



GRIFFIN THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS
IN ASSOCIATION WITH SEYMOUR CENTRE

NUCLEUS

BY ALANA VALENTINE

14 FEB – 15 MAR 2025 | 📍 SEYMOUR CENTRE

GRIFFIN
THEATRE
COMPANY

CAST & CREATIVES

Director Andrea James

Dramaturg Dylan Van Den Berg

Designer Isabel Hudson

Lighting Designer Verity Hampson

Composer & Sound Designer Phil Downing

Video Designer Laura Turner

Fight Director Tim Dashwood

Intimacy Director Chloë Dallimore

Assistant Video Designer Dylan Ford

Lighting Programmer Sammy Read

Stage Manager Tanya Leach

Production Manager Damion Holling

With Paula Arundell, Peter Kowitz

SPECIAL THANKS

Vicki Gordon, Wendy Howell, Nadia Tass, Christine Dunstan, Julian Louis, Jane Phegan, Jo Turner, Lloyd Alison-Young, Katia Molino, Maddy Baghurst, Karen Patterson, Kar Chalmers, and all my face to face, Zoom and phone interviewees whom I thank sincerely.

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Nucleus was developed with the support of the Sally Breen Family Foundation. This project was supported through a residency at Theatre and Performance Studies, the University of Sydney



PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE

Nucleus is a work of fiction. It has been extensively researched, for which I thank the Shoalhaven Arts Board. It draws on personal testimony and historical accuracy, for whom I thank interviewees from all sides of the nuclear power debate.

But *Nucleus* was born one harrowing morning when I decided to throw some eight years of research, all my verbatim drafts and all my previous thinking about this work into an archive box and invent a play about two people who knew each other well and disagreed utterly.

It was these fictional characters whose logic, passions, secrets and decisions I wanted to track, dramatize and understand, in all their human contradictions.

It is, of course, the artist's work to be prescient about the concerns that inform our polity but I could not have predicted that this debate would be quite so current when the play went into production.

For that I thank the visionary foresight of **Declan Greene** who programmed it, **Dylan Van Den Berg** who dramaturges it, the wonderful **Paula Arundell** and **Peter Kowitz** who perform it and the rest of the dedicated creative team who have brought it to life. **Andrea James** is a force of spiritual vitality, and I cherish our collaboration.

If our work as artists is to complicate and confound certainty with our imaginations, I have been accompanied in this work by an entire theatre company full to the brim with dedicated and perceptive theatre makers, striving to make the world a more nuanced and safer place for disagreement and diversity.

Emma, Julieanne, Tanya, Erica, and all the Griffis—all power to you.

Alana Valentine
Writer

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I am a long time admirer of Alana's work since we first met each other on a multi-writer project for Belvoir many moons ago. Sadly, that project didn't see the light of the stage, but our creative friendship - along with our mutual admiration of each other's political nous (*and dress sense*) - has endured.

Like true allies in the theatre trenches, we have quietly championed each other's work for well over a decade, and I am so chuffed to be finally working with Alana to direct her brilliant new play.

I always knew that Alana was whip smart (*sometimes frighteningly so*), but to see her work take shape on *Nucleus* has been breathtaking. Alana writes for the stage prolifically and her radar for thrilling, true stories and characters with bite is consistently en pointe. Her fingers and steely eyes are always on the pulse of colonial, patriarchal Australia and our stages are all the better for it.

Every now and then a play lays in wait. As the political left and right stalk each other in dangerous attempts at point scoring for political gain, the divisive nuclear debate in Australia is yet again on the table. Alana assured us, that she never sought out to write a zeitgeist play, but we should never underestimate the witchy premonition of a playwright.

I am yet to read or hear the exquisitely crafted denouement of this play without having my heart completely broken asunder. In exploring the relationship between two love struck enemies, Alana effortlessly brings the macro into the micro at a deeply cellular level and encourages us to get in touch with

our common humanity. In this way, she provides an anecdote to the fast-paced destruction of our planet.

