



FIXED FOOT PRODUCTIONS AND SEYMOUR CENTRE PRESENT

THE PASS

BY JOHN DONNELLY



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

It is not often I come across a play that gets under my skin like John Donnelly's *The Pass*. I have wanted to direct it since first encountering it in 2017, and after the small issue of a global pandemic saw our planned 2020 production postponed, I am thrilled to now be able to bring the play to Sydney audiences. I would like to thank Seymour Centre and Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras for their support of this production.

I have heard it said that film is about story, television about character, and theatre about ideas. Donnelly's play is certainly brimming with ideas – I hope it might have you talking long into the night – but Donnelly has also managed to package his ideas into a deftly-plotted and cleverly-crafted story, peopled with complex and intriguing characters. I think of *The Pass* as a modern-day morality tale. It asks us to consider the dangers of pursuing 'success' at any cost and whether we can live a fulfilled life if we are unable to live authentically. *The Pass* may be set in the world of elite professional football, but its questions are existential ones – who are we? what is our purpose? how do we find fulfillment and meaning in our lives? – while taking in issues of gender, sexuality, class and race, all wrapped up in a bold and heartfelt story told by a quartet of contradictory, deeply-flawed, all too human characters. It is a remarkable achievement, and I thank Donnelly for his creation.

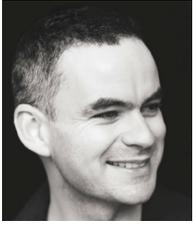
I would also like to thank the extraordinarily committed and talented creatives working with me to bring this play to life. A special thanks goes to my fearless cast, who have fully embraced the physical and emotional challenges of this play from the very beginning, all the while having to hold down paid work.

Lastly, I would like to dedicate this production to three real-life sportsmen – Andy Brennan, Ian Roberts and Dan Palmer – who have all spoken publicly about their sexuality and whose courage and commitment to living authentically is an inspiration to me.

– Ed Wightman



PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE



Hotel rooms, like shopping malls, are designed to make you forget the outside world. Shorn of all context, you could be anywhere, be anyone. They're places of transgression. And boredom. Perhaps both at the same time.

In that sense, theatres are like hotel rooms. The same rituals of checking in, having an overpriced drink, playing around with new personalities that aren't your own. New ways of being. Theatres too are places of transgression, hope and disappointment.

One of the things I value most about theatre is its ability to provoke an unguarded reaction. I don't mean the polite laughter that shows we get the reference, nor the standing ovation that productions rudely pummel out of us by sheer force (feel free to stand at the end of this one). The audience is engaged in performance as much as the actors. We signal our approval or disdain or boredom.

No, I'm talking about the gasp that slips through our defences, the belly laugh that bursts forth unbidden, the frisson that makes us shift in our seat when sex is in the air and you know it. I mean those moments when your subconscious briefly takes back control and for the briefest of seconds your true self is revealed. We laugh when a thing delights us. But also when it unsettles or frightens us. Theatre can, I believe, provide a context where we can all sit in the same room and confront and challenge things that unsettle us, about each other, and – more importantly – about ourselves, but also feel held and valued and loved and part of something communal.

Similarly, the characters in *The Pass* are struggling with versions of themselves – the selves they present to their families, their friends, lovers, the world and of course the versions they present to themselves. How do they reconcile all these identities? How do we?

These weren't new ideas in 2014 when the play was first produced but they maybe hadn't entered our bloodstream to the extent they have now. Figuring out who we are is no longer the preserve of philosophers. It's a full time job for all of us.

Any play that seeks to explore who we are must take in gender, sexuality, race, class, money – these are inescapable forces that shape us all. Sometimes we forget or pretend they're not there, but they always are – driving us on, pulling us back. The characters in *The Pass* operate within these structures as much as you or me. They exploit each other and themselves – physically, emotionally, economically – but they also hanker after a purer human connection.

And so they face a choice, as we all do – how much of ourselves are we prepared to sacrifice to get the things we want? And if we lose ourselves, what becomes of us then? What is left?

– John Donnelly





ED WIGHTMAN DIRECTOR

Most recently Ed was Assistant Resident Director on the Australian revival of *Billy Elliot The Musical*. Prior to that, he was Resident Director on *Fawlty Towers Live*, written by John Cleese.

