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# THE FEATHER IN THE WEB

GRIFFIN THEATRE COMPANY  
PRESENTS

THE FEATHER IN THE WEB

BY NICK COYLE  
5 OCTOBER - 17 NOVEMBER

Production Partner  
GIRGENSOHN  
FOUNDATION

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# THE FEATHER IN THE WEB

## NICK COYLE

### 5 OCTOBER – 17 NOVEMBER

**Director** Ben Winspear  
**Designer** Sophie Fletcher  
**Assistant Designer** Ella Butler  
**Composer / Sound Designer** Steve Toulmin  
**Lighting Designer** Trent Suidgeest  
**AV Designer** Mic Gruchy  
**Stage Manager** Samuel Johnson  
**With** Tina Bursill, Gareth Davies,  
Michelle Lim Davidson, Claire Lovering

SBW Stables Theatre  
Preview 5–10 October  
Season 13 October–17 November

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Griffin acknowledges the generosity of the Seaborn, Broughton & Walford Foundation in allowing it the use of the SBW Stables Theatre rent free, less outgoings, since 1986.

Have you ever been listening to someone tell a story and been overcome with the urge to scream SHUT UP!? Have you ever been so bored at a work event you wanted to kick someone in the groin? Have you ever been in a car travelling very fast on a highway and thought about jerking the steering wheel to the side? Me neither. That would be crazy. But a character who follows through on those impulses and doesn't give a damn about the consequences was the starting point of this play.

Kimberly is dangerous because she is fearless. She pours petrol over banality and sets it on fire, figuratively and literally. She doesn't laugh unless there's something funny. She knows she's not the architect of the body and face she was given. She refutes the falsehoods we're trained to accept. She can see the artifice behind the illusion, and see the audience behind the play.

But without giving her an adversary this play would just be a series of psychopathic vignettes, and Kimberly needed a mighty opponent: Love.

When she falls for Miles it's against her will, a cupid's dart situation, and Kimberly is suddenly shackled to epic, magic, brutal, bloodless Love. The splendour and the horror. Sure it can lift you up, but it can also plunge you down. It can make you feel like you're walking on air and then suddenly, knives. Can it make you feel alive? Absolutely! But it also doesn't care if it leaves you dead in a ditch. And there's nothing you can say when it's happening to you because everything you want to say is a cliché.

Kimberly's quest for Miles, with its diminishing returns, morphs into a quest for survival, and the warping of her identity, the lowering of her standards, the bludgeoning of her dignity, all come at a great cost. She can make the best of life in the trap or she can chew her foot off. Moving forward sometimes means leaving things behind. Things you thought you needed, like feet.

If I could decide what we were taught at school, apart from how to do your taxes and how the government works, I'd have at least a couple of classes on how to deal with heartbreak, because it happens to everyone, romantic or otherwise, and when it does, no one knows what they're doing. This play is about what Kimberly does.

I'm grateful to the many people who helped make this play happen.

And to you.

Thanks for coming.

**Nick Coyle**  
Writer

Buñuel called imagination a 'crucial privilege', and much of my role in the process of helping Nick bring this play to life has been to allow his unique and powerful imagination to flourish unfettered. The structural and stylistic hairpin turns in the text, and the tangential alleyways down which the characters dart are its strength and charm. It is impossible to contain on stage, or in a single production, the full scope of Nick's imagination, and nothing illustrates this more than this deleted scene from the play, which we have included here for your imaginative delection.

**Ben Winspear**  
Director

*Kimberly, crying, walks out of the city into the wilderness. She comes to a tree, and crumples against it, sobbing. A puppet appears in an opening higher up in the tree. It watches her for while.*

PUPPET: Why are you crying?

*Kimberly sees the puppet and screams.*

KIMBERLY: No. No way. No fucking puppets.

*Kimberly picks up a rock, and climbs the tree. The puppet disappears into the tree. While Kimberly bashes the tree with the rock, the puppet pops out near the roots.*

PUPPET: Don't be afraid.

*Kimberly tries to stomp on the puppet as she jumps from the tree. It disappears back into the trunk. Kimberly punches the tree and screams. She looks around, finds two sticks and some kindling, and places them at the foot of the tree, then starts furiously spinning one stick against the other.*

PUPPET: What are you doing?

KIMBERLY: Starting a ... fire to ... kill you.

PUPPET: Oh.