As snarky social media platforms disappear into their own hellscapes, opportunities for considered debate are few and far between. Thank Biami and the goddesses for theatre; this beautiful artform that brings us into a dark room together to consider all sides of an argument; to smell and sense the chemistry that plays exquisite tricks between human beings on stage and in the seating banks.

It has been a privilege to work with two of Australia's finest actors for the stage. **Alana Valentine's** acuity doesn't suffer fools gladly. There's an epic quality to this play that requires great intelligence, bravery and a Greek God-like energy that only actors like **Paula Arundell** and **Peter Kowitz** could tackle. They worked together before on the tricky play *Blackbird* at STC in 2007; and it's wonderful to see them reunited again. Storied, gloried theatre careers do that and we, the audience, delight in the ripening of actors over time who are at the top of their game.

Finally, I must thank and acknowledge our wise Stage Manger **Tanya Leach** who also brings her decades of theatre experience to this production along with her political fire.

As a nuclear activist in the 60's and 70's, her boots on the ground experience and enormous heart have been a great asset to the team.

Andrea James
Director

BIOGRAPHIES



ALANA VALENTINE

PLAYWRIGHT

Griffin Theatre Company: *Ladies Day* (2016); Seymour Centre: *Made To Measure* (2019), *Ear to the Edge of Time* (2018), *Shafana and Aunt Sarrinah* (2009); Opera Australia: *Watershed: The Death of Dr Duncan* (with Christos Tsiolkas, 2024) also Adelaide Festival (2022); Belvoir St Theatre: *Wayside Bride* (2022), *Barbara and the Camp Dogs* (with Ursula Yovich 2019, 2017), *The Sugar House* (2018), *Parramatta Girls* (2007), *Run Rabbit Run* (2004); Adelaide Festival 2024: *Baleen Moondjan* (with Stephen Page); Bangarra Dance Theatre: *Wudjang: Not The Past* (with Stephen Page 2022), and as Dramaturg, *Dark Emu* (2018), *Dubboo: Life of A Songman* (2018), *Bennelong* (2017), *Patyegarang* (2014) and *ID* (from *Belong*, 2011); erth visual and physical theatre, *arc* (2024, 2022); Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, *Notre Dame* (and as director, 2024); Merrigong Theatre Company, *Letters to Lindy* (2018, National Tour, and 2016), *Dead Man Brake* (2013); Street Theatre, Canberra, *Flight Memory* (2019), *Cold Light* (with Frank Moorhouse, 2017), *MP* (2011), *Butterfly Dandy* (2005). AWARDS: Griffin Award (five nominations); AWG David Williamson Award for Excellence (2013), Major AWGIE for *Grounded* (2013), 6 AWGIES (Music Theatre, Community and Youth Theatre, Radio), 9 AWGIE Nominations; Helpmann Awards (with Ursula Yovich, Best Musical, Best Original Score); NSW State Literary Award (Radio, 1989).

BIOGRAPHIES



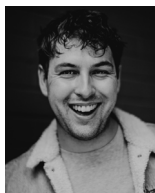
ANDREA JAMES

DIRECTOR

Andrea is a Yorta Yorta/Gunaikurnai award-winning theatremaker and Associate Artistic Director of Griffin Theatre Company. Andrea's directing credits for Griffin include *Ghosting the Party* by Melissa Bubnic and *Jailbaby* by Suzie Miller and *swim* by Ellen van Neerven. As Playwright and Director, Andrea has written and directed productions including: for Belvoir St Theatre and Geelong Performing Arts Centre: *Winyanboga Yurringa*; for Melbourne Workers Theatre with Playbox Theatre Company: *Yanagai! Yanagai!*, which went on to tour internationally to the UK; for Moogahlin Performing Arts: *Winyanboga Yurringa*; and for Performing Lines: *Sunshine Super Girl*, which then had an extensive national tour. Andrea's co-writing credits include: for Griffin: *Dogged*, with Catherine Ryan; for Sydney Festival: *Big Name No Blankets*, with Sammy and Anyupa Butcher about the life and times of Aboriginal rock legends *The Warumpi Band*.