Previous directing credits include: *The Book of Everything* (Canberra Critics Circle award), *Lawrence & Holloman* (Sun Herald Best Independent Theatre mention), *The Memory of Water*, *Twelfth Night*, *Arms and the Man*, a touring version of *The Comedy of Errors* for WAAPA, *Summer and Smoke* for NIDA, and a sold-out production of a new Australian play for Old 505 Theatre (*Are You Listening Now?*). He has also directed and co-written two original music theatre productions for P&O/Grayboy Entertainment, as well as several student productions for various high schools and the performing arts school, ED5 International, where he also teaches acting. Ed originally trained as an actor at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art. He also works as an acting coach – most recently on the ABC/Netflix series *The Unlisted* – and as a freelance casting director, running sessions for several leading Sydney-based casting studios.



BECKY MATTHEWS PRODUCER

Becky is a Sydney-based producer, writer, photographer and communications professional. She is the founder and artistic director of Fixed Foot Productions.

The company's first production in 2018, *Are You Listening Now?* by Xavier Coy, had a critically acclaimed sell-out season at the Old 505 Theatre. Fixed Foot Productions has since produced several new Australian works including *Distorted* (Old 505 Theatre) and *Caught Out* (Bond Feast; co-production) by Xavier Coy, *Inner Weather* by Michael Becker (Chippen Street Theatre), and *Hairworm* by Emma Wright (Old 505 Theatre for Freshworks Femme; co-production).

Becky is an accomplished photographer, specialising in performance and headshots. She was associate producer of *The Nether* by Jennifer Haley at the Seymour Centre (Catnip Productions), and has a variety of experience behind the scenes in stage management and operating roles. She is a graduate of the University of Sydney with a Bachelor of Arts in Media and Communications.



RACHAEL ADAMSON ASSOCIATE PRODUCER

Rachael Adamson is a young theatre producer, director, performer and graphic artist currently studying a double bachelor of theatre and molecular

biology at UNSW. Rachael's recent theatre credits include developing, producing and co-directing the original concept online show *Is This On?* (2020), producing *The Real Inspector Hound* (2019) for which she won the NUTS award for best producer and best newcomer, and stage managing *Gritty In Pink*, an experimental exploration of femininity for Sydney Fringe Festival (2019). Rachael's recent graphic art and publicity credits include managing publicity for the UTS Backstage production of *Dogfight* (2019) and creating the visual identity for NUTS Theatre Society, of which she is the 2021 president.



HAMISH ELLIOT SET & COSTUME DESIGNER

Hamish is a Sydney-based production and costume designer working in theatre and film. He attended Enmore Design Centre where he achieved a Diploma in live production design in 2016.

He is also a 2019 graduate of NIDA's Design for Performance BFA. Hamish's recent theatre credits include *Miracle City* by Nick Enright and Max Lambert, Dir. Hayden Tonazzi, set and costume design; *Distorted* by Xavier Coy, Dir. Richard Hilliar, set and costume design; and *Love Burns* music by Graeme Koehne, libretto by Louis Nowra, Dir. Eugene Lynch, set and costume design.



MATT COX LIGHTING DESIGNER

Since arriving in Sydney in 2003, Matt has designed numerous theatre productions including, for Bangarra Dance Theatre: *Dubbo*, *One's Country*, *OUR Land*

People Stories, *Blak*, *Belong*. For Carriageworks: *Lake Disappointment*. For The Hayes Theatre Company: *Lake Loves Me*. For Siren Theatre Co: *The Trouble with Harry*. For Ensemble: *Diplomacy*, *Murder on the Wireless*. For the Australian Chamber Orchestra: *Reflections on Gallipoli*. for Marrugeku: *Burrngaja Yalirra*. For Musica Viva: *Goldner String Quartet*. 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 Revue 2020, Wharf Revue 2019, Wharf Revue 2018, Ruby Moon.* for William Zappa: *The Iliad Out Loud.* For Tinderbox Productions: *David Suchet, Poirot and More.* for Louise Withers and Associates: *The Mousetrap, and A Murder is Announced.* For Michael Sieders Presents: *Alice in Wonderland.* For Company B: *The Seed.* for Legs on the Wall: *Symphony.* For Sport for Jove: *The Libertine, Othello, Antigone, The River at the end of the Road, The Tempest.* For Red Line Productions: *This Much is True, A View From the Bridge.* For Sydney Festival: *The Famous Spiegeltent (2016), The Famous Spiegeltent (2015), The Aurora Spiegeltent (2014).* For the Sydney Chamber Opera: *His Music Burns.*



DARYL WALLACE SOUND DESIGNER

Daryl Wallis is a composer, sound designer, keyboard musician, vocal coach and musical director. He won first prize in the 2012 Federation Bells Composing

Competition, and won the 2013 Sydney Theatre Award for best Score & Sound Design in a Mainstage Production with Elana Kats-Chernin for their work on the Ensemble production of *Frankenstein.* He won a Green Room award as musical director for *The Strange Bedfellows.* Current projects include *Leonard Cohen Koans*, an exploration of Leonard Cohen's song, poetry and prose with Ali & The Thieves; *The Aurobindo Project*, an immersive theatrical exploration of the spiritual poetry and philosophy of Sri Aurobindo; the cabarets *Take This Longing* and *Jacqui Dark is Alive and Well and Living in Newtown with Jacqui Dark*, and *The Hour of Land*, a personal meditation and musical dialogue between Yosemite National Park and the Royal National Park in Sydney.



