

Brown's Mart Productions and Knock-em-Down Theatre present

THE TURQUOISE ELEPHANT

An hilarious romp into the apocalypse

Written by Stephen Carleton

Directed By Gail Evans

*Winner of the 2015 Griffin Award
for Best New Australian Play*

*Carleton's script is vigorously
written and filthy-black humoured
- Sydney Morning Herald*



Brown's Mart Theatre
8 - 19 May 2018 | 7pm
brownsmart.com.au

WRITER'S NOTES

The first play I ever went to see was Ionesco's *Rhinoceros* at Brown's Mart in 1981. I was 12 or 13 years old and won the tickets over the radio. That experience opened up a new world for me; I was transfixed. I remember being terrified by the noise of the stampeding rhinoceroses; enthralled by the idea that they could operate as an image for bully-boys, for the gullible throngs being turned into fascists, seduced into truly horrid ideology by peer pressure and self-preservation. That seminal theatre experience politicised me in a quiet, slow burn kind of way. I didn't even know until then that I had opinions about fascists, bullies and gullible throngs!

The *Turquoise Elephant* pays obvious homage to Ionesco. Absurdism captures the sense of exasperation I feel about our economic and political classes' ridiculous denialism about climate change. Every time you think things can't get any more ludicrous, another catastrophe occurs – a longer drought, a bigger bushfire, a wilder super storm cell – and rather than galvanising us into action, we just seem to do more and more nothing. We do nothing on a grander and grander scale. And what, the play asks us, is there to be done? Who should do it? In Australia, we have Federal, State and Territory governments floundering and refusing to organise a national approach to sustainably sourced power supply. Fixing the problem seems to be left to wealthy, maverick individuals like Elon Musk. In the US, Trump has torn up the Paris Agreement for his nation, tweeting nonsensical climate fabrications that are designed to appease the fossil fuel lobby groups that sponsored his tilt at the presidency. We're back firmly in the sort of political cycle of illogic, mendacity and chaos that spurred Ionesco and his contemporaries to find Absurdist voice in the first place.

I'm thrilled that this play is coming back to my theatrical home, Brown's Mart, and that my talented friend Gail Evans is directing this wonderful local cast (full of more talented friends, old and new!) in the Darwin premiere. It would make me very happy if *The Turquoise Elephant* got inside the head of another 12 or 13-year-old and provided them with the sort of seminal theatrical experience that *Rhinoceros* provided me. I need to believe that laughter is the right weapon to take on the ideology of the powers-that-be right now. Nothing else seems to be working.

Stephen Carleton



DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Turquoise Elephant has been a joy to direct. Whilst the issue it addresses is incredibly alarming, I have spent a great deal of the rehearsal process rolling around the floor laughing. Stephen's wit is wicked, acerbic and sharp as a rapier!

This dark comedic play is an important comment on the current crisis our planet is facing.

I believe that laughter is one of the best medicines and that political comedy is a great way to engage people with themes that they may not want to scrutinise too closely.

Gail Evans





STEPHEN CARLETON

WRITER

Stephen Carleton's plays have been produced across Australia and won awards including the Griffin Award (2015) for *The Turquoise Elephant*, the Matilda Award for Best New Australian Work for *Bastard Territory* (2017), and the Patrick White Playwrights' Award (2005) for *Constance Drinkwater* and the *Final Days of Somerset*. Companies he has worked with include Queensland Theatre Company, Sydney Theatre Company, La Boite, Griffin, Darwin Theatre Company, Brown's Mart, JUTE, La Mama and the Brisbane Powerhouse.

GAIL EVANS

DIRECTOR

Gail Evans is a multi-skilled theatre maker with over twenty-five years' experience in the performing arts as an actor, director and writer. Recent directing credits include the creative development and subsequent productions of *Broken* and *The Sound of Waiting* by Mary Anne Butler, *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen, *Dog Dog* by Sarah Hope and *The Bunker* by *Creatures of Habit* physical theatre collective. Gail is published with Playlab and the Australian Script Centre, and has had her plays produced in Darwin, Cairns and Melbourne.



CREATIVES



REBECCA ADAMS SET AND LIGHTING DESIGNER

Rebecca Adams is an architect and theatrical set and lighting designer. Before returning to her home town of Darwin in 2010, Rebecca worked in theatre lighting in Melbourne for 15 years doing ballet, opera and musicals. Recent productions include Jehovah's One Table Restaurant, When The Rain Stops Falling (set and lighting design), Book of Shadows (set design) and Mr Takahashi, The Glass Menagerie, And I'm The Queen Of Sheba, Contagion's Kiss, Slow Falling Bird and God of Carnage (lighting design).

MATT CUNLIFFE SOUND DESIGNER

Matt Cunliffe is an ARIA award winning musician, sound engineer and composer with a wide range of live and studio based experience. Career highlights to date include 13 years as a keyboard player with Yothu Yindi, recording and mixing credits on 100+ albums of Australian indigenous music and 30+ soundtracks for NT arts companies including ARDS, Brown's Mart Productions, Darwin Theatre Company, Gary Lang NT Dance Company, Tracks Dance and the Yothu Yindi Foundation.



