

## BIOGRAPHIES

### Steve Francis

Composer & Sound Designer

Steve has worked on over 100 theatre productions for leading companies including for Griffin: *A Strategic Plan*, *A Rabbit for Kim Jong-il*, *The Bull*, *the Moon and the Coronet of Stars*, *Between Two Waves*, *Speaking in Tongues*, *Strange Attractor*, *This Year's Ashes*; for Bell Shakespeare: *Henry V*; for Belvoir: *The Sugar House*; for Sydney Theatre Company: *The Battle of Waterloo*, *The Children*, *Disgraced*, *The Father*, *The Hanging*, *The Long Forgotten Dream*, *The Secret River*, *Still Point Turning*, *Switzerland*; for Legs on the Wall: *The Man with the Iron Neck*; for Melbourne Theatre Company: *The Weir*, *The Sublime*; and for Queensland Theatre: *Nearer the Gods*. For dance, Steve has composed scores for Bangarra Dance Theatre, most recently *Dark Emu* and *Bennelong*. He was commissioned to compose music for the Gold Coast XXI Commonwealth Games Opening, the Sydney Olympic Games Opening Ceremony and the Rugby World Cup Opening. Steve has received two Helpmann Awards for Best Original Score (*Walkabout*, 2002 and *Belong*, 2011), and two nominations for Best Sound Design. He's also won two Sydney Theatre Awards for Best Music and Sound Design. Steve was nominated for a Screen Music Award for his work on *Dangerous*.

### Michael Toisuta

Associate Sound Designer

Michael has worked as composer and sound designer on numerous theatre, dance, video art and short film projects. His sound design credits include: for Griffin and STCSA: *Masquerade*; for Bell Shakespeare: *Richard 3*; for Belvoir: *The Sugar House*; for National Theatre of Parramatta: *Flight Paths*; and for Sydney Theatre Company: *Australian Graffiti*.

### Mary Rachel Brown

Dramaturg

Mary has worked as a dramaturg for PWA, Canberra Theatre Centre, ATYP, Canberra Youth Theatre and the Australian War Memorial. As a playwright, Mary's credits

include: for Griffin Independent/Apocalypse Theatre Company/Glen Street Theatre/HotHouse/Merrigong Theatre Company: *The Dapto Chaser*; for Apocalypse Theatre Company/Old 505: *All My Sleep And Waking*; for Apocalypse Theatre Company/Red Line Productions: *Permission to Spin*; for the Australian War Memorial: *Last Letters*; for Christine Dunstan Productions: *Inside Out*; for Darlinghurst Theatre Company: *Silent Night*; for Glynn Nicholas Group: *National Security and the Art of Taxidermy*; for South East Arts: *Sunshine*; for Sydney Conservatorium of Music: *Die Fledermaus* (adaptation); and for the University of Wollongong: *These Are Not My People*. Mary's TV credits include: for the ABC: *The Elegant Gentleman's Guide to Knife Fighting*; and for Seven Network: *Home and Away*. Mary is the recipient of several national playwriting awards, including Griffin's Lysicrates Prize in 2016, the 2006 Griffin Award, PWA's Max Afford Award in 2007 and SBW Foundation's Rodney Seaborn Award in 2008.

### Isabella Kerdijk

Stage Manager

Isabella graduated from the production course at NIDA in 2008. Her credits include: as Stage Manager and Assistant Stage Manager: for Griffin: *And No More Shall We Part*, *Replay*, *This Year's Ashes*, *Ugly Mugs*; for Belvoir: *An Enemy of the People*, *The Dog/The Cat*, *The Drover's Wife*, *Girl Asleep*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *HIR*, *Jasper Jones*, *Kill The Messenger*, *Mother*, *My Name is Jimi*, *Stories I Want To Tell You In Person*, *The Sugar House*, *Thyestes* (European Tour); for Circus Oz: *Cranked Up*; for Darlinghurst Theatre Company: *Fourplay*, *Ride*, *Silent Night*; for Ensemble Theatre: *Rainman*, *The Ruby Sunrise*; for Legs on the Wall: *Bubble*; for LWAA: *The Mousetrap* (Australia/NZ Tour); for Spiegelworld: *Empire*; as Production Coordinator: for Opera Australia: *Carmen*; and as Production Manager/Stage Manager: for A-List Entertainment: *Puppetry of the Penis*. Isabella has also worked on various festivals including The Garden of Unearthly Delights at Adelaide Fringe, Sydney Festival and Woodford Folk Festival.