Andrea is a graduate of VCA and was Artistic Director of Melbourne Workers Theatre (2001-2008), Aboriginal Arts Development Officer at Blacktown Arts Centre (2010-2012) and Aboriginal Producer at Carriageworks (2012-2016) before launching a freelance theatremaker career. She was recipient of British Council's Accelerate Program for Aboriginal Art Leaders in 2013 and was awarded Create NSW Aboriginal Arts Fellowship in 2018. Andrea was recently awarded the Mona Brand Award for Women Stage and Screen Writers, Australia's most prestigious writing prize for women.

BIOGRAPHIES



DYLAN VAN DEN BERG

DRAMATURG

Dylan Van Den Berg is a Palawa writer and dramaturg, originally from the northeast of lutruwita/Tasmania. As a dramaturg, recent credits include: for Griffin Theatre Company: *Nucleus*, *SISTREN* (Griffin Lookout); for ILBIJERRI Theatre Company: *10 in 10 Play Festival*, *Nan's Place*; for Queensland Theatre: *Burning House*; for The Street Theatre: *A Better Tomorrow*. As a playwright, recent credits include: for Griffin Theatre Company: *Whitefella Yella Tree*; for The Street Theatre: *Milk*, *The Chosen Vessel*; for the National Institute of Dramatic Art: *All that Glitters is Not Mould*; for Belco Arts: *Ngadjung*; for FlickFlick City/Hobart Fringe: *The Camel*. For his writing, he has received the Griffin Award, two AWGIES, the David Williamson Prize, two NSW Premier's Literary Awards and was shortlisted for the Bruntwood International Prize. He is currently under commission with Griffin Theatre Company and Malthouse Theatre.



ISABEL HUDSON

DESIGNER

Isabel is an award-winning set and costume designer. Isabel's design credits for the stage include: for Griffin: *Ghosting the Party*, *Jailbaby*, *Pony*; for Sydney Theatre Company: *A Fool In Love*, *Constellations*, *Hubris & Humiliation*. for Belvoir St Theatre: *Blessed Union*, *Every Brilliant Thing*, *Winyanboga Yurringa*; for Belvoir 25A: *Jess & Joe Forever*, *Tuesday*; for Ensemble Theatre: *Master Class*; for Hayes Theatre Co: *Razorhurst*, *The View Upstairs*; for Melbourne Theatre Company: *Torch the Place*; for New Theatricals: *Darkness*; for NIDA: *Mr Burns*; for Pinchgut Opera: *Farnace*; and for Sydney Festival/Rising/Darwin Festival: *Maureen: Harbinger of Death*. Isabel's set design credits include: for Hayes Theatre Co: *American Psycho*, *Cry-Baby*, *Young Frankenstein*. Isabel was the costume designer for *Dear Evan Hansen* (Michael Cassel Group) and costume designer and associate set designer for *The Mousetrap* (Crossroads Productions). Isabel has won four Sydney Theatre Awards for her outstanding designs; best set design for *Constellations*, *American Psycho*, and *Cry-Baby*, and best costume design for *Hubris And Humiliation*. She also won an APDG award for best set design for *American Psycho*. She was awarded the Kristian Fredrikson Scholarship in 2022 and The Thelma Afford Award for Costume Design in Stage and Screen in 2022.

BIOGRAPHIES



VERITY HAMPSON

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Verity's lighting designs for theatre include: for Griffin: *Blaque Showgirls, A Strategic Plan, And No More Shall We Part, Angela's Kitchen, Beached, Dealing With Clair, Dogged, Ghosting the Party, Orange Thrower, Pony, The Bleeding Tree, The Boys, The Bull, The Moon and the Coronet of Stars*; for Griffin Independent: *The Brothers Size, The Cold Child, Crestfall, Family Stories: Belgrade, Live Acts On Stage, Music, The New Electric Ballroom*; for Griffin/Bell Shakespeare: *The Literati*; for Sydney Theatre Company: *7 Stages of Grieving, A Raisin in the Sun, Blackie Blackie Brown, Fences, Grand Horizons, Hamlet: Prince of Skidmark, Home, I'm Darling, Machinal, Little Mercy*; for Bell Shakespeare: *Twelfth Night, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Julius Caesar, Titus Andronicus*; for Belvoir St Theatre: *An Enemy of the People, The Blind Giant is Dancing, The Drover's Wife*; for Black Swan/Sydney Theatre Company: *City of Gold*; for Ensemble Theatre: *A Doll's House, Baby Doll, Fully Committed, Murder at Hamlington Hall, The Heartbreak Choir, The One*; for Hayes Theatre Co: *Lizzie, Zombie! The Musical*; for Queensland Theatre: *Death of a Salesman*. Verity is a recipient of the Mike Walsh Fellowship and has won three Sydney Theatre Awards, a Green Room Award and an APDG Award for Best Lighting Design.



