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# THE LITERATI

GRIFFIN THEATRE COMPANY  
AND BELL SHAKESPEARE PRESENT

**THE LITERATI**  
BY JUSTIN FLEMING  
AFTER MOLIÈRE'S  
LES FEMMES SAVANTES  
27 MAY - 16 JULY

**Director** Lee Lewis

**Designer** Sophie Fletcher

**Co-Composers & Sound Designers** Max Lambert  
and Roger Lock

**Lighting Designer** Verity Hampson

**With** Caroline Brazier, Gareth Davies,  
Kate Mulvany, Jamie Oxenbould, Miranda Tapsell



# PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE

We live in an age of spin. And so did Molière. The spin doctors may change in wardrobe, manners or language, but they remain a rich field for biting satire. That the learned fool is more of a fool than an ignorant one remains as much a conundrum for us in the 21st century as it did for audiences in the 17th. Molière wrote on the threshold of the Age of Reason, so any spin that amounted to nonsense on stilts was both repugnant and laughable.

I think Molière's work is principally about extremes. Such human forces as love, passion, honesty, health, money, authority and religion (even if it is an obsession with books) are better lived in the moderate zones. As soon as we traverse that corridor, especially if we try to drag everyone else with us, we are on the path to the destruction of happiness.

*The Literati* is many things, not least a piss-take on pretentious literary conceit, and as I approached the work, I always kept in mind some of the gushing hyperbole that passes for writers' festivals and book clubs both on television and off. In this vein, the play had a modern resonance, which I was eager to capture. Molière's title *Les Femmes Savantes* did not embrace the wonderful wankery of Tristan Tossier (Molière's Trissotin – his pun on three fools in one man). Hence, when Lee Lewis and Peter Evans asked me to find an appropriate all-inclusive title, I suggested *The Literati*.

Though Molière used rhyming couplets throughout, his audience was used to them, and in French, because of the frequent similar endings of words, they have less intensity. For variety's sake, and to give themes their breathing space, in scenes on lofty pretentiousness, I have used the rhyming couplets (AABB). When the subject is love, the rhymes are on alternate lines (ABAB). And for wisdom and true scholarship, the rhymes fall on the first and fourth lines, and the second and third lines (ABBA). I first experimented on this pattern with *Tartuffe* and remain grateful to director Peter Evans, the actors and audiences who so happily ran with it.

**Justin Fleming**  
Writer



# DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Molière at Griffin. *Qu'est-ce que c'est?* Griffin, the only theatre company in the country dedicated to the production of new Australian plays, producing an adaptation of a French classic ... is it all downhill into an international quagmire from here? *Mais non, mes amis! Calmez-vous.*

Justin Fleming has been in a serious literary relationship with Molière for many years now. I admired his work in a Peter Evans production at MTC in *Tartuffe* years ago. I directed his translation of *The School For Wives* in a production which toured around the country with Bell Shakespeare. I giggled helplessly at Kate Mulvany in another Evans Bell production of his *Tartuffe* at the Opera House in 2014. I witnessed his first draft of *Les Femmes Savantes* come to life in a reading for The Lysicrates Prize. Finally I realised that Justin is more than a translator of Molière (a difficult enough task in and of itself). He has become an Australian adaptor, interpreter, suggester and massager of Molière's original works to such an extent that, while remaining faithful to Molière's structures and stories, he is creating Australian versions that speak directly to Australian audiences about our own foibles here and now. These are not versions written for a relationship with a French audience. These are not versions that belong on the British stage or the American stage. They belong here.

So his work, his skill, his talent needs to be shown on the Griffin stage.

And it is enormous fun. Not to make. Comedy is horrifically hard. Verse comedy is hellishly impossible. Jammed into the tiny Stables space is the stuff of nightmares. With only five actors it is just ridiculous. Even when they are as good as this bunch. All of which possibly make Peter Evans and me the most foolhardy Artistic Directors in the country. But we both believe in Justin Fleming. And we both believe that if we can make it work, it will be enormous fun ... for the audience.

So the country's national classical company is teaming up with the country's new writing company to create a production of such linguistic dexterity, of such audaciously silly virtuosity that it will inspire playwrights around the country to dare more with their double entendres, to leap further in their language play, to bathe in the voluptuousness of verse, and ultimately to make people laugh.

So don't worry. We are still Australia's new writing theatre. Always have been. Always will be. It's just that the idea of what is an Australian play is evolving. In front of your eyes. I dare you to sit in the front row.