## THANK YOU

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# THE SMALLEST HOUR

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## THE SMALLEST HOUR

WRITTEN & PERFORMED BY  
PHIL SPENCER & SUSIE YOUSSEF  
5 - 15 DECEMBER



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# THE SMALLEST HOUR

*A bleak romantic comedy from two of Sydney's best-loved raconteurs.*

A woman bails on her bestie's Hens' Night. A cop dodges the bus fare into town. A dog walker whistles ABBA in the dead of night. Pop the kettle on and join storytellers Phil Spencer (*Story Club*, *Radiotonic*) and Susie Youssef (*Whose Line Is It Anyway?*) for this bleary-eyed stagger through the night that was. *The Smallest Hour* is a richly woven comedy about broken dreams, second chances and velcro pants.

After long walks around Kings Cross, cups of tea and a few too many baked goods, we discovered that we had started writing in each other's voices. Throughout the script we genuinely couldn't tell you who wrote which line (probably Susie).

WRITERS' NOTE

We never set out to write a romantic comedy, and perhaps this story isn't terribly romantic or maybe even all that comedic (that's a joke, we're joking). But for us, *The Smallest Hour* is a story about our fears: Am I being true to myself? Am I living the life I really want to live? And should I stop drinking Pimm's and lemonade?

We knew we wanted this story to be told by characters who were familiar to us and set in a place not unlike the one we live in now. A place where, hidden away in the hustling debris of city life, there are (if you look hard enough) still real moments of hopefulness, flashes of joy and on a good day—actual love.

**Phil Spencer & Susie Youssef**  
Writers

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I loved this play the first time I read it. I felt it was a story many people would be able to connect to. Something about the simplicity of it attracted me, and I loved the space it left for me to fill in the blanks. The stripped-back storytelling, the conversational sparring between the narrators, the endearing vulnerability of its two characters travelling through the night. It's been a real treat to see it evolve from early development through to this premiere season.

Susie and Phil's respective creative careers have been devoted to bringing unique characters and peculiar scenarios to life for their audiences. As writers, they both possess an acute eye for noticing the finer details that you and I might miss, and have a

knack for painting characters whose flaws and failures are painfully tragic and beautifully comic in equal measure.

This project sees them combining their skills to collectively craft a story of two individuals as they move through a city at night. A city at once familiar and new. Join them as they travel down back alleys and up carpeted stairwells into the forgotten corners of a city much like our own. Spend an evening nestled alongside these people as they negotiate their own longing, and search for that special connection that we all ultimately want, but seldom attain.

**Scarlet McGlynn**  
Director

BIOGRAPHIES

**Phil Spencer**  
Writer/Performer

Phil is a writer, performer and festival director. Originally from the UK, he now lives in Sydney with his young family, where he makes comedy, theatre and stories for radio. His most recent theatre credits include: as Performer: for Adelaide Fringe: *Destroyer of Worlds*; as Writer/Performer: for Battersea Arts Centre/The Arches Glasgow/Melbourne Fringe: *Bluey*; for Critical Stages/Lorne Arts Festival/Melbourne Fringe/Sydney

Theatre Company Rough Draft Program: *Hooting & Howling*; for Giant Dwarf: *No Standing. No Dancing.*; for Sydney Fringe: *Glorious Pomegranate*; for Tin Shed Theatre Company: *You And Whose Army?* (Australian Tour); and for Tin Shed Theatre Company/Old Fitz: *Boxing Day*. Phil's piece for radio, *All Lost in the Supermarket*, was featured on ABC Radio's *Radiotonic* and at Sydney Writers' Festival. Phil is Griffin Theatre Company's Artistic Associate, Co-Festival Director for the annual Bondi Feast festival and is a regular guest on the Story Club Podcast.

**Susie Youssef**  
Writer/Performer

Susie Youssef is a comedian, actor, writer and improviser. Susie's solo shows include: for Sydney Comedy Festival/Melbourne International Comedy Festival: *Behave Youssef*, *Check Youssef Before You Wreck Youssef*, which she toured to the Edinburgh Fringe and London, *Owl Eyes On You* and *Sketchual Chocolate*. As a performer, Susie's theatre credits include: for the Hayloft Project: *The Boat People*; and for Sydney Theatre Company: *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*. Susie's television credits include: for the ABC: *The Chaser's Media Circus*, *The Checkout*, *Get KrackIn*, *How Not To Behave*, *Rosehaven*, *Squinters*; for the Comedy Channel: *Whose Line Is It Anyway? Australia*; for Network Ten: *Have You Been Paying Attention?*; and for Stan: *No Activity*. A regular performer at the Sydney Comedy Store and Giant Dwarf, Susie has also performed at Splendour in the Grass, Secret Garden Festival and Homebake. As an improviser, Susie has performed internationally as a guest at Improvaganza in Edmonton, Dad's Garage in Atlanta and The Del Close Marathon in New York. She has studied at the iO Theatre in Chicago.

