Sydney Theatre Company unveils its 2017 Season

Sydney Theatre Company tonight announced its 2017 season, a classic STC program to challenge, stir and entertain audiences with fifteen shows across four venues. A raft of new writing, including a musical version of one of Australia’s most iconic films, a sharp Indigenous romantic comedy and a striking account of migrant life within Australia’s Thai community, sits alongside fresh explorations of landmark texts and the best of recent international plays.

Speaking about the program, Interim Artistic Director Kip Williams said:

“We are excited to present a diverse season in 2017, embracing both established and emerging voices with a number of shows passionately exploring social and racial politics, gender and identity. Some of the country’s finest actors will take to our stages in a program of largely contemporary work, including Paula Arundell, John Bell, Caroline Brazier, Jason Chong, Julie Forsyth, Heather Mitchell, Josh McConville, Eryn Jean Norvill, Chris Ryan, Shari Sebbens, John Waters, Alison Whyte, Mark Leonard Winter and Charles Wu.

“STC’s commitment to bringing fresh talent to its stages is evident throughout the season, with younger voices such as Disapol Savetsila and Nakkiah Lui amongst STC’s commissions. We can’t wait to share Griffin Theatre Company’s extraordinary The Bleeding Tree, with STC audiences. We’re delighted to welcome Sport for Jove’s Damien Ryan, making his STC debut, and thrilled to have Imara Savage join us as a new Resident Director.

“We’ll be delving into some game-changing plays from overseas, The Testament of Mary, Chimerica, The Father and 1984, in the mix with works by home-grown talents Angus Cerini, Jonathan Biggins and Andrew Upton. There are intriguing revivals of a Michael Gow classic, a Caryl Churchill masterwork and, at last, a Moira Buffini comedy. We’ve got a new adaptation of a monumental Chekhov and a fantastically impolite little riff on Shakespeare.

“And for one of STC’s biggest shows in years, the company returns to a form of theatre that has provided some of the company’s most exciting theatrical highs since The Venetian Twins in 1979, STC’s first year. A dazzling musical version of one of Australia’s great gifts to the world, Muriel’s Wedding, offers an ideal opportunity to present new Australian writing at the Roslyn Packer Theatre.”
Sydney Theatre Company presents

**The Testament of Mary**
by Colm Tóibín
13 January to 25 February 2017. Wharf 1
Opening Night: Wednesday 18 January 2017

Alison Whyte kicks off STC’s year in the Australian premiere production of *The Testament of Mary* by Colm Tóibín, adapted from his Man Booker Prize-nominated novella. Several years after Jesus’ death, his mother is interrogated by a couple of his disciples – that “group of misfits”, as she regards them. A version of Christ’s life and death is required from the perspective of the Madonna. The matriarch of the New Testament, the beatific subject of Renaissance masters, is finally given a voice. A real woman, a real mother of flesh and blood and tears. What will she have to say? Incoming STC Resident Director Imara Savage collaborates with Resident Designer Elizabeth Gadsby and Composer and Sound Designer Max Lyandvert.

Sydney Theatre Company presents

**Away**
by Michael Gow
18 February to 25 March 2017. Drama Theatre, Sydney Opera House
Opening Night: Thursday 23 February 2017

Following her 2016 triumph in STC’s *Hay Fever*, Heather Mitchell plays Gwen, one of Michael Gow’s eight Christmas holiday makers in his landmark play *Away*. Set against the social upheavals of the 1960s, the 1986 classic, like the Shakespearian scenes that bookend it, resonates for audiences at all times. Placing emphasis on how events unfold through the eyes of Tom (played by Liam Nunan of STC’s *The Golden Age*), an aspiring actor who must come to terms with his own mortality, director Matthew Lutton’s vision heightens the meta-theatricality inherent in Gow’s enduring classic. Marco Chiappi, Wadih Dona, Glenn Hazeldine, Natasha Herbert and Naomi Rukavina are also confirmed for this co-production with Malthouse Theatre which transfers to Melbourne after its Sydney Opera House season.
Sydney Theatre Company and Colonial First State Global Asset Management present