**Lee Lewis**  
Director



## Justin Fleming

### Playwright

Justin Fleming's plays include: for ATYP and Bakehouse Theatre Company: *His Mother's Voice*; for Belvoir: *Burnt Piano* (later produced by: Melbourne Theatre Company, Centaur (Montréal), Herbert Berghof Theater New York); for Courtauld Institute, London: *Origin* (later produced by Art Gallery of New South Wales); for Ensemble Theatre and Festival of Sydney: *Hammer*; for Melbourne Theatre Company: *Coup D'Etat* (later produced by: Bakehouse Theatre Company, Western Canada Theatre); for New York Ensemble Studio Theatre and Alfred P Sloan Foundation: *Soldier of the Mind*; for Old Fitz Theatre: *The Department Store*; for Riverside Theatres: *Shellshock*; and for Sydney Theatre Company: *The Cobra*, *Harold In Italy*, *The Ninth Wonder*. Justin's previous translations of Molière include: for Bell Shakespeare: *The School for Wives*; and for Melbourne Theatre Company: *Tartuffe (The Hypocrite)* (later produced by Bell Shakespeare). Justin's credits as librettist include: for Griffin, Wayne Harrison, Ross Mollison and Robert C Kelly: *Satango*; for Compact Opera (UK Tour) and Sadler's Wells: *Crystal Balls*; for Ensemble Theatre: *Ripper: The Terror of Whitechapel*; and for Savoy Theatre: *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, which then toured the UK. Justin is also the author of *Stage Lines – Writing Scripts for the Stage*, published by Phoenix Education.



## Lee Lewis

### Director

Lee is the Artistic Director of Griffin Theatre Company and one of Australia's leading directors. Her directing credits for Griffin include: *The Bleeding Tree*, *The Bull*, *The Moon and the Coronet of Stars*, *The Call*, *Emerald City*, *A Hoax*, *Masquerade* (co-directed with Sam Strong), *The Nightwatchman*, *A Rabbit for Kim Jong-il*, *Replay*, *The Serpent's Table* (co-directed with Darren Yap) and *Silent Disco*; for Bell Shakespeare: *The School for Wives*, *Twelfth Night*; for Belvoir: *That Face*, *This Heaven*; for Melbourne Theatre Company: David Williamson's *Rupert*, which toured to Washington DC as part of the World Stages International Arts Festival and to Sydney's Theatre Royal in 2014; and for Sydney Theatre Company: *Honour*, *Love Lies Bleeding* and *ZEBRA!*.



## Max Lambert

### Co-Composer & Sound Designer

Max is one of Australia's most talented composers, arrangers, musicians and musical directors. Composing credits include work for Sydney, Melbourne and Queensland Theatre Companies, Sydney Dance Company and The Australian Ballet. Recording album credits include: Kate Ceberano, Wendy Matthews, Grace Knight, Vince Jones, Renee Geyer, Paul Kelly, Iva Davies and Icehouse. Max's film credits include: George Miller's *Happy Feet*; Gillian Armstrong's *The Last Days of Chez Nous*. His musical theatre credits include, David Atkins' *Hot Shoe Shuffle*. Max's Musical Directorship credits include the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of *Sydney 2000 Olympic Games*; *2002 Commonwealth Games* (Manchester); and the *2006 Asian Games* (Doha, Qatar). His Musical Supervisor credits include: ARIA award-winning production *The Boy From Oz*, *Hairspray*, *Fame*, *King Kong* and *Strictly Ballroom the Musical*. The revival of Max's musical *Miracle City* (co-written with Nick Enright) was a runaway success at The Hayes Theatre in 2014. He is thrilled to be back at the SBW Stables working again with Roger Lock, having just worked as Composer and Sound Designer on Alana Valentine's *Ladies Day*.



## Sophie Fletcher

### Designer

Sophie's theatre credits include, as Set and Costume Designer: for Griffin: *Caress/Ache*, *Emerald City*; for Belvoir: *This Heaven*; and for Pants Guys / ATYP: *Sweet Nothings*. As Design Assistant: for Belvoir: *Babyteeth*, *Every Breath*, *Peter Pan*; for Melbourne Theatre Company: *Miss Julie*; for Opera Australia: *The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Ring Cycle*; and for Sydney Theatre Company: *Gross und Klein*, *The Maids*, *Waiting for Godot*. Her film credits include, as Costume Designer: for Whitefalk Films: *Florence Has Left the Building*; as Production Designer: for Whitefalk Films: *Shadow Self*; and as Production and Costume Designer: for Whitefalk Films: *How to Get Clean*.





