsythe, Phillip Scott and David Whitney

Producer: Jo Dyer

Company Stage Manager: Tim Burns

Head of Sound: Dylan Robinson

Head of Lighting: Lyndon Buckley

Sound Operator: Dave Smith

Production Manager: Barry Searle

Publicity: Ian Phipps Publicity

Marketing: Phillipa Spratt  PS Creative

Graphic Designer: Leading Hand Design

The Producers wish to thank:

Timothy Jones and the staff at the Seymour Centre,
Marcus Kelson, Sydney Theatre Company Costume
Department, Nyok Kim Chang, Linda's Alterations,
Mathilde Montredon and Warrick Baker.

'I'm Bandt' choreography: Cameron Mitchell

Additional Choreography: Mandy Bishop

Backing tracks: Andrew Worboys

Piano Partner: Kawai Australia

PROUD PARTNER

KAWAI

softtread.com.au



softtreadenterprises



softtreadent



SOFT TREAD

THE
WHARF
REVUE