NIGEL POULTON MOVEMENT & INTIMACY DIRECTOR

Nigel is an award-winning movement, fight and intimacy coordinator, SAG-AFTRA/MEAA stunt performer and actor with

over 25 years of professional experience. Nigel is a certified Intimacy Director and Coordinator with Intimacy Directors International (IDI), and Intimacy Directors and Coordinators (IDC), an Instructor, Fight Director and past President of the Society of Australian Fight Directors Inc; a Certified Fight

Director and Teacher with the Society of American Fight Directors; an Honorary Fight Director with Fight Directors Canada; and has been certified with the British Academy of Dramatic Combat. Nigel has particular expertise in kinaesthetic movement processes and combat systems, classical, historical and adaptive swordplay, and edged weapon use. He has worked internationally over the last fifteen years, is a classically trained with the Martinez Academy of Arms, has trained and taught extensively in Historical European Martial Arts throughout the world, and has over 20 years experience in a variety of mainland and archipelago Asian martial systems. Nigel is a practitioner of Chen Taiji and Vsevelod Meyerhold's Theatrical Biomechanics system, having trained intensively with the system's current custodian Gennadi Bogdanov.

Choreography credits include the Australian Ballet (2018), the New York City Ballet (2007, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2015, 2017 and 2018), The Metropolitan Opera (2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2014 and 2015), Sydney Theatre Company, the Bell Shakespeare Company, Washington Opera Company (2002 tour of Japan), Opera Australia, Circus Oz, Melbourne Theatre Company, Queensland Theatre Company, Belvoir Street, La Boite Theatre (Brisbane), Playbox Theatre (Melbourne), and Kooemba Jdarra (Brisbane).



BENJAMIN PURSER DIALECT COACH

Benjamin is an emerging dialect and voice coach based in Sydney. He has coached various productions in theatre and film for Genesian Theatre Company,

AFTRS, Charles Sturt University, and New Theatre, and has worked with actors and musical theatre performers teaching dialect and voice workshops. His most recent work includes New Theatre's successful Sydney premiere of *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, where Benjamin's dialect work was critically acclaimed by The Sydney Morning Herald. Benjamin also works in linguistic research across several Australian Research Council-funded projects such as Sydney Speaks (ANU) and AusKidTalk (Macquarie University). He is a tutor in the Department of Linguistics at Macquarie University, and recently co-authored a paper in the Voice and Speech Review about dialect coaching of Australian English. Benjamin is a graduate of both the Australian National University (PhB, First Class Honours, University Medal) and ED5 International (Dip. Performing Arts).



ALEX PLENGE CHAN STAGE MANAGER

Alexandra Plenge Chan is a recent graduate with a Bachelor of Dramatic Arts. Though predominantly a performer, Alex has managed for numerous

shows whilst also being involved in design and directing. Some highlights include: *The Tempest* (2018) *Clinchfield* (2018), *Love & Information* (2019), *The Classroom* (2019), *Distorted* (2020), *Love Burns* (2020) and *Ching Chong Chinaman* (2021).



BEN CHAPPLE JASON

Ben Chapple began as a writer of plays, sketches and screenplays whilst studying Law and Writing degrees at UTS. In 2016, when shortlisted for the Sydney Theatre

Company's prestigious Patrick White Playwrights' Award, Ben finally succumbed to the acting bug and auditioned for (and was accepted to) the Acting course at WAAPA. A graduate of 2019, Ben has shared his takes on iconic characters like Francis in *The Golden Age*, Paul in *Birdland*, Fr Flynn in *Doubt*, and Holden Caulfield in *Reg Cribb's Bullies*. Since, Ben has starred in Screentime/Network Ten's second series of *Playing For Keeps* as AFL superstar, Liam Flynn, built his voiceover career, completed all three Bachelor degrees, and written like a nutter – polishing off multiple novels, pilots and plays. As 2021 takes hold, Ben is also part of Parramatta Riverside's 2021 Page to Stage playwriting cohort.