*The puppet watches her try. Kimberly can't start the fire.*

PUPPET: I have some matches you could borrow?

*Kimberly screams, curls up into the foetal position next to the tree, and cries softly. The puppet watches her.*

PUPPET: Bad day?

KIMBERLY: He made me jump up and down.

PUPPET: Who did?

KIMBERLY: He said jump up and down and I did.

PUPPET: Why did you do that?

*Kimberley wails.*

PUPPET: This guy sounds like bad news. What's so good about him?

KIMBERLY: I don't want to talk about him! I want to forget him forever. No, I want most of all, to make love to him so hard he gets trapped inside me, and I can feel him kicking inside me, and it hurts, but I love it. I have a job, and I'm on the computer, and he's kicking me inside, and I'm smiling. And he's screaming and my colleague is like 'Was that your stomach?'

And I say 'Yeah, sorry, I had a very spicy burrito.' That's what I want.

*The puppet blows. A wind blows through the forest. Tiny lights appear everywhere. The air is full of swirling pollen. Music starts. The puppet sings.*

KIMBERLY: Shut up! Come out here!

*The puppet thinks for a moment, disappears, and then comes out of the tree. Kimberly is shocked, picks up the rock.*

KIMBERLY: Aren't you going to try to run away?

*The puppet shakes its head. Kimberly raises the rock. The puppet bows its head.*

KIMBERLY: Well now I don't feel like it anymore. Thanks a lot.

PUPPET: See? I knew you were kind.

KIMBERLY: I feel like it again

*Kimberly picks up the rock. The puppet bows its head. It's too cute to kill when it does that.*

KIMBERLY: Arrrrrhg!

*Kimberly throws the rock away, gets back into the foetal position, crying.*

PUPPET: You know what? I was sad once. Real sad. Sad as they come. Why I felt so bad, I felt like a fly, caught in a web, just waiting for that big old spider to come over and eat me.

*The puppet comes closer to Kimberly.*

PUPPET: If you're a fly in a web, sure, you're in trouble. But sometimes? Sometimes you're not a fly at all! You're a feather! And the spider, well the spider cuts you loose, and pretty soon, why you're back on the breeze again!

KIMBERLY: Were you sad because you were in love?

PUPPET: No, I was sad because I'd been falsely accused of workplace sexual harassment.

KIMBERLY: I tried so hard to be what he wanted. But I can't. I want to be near him, but I think being near him is worse. I'm either in the freezing snow, or too close to the fire.

*The puppet shivers.*

KIMBERLY: What's wrong?

PUPPET: Oh nothing. It just gets so cold. I have such a small body. It's fine.

*Kimberly takes off her cardigan and puts it on the puppet. The puppet doesn't say anything, but it is incredibly touched. It lays its head against Kimberly's arm.*

KIMBERLY: No.

*The puppet lifts its head. They stare into the night.*



## Nick Coyle

### Playwright

Nick Coyle is a writer, illustrator and theatre maker. His theatre credits include, as playwright: for Griffin: *Hammerhead (is dead)*; for Critical Stages/TRS: *Uh Oh Tony!*; for Sydney Theatre Company: *Kittenbone Bridge*; for TRS: *Rommy*; and internationally: for New York Fringe: *The October Sapphire*. Nick's solo shows, *Blue Wizard* (for Belvoir), *Double Tribute*, *Guided Meditation*, *Me Pregnant!*, and *Queen of Wolves* have been staged in Sydney, Melbourne Comedy Festival, Melbourne Fringe Festival, Brisbane Comedy Festival, Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Greece, London, Oslo and New York. His radio credits include: as writer: for FBi Radio: *Batfeet*. Nick also created and co-hosted the show *Versus* on FBi Radio. Nick was awarded Best On Stage in the 2013 and 2014 Sydney, Music and Culture Awards; and the Brisbane Powerhouse Outstanding Comedy Award at the 2011 Melbourne Fringe.



## Ben Winspear

### Director

As a director, Ben has steered a number of new productions for Sydney Theatre Company, where he was resident director for three years including: *Morph*, *Metamorphosis*, *These People*, *This Little Piggy*, *Thyestes*; and as co-director: *Victory*. His other directing credits include: for Big Monkey: *Monkey*; for Blue Cow: *Twelve Times He Spoke*; for NIDA: *Saved*; for STC Education: *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *The Tempest*; for Ten Days: *The Gardens of Paradise*; for UNSW: *Insect!*, *Monkey*, *Pantagleize*. As associate artist for Griffin Theatre Company, Ben was associate director on *Gloria*.