KIRSTIN FAUSETT COSTUME DESIGNER

Kirstin Fausett is a long term Territorian and passionate supporter of the Darwin theatre industry. She has designed costumes for numerous productions at Brown's Mart Theatre including: God of Carnage (2013), Jehovah One-Table Restaurant (2014), Bastard Territory (2014), When the Rain Stops Falling (2016) and assisted with costume design for productions of And I'm the Queen of Sheba (2016) and A Doll's House (2017).

TODD WILLIAMS

VIDEOGRAPHER

Todd Williams is a film-maker, animator and graphic designer who has worked in the NT's creative industries since 1995 [Burrundi Pictures, Cutting Edge]. In that time, he has collaborated on many projects with NT theatre makers, including five revues for KeDT, and design and animation for Undercurrent, a cross cultural theatre collaboration with Yum Cha Arts and Wandering Moon, Chang Mai, Thailand. He is currently the director/producer for the VAMPTv project, an online arts vodcast for NT community schools.



CAST

NICOLA FEARN

OLYMPIA

Nicola Fearn has worked in professional theatre as a performer, writer, teacher and director since 1980. She is Artistic Director of Darwin-based company Business Unusual (BUU). As well as being a regular on the Darwin arts scene, Nicky works in the UK with Horse and Bamboo Theatre, one of the UK's leading visual companies and with mask company Vamos. She was co-founder of Skin and Blisters (London 1987-1991), a circus theatre company that toured major festivals in Europe and the UK. Nicky has just finished touring with The Royal National Theatre of Jingili's Hillbilly Horror, due for a return season in June at Brown's Mart.



KADEK HOBMAN

JEFF

Kadek Hobman is an actor, musician, comedian and performer who has been performing and touring interstate and overseas since a young age. Recent acting credits include: Swagman's Ghost by Levin Diashenko [Browns Mart Shimmer season], Age of Bones by Sandra Thibodeaux [Performing Lines], Prometheus Bound [CIYA], The Glass Menagerie [Browns Mart Productions], Othello [Darwin Theatre Company], Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead [BM Share program] and The Bunker [Creatures of Habit collective].



**EL IBO**

VISI/VIKA

El Ibo moved to Darwin from Cairns in 2017. Her first love has always been theatre, followed by her passion in dance. She was part of the Tropical Arts ensemble who performs Shakespeare at the Tanks and most recently appeared in Mr Takahashi and Other Falling Secrets (CIYA/JUTE). El holds a Bachelor of Creative Industries from James Cook University, majoring in Performance.

**MERRILEE MILLS**

AUGUSTA

Merrilee Mills has worked for companies including JUTE, Brown's Mart, DTC, HVTC, KeDT, CIYA, and Tracks. Projects have included Mr Takahashi and Other Falling Secrets (CIYA/JUTE), Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf, The Winter's Tale, The Tempest, Emma, Money and Friends, Roadhouse, The Threepenny Opera, Seven Deadly Australian Sins (DTC/Knock-em-Down/JUTE), and The Man from Mukinupin and West Side Story for HVTC. She is currently completing a Master's degree in Applied Theatre focusing on constructions of the senescent female body in Australian theatre practice.

**CIELLA WILLIAMS**

BASRA

Ciella Williams is a Darwin-based actor and theatre maker. Recent acting credits include A Doll's House by Henrik Ibsen (Brown's Mart Productions, 2017), Broken by Mary Anne Butler (Knock-em-Down Theatre, 2015 and 2016), Sissy in Hillbilly Horror (Royal National Theatre of Jjingili, 2016) and Jess in Dog Dog by Sarah Hope (SALT Theatre, 2016, 2017). She has recently completed an ATYP mentorship in playwriting with Mary Anne Butler and was a recipient of a Bundanon residency for young playwrights in 2016.

THE TURQUOISE ELEPHANT

Written by Stephen Carleton

Directed By Gail Evans

Nicola Fearn: Olympia

Kadek Hobman: Jeff

El Ibo: Visi/Vika

Merrilee Mills: Augusta

Ciella Williams: Basra

Set & Lighting Designer: Rebecca Adams

Sound Designer: Matt Cunliffe

Costume Designer: Kirstin Fausett

Videographer: Todd Williams

Stage Manager: Tiffany Jansen

Lighting Operator: Jessie Davis

Creative Producer: Knock-em-Down
Theatre

Set Builders: Josh Barnes, Finn Williams, Chris Kluge, Gus Fitzgerald & Katy Moir

THANK YOU

Mary Anne Butler

Scenic Painter: Colin Holt

Stretch - All Bend NT

Steven Chin - Mirrors, Robes and Showerscreens

Yam Li - The Clothing Hub

Monsoon Millinery

David Newman

Bong Ramillo - DCA

Jane Tonkin & Jodie Reichstein

(Corrugated Iron Youth Arts)

Kirstin Fausett

Paolo Randazzo

Katie Saunders

Lisa Patamisi

Sara Scrutton & Therese Ritchie - Puppy sitters

Paz Tassone & Glenn Campbell - Photographer

The Turquoise Elephant was first produced by Griffin Theatre Company
on 14 October 2016 at the SBW Stables Theatre.

