

GRIFFIN THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS

WICKED SISTERS

REGINALD THEATRE,
SEYMOUR CENTRE
6 NOVEMBER –
12 DECEMBER

BY ALMA DE GROEN

DIRECTOR
NADIA TASS

DESIGNER
TOBHIYAH STONE FELLER

LIGHTING DESIGNER
TRENT SUIDGEEST

**COMPOSER &
SOUND DESIGNER,
VIDEO DESIGNER**
NATE EDMONDSON

STAGE MANAGER
ISABELLA KERDIJK

WITH
DI ADAMS
VANESSA DOWNING
DEBORAH GALANOS
HANNAH WATERMAN



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PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE

One day in the 1990s, outside the newsagent in Leura, I saw one of those yellow billboards with giant black lettering. In the 1980s they'd often been irresistible: 'DEAD HEART SOAKED!', or 'DRUNK ON MOON!' and I'd sometimes collect them. In the 1990s, this one featured Germaine Greer, so I went in the shop and asked if I could have it. "Who's Germaine Greer?"; the young guy said. Perhaps I shouldn't have been shocked. Second Wave feminists were fading, and it was disturbing to learn that many of these dedicated lives were ending in poverty. This set me thinking about the fate of women in general, and how vulnerable some of us are as we age. We didn't see these women on stage then, or not often, and hardly ever centre stage, with all their gallantry and insecurities. I, for one, wanted to see them. But it turned out few of the people in charge agreed. The play was accepted for workshopping at the Australian National Playwrights' Centre, but only one theatre was willing to program it. And, after a long and respected history, that theatre announced it would close. That seemed to be it for *Wicked Sisters*—until Ros Horin and Playworks gave it a workshop (and Ros gave the play its name)—and

in 2002, Griffin took it on. It did well, and went on to tour Victoria, Tasmania, Queensland and the Northern Territory—then it largely sank back into suspended animation in Australia, until Lee Lewis decided to revive it here.

The other thing I'd had a yen to see in those days was women on stage getting a chance to give voice to ideas, entertainingly and with relish. I'd been admiring of Eva Cox and her 1995 Boyer Lectures, 'A Truly Civil Society'. Having around that time written a play, *The Woman in the Window*, about a society in Australia's future that was anything but civil, I remained concerned about how we behave towards one another and the way in which current (1990s) thinking might shape our futures. *Wicked Sisters* remains as it was when written at the end of last century. I've made no attempt to update the science or technology, thus it's possible to assess how things have played out.

Interestingly enough, it has found an audience lately in Eastern Europe.

Alma De Groen
Playwright

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Wicked Sisters focuses on the relationships of four divergent women. I am fascinated with their friendships and the slow revelation of rifts, deceptions and betrayals. My wish is that *Wicked Sisters* will inspire and empower women and men to confront the truth; for women to challenge those women whose friendships cannot be trusted; for women to oppose the men who would deny them their very own endeavours; and finally, to move away from being the victims and to become proactive in liberating themselves from self-deception and abuse.

The play is ostensibly about women's relationships—in this case with the same man who was a misogynist and brutally selfish, but a genius whose contribution to science was prodigious.

In a broader sense, the play looks at our future, at the tenuous balance of emotional, social and rational intelligence that will play out in our ultimate survival.

It also explores the moral and ethical codes that are broken, of four women struggling to re-find their self-esteem as the loss of *le grand savant* becomes a reality and unravels their world and their security.

Wicked Sisters is an absorbing narrative, full of tension and personal ambition. It is at this meeting of the four women that we unpack and discover the drive behind each one's betrayal. And we drill deep into their individual relationships with Alec, the man, who is ever-present, but who is not at this meeting.