**Scarlet McGlynn**  
Director

Scarlet is an award-winning director and dramaturg who has worked professionally both in Australia and the UK. Her theatre credits include: as Director: for Griffin: *Glimpse* with Jonathan Hindmarsh (Batch Festival); *The Lysicrates Prize* (staged readings); for Critical Stages: *Hooting & Howling*; for La Boite Indie: *Show Me Yours*, *I'll Show You Mine*, for which the show won a Green Room Award at the Melbourne Fringe; for Sydney Theatre Company: *Hooting and Howling* (Rough Draft Program); for Tin Shed Theatre Company: *Boxing Day*, *You and Whose Army?*; as Writer/Director: for Rock Surfers Theatre Company: *Future Senior/Former Youth*; as Assistant Director: for Griffin: *The Almighty Sometimes*; for Sydney Theatre Company: *Disgraced*, *Storm Boy*, *Switzerland*; and as National Tour Director: for Sydney Theatre Company: *Disgraced*. Scarlet is currently on the Women in Theatre Program at MTC and is Artist in Residence at Critical Stages.

**Tyler Hawkins**  
Set & Costume Designer

As a design graduate of NIDA's Master of Fine Arts in 2017, Tyler has already been fortunate enough to work for a number of major companies across theatre, opera, art and fashion. His previous theatre credits include: as Designer: for 25a (Belvoir): *Greater Sunrise*; for ATYP: *Intersection: Chrysalis, Moth*; for Black Birds/Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre: *Black Birds*; for Clock and Spiel Productions/Seymour Centre: *Freud's Last Session*; for The Kings Collective: *Gruesome Playground Injuries*, *Out of Gas on Lover's Leap*, *This is Our Youth*, *Wasted*, *The Wonderful World of Dissocia*; for Next Wave Festival: *L.O.T.R.A.F.*; for NIDA: *#KillAllMen*, *The Olympians*; for Old 505/La Mama: *Hell's Canyon*; for Red Line Productions: *I Hate You My Mother*; for Sam Productions: *Dolores*; for Sydney Chamber Opera/Carriageworks: *Howling Girls*; for Underbelly Arts Festival: *Watermelon*; as Festival Designer: for Bondi Feast: *Bondi Feast 2018*; for Opera Australia: *The Hanging Gardens of Babylon: Dinner on the Dock*; as Design Secondment: for Griffin: *A Strategic Plan*; for Belvoir: *The Wizard of Oz*; and for Sydney Theatre Company: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. His design credits for screen include: for ABC/Noble Savage Pictures: *Scout*; for Dollhouse Collective/Shannon Murphy: *Eaglehawk*; for Nakkiah Lui/Noble Savage Pictures: *Brown Lips*; for Nick Waterman/Megan Washington: *Saint Lo*; and for Noble Savage Pictures: *A Chance Affair*.

**Veronique Benett**  
Lighting Designer

Veronique is a lighting designer, as well as a set and costume designer. In 2017, Veronique completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Technical Theatre and Stage Management) at NIDA. She is continuing her studies at NIDA this year in a Master of Fine Arts (Design for Performance). Veronique's lighting design work includes: for KXT: *A Girl is a Half-Formed Thing*; for the New Theatre: *Stupid Fucking Bird*; for NIDA: *Directors and Designers Graduating Productions 2017*, *Fraternal*, *Venus in Fur*, *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*; for Red Line Productions at the Old Fitz: *Toby Schmitz Live*, *The Wolves*; for UTS Backstage: *Blood Wedding*; as Set Designer: for NIDA: *Venus in Fur*; as Costume Designer: for NIDA: *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*; as Assistant Lighting Designer: for Apocalypse Theatre Company: *Metamorphoses*; for The Apollo Opera Collective: *Ariodante*; for KXT: *Visiting Hours*; and as Associate Lighting Designer: for The Hayes: *Cry-Baby*.