PHIL DOWNING

COMPOSER & SOUND DESIGNER

Phil has been performing and recording music for over 20 years and was first engaged to produce soundtracks for theatre through experimentation with original musical inventions. He continues composing using various music recording/editing tools, creating sounds from found objects or manipulation of surroundings and the natural environment.

Highlights include: for Griffin: *Ghosting the Party*, for Branch Nebula: *Crush, High Performance Packing Tape, STOP-GO, Artwork*, for Vicky Van Hout: *Plenty Serious Talk Talk, Stolen, Long Grass*, for Side Pony Productions: *The Irresistible*, for Moogahlin Performing Arts: *The Visitors, Rainbow's End, Winyanboga Yurringa, This Fella My Memory*, for My Darling Patricia: *Posts in the Paddock, The Piper*, for Alice Osbourne/Performance Space: *Falling* and for Erth: *Murder*.

BIOGRAPHIES



LAURA TURNER

VIDEO DESIGNER

Laura Turner works across theatre, film, and visual arts in various forms and creative roles. Her credits as Video Designer include: Bell Shakespeare *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*; Australian Chamber Orchestra: *The Princess and the Pea*, *There's a Sea in My Bedroom*; Sydney Theatre Company: *Rules for Living*, Sydney Dance Company: *Here Now*; Clockfire Theatre Company: *Ruins*; In Transit Co: *In Transit*; Steps and Holes Theatre Co: *Soul Traders*; House of Sand: *That Was Friday*; Living Room Theatre: *I just wanted to be alone with her*; Weatherboard Theatre: *A Door Ajar*; Australian Theatre for Young People: *Luke Lloyd: Alienoid*. As a video artist Laura has exhibited with M. Contemporary Gallery: *Mythology of My Land*, Young Artists Initiative '14; *dLux Media Arts Is This Art?!*; UNSW Galleries: *The Annual '14; Articulate Project Space The Hidden Gesture*; Annandale Galleries: *Turning Points*; Forum Projects Gallery: *Enigma*. Laura is currently completing an MA in Screen Directing at the Australian Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS).



TIM DASHWOOD

FIGHT DIRECTOR

Tim has studied a range of martial disciplines and movement practices in Australia and North America under the mentorship of Nigel Poulton and is the current President of the Society of Australian Fight Directors incorporated. Griffin Theatre Company: *Golden Blood*, *Jailbaby*, *The Lewis Trilogy*; Australian Theatre for Young People: *Saplings*, *Scab*, *The Deb*; Bell Shakespeare: *Bell Players*; Belvoir St Theatre: *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime*, *Tell Me I'm Here*, *Opening Night*; Hayes Theatre Company: *Zombie! The Musical*, *Dubbo Championship Wrestling*; National Theatre of Paramatta: *Girls in Boys Cars*, *Karim*; Opera Australia: *Hamlet*, *Miss Saigon*, *West Side Story*; Outhouse Theatre & The Ensemble Theatre: *Ulster American*; shake & stir theatre co: *Fantastic Mr Fox*, *Fourteen*; Shane Anthony, Daniel Cottier Productions, Sugary Rum Productions and Seymour Centre: *The Inheritance Parts 1 & 2*; Sydney Theatre Company: *A Fool in Love*, *Lord of the Flies*, *No Pay? No Way!*, *Sweat*, *Stolen*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*; Whale Chorus: *Twelfth Night*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Tim enjoys teaching movement and stage combat for: Actor's Centre Australia, Sydney Actors' School, the National Institute of Dramatic Art and independent workshops.