## Sophie Fletcher

### Designer

Sophie graduated from WAAPA in 2012 and designs sets and costumes for theatre, film and television. Her theatre credits include: as designer: for Griffin: *A Strategic Plan*, *Caress/Ache*, *Emerald City*, *Gloria*, *The Literati*; for Darlinghurst Theatre Company: *Broken*; as co-designer: for Belvoir: *This Heaven*; as assistant designer: for Melbourne Theatre Company: *Miss Julie*; for Sydney Theatre Company: *The Maids*, *Waiting for Godot*; as resident props buyer: for Sydney Theatre Company: *Arcadia*, *Speed the Plow*, *The Present*, *Three Sisters*. Sophie's feature film credits include: as costume designer: *Acute Misfortune*, *Angel of Mine*; in the wardrobe department: *Casting JonBenet*, *Holding the Man*, *The Turning*. Her short film credits include: as designer: *Florence Has Left The Building*, *How to Get Clean*, *Measuring the Jump*, *Trespass*; and as costume designer: *Cattle*. Sophie's TV credits include: as costume designer: for Jungle/Blue Tongue: *Mr Inbetween*. Sophie has designed for Mercedes Benz Fashion week and is a frequent collaborator with photographers for *Vogue Australia*, *RUSSH* magazine and *GQ*.



## **Ella Butler**

### **Assistant Designer**

Ella is a Sydney-based designer. She recently graduated from the National Institute of Dramatic Art with a BFA (Design for Performance). Ella's theatre credits include: as designer: for Darlinghurst Theatre Company: *Love*; for Hayes Theatre Company: *Big River*; for The Kings Collective: *After the End*; as set designer: for KXT: *DNA*; and as co-designer: for Tough Kids Productions: *Blood Wedding*. More recently, Ella designed *Enter the Underworld* as part of the Piccolo Spoleto Festival in Charleston, South Carolina.



## **Steve Toulmin**

### **Composer / Sound Designer**

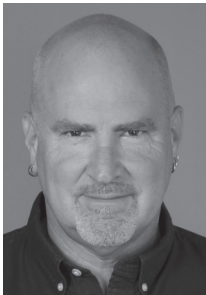
Steve is one of Australia's most sought after composers and sound designers for theatre. Steve's work has toured nationally and internationally, most recently at The Hippodrome in London's West End. His credits as composer and/or sound designer for theatre include: for Griffin: *A Hoax, Beached, The Bleeding Tree, Gloria, The Homosexuals or Faggots, Kill Climate Deniers*; for Griffin Independent: *Porn. Cake*; for Bell Shakespeare: *Othello, Richard III*; for Belvoir: *20 Questions, Blue Wizard, The Blind Giant is Dancing, HIR, Is This Thing On?, Ivanov, Jasper Jones, La Traviata, The Rover, Scorched, The Seed*; for Ensemble Theatre: *Circle Mirror Transformation, Great Falls, Liberty Equality Fraternity, Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*; for La Boite: *Hamlet, Julius Caesar, Tender Napalm*; for Malthouse Theatre: *Testament of Mary*; for Queensland Theatre: *Scenes from a Marriage, Switzerland, That Face*; for Strut and Fret: *Blanc De Blanc, Fun House, Life, Love Riot*; for Sydney Festival: *All The Sex I've Ever Had*; for Sydney Theatre Company: *A Flea In Her Ear, Blackie Blackie Brown, Black is the New White, Edward Gant's Amazing Feats of Loneliness, Little Mercy, Power Plays*; and independent productions of: *After All This, Me Pregnant!, Prehistoric, Queen of Wolves, Rommy, Trapture*. Steve worked as Foley artist on *Our Town* for Sydney Theatre Company, and as associate designer on Belvoir's *The Baulkham Hills African Ladies Troupe* and *Radiance*. His event credits include EKKa Arena Spectacular 2013-2015, and Papua New Guinea's 40th Year of Independence Celebrations. Between 2012-14, Steve was musical director for poRicki-Lee Coulter. As a songwriter and music producer, he has worked with artists including Megan Washington, Ricki-Lee Coulter and Samantha Jade.



