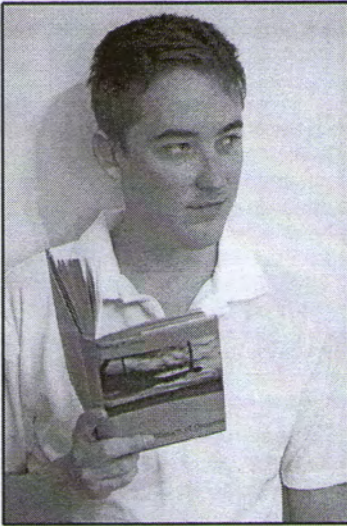
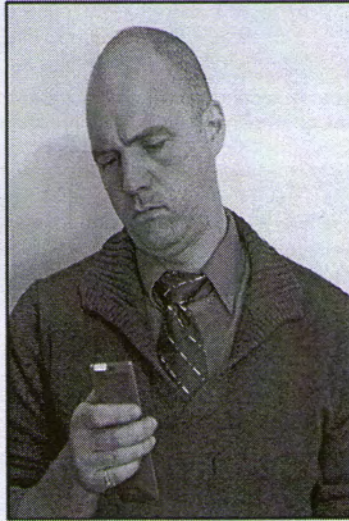


 **LA MAMA**
presents



THE JOY OF TEXT



March 7 - March 24, 2013
Previewing March 6
La Mama Courthouse

THE JOY OF TEXT

Written by Robert Reid

Directed by Peita Collard

Performed by Jason Cavanagh, Colin Craig, Kasia Kaczmarek and Elizabeth Thomson

Set and lighting design by Rob Sowinski

Film design by Isaac Mitchell-Frey

Sound design by Kiernan Box

Produced by Rikki Lee Butinar

Original production by Melbourne Theatre Company

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

How do new works become Australian classics?

After seeing *The Joy of Text* at MTC last year, I wondered what would become of Rob Reid's script now that it had premiered. In working with writers on their first productions, I knew that they almost always learned something new from the experience, adjusting and retuning their scripts in response to seeing them performed before an audience.

But to what avail?

With contemporary audiences seemingly stricken by premiere-itis and an obsession with past classics, it's a rare play that ever sees a stage again. Yet scripts grow and improve through performance – it is, after all, their *raison d'être* and there've been plenty of shows I felt deserved a second moment in the sun. In the past, scripts we now think of as classics enjoyed multiple outings and hard-copy publishing, helping to establish them as great plays in the public psyche. Nowadays, though, too many of our contemporary writers have their work shelved and never performed again.

I knew there was something substantial about *The Joy of Text* that needed revisiting. I knew that in the more nurturing and accepting independent environment, I could explore the nuances buried within its pages. A second development process and production would illuminate the complex layers Reid was attempting to express in his script.

Working on the MTC developed script with Reid, the cast and I have attempted to reveal its deeper and more controversial nature: the subject of truth in text and discourse that surrounds the post-modern approach to literature. As I saw it, *The Joy of Text* has more to say than just the surface narrative of the controversy that surrounds the topic of institutionalised duty of care within schools and teachers sleeping with students and more about the individual emotions involved. Cleverly, Reid has chosen this emotionally charged, taboo subject to explore the nature of how we read and interpret text – and how violently they can be altered by our own agendas. Can readers interpret text by what is on the page alone, or must society's laws and moralities always colour our interpretations? On the surface it seems easy to judge that a book written by a student about her affair with a teacher paints a clear case of abuse. We feel sympathy for the student and outrage at the teacher. But when it is discovered that the work is in fact fiction, we swap our affinity to the student and teacher, we allow the discourse to colour the text.

Through this salacious, controversial narrative Reid seeks to expose the foolishness of our knee jerk reactions through a modern representation of true satire. Satire that damages reputations to expose the hypocrisy that lies underneath. Reid revels in the joys of text and has given us, the cast and crew, many long hours of debate on such subjects – our hope is that you, too, will have much to talk about long after you leave the theatre.

Peita Collard-Director

Peita Collard studied acting and directing at QUT in Brisbane. Peita and three friends started WAX Studios in Richmond in 1996. WAX helped launch many successful acting, directing and design careers in Melbourne including for Peita, her own dedication to Independent theatre. Peita has directed over 30 productions in Melbourne. This is her third La Mama show. She also is completing her Masters degree in theatre at La Trobe University this year researching the benefits of second productions on new Australian plays. As a result of this thesis she and Robert Reid are forming a new company, RePlay Theatre that is dedicated to new productions of past Australian plays.

Robert Reid - Writer

Robert Reid is a freelance playwright, director and academic. He is Artistic Director and a founding member of the independent theatre company, Theatre in Decay and also of the experimental puppet and visual theatre company, Terrible Comfort. His projects for Terrible Comfort have included the tabletop puppet work *Everything Will Be Okay*, the shadow puppet show *Urgent Little Things* and the finger and hand puppet show *Owl in Spotlight* at the La Mama Courthouse. He most recently had his play *The Joy of Text* produced at Melbourne Theatre Company and his next work, *Eating Alone*, was presented as part of the MTC's 2011 Cybec readings. Robert's play *Sad Bird Boy and the Scalpel Fingered Girl* won both the Best Independent Theatre Company Prize and the Best Overall Performance Prize at Short and Sweet Melbourne 2005. His play, *Portraits of Modern Evil* was shortlisted for both the Wal Cherry Award and the Griffin Award and was performed by Black Swan Theatre Company BSX in Perth. His play, *The New Black* was shortlisted for the Kit Denton Award in 2009 and performed at the PWA National Play Festival in 2010. Robert graduated from the Victorian College of the Arts with a post graduate diploma in directing in 2000, holds a Masters Degree in Creative Industry (Scriptwriting) from Queensland University of Technology and is currently completing a PhD in Australian Theatre History at La Trobe University.