BIOGRAPHIES



CHLOË DALLIMORE

INTIMACY DIRECTOR

Chloë is an internationally trained and accredited Intimacy Coordinator/Director. Griffin Theatre Company: *Blaque Showgirls*, *Flat Earthers* *The Musical*, *Sex Magick*; Belvoir St Theatre: *At What Cost?*, *Miss Peony*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *The Master & Margarita*; Crossroads Live: *Chicago*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Rocky Horror Show*, *SIX*; Hayes Theatre Co: *Jekyll and Hyde*, *Ride The Cyclone*, *Zombie!*; Opera Australia: *Amadeus*, *Miss Saigon*, *Summer Season '25*, *Winter Season '24*; Sydney Theatre Company: *A Fool In Love*, *Dear Evan Hansen*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *The Seagull*, *The Tempest*; Chloë's film credits include: *The Knot*, *Three Thousand Years of Longing*, *Transfusion*; Chloë's television credits include *Fifth Season: One Night*, *Pieces of Her*, *The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart*, *The Twelve*; Fremantle Media Australia: *Heartbreak High*, *Significant Others*, *Totally Completely Fine*, *Wellmania*; Seven West Media: *Home & Away*; Stan: *Bump*, *Colin From Accounts*, *Last King of the Cross*, *Thou Shalt Not Steal*. Chloë received the 2005 Helpmann Award for Best Female Actor in a Musical.

DYLAN FORD

ASSISTANT VIDEO DESIGNER

Dylan is a multidisciplinary artist and emerging director working in theatre and film. Theatre credits include, as Sound Designer: for Backstage: *Lysistrata*; as Synthesisers: for Cambridge University Amateur Dramatic Club: *Mr. Burns: A Post-Electric Play*; as Stage Manager: for Clockfire Theatre Company: *Ruins*; as Musical Director: for UNSW MTS: *Mother May's*; as Stage Manager: for Steps & Holes Theatre Company: *Soul Trading*; as Stage Manager: for White Box Theatre: *The Lives of Eve*. Film credits include, as Composer: for AFTRS: *Gatorland*, *Sharehouse*; as Composer and Photographer: for AFTRS: *Ode To An End*; as Sound Designer, Photographer and Voice Actor: for AFTRS: *A Somber Lust*; as Chorister of St Mary's Cathedral Choir: for Warner Bros.: *The Lego Batman Movie*.

He has a Bachelor of Communication in Media Arts and Production from the University of Technology, Sydney. Dylan was musically trained as a Scholar of the St Mary's Cathedral Choir, with which he has toured internationally and appeared on various radio, film and broadcast programs. Dylan was an Ambassador for Griffin Theatre Company in 2021.

BIOGRAPHIES



PAULA ARUNDELL

CASSIE LOGART

Paula has worked extensively across screen and theatre nationally and internationally.