## Trent Suidgeest

### Lighting Designer

Trent Suidgeest's credits include: for Griffin: *Kill Climate Deniers*, *The Homosexuals or 'Faggots'*; for Sydney Theatre Company: *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*, *Talk*, *Hay Fever*; for STC/Global Creatures: *Muriel's Wedding The Musical*; for Opera Australia: *Carmen*, *Sydney Opera House—The Opera (The Eighth Wonder)*, *The Rabbits*; for Hayes Theatre Company: *Calamity Jane* (including Australian tour and Belvoir), *Gypsy*, *Darlinghurst Nights*, *The View Upstairs*, *Only Heaven Knows*; for The Production Company: *The Boy From Oz*, *Dusty*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Nice Work If You Can Get It*, *The King & I*; for Black Swan State Theatre Company: over 20 mainstage productions including *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*; for Barking Gecko: *Duck*, *Death and the Tulip*, *Jasper Jones*. In 2015 Trent received the Mike Walsh Fellowship and the WA Department of Culture and the Arts Young People Fellowship; he went on to assist at Toneelgroep Amsterdam with Ivo van Hove and Jan Versweyveld on their Shakespearian epic *Kings of War*.



## Mic Gruchy

### AV Designer

Mic works across stage, screen and video art and is a pioneer of video design for theatre. Mic's theatre credits include: for Griffin: *King Tide*, *Serpent's Table*, *Yasukichi Murakami—Through a Distant Lens*; for Brisbane Festival: *Freeze Frame*; for Merrigong Theatre Company: *Lost Boys*; for Monkey Baa: *Thai-riffic*; for Opera Australia: *Aida*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *The Girl of the Golden West*; for Perth Festival: *A Flowering Tree*, *My Bicycle Loves You*; for Performing Lines: *Wrong Skin*; and for Sydney Festival: *I Am Eora*, *My Bicycle Loves You*, *Puncture*. International credits include: for the Australian Chamber Orchestra at the Barbican in London: *The Reef*; for Jermyn St. Theatre in London's West End: *Letter to Larry*; and for Satu Bulan/Performing Lines/Browns Mart Arts, touring across Indonesia and Australia: *Age of Bones*. Mic teaches Digital Media Design and Vision Technologies Production at NIDA and has lectured in media at Uni of NSW and Uni of Wollongong. Mic's video artworks have been included in collections such as MOMA in New York, as well as the Sydney Opera House, Sydney Olympic Park and the Biennale of Sydney. He was awarded an Australia Council Established Artist's Fellowship for Interdisciplinary Practice in 2012.



## **Samuel Johnson**

### **Stage Manager**

Samuel completed his Bachelor of Dramatic Arts (Production) at NIDA in 2011, where he took a special interest in technical production and stage management. Samuel's theatre credits include; as stage manager: for Griffin Theatre Company: *The Bleeding Tree* (tour), *The Lysicrates Prize*, *The Witches*; for ATYP: *Isamel and the Return of the Dugongs*; for Cre8ion: *The 7 Sopranos*; for Darlinghurst Theatre Company: *Kindertransport*, *Torch Song Trilogy*; for HotHouse Theatre Company: *Disarming Rosetta*; for Legs On The Wall: *Highly Sprung*; for Monkey Baa: *Emily Eyefinger*, *Goodbye Jamie Boyd*, *I Am Jack*, *Kermond Comedy Capers*, *Nautilus: A Journey into the Deep*, *Simon Tedeschi: Pianist and Prankster*, *The Unknown Soldier*; for Performing Lines: *A Town Named War Boy*, *The Magic Hour*, *They Saw A Thylacine*; and as assistant stage manager: for Auspicious Arts/Wayne Harrison's Cheep/Seymour Centre: *Stainless Steel Rat*. Samuel has worked as freelance theatre and events technician across many Sydney performance venues.



## Tina Bursill

Tina Bursill has enjoyed a long and varied career in film, television and theatre. Tina's theatre credits include: for Black Swan State Theatre Company/Melbourne Theatre Company: *The Swimming Club*; for Ensemble Theatre: *Macbeth*, *Top Silk*; for Sydney Theatre Company: *Boys Will Be Boys*, and *Up for Grabs*, for which she was nominated for an MO Award for Best Female Actor in a Play of the Year. Tina's TV credits include: for ABC: *A Moody Christmas*, for which the ensemble won the 2013 Equity Award for Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble Cast in a Comedy Series, *Crownies*, *Jack Irish: Dead Point*, *Time of Our Lives*, *The Moodys*, for which the ensemble won the 2015 Equity Award for Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble Cast in a Comedy Series, *Rake*; for Network Ten: *Neighbours*, *Offspring*; for Nine Network: *Doctor Doctor*, for which she was nominated for a Logie for Best Drama Program, and nominated for an AACTA Award for Best Guest or Supporting Actress in a Television Drama; for Seven Network: *Drop Dead Weird*. Feature film credits include the recently released *The Flip Side*, *Billy's Holiday*, *Jilted*, for which she won an AFI/AACTA award for Best Supporting Actress, *Three Blind Mice*, *Wish You Were Here*. Short film credits include *Going Down* and *Saturn's Return*. Tina is a proud member of Equity.