## Roger Lock

### Co-Composer & Sound Designer

Guitarist, producer and composer Roger Lock studied guitar, composition and music technology at the Mozarteum University of Salzburg. As a concert guitarist he has played concerts in Austria, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Spain, Hungary and Taiwan before moving to Vienna in 2007. He has been very active as a concert and recording artist, producing albums with Dr. Opim, Eminence Symphony Orchestra, Yorgos Nousis, Laetitia Ribeiro, Jane Rosenson, Emma Sholl, Troebinger and his band project Roger Vs. The Man. He has taught at many tertiary institutions including the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and currently runs the Cranbrook Recording Studio. Roger is honoured to be back at Griffin after being the Associate Sound Designer on *Ladies Day*, and is delighted to be working with Lee Lewis and Max Lambert again.



## Verity Hampson

### Lighting Designer

Verity's previous theatre credits for Griffin include: *Beached*, *The Bleeding Tree*, *The Boys*, *The Bull*, *The Moon and the Coronet of Stars* and *The Floating World*. She is a NIDA graduate with over ten years' experience as a lighting and projection designer. She has designed for over one hundred theatre productions working with some of Australia's most talented directors and choreographers. Verity's television credits include: for ABC: *Live at the Basement* and *The Roast*. Verity was awarded the Mike Walsh Fellowship in 2012, which took her to Broadway to work with Tony Award-winning projection design company 59 Productions. She was also the winner of the 2013 Sydney Theatre Award for Best Mainstage Lighting Design for her work on *Machinal* at Sydney Theatre Company.



## Charlotte Barrett

### Stage Manager

Charlotte's previous stage management credits include: for Griffin: *A Rabbit for Kim Jong-il*; for Force Majeure: *Jump First, Ask Later*, *Nothing to Lose*; for Matthew Management & Neil Gooding Productions: *Thank You For Being A Friend*; for The National Theatre of Parramatta: *Swallow*; for Queensland Theatre Company: *Mountaintop*, *Stradbroke Dreamtime* (remount), *Youth Ensemble Showcase 2013*; for Queensland Theatre Company and Sydney Theatre Company: *The Effect*; and for Sydney Theatre Company: *Battle of Waterloo*, *The Golden Age*. Charlotte has also worked extensively as an Assistant Stage Manager: for Black Swan State Theatre Company and Queensland Theatre Company: *Gasp!*; for Opera Queensland: *The Perfect American*; for Queensland Theatre Company: *Macbeth*, *Other Desert Cities*; and for Shake & Stir Theatre Company: *Animal Farm* (Queensland Regional Tour).



## Caroline Brazier

### Philomena / Vadius

Since graduating from NIDA in 1998, Caroline Brazier has enjoyed an extensive career in film, theatre and television. Caroline's theatre credits include: for Bell Shakespeare: *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Julius Caesar*, *The Merchant of Venice*; for Critical Stages and Tamarama Rock Surfers: *I Want to Sleep with Tom Stoppard*, for which Caroline won a Sydney Theatre Award and a Glug Award for Best Actress in a Leading Role; for Melbourne Theatre Company: *Enlightenment*, *Jumpy*, *Ray's Tempest*; and for Sydney Theatre Company: *Don's Party*. Her television credits include: for ABC Studios/Paperboy Productions/ Renaissance Pictures: *Legend of the Seeker*; for Amblin Television/Chernin Entertainment/Kapital Entertainment/ Siesta Productions/20th Century Fox Television: *Terranova*; for Blow by Blow Productions/Essential Media: *Rake*, for which Caroline received an Equity Ensemble Award for Outstanding Performance for her role of Wendy Greene; for Endemol Australia: *Water Rats* (Nine Network), *Wild Boys* (Channel 7); for Every Cloud Productions: *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries* (ABC); and for Spectrum Films: *Packed to the Rafters* (Channel 7).