Paula's theatre credits include: for Griffin Theatre Company: *Clark in Sarajevo*, *The Bleeding Tree* for which she received the 2016 Helpmann Award for Best Female Actor in a Play; for Bell Shakespeare: *The Servant of Two Masters*, *Hippolytus*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, for which she received the 2001 Sydney Morning Herald Award for Best Actress, *Henry V*, for which she received the 1999 Green Room Award for Female Actor in a Featured Role, *The Tempest*, for which she received the 1997 Green Room Award for Best Female Actor in a Supporting Role, *Much Ado About Nothing*; for Belvoir St Theatre: *The Master & Margarita*, *Sami In Paradise*, *Atlantis*, *Mr Burns*, *Mother Courage*, *Angels in America Part 1 & 2*, *Peter Pan*, *Death of a Salesman*, *Gethsemane*, *Scorched*, *The Adventures of Snugglepoot and Cuddlepie* and *little ragged Blossom*, *Paul*, *Peribanez*, *The Three Penny Opera*; for Enda Marley Presents: *Carousel: A Concert*; for Ensemble Theatre: *Clybourne Park*, *Interactive World Theatre*, *Are You There*; for GWB Entertainment: *Death of a Salesman*; for Malthouse Theatre: *The Real and Imagined History of the Elephant Man*; for Mardi Gras: *Elegies For Punks*, *Angels and Raging Queens*; for Melbourne Theatre Company: *Company*, *Measure for Measure*; for Michael Cassel Group: *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*; for STAC: *Night Letters*; for Sydney and Adelaide Festivals: *Three Furies*; for Sydney Festival: *Oedipus Rex* and *Symphony of Psalms*; for Sydney Theatre Company: *Sweat*, *Death of a Salesman*, *Top Girls*, *The Bleeding Tree*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Disgraced*, *Suddenly Last Summer*, *Macbeth*, *Under Milk Wood*, *The Mirage*, *Honour*, *Blackbird*, *Loves Lies Bleeding*, *Life is a Dream*, *The Three Sisters*, *The White Devil*, *Attempts on her Life*, *Love For Love*, *Julius Caesar*.

BIOGRAPHIES



PETER KOWITZ

GABRIEL HULST

Peter's theatre credits this century include: for Griffin Theatre Company: *Burning*, *Strange Attractor*, *The Floating World*, for which he received the Sydney Theatre Award for Best Actor in a Leading role in a Main Stage Production. Bell Shakespeare: *King Lear*. Ensemble Theatre: *Happiness*, *Taking Steps*. Melbourne Theatre Company: *Australia Day*, *Double Indemnity*, *Heisenberg*, *The Weir*. Queensland Theatre: *Family Values*, *Death of a Salesman*. Railway Street Theatre: *The Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, *Away*, *Falling on my Left Ear*. Sydney Theatre Company: *Blackbird*, *Australian Graffiti*, *Talk*, *Marriage Blanc*, *Tot Mom*, *Australia Day*. State Theatre Company of South Australia: *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, *Creditors*. GWB Entertainment: *Girl From The North Country*. Television credits include: For ABC: *Crownies*, *Janet King* (3 seasons), *Grassroots* (2 seasons), *Bodysurfer* (Winner AFI Best Actor in a Mini-Series) *The Long Way Home* (Winner AFI Best Actor in a Tele-Feature). In 1989 he received the Variety Heart Award for Television Actor of The Year.

ABOUT GRIFFIN

Griffin is the only theatre company in the country exclusively devoted to the development and staging of new Australian writing. Located in the historic SBW Stables Theatre, nestled in the heart of Kings Cross, Griffin has been Australia's home for the exploration of new stories since 1979.

We are the launch pad for new plays, ideas and writing that other theatres won't take a risk on. We boldly contribute to Australia's unique and powerful storytelling culture. Plays like *Prima Facie*, *Holding the Man* and *City of Gold* all had their world premieres at Griffin

before going out to capture the national imagination. In the words of our longest-serving Artistic Director, **Ros Horin**:

"We are the theatre of first chances."

We are passionate about nurturing emerging and established practitioners alike. We pride ourselves on supporting our vast community of artists, audiences and supporters who consider our theatre their creative home. We help ambitious, bold, risk-taking and urgent Australian work get from the page onto the stage. We tell the stories that help us know who we are as a nation, and who we want to become.

Acknowledgement of Country

Griffin Theatre Company operates and tells stories on the unceded lands of the Gadigal of the Eora Nation. We acknowledge and honour Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the oldest continuous living culture on the planet, with more than 60,000 years of storytelling practice shaping and underpinning all aspects of Australian culture. It is a privilege that we do not take lightly: to work on this land, and to tell stories on its soil.

GRIFFIN THEATRE COMPANY

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We drive youth engagement in the arts through our comprehensive Arts Education Program and enliven the

artistic life of our city through presenting partnerships with major cultural events.

We foster the next generation of artists and audiences through emerging artist initiatives and student performances.

Our work champions new voices, questions the status quo and inspires wide-ranging audiences through the creative expression of big ideas.

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