## Gareth Davies

Gareth's theatre credits include: for Griffin Theatre Company/Bell Shakespeare: *The Literati*; for Bell Shakespeare: *As You Like It*; for Belvoir: *And They Called Him Mr Glamour*, *As You Like It*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *Peter Pan*, *The Rover*, *The Seagull*, for Belvoir/Malthouse: *The Government Inspector*; for Black Lung Theatre: *Avast I and II*; for Black Lung/Darwin Festival: *Doku Rai*; for Black Lung/Queensland Theatre Company: *I Feel Awful*; for B Sharp: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Only Child*, *The Suicide*; for Melbourne Theatre Company: *Hay Fever*, *The Cherry Orchard*; for Red Line Productions: *Masterclass*, *Masterclass II*; for Sydney Theatre Company: *Saint Joan*. His TV credits include: for ABC/Netflix: *The Letdown*; for ABC/Jungle: *The Elegant Gentleman's Guide to Knife Fighting*; for Matchbox UCF/Syfy: *Hunters*. In film, Gareth can be seen in *Little Monsters*, *Peter Rabbit* and *The Daughter*.



## Michelle Lim Davidson

Michelle graduated from WAAPA in 2010. Michelle's theatre credits include: for Griffin Theatre Company: *The Lysicrates Prize*; for the ABC: *Play School Live*; for Black Swan State Theatre Company: *Far Away*; for Ensemble Theatre: *Seminar*, *The Plant*; for Melbourne Theatre Company: *An Ideal Husband*; for STC Education: *The Laramie Project*; for Sydney Theatre Company: *Top Girls*, *Power Plays*. She guest starred alongside John Cleese in the Just for Laughs Comedy Festival. Michelle is a regular presenter on *Play School*, and her TV credits include: ABC: *Get Krack!n*, *Utopia*; for BBC/Sundance: *Top Of The Lake: China Girl*; for Network Seven: *Jay's Jungle*; for Nine Network: *Doctor Doctor*, *Live from Planet Earth*. Michelle's film credits include *Goldstone*, *The Wiggles: Pandemonium* and the short film *Beyond the Bubble*, which was selected for the Sydney Film Festival 2017. Michelle was the recipient of the 2013 Mike Walsh Fellowship and the 2016 Equity Award for Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Comedy Series for *Utopia*.



## Claire Lovering

Claire graduated from WAAPA in 2010 and was awarded the Leslie Anderson Award and the Sally Burton Award that same year. Her theatre credits include: for Black Swan State Theatre Company: *Day One*, *A Hotel*, *Evening*, *The Damned*; for Black Swan State Theatre Company/Melbourne Theatre Company: *Rising Water*; for Black Swan State Theatre Company/Queensland Theatre Company: *Managing Carmen*; for Darlinghurst Theatre Company: *Detroit*; for Ensemble Theatre: *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, for which she received a Sydney Theatre Nomination for Best Supporting Actress; for Kay & McLean: *The Graduate*; for Sport for Jove: *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*; for Sydney Theatre Company: *Dinner*, *Top Girls*. Claire's film credits include: *Event Zero*, *San Andreas*. Her television credits include: for ABC/Netflix: *The Letdown*; for Nine Network: *Bite Club*, *Hyde & Seek*; for Network Ten: *Wonderland*. Claire's self-penned solo show, *RIVER* won the Adelaide Fringe Weekly Award for Best Theatre and Sydney's Spectrum Now ANZ Blue Rooms Series for Most Promising Emerging Theatre Talent. As a recipient of a 2015 Mike Walsh Fellowship, Claire travelled to New York to study method acting at the Lee Strasberg Theatre and Film Institute in 2016. *The Feather in the Web* marks Claire's debut at Griffin Theatre Company.