DENG DENG ADE

Deng Deng, an African-Australia actor/writer, is a recent graduate of the Academy of Film Theatre and Television. Deng was in the Australian feature *Hearts and*

Bones directed by Ben Lawrence (2019), *Moe from Da Area* (2019-present) and web series *How To F*** A French Woman*. Besides screen work Deng had also worked in theatre productions such as AFTT's *Love and Information* by Luke Rogers (2017) and *Romeo and Juliet* by Sean O'Riordan (2017). Deng also worked as a Dialect Coach & Cultural Consultant on Darlinghurst production of *Maggie Stones* by Sandra Eldridge (2018), and appeared in *Blood on the Cat's Neck* (2019), *Trojan Barbie* (2019) and *Macbeth the Installation* by Sean O'Riordan (2020).



CASSIE HOWARTH LYNDSEY

Cassie trained at the Actors Centre Australia in Sydney as well as the Atlantic Acting School and the Stella Adler Conservatory in New York. In 2008 she appeared in two

feature films, Bruce Beresford's *Mao's Last Dancer* and Vincent Skreli's *School for Life* as well as Channel Nine's children's TV series *The Kingdom of Paramithi* directed by Paul Field. In 2010 and 2011 she played Dayna Rollins in the US cable series *Bar Karma* alongside William Sanderson. On return to Australia Cassie had a guest lead in Seven Network's *Packed to the Rafters* before taking the regular role of Hannah Wilson on *Home and Away* (2013-2015). Cassie then returned to the USA to play the lead in two feature films: *Two Graves in the Desert* (Dir. Benjamin Goabré) and *Model Citizen* (Dir. Mark Gaunt). She has appeared in a number of short films in Australia and USA including *Death Clock* (Dir. Connor van Vuuren), *Moirea* (Dir. Salome Buelow), *Afternoon* (Dir. Alfonso Herrera), *Miseducation* (Dir. Julian Shaw), *Pink Balloons* (Dir. Rebecca Rochford Davies) and *La Boite Noir* (Dir. Eric Marciano).



TOM RODGERS HARRY

Tom is a 2019 graduate of NIDA, mentored by some of Australia's finest artists including Simon Burke, Philip Quast, Anne-Maree McDonald, Darren Gilshenan and

Cameron Mitchell. Originally from Newcastle, he is a musical theatre, stage and screen actor, with a particular love for the screen. He recently starred in a Screen Australia produced short film, *Shrapnel*, directed by Oscar nominee, Steve Pasvolsky. His most memorable stage roles include Tonino in *The Venetian Twins*, Barfée in *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, Shrek in *Shrek the Musical*, Peter Pan in *Take Me to Neverland* and Tim in *Starstruck: The Musical* (RGM Productions). Tom will be making his Sydney theatre debut in this powerful Australian premiere.

FIXED FOOT PRODUCTIONS & SEYMOUR CENTRE PRESENT

THE PASS

SEYMOUR CENTRE | 11 FEB – 6 MAR

Writer **John Donnelly**

Director **Ed Wightman**

Producer **Becky Matthews**

Associate Producer **Rachael Adamson**

Set & Costume Designer **Hamish Elliot**

Lighting Designer **Matt Cox**

Sound Designer **Daryl Wallis**

Movement & Intimacy Director **Nigel Poulton**

Dialect Coach **Benjamin Purser**

Stage Manager **Alex Plenge Chan**

Cast **Ben Chapple, Deng Deng, Cassie Howarth & Tom Rodgers**

With thanks to

Tim Jones and all the staff at Seymour Centre, John Donnelly, Kara Fitzpatrick, Andy Brennan, Mary Rachel Brown, Kirsty McGregor, Will Pearce, Anthony McShane, David Cutler, Ana Maria Belo, Xavier Coy, Joel Horwood, Simon Pollard, John Bashford, Laurence Coy, Will Pearce, Tom Hodgson, David Als, Amy Lawler, Chris Vasilescu and Rosie Pitty.

This production of *The Pass* is supported by the NSW Government through Create NSW.

Fixed Foot Productions

Fixed Foot Productions is an independent theatre production company founded by Becky Matthews to develop, produce and share high-quality new Australian work by emerging and established theatre makers.

Seymour Centre

Seymour Centre's work champions new voices, questions the status quo and inspires wide-ranging audiences through the creative expression of big ideas.

The Seymour Season program presents major works from Australian and international artists, and proudly supports emerging and established independent arts companies.

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