**Chimerica**
by Lucy Kirkwood
28 February to 1 April 2017. Roslyn Packer Theatre
Opening Night: Saturday 4 March 2017

Mark Leonard Winter, recipient of two 2016 Helpmann Awards (for both Best Actor and Best Supporting Actor), is directed by Kip Williams in Lucy Kirkwood’s international hit *Chimerica*, about the complex relationship between the two global superpowers of the 21st century, China and the United States. This epic, globe-trotting play centres on a fictional photojournalist who, years after he took the picture, embarks on a quest to find the subject of one of the 20th century’s most recognisable images. Who was the man, shopping bags in hand, attempting to block the column of tanks rolling through Tiananmen Square in 1989? Alongside Winter, the Australian premiere of this visually rich thriller (winner of both the Olivier and Evening Standard Awards for Best New Play) also includes Gabrielle Chan, Jason Chong, Geraldine Hakewill, Brent Hill, Shuang Hu, Anthony Brandon Wong and Charles Wu.

Sydney Theatre Company and Lendlease present a Griffin Theatre Company production

**The Bleeding Tree**
by Angus Cerini
9 March to 8 April 2017. Wharf 1
Opening Night: Saturday 11 March 2017

A gothic thriller, a revenge comedy and a murder ballad all in one, STC presents a show for which critics found there were not enough superlatives to do justice in 2015. *The Bleeding Tree*, Angus Cerini’s startling celebration of women fighting back against spousal abuse won a swag of awards, including Helpmanns for Best Play for Cerini, Best Direction for Lee Lewis and Best Female Actor for Paula Arundell. “Other audiences should get to experience it, for this is powerful, visceral and deeply exhilarating theatre”, proclaimed The Guardian in sentiments echoed by many. STC is pleased to oblige and will share Griffin Theatre Company’s production with new audiences, bringing the original cast and creative team together to remount an exceptional piece of theatre.
Sydney Theatre Company and Adshel present 

**Talk**

by Jonathan Biggins  
3 April to 20 May 2017. Drama Theatre, Sydney Opera House  
Opening Night: Friday 7 April 2017

In his timely, rambunctious new play, *Talk*, Jonathan Biggins casts a critical eye on the links binding modern journalism, the justice system and the political establishment. John Waters, in his first role at STC in over a decade, plays John Behan, a rampaging radio talkback host filling Sydney’s airwaves with a daily diet of toxic, moralising opinion. As he learns that his words have major personal consequences, across town in the newsrooms of both a major tabloid and the national broadcaster, the zeal for a good story goes into overdrive. Retiring newsman Taffy (Peter Kowitz) has one last tale to tell but without the right platform, is anyone going to listen? The large cast for this fast-moving drama, peppered with insightful socio-political observations, also includes Valerie Bader, Helen Christinson, Lucia Mastrantone, Andrew Tighe and Hannah Waterman. Following its Sydney Opera House run, *Talk* tours to Belrose, Canberra and Wollongong.

Sydney Theatre Company presents  
a State Theatre Company South Australia production  

**The Popular Mechanicals**

by Keith Robinson, William Shakespeare and Tony Taylor from the original direction of Geoffrey Rush  
6 April to 13 May 2017. Wharf 2  
Opening Night: Saturday 8 April 2017

State Theatre Company of South Australia’s *The Popular Mechanicals* comes to The Wharf with a cast including Julie Forsyth and Amber McMahon, directed by STC’s former Resident Director Sarah Giles. Farce, slapstick and bad puppetry combine joyfully in this anarchically unhinged carnival of wit and profanity as the Rude Mechanicals of Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* set about presenting a ridiculously earnest and unintentionally hysterical *Pyramus and Thisbe*. A 30th anniversary return to Sydney – the original production was directed by Geoffrey Rush at Belvoir in 1987 – this reinvention of Keith Robinson and Tony Taylor’s play promises raucous fun for teenagers and all who are adolescents at heart.
Sydney Theatre Company and Allens presents

