

GRIFFIN THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS

GRIFFIN
THEATRE
COMPANY

PRIMA FACIE

BY SUZIE MILLER

SBW STABLES THEATRE
17 MAY - 22 JUNE 2019

DIRECTOR

LEE LEWIS

DESIGNER

RENÉE MULDER

LIGHTING DESIGNER

TRENT SUIDGEEST

COMPOSER & SOUND DESIGNER

PAUL CHARLIER

STAGE MANAGER

KHYM SCOTT

WITH

SHERIDAN HARBRIDGE

ME TOO

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PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE

Prima Facie has been playing out in my mind since my law school days, years before I was a playwright. It was there waiting for me to find the courage to write it and for the right social environment to provide a space for it. In light of the #MeToo movement, *Prima Facie* was able to be realised. Years of practicing as a human rights and criminal defence lawyer did nothing to silence my feminist questioning of the legal system, because while I firmly believe that 'innocent until proven guilty' is the bedrock of human rights, it always felt that its application in sexual assault cases served to undermine rather than to uphold any real fairness.

The legal system is shaped by the male experience. While innocence/guilt focuses on whether the (usually) male person reasonably believes there is consent or not provided from the (usually) female person, it has always been the victims, (usually) women, who are on trial, cross-examined and made to relive their experience, only to be doubted and have their motives for reporting such a hideous crime questioned. Significantly, research shows that women giving evidence in sexual assault cases aren't believed, even by other women.

How can society and therefore the law evolve to reform this area of the system? Some countries have made changes to counter the current system—can this country, in this day and age, do that too?

As a playwright, winning the prestigious Griffin Award proved to me that women's stories do matter. Having the enormously

talented Lee Lewis directing this work, and starring the dynamic Sheridan Harbridge, makes for a dream team, but they are just the beginning. Thanks to the staff and Board at Griffin, to the creative team behind *Prima Facie*, and of course, those wonderful Griffin donors. Thanks also to my agents Dayne Kelly (Sydney) and Georgina Ruffhead (London), and to my warm, generous publisher Claire Grady, and Currency Press, who make theatre into something you can hold onto and hand out!

I would like to offer my personal thanks to my family, Robert, Gabriel and Sasha Beech-Jones, and my beloved mother Elaine Doreen Miller (the original inspiration for living a vital, vivid and big life). My friends are also my family, so thank you to my 'women squad': Hilary Bonney, Rochelle Zurnamer, Karen O'Connell, Sam Mostyn, Nicole Abadee, Sue Quill, Katie Pollock, Heather Mitchell, Lisa Hunt, Vanessa Bates, Francesca Smith, Jenny Cooney, Lee Lewis, Celia Ireland, Lisa Cahill, Helen Angwin, Jane Irwin, Jane Stewart, Lindy Hume, Hilary Bell, Louise, Kris and Robyn Cooney, Milly Braim, Anna Cody, Maria Kallas, Andy Durbach, Valerie Artz, Maritza Eftimou, Johanna Hampson, Lucy Bell, Suzie Sharp, Jenn Cummins, Poppy Adams, Julia Pincus, Lizzie Shultz—you all inspire and sustain me.

And the men: Andrew Post, Rick Goldberg, Simeon Beckett, Simon Lake, Marty McGrath, Caleb Lewis, John Sheedy, Roger Monk, Tim Jones, Ross Mueller, Lachlan Philpott, Jules Hampson, Phil Ladlow and Dion Slabber. You all rock.

Lastly, thanks also to the women who share their stories, and those who write women's stories, in particular the brilliant Eve Ensler, a playwright, a human rights advocate, and a beautiful person.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

There is nothing new about this play. It is so familiar. That is what makes it so distressing. It is fiction. But it is based on so many truths that I have lived. That you have lived. That the woman sitting next to you has lived. That your mother, your grandmother, your best friend has lived. This is the reality of so many everyday violences, of absolutely ordinary awful moments, that it is almost journalistic. It is almost verbatim. It is almost documentary. It does not exaggerate or embellish.

Prima Facie is a new play to add to the chorus of voices in Australia today protesting that the current legal system is incapable of delivering safe pathways to justice for survivors of sexual harassment and sexual assault. It lays bare a process which re-traumatises, stigmatises, isolates and mostly silences these survivors. This play is an appeal for a new system. We have the capacity, just not the will for change. Why?

Suzie Miller is a scientist who evolved into a lawyer who evolved into a playwright. Her stories are created with a breadth of lived experience that gives her not only the courage of her convictions but also the courage of her emotions. She writes with a language that has struggled to find a place on the traditionally male stage that is mainstage theatre. She is one of an extraordinary number of female playwrights who have continued to create despite not being produced by major companies. This country owes them a cultural debt for their persistence in representing non-dominant voices in the theatrical landscape.

This play won the 2018 Griffin Award. It would not have won ten years ago because the audience did not want to hear this story then. I hope this story will not win ten years from now because it is redundant. I hope.

Lee Lewis
Director



SUZIE MILLER
PLAYWRIGHT

Suzie Miller is drawn to complex personal stories often exploring injustice and her plays have been produced in around 40 productions around the world. Her credits include: for Griffin: *Caress/Ache*; for Griffin Independent: *Sunset Strip*; for Black Swan State Theatre Company: *DUST*; for La Boite: *The Mathematics of Longing, Medea*; for Performing Lines WA: *Overexposed*; for Perth International Arts Festival: *Driving Into Walls, OneFiveZeroSeven*; for Queensland Opera/Brisbane Festival/La Boite: *Snow White*; for Ransom Theatre Northern Ireland & Seymour Centre/Riverside Theatres: *Transparency*. Other international credits include: for National Theatre of Scotland/The Lemon Tree Theatre/Assembly Rooms Edinburgh: *Velvet Evening Séance*; for Theatre Gargantua (Canada): *The Sacrifice Zone*; for New York Fringe Festival/Assembly Rooms Edinburgh: *Reasonable Doubt*; and for Theatre 503 London: *SOLD*. Suzie has been awarded the Kit Denton Fellowship in 2008, the WA Premier's Award for Script/Drama 2016, the New York Fringe Festival award for 'Overall Excellence Award for Outstanding Playwriting', an AWGIE for Radio for *Cross Sections* 2013, Inscription (mentored by Edward Albee) in 2006 and 2009 and the Griffin Award in 2018 for *Prima Facie* among other awards. Suzie has been Writer in Residence at a number of prestigious organisations, including the National Theatre (UK), Theatre Gargantua (Canada), Critical Stages and Griffin.



LEE LEWIS
DIRECTOR

Lee is the Artistic Director of Griffin Theatre Company and one of Australia's leading directors. For Griffin she has directed: *The Bleeding Tree* (Best Director at the 2016 Helpmann Awards), *The Almighty Sometimes, Kill Climate Deniers, Eight Gigabytes of Hardcore Pornography, The Homosexuals or 'Faggots', Rice, Masquerade* (co-directed with Sam Strong), *Gloria, Emerald City, A Rabbit for Kim Jong-il, The Serpent's Table* (co-directed with Darren Yap), *Replay, Silent Disco, Smurf In Wonderland, The Bull, The Moon and the Coronet of Stars, The Call, A Hoax, The Nightwatchman*. Other directing credits include: for Griffin and Bell Shakespeare: *The Literati, The Misanthrope*; for Bell Shakespeare: *The School for Wives, Twelfth Night*; for Belvoir: *That Face, This Heaven, Half and Half, A Number, 7 Blowjobs, Ladybird*; for Hayes Theatre Company: *Darlinghurst Nights*; for Melbourne Theatre Company: *Gloria, Hay Fever* and 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; for Sydney Theatre Company: *Mary Stuart, Honour, Love-Lies-Bleeding, ZEBRA!*; for Darwin Festival: *Highway of Lost Hearts*.



RENÉE MULDER

DESIGNER

Renée's design credits include: for Griffin: *A Hoax, The Bleeding Tree, The Boys*; for Griffin Independent: *The Pigeons*; for Griffin/Queensland Theatre: *Rice*; for Bell Shakespeare: *Romeo and Juliet*; for La Boite: *As You Like It, I Love You Bro, Ruben Guthrie*; for Melbourne Theatre Company: *Arbus & West*; for Queensland Theatre: *An Octoroon, Fat Pig, Nearer the Gods, Sacré Bleu!*; for Sydney Theatre Company: *Actor on a Box, Battle of Waterloo, Black is the New White, Dance Better at Parties, The Effect, Hamlet: Prince of Skidmark, In a Heart Beat, The Long Way Home, The Luck Child, Mariage Blanc, Mrs Warren's Profession, Orlando, Perplex, The Splinter*; as Costume Designer: for Sydney Theatre Company: *Chimerica, Children of the Sun, Endgame, The Harp in the South, St Joan, Top Girls* (for which she won a Sydney Theatre Award for Best Costume Design), *Vere (Faith)*; as Set Designer: for Sydney Theatre Company: *Edward Gant's Amazing Feats of Loneliness* (for which she won a Matilda Award for Best Design). Renée was Sydney Theatre Company's Resident Designer from 2012-14. She is a graduate of National Institute of Dramatic Art and Queensland College of Art.



TRENT SUIDGEEST

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Trent Suidgeest's lighting design credits include: for Griffin: *The Feather in the Web, The Homosexuals or 'Faggots', Kill Climate Deniers*; for Barking Gecko Theatre Company: *Duck, Death and the Tulip, Jasper Jones*; for Black Swan State Theatre Company: over 20 mainstage productions recently including *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*; for Hayes Theatre Co: *Calamity Jane* (including Australian Tour and Belvoir), *Darlinghurst Nights, Gypsy, Only Heaven Knows, The View Upstairs*; for Opera Australia: *Carmen, Sydney Opera House—The Opera (The Eighth Wonder), The Rabbits*; for The Production Company: *The Boy From Oz, Dusty, Jesus Christ Superstar, The King & I, Nice Work If You Can Get It*; for Sydney Theatre Company: *Accidental Death of an Anarchist, Hay Fever, Talk*; for STC/Global Creatures: *Muriel's Wedding The Musical*. 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*.

**PAUL CHARLIER**

COMPOSER & SOUND DESIGNER

Paul's earliest work was with industrial bands SoliPsiK and SPK and composing for Anthill Theatre. He has since worked on nearly two hundred productions, including: for Belvoir: *Aftershocks*, *Buried Child*, *Diary of a Madman* (for which he received a Sydney Theatre Award), *Hamlet*, *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, *Suddenly Last Summer*; for Force Majeure: *Already Elsewhere*; for Malthouse/Sydney Opera House: *Honour Bound* (for which he received a Sydney Theatre Award); for Sydney Theatre Company: *A Streetcar Named Desire* (for which he received a Sydney Theatre Award and a Helpmann Award), *Copenhagen*, *Love-Lies-Bleeding*, *Tot Mum*, *Victory*. International credits include: *Deuce* on Broadway; for DV8 Physical Theatre (UK): *The Cost of Living*; for National Theatre (UK): *Afterlife*; for Out of Joint (UK): *Dreams of Violence*. Paul's film and television credits include: as Composer: *Aftershocks*, *Candy*, *Last Ride*, *Suzu & the Simple Man*; as Music Supervisor: *Holding The Man*; as Sound Designer: *Looking for Alibrandi*; as Sound Designer and Music Mixer: *Paul Kelly – Stories of Me* (for which he received an Australian Screen Sound Guild Award). Paul wrote and produced the ABC Radio features *A Plan For Eurydice* and *The Touring Machine* (in partnership with MoCA, Los Angeles). In 2017, he co-directed the polymedia surveillance work *WIRELESS* and in 2018 was shortlisted for the BBC International Radio Playwriting Competition.

**KHYM SCOTT**

STAGE MANAGER

Khym has previously worked for Griffin Theatre Company as Stage Manager for *Good Cook*, *Friendly*, *Clean.*, *Kill Climate Deniers*, *Festival of New Writing*, *Girl in Tan Boots*, *The Serpent's Table*, *The Witches*; and for Griffin/Bell Shakespeare: *The Misanthrope*. Other recent credits include: for Belvoir/Malthouse: *Barbara and the Camp Dogs*; for Belvoir: *The Dance of Death*, *Miss Julie*, *This Heaven*; for Performance 4a: *Stories Then and Now*; for Sydney Festival: *Lady Rizo: Red, White and Indigo*. From 2013 to 2017, Khym was Assistant Stage Manager of The Australian Ballet, and toured with the company regionally, nationally, and internationally. He has also stage managed for Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. Khym is a graduate of NIDA and The University of Sydney.

**SHERIDAN HARBRIDGE**

TESS

I would like to dedicate my performance to my friend and teacher Kevin Jackson, who thought my audition for NIDA was lousy, and harangued me for three years till he thought I was worthy.

Thank you for inviting me under your wing, KJ. I'll always have that thrill and horror up my spine when I hear your laugh in the house.

Sheridan performed in Griffin's productions of *Jump for Jordan* and *Kill Climate Deniers*, and co-wrote and performed in the Griffin Independent production *Nosferatutu, or Bleeding at the Ballet*. She was part of Griffin Studio in 2016. Her other recent performance credits include: for Arts Centre Melbourne: *I Love the Frog*; for Belvoir: *Calamity Jane*; *The Dog/The Cat, Girl Asleep, The Sugar House*; for Big hART: *Blue Angel, Hip Bone Sticking Out*; for Darlinghurst Theatre Company: *Gaybies*; for GFO: *An Officer and a Gentleman*; for Hayes Theatre Company: *The Bald Soprano, Cabaret, Calamity Jane, The Detective's Handbook, DreamSong, Frogger and Smudge, Miss Julie, Shafana and Aunt Sarrinah, Threepenny Opera, You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*; for Melbourne Theatre Company: *The Beast, North by Northwest, The Speechmaker*; for Opera Australia: *Carmen, Fiddler on the Roof, My Fair Lady*; for Red Line Productions at the Old Fitz Theatre: *80 Minutes No Interval*; for Sydney Theatre Company: *Muriel's Wedding*. Her musical *Songs for the Fallen* won Best Musical and Outstanding Actress at the New York Music Theatre Festival, and has toured to Sydney Festival, Arts Centre Melbourne and Brisbane Festival. Her cabaret *Mrs Bang: A Series of Seductions in 55 Minutes* appeared in Brisbane Festival, Sydney Festival, Edinburgh Fringe, Adelaide Cabaret Festival, the 32nd Stage Song Review in Poland, and the Sydney Opera House. She played Valerie Solanas and Judy Garland in Jim Sharman's online film *Andy X*. TV credits include *All Saints, The Doctor Blake Mysteries, The Justine Clarke Show, Rake, Wild Boys* and various plays for ABC RN. Sheridan is a NIDA graduate.