Rob Sowinski - Designer

Current projects: *Parade* (dir. Bryce Ives/ Nate Gilkes), *Into the Woods* (dir. Jayne Wise), *Assassins* (dir. Tyran Parke). MTC *Other Desert Cities* (set model for Callum Morton). Recent: *Prodigal* (dir. Dean Bryant); MKA's *Hose* (dir. Alister Smith), *Tinkertown* (dir. Tobias Manderson-Galvin); MKA Winter season *Tuesday* (dir. Brienna McNish), *Triangle* (dir. Tanya Dickson; nominated for 6 Green Room awards inc. Best Lighting). For Melbourne Lyric Opera *Iphigenie en Tauride*, *Pomme d'Api*, *Trouble in Tahiti*. For NTDS *Orpheus/Eurydice*, *The Laramie Project*, and Lorca's *The House of Bernarda Alba* and *Yerma*. Musicals: *Once on this Island*, *Floyd Collins*, and *Little Shop of Horrors*. Concerts: Albert Salt and Wintercoats. For Showtune: deputy production manager for Macy Gray and production manager for Chita Rivera and Ben Vereen. Rob is the 2010 recipient of the Trina Parker Award.

Isaac Mitchell-Frey - Film Designer

Isaac graduated from Williamstown High School in December of 2012, and two weeks after his last exam Isaac was right back at school, filming it. Former teachers were nice enough to lend Isaac the camera gear and class time required to make the director's vision a reality. Filming at a school proved to be more challenging than you'd expect, forcing us to work within a high school timetable and hand out a small tree's-worth of consent forms. Isaac has now been selected to study Film and Television at Swinburne.

Jason Cavanagh - Actor

Jason is the founder and manager of The Owl and the Pussycat in Richmond, and Artistic Director of 5pound Theatre. Involved in the arts industry for over 15 years. He graduated from The National Theatre Drama school in 2002 and subsequently has performed in many of the theatres in and around Melbourne and internationally. He has also written a number of plays and short stories, directed a variety of different shows and events and participated in a number of exhibitions, having his first solo show in 2009.

Colin Craig-Actor

Colin Craig is an actor and theatre-maker based in Melbourne. He is the creative producer of Eagle's Nest Theatre, a member of Underground Cinema's acting troupe and a freelance actor. Before moving to Melbourne from Perth he was nominated for best actor in the Robert Finley Awards. Over the past few years he has performed in Sydney, Adelaide, Melbourne and Perth in such productions as 5 Pound Theatre's *Rhinoceros*, and *The Goat*, Eagle's Nest Theatre's *Così*, *Macbeth*, and *Romeo and Juliet*, Lynne Ellis' *Titus Andronicus*, and performed several monologues for the Candle Ends Festival.

Elizabeth Thomson-Actor

Elizabeth's work has cut a swathe through theatre, film, television, voiceover, TIE and the corporate sector. Theatre highlights include *Nil*, *Cat and Buried* and *The Doctor with le poulet terrible* at The Dog Theatre, *Tartuffe* and *Tango* at Napier Street, *Richard III* with Arden Productions at The Beckett Theatre, *10,000 Cigarettes* with Melbourne Writer's Theatre and *Solitary Animals* with Wax Productions at La Mama Courthouse and *Last Tango in Brunswick* and *After the War* with Immediate Theatre.

Kasia Kaczmarek

Raised in Western Australia, Kasia studied acting at the Victorian College of Arts before moving to New York to study Meisner at the William Esper Studio. Kasia's theatre credits include *The Cherry Orchard* (Winterfall Theatre), *The Seagull* (VCA), *The Taming of the Shrew* (VCA), *A Season at Sarsparilla* (VCA), *Speed the Plow* (HST) and *Serenade* (Melbourne Comedy Festival). Her TV credits include *City Homicide*, *Rush*, *The Dr Blake Mysteries*, *Mystery of a Hanson Cab* and *Jack Irish*. Kasia devised and directed *Bring A Nice Dress*, a show about brothel workers for the Perth Artrage Festival, and assisted Brendan Cowell on the direction of *Ruben Guthrie* at Red Stitch in 2010.

Special Mention:

Rikki-Lee Butinar- Producer and Stage Manager
Owen Dalton-ASM and technical advisor
Peter Leiss- Documenter
Keirnan Box- Sound designer.

Special Thanks:

We would especially like to thank Liza MaGregor and Dean Commons for allowing us time to film at Williamstown Secondary College, also to all the students we worked with.
Hannah Brown, Richard Saxby, Kathryn Crisp and David Politanski for their excellent work as first time actor's in a Melbourne theatre production.
Murray Clatworthy and Taylor Butinar for their extensive support and technical advice.
La Trobe University
And of course we would like to thank all of the La Mama team.

LA MAMA

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Our sincerest thanks to the many volunteers who generously give their time in support of La Mama.

La Mama's Committee of Management, staff and its wider theatrical community acknowledge that our theatre is on traditional Wurundjeri land. La Mama is financially assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council – its arts funding and advisory body, the Victorian Government through Arts Victoria - Department of Premier and Cabinet, and the City of Melbourne through the Arts and Culture triennial funding program