**Black is the New White**

by Nakkiah Lui

5 May to 17 June 2017. Wharf 1

Opening Night: Wednesday 10 May 2017

Imbued with freshness, insight and wit, **Black is the New White** is a romantic comedy commissioned by STC from Nakkiah Lui. Roy Gibson (Tony Briggs) decided long ago that his Indigenous family would be taking their seats at tables of influence, invited or not. With wife Joan, he has expectations for his offspring; politics, race and power are the touchstones for this dynasty. So far their daughters have followed all the cues, found their light and performed in ways to make their parents proud. But as the clan gathers for Christmas and one of his daughters brings her boyfriend home to meet the folks, there’s a problem. A white, unemployed, experimental classical music composer from a conservative background is not in any script her parents had been following. Directed by Paige Rattray the cast also includes Luke Carroll, Shari Sebbens, Anthony Taufa and Geoff Morrell.

Sydney Theatre Company in association with State Theatre Company South Australia & by arrangement with Ambassador Theatre Group presents the Headlong, Nottingham Playhouse & Almeida Theatre production

**1984**

by George Orwell

A new adaptation created by Robert Icke and Duncan Macmillan

28 June to 22 July 2017. Roslyn Packer Theatre

Opening Night: Thursday 29 June 2017

The fierce adaptation of one of the most significant and prescient novels of the 20th century, George Orwell’s **1984**, by Robert Icke and Duncan Macmillan, produced by British theatre innovators Headlong with Almeida Theatre and Nottingham Playhouse, has been a phenomenon, with multiple seasons in the West End and numerous international festival appearances. Now this multimedia depiction of relentless public mind-control and ubiquitous surveillance comes to Sydney as part of a national tour spearheaded by State Theatre Company of South Australia. In recent years, STC has presented at least one production from an international company, such as *King Charles III* from the Almeida, Steppenwolf’s *August: Osage County* and the National Theatre’s *One Man, Two Guvnors*. With **1984**, an all Australian cast breathe life into this landmark British production, bringing a local flavour to a truly chilling tale.
Sydney Theatre Company presents

Cloud Nine
by Caryl Churchill
1 July to 12 August 2017. Wharf 1
Opening Night: Thursday 6 July 2017

Kip Williams continues his exploration of Caryl Churchill’s wildly inventive oeuvre with an early masterpiece, Cloud Nine, following the success of Love and Information in 2015. Cross-casting in terms of gender, race and age, with actors doubling and sometimes tripling roles, a witty exploration of the complex politics of human relationships is promised. The play begins in colonial Africa, amidst the Victorian constrictions of corset and empire. Those familiar with the playwright will know it’s best to make no assumptions, and amongst other surprises, while the second half is set a century later in London, the characters of the first half have aged only 25 years. The confirmed cast includes Kate Box, Harry Greenwood and Josh McConville, with set and costume design by STC Resident Designer Elizabeth Gadsby.

Sydney Theatre Company presents

Australian Graffiti
by Disapol Savetsila
7 July to 12 August 2017. Wharf 2
Opening Night: Wednesday 12 July 2017

A darkly humorous and affecting new play offers insight into Australian lives often overlooked. Being the only Thai household in a small country town certainly has its challenges. Australian Graffiti is about a family that has uprooted its restaurant business too many times already when they begin to suspect that some of the locals may be less than thrilled to have them. Drawing on some of his own experiences as the son of migrants working in the restaurant trade, 22-year-old Disapol Savetsila is the youngest playwright ever commissioned by STC as part of its main stage season. His play, exploring the intricacies of identity and belonging, has been developed by STC in partnership with Asian Australian arts