Nadia Tass
Director



ALMA DE GROEN
PLAYWRIGHT

Alma De Groen was born in New Zealand in 1941. At the age of twenty-three she settled in Australia where, under the influence of the new theatre movement, she began writing plays in 1968. Her plays have been developed and produced all over the world, and include: for Nimrod Theatre Company: *The Sweatproof Boy*; for Grant Street Theatre: *Chidley*; for Jane Street Theatre: *The After-Life of Arthur Cravan*; for Melbourne Theatre Company: *Going Home, Vocations, The Woman in the Window* (which was shortlisted for the NSW Premier's Literary Awards); for Russell Street Theatre: *The Girl Who Saw Everything*, for which she was awarded the 1993 AWGIE Award for Best Stage Play; for Sydney Theatre Company: *The Rivers of China*, which won the Premier's Literary Award for Drama in both New South Wales and Victoria; and internationally: for The Drama Theatre of Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam): *The Girl Who Saw Everything*; for the Studio Laboratory Theatre (Toronto, Canada): *The Joss Adams Show*. Alma was also Co-Writer and Dramaturg for Legs on the Wall's 1994 performance piece *Wildheart*. Alma's television credits include: for ABC: *After Marcuse, Man of Letters*, for which she was awarded the 1985 AWGIE Award; for Seven Network: *Rafferty's Rules, Singles*; and her work for radio includes *Available Light* and *Stories in the Dark* (with Ian MacKenzie), which was the Australian entry for the Prix Italia in 1996. In November 1998, Alma was the first playwright to win the Patrick White Literary Award for her contribution to Australian theatre. Alma's play *Wicked Sisters* was workshopped at the Australian National Playwrights' Conference 2001, and was produced by Griffin Theatre Company (under the direction of Kate Gaul) in 2002. It has enjoyed a season in Poland and the Czech Republic and has been translated for performance in France, along with *The Rivers of China*. Alma is currently retired in New Zealand, with her plays still being performed both in Australia and around the world.



NADIA TASS
DIRECTOR

Awarded the Screen Leader Award for Outstanding Leadership, Nadia Tass is one of Australia's most iconoclastic directors of both stage and screen. Nadia's experience as theatre director is extensive and diverse, ranging from improvised, classic, to contemporary and musical theatre. In recent years, theatre credits include: for Ensemble Theatre: *e-baby, Sorting Out Rachel*; for Melbourne Theatre Company: *Così, Miss Bosnia, The Other Place, Summer of the Aliens*; for Melbourne Theatre Company/Queensland Theatre/Geelong Performing Arts Centre: *Disgraced*; for The Production Company: *Promises, Promises*; for Red Stitch Actors Theatre: *The Aliens, Extinction, The Gronholm Method, Out of the Water, Uncle Vanya*; for Red Stitch Actors Theatre/Queensland Theatre: *The Flick*; for Sport for Jove: *Ear*

to the Edge of Time; for Victorian Arts Centre/Malcolm C Cooke and Associates Pty Ltd.: *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, which garnered a nomination for Best Director of a Musical at the Helpmann Awards; and internationally: for 59E59 Theaters/New Jersey Repertory Company (US): *Fern Hill*; for King's Head Theatre (UK): *Three Women in an Ice Cream Cone*; for King's Head Theatre (UK)/Southbank Theatre (AU): *The Book Club*; for Portland Stage (US): *Sex and Other Disturbances*; and for Signature Theatre (US): *Masterpieces*. Nadia is a multi-award winning film director. Her films include *Amy, The Big Steal, Fatal Honeymoon, Malcolm, Matching Jack, Mr Reliable, Pure Luck, Rikky and Pete*, and on television, the mini-series *Stark* for the BBC. She directs films for major studios and networks in America, including A&E Network, CBS, Disney, Universal Studios, and Warner Bros. In 2012, Nadia was honoured by the American Cinematheque with a retrospective of her film work in Los Angeles.