## Gareth Davies

### Tristan Tossier

This is Gareth's first production with Griffin. His previous theatre credits include: for Bell Shakespeare: *As You Like It*; for Belvoir: *As You Like It*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *Peter Pan*, *The Seagull*; for Belvoir and The Hayloft Project: *The Only Child*, *The Suicide*; for Belvoir and Arts Radar: *Midsummer Night's Dream*; for Malthouse Theatre: *The Government Inspector* and for Melbourne Theatre Company: *The Cherry Orchard*. Gareth has also been involved in a number of works which he both devised and performed in: for Belvoir: *And They Called Him Mr Glamour*, which Gareth wrote; for Redline Productions: *Masterclass*, *Masterclass 2 - Flames of the Forge*, which he co-wrote with Charlie Garber; and as a member of Melbourne's Black Lung Theatre: *Avast and Avast II* (with Malthouse Theatre), *Doku Rai* (with Darwin Festival), *I Feel Awful* (with Queensland Theatre Company), *Pimms*, *Rubeville* and *Sugar*. Gareth appeared in the film *The Daughter* for Screen NSW and Fate Films. His television credits include: for Universal Cable Productions and Valhalla Entertainment: *Hunters*; and for Giant Dwarf: *The Letdown* (ABC).



## Jamie Oxenbould

### Christopher / Clinton

Jamie has worked in the performing arts for over 25 years. His theatre credits include: for Griffin Independent and Apocalypse Theatre Company: *The Dapto Chaser*; for Darlinghurst Theatre Company: *Good Works*; for the Ensemble Theatre: *Chapter Two*, *Casanova*, *Fully Committed*, *Last of the Red Hot Lovers*, *Neighbourhood Watch*, *Seven Stories*, *The Spear Carrier* (one man show), *When Dad Married Fury*; and for Sydney Theatre Company: *The Tempest*. His television credits include: for ABC: *My Place*, *Playschool*; and for Yoram Gross: *Filippa & Lopaka*. Jamie also writes and directs short films. His films have screened at various film festivals including Adelaide Film Festival, Flickerfest, LA Shorts Festival, St Kilda Film Festival, the Tasmanian Breath of Fresh Air Film Festival (BOFA) and Tropfest.



## Kate Mulvany

### Amanda

Kate is one of Australia's most multi-talented and versatile artists. She has performed widely across stage, screen and television, and has written and produced over 25 plays and screenplays. As an actor, her theatre credits include: for Griffin: *Beached*; for Griffin and Riverina Theatre: *Mr Bailey's Minder*; for Bell Shakespeare: *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, and *Tartuffe*, for which she received a Sydney Theatre Critics Award for Best Actress; for Belvoir: *Buried Child*; for Melbourne Theatre Company: *The Beast*; for Perth Theatre Company: *Amadeus*, *Milk & Honey*, *Social Climbers*, *Sweet Phoebe*; for Sydney Theatre Company: *A Man With Five Children*, *The Crucible*, *Festen*, *King Lear*, *Proof* and *Rabbit*. Kate's feature film credits include: *The Final Winter*, *Griff the Invisible*, Baz Luhrmann's *The Great Gatsby* and *The Turning*. Television credits include: *The Chaser's War On Everything*, *Chandon Pictures*, *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries*, *My Place*, *The Underbelly Files: The Man Who Got Away* and *Winter*. As a writer, some of Kate's original plays include: for Black Swan State Theatre Company and Hothouse Theatre: *The Web*; for Belvoir: *Jasper Jones*, *Medea* and *The Seed* – which, after several acclaimed seasons, is in development to become a feature film. She has also written a number of musicals including: for The Q Theatre Company: *Somewhere – The Magical Musical of Penrith* (co-written with Tim Minchin) and for the State Theatre Company of South Australia and Griffin Theatre Company: *Masquerade*. Kate has been a proud member of Actors Equity since 1997.



## Miranda Tapsell

### Juliet / Martina

Miranda Tapsell is a proud Larrakia Woman from Darwin who grew up in Kakadu National Park. Her theatre credits include: for Belvoir: *A Christmas Carol*, *Radiance* and *Yibiyung*; for Riverside Theatres: *Rainbow's End*; for Sydney Theatre Company: *The Secret River*, for which she received a Helpmann Award nomination for Best Female Actor in a Supporting Role; for Sydney Festival: *I Am Eora*; for Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company: *Mother's Tongue*. Miranda appeared in the multi-award winning feature film, *The Sapphires*. Her previous television credits include: for ABC: *Black Comedy*, *Playschool*, *Redfern Now* and *Splash Content*; for Blackfella Films: *Mabo*; for Channel 9: *Love Child*, for which she won both the Most Popular New Talent and The Graham Kennedy Award for Most Outstanding Newcomer logies; for Foxtel: *Who We Are* (Season 3). Her upcoming television credits include: for ABC: *Cleverman* and *Maurice's Big Adventure*; for Foxtel: *Secret City*; for Screentime: *Wolf Creek*.

Cover and rehearsal photography by Brett Boardman



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