TOBHIYAH STONE FELLER
DESIGNER

Tobhiyah is a multi-disciplinary designer dedicated to live performance, interior, and installation projects. Based in Sydney, Tobhi is also a Lecturer in the Design and Creative Practice Centres at NIDA, where she graduated in 2005. Set & Costume Design credits include: for Griffin: *Replay, Splinter*; for Griffin Independent: *Lighten Up*; for ATYP: *Bustown, Desiree Din and the Red Forest, The Laramie Project, This Territory*; for B Sharp: *A View of Concrete*; for Bell Shakespeare Education: *Macbeth*; for Blacktown Arts Centre: *My Name is SUD*; for Clockfire Theatre Co/Sydney Festival: *Night Parade of One Hundred Goblins*; for Ensemble: *Blue/Orange, Clybourne Park, e-baby, Good People, My Zinc Bed/Blood Bank*, for which her multi-purpose set design won the Installation Design Category at the 2016 Australian Interior Design Awards, *Sorting Out Rachel*; for Merrigong Theatre Company: *Camarilla*; for Musica Viva: *Da Vinci's Apprentice; Hercules*; for Performing Lines: *Variant*; for Riverside Theatres: *Parramatta Girls*; for Siren Theatre Company: *Human Resources*; for Sydney Conservatorium of Music: *Daisy Bates at Ooldea, Orphée Aux Enfers*; and for Tamarama Rock Surfers: *Anna Robi and the House of Dogs*. In 2014, Tobhiyah was awarded Highly Commended Emerging Designer for Stage at the Australian Production Design Guild Awards. In 2019, *Flowstate*, a multi-arts outdoor performance venue for which she was a lead designer was awarded The Great Place Award by QLD Planning Institute of Australia. Tobhiyah is an active member of Australian Production Design Guild for which she is the Live Performance Coordinator of the MENTORAPDG program.



TRENT SUIDGEEST
LIGHTING DESIGNER

Trent Suidgeest's lighting design credits include: for Griffin: *First Love is the Revolution, Prima Facie, The Feather in the Web, Kill Climate Deniers, The Homosexuals or 'Faggots'*; for Belvoir/Black Swan State Theatre Company: *The Sapphires* (which toured to the Barbican Centre, London and Daegu Opera House, South Korea); for Black Swan State Theatre Company: over 20 mainstage productions, recently including *Oklahoma!, Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*; for Black Swan State Theatre Company/Melbourne Theatre Company: *National Interest*; for Darlinghurst Theatre Company: *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice*; for Ensemble Theatre: *Black Cockatoo, Folk*; for Global Creatures: *Muriel's Wedding The Musical* (also at Sydney Theatre Company), for Hayes Theatre Company: *Calamity Jane* (including Australian Tour and Belvoir), *Darlinghurst Nights, Gypsy, Merrily We Roll Along, Only Heaven Knows, The Rise and Disguise of Elizabeth R, 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 Red Line Productions: *Betty Blokk-Buster Reimagined*; for Sydney Theatre Company: *Accidental Death of an Anarchist, Hay Fever, Talk*. In 2015, with a Mike Walsh Fellowship, Trent assisted Jan Versweyveld and Ivo van Hove at Toneelgroep Amsterdam on their Shakespearian epic *Kings of War* at Wiener Festwochen.



NATE EDMONDSON
COMPOSER & SOUND DESIGNER, VIDEO DESIGNER

Nate is an international, multi-award-winning composer and sound designer for stage and screen. His theatre credits include: for Griffin: *Caress/Ache, Dead Cat Bounce, Good Cook, Friendly Clean., Jump for Jordan, This Year's Ashes, The Witches*; for Griffin Independent: *The Ham Funeral, Rust and Bone, MinusOneSister, Music*; for ATYP: *Fireface, The Hiding Place, Political Children*; for Bell Shakespeare: *A Midsummer Night's Dream, Julius Caesar, Macbeth, Romeo and Juliet, The Tempest, The Winter's Tale*; for Belvoir: *Mark Colvin's Kidney, Mortido, Seventeen, This Heaven*; for Critical Stages: *Stones in His Pockets*; for Darlinghurst Theatre Company: *All My Sons, Daylight Saving, Good Works, Love, Savages, The Seafarer, The Paris Letter, Torch Song Trilogy*; for Ensemble Theatre: *Baby Doll, Diplomacy, Fully Committed*; for Hayes Theatre Company: *Evie May, H.M.S. Pinafore*; for KXT:

Coram Boy, Jatinga, Leaves, for which Nate won the 2016 Broadway World Award for Best Score/Sound Design of a Play; for Little Ones Theatre: *Psycho Beach Party, Salomé, Two by Two*; for Malthouse Theatre: *Lord of the Flies, Salomé*; for Monkey Baa: *Edward The Emu, Possum Magic*; for New Theatre: *Marat/Sade, When The Rain Stops Falling*; for Red Line Productions at the Old Fitz: *Anatomy Of A Suicide, Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo, I Am My Own Wife, Our Blood Runs in the Street, The Village Bike*; for Riverside Theatres: *Shellshock*; for Rockefeller Productions: *Paddington Gets In A Jam* (US), *That Golden Girls Show!* (US & CA), *The Very Hungry Caterpillar Show* (AU, NZ, US, UAE, EU & UK); for Seymour Centre: *Blackrock, The Flick, Table*; for Siren Theatre Company: *Good With Maps* (AU & UK), *Misterman* (AU & UK), for both of which Nate won the Sydney Theatre Award for Best Score/Sound Design of an Independent Production, *The Moors, The Trouble With Harry*; for Sport For Jove: *Of Mice and Men*; for Street Theatre: *All My Sons* (UK), for which Nate won the 2014 Brian Dyer Trophy for Best Score/Sound Design; for Sydney Dance Company: *Once We Were*; for Sydney Theatre Company: *A Midsummer Night's Dream, Blackie Blackie Brown, Cloud Nine, The Harp in the South Parts I and II*, for which Nate was nominated for the Helpmann Award for Best Sound Design, *Never Did Me Any Harm* (with Force Majeure), *Romeo and Juliet, Three Sisters*.



ISABELLA KERDIJS
STAGE MANAGER

Isabella graduated from the production course at the National Institute of Dramatic Art in 2008. She has worked as stage manager and assistant stage manager on many shows, including: for Griffin: *And No More Shall We Part, Replay, The Smallest Hour, This Year's Ashes, Ugly Mugs*; for Belvoir: *An Enemy of the People, The Dog/The Cat, The Drover's Wife, Every Brilliant Thing, Fangirls, Girl Asleep, The Glass Menagerie, HIR, Jasper Jones, Kill the Messenger, Mother, Mother Courage and Her Children, My Name is Jimi, Stories I Want to Tell You In Person* (National Tour), *The Sugar House, Thyestes* (European Tours), *Winyanboga Yurringa*; 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/New Zealand Tours); for Spiegelworld: *Empire*. Isabella has worked as Production Coordinator on *Carmen* (Opera Australia on Sydney Harbour) and Production Manager/Stage Manager for *Puppetry of the Penis* (A-List Entertainment). She has also worked on various festivals, including The Garden of Unearthly Delights, Sydney Festival and the Woodford Folk Festival.



DI ADAMS
HESTER

Di most recently appeared on stage in the 2020 production of *Australian Open* for Bub and the 2019 production of *Trevor* for Outhouse Theatre, both at KXT. Other stage credits include: for Apocalypse Theatre Company/Old 505: *All My Sleep and Waking*; for Bell Shakespeare: *King Lear*; for Ensemble Theatre: *When Dad Married Fury*; for MopHead Productions/Red Line Productions at the Old Fitz: *The Humans*; for New Theatre: *Parramatta Girls*; and for Sydney Theatre Company: *The Crucible*, *Tartuffe*. Di has worked extensively on screen, with her most recent film credits including: *All God's Creatures*, *Cherith*, *Help Me*, *Rust Bucket*, *The Turning*, *The War Room*, *The Water Diary*; and on television, credits include: for BBC UKTV: *Top of the Lake: China Girl*; for Foxtel: *Secret City*; for Network Ten: *Wake In Fright*; for SBS: *The Principal*; for Stan: *The Other Guy*. Di has also voiced numerous characters in children's television series: for ABC: *Sally Bollywood: Super Detective*; for Nine Network: *Seaside Hotel*; for Seven Network: *Raggs*; and for Stan: *Alice Miranda Friends Forever*. Di has been a proud member of Actors Equity since 1983.



VANESSA DOWNING
MERIDEE

Vanessa has enjoyed an extensive and varied career encompassing film, theatre and television. On stage, she has worked with many of Australia's leading theatre companies, of which highlights include: for Griffin: *Away*, *Live Acts on Stage*; for Griffin Independent: *Thomas Murray and the Upside Down River*; for Bell Shakespeare: *The Taming of the Shrew*; for Belvoir/Sydney Theatre Company/Sydney Festival: *A Cheery Soul*; for Ensemble Theatre: *The Glass Menagerie*; for The Production Company: *Hello, Dolly!*; for Queensland Theatre: *Season's Greetings*; for State Theatre Company South Australia: *As You Like It*, *Equus*, *Three Birds Alighting on a Field*, *Private Lives*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*; for Studio Co./Riverside Theatres: *King Lear*; for Sydney Theatre Company: *Black is the New White*, *The Deep Blue Sea*, *How to Rule the World*, *Macbeth*, *Power Plays*; and for Wilton Morley Productions: *Steaming*. On screen, Vanessa recently appeared in Season 2 of Foxtel's *Mr Inbetween*. Additional television credits include: for ABC: *Black Comedy*, *The Checkout*, *G.P.*, *Rake*; for Seven Network: *A Country Practice*, *All Saints*, *Home and Away*. Feature film appearances include: *The Boy Who Had Everything*, *Mary*, *Stationery*, *Two Hands*. Vanessa is also a member of the Sydney Philharmonia Symphony Chorus. Vanessa is a proud member of Actors Equity and is delighted to be returning to Griffin in *Wicked Sisters*.



DEBORAH GALANOS
LYDIA

Deborah is a graduate of the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA), Trinity College London, the University of Sydney, and has worked all over Australia. Deborah's theatre credits include: for Griffin's Batch Festival/National Theatre of Parramatta/Sydney Festival: *Lady Tabouli*; for Apocalypse Theatre Company/Red Line Productions at the Old Fitz: *Metamorphoses*; for Bontom/Seymour Centre: *Unfinished Works*; for Bontom/Old 505: *Homesick*; for Belvoir: *Greek Tragedy*; for Burberry Productions: *Mum's the Word*; for Darlinghurst Theatre Company: *I'm With Her*, *The Mystery of Love & Sex*; for the Depot Theatre/Secret House: *The Seagull*; for Ensemble Theatre: *The God Committee*, *The Heartbreak Kid*; for The Goods Theatre Company/Red Line Productions at the Old Fitz: *Dropped*; for Mantouridion Theatre: *The Plot*; for MopHead Productions/Red Line Productions at the Old Fitz: *The House of Ramon Iglesia*; for NIDA Company: *Hotel Hibiscus*; for Sport for Jove: *Antigone*, *Romeo & Juliet*; for State Theatre Company South Australia: *Gods of Strangers*; for Sydney Festival: *Boswell for the Defence*; for Sydney Theatre Company/Australian People's Theatre: *The Shearston Shift*; and for theatrongroup: *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*. Deborah's television credits include: for ABC: *Children's Hospital*, *My Place*, *Police Rescue*, *Pulse*, *Rake*, *Redfern Now*; for NBC: *Camp*; for Network Ten: *Street Smart*; for Nine Network: *Murder Call*; and for Seven Network: *A Country Practice*, *All Saints*, *G.P.*, *Home and Away*. Her film credits include *Balls*, *Boys from the Bush*, *Cavity*, *Chasing Comets*, *Inside Out*, *No Worries*, *The Premonition*, and *Razzle Dazzle*. Deborah has been nominated for several Sydney Theatre Awards, and has been a proud Actors Equity Member since 1990.



HANNAH WATERMAN
JUDITH

Hannah began her career with the National Youth Theatre of Great Britain and went on to star in a wide variety of British television shows and stage productions. Hannah has toured the UK and appeared on the West End with a variety of shows including: for Anvil Arts: *Calendar Girls* (Tour and West End); *Tom, Dick and Harry* (West End); *Strangers on a Train* (Tour), *Vagina Monologues* (London and Tour); for Stephen Joseph Theatre: *Soap*; and *Abigail's Party* (Tour). Hannah's Australian theatre credits include: for Griffin: *The Almighty Sometimes*; for CDP Theatre Producers at Sydney Opera House: *Mr Stink*; for Christine Harris and HIT Productions: *Love Letters* (Tour); for Ensemble Theatre: *The Kitchen Sink*; for Hayes Theatre Company: *Side Show*; for Michael Cassell Group: *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*; for Red Line Productions at the Old Fitz: *The Whale*; for Sydney Theatre Company: *Talk*. Hannah's film credits include *Patient 17*. Hannah's television credits include: for BBC: *Come Fly With Me*, *Dangerfield*, *Doctors*, *New Tricks*; for ITV: *Peak Practice*; and for London Weekend Television: *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. In 2000, Hannah joined the cast of the British soap opera *EastEnders* (BBC) where she remained for four and a half years, appearing in over 400 episodes. Hannah is a proud member of Actors Equity and is thrilled to be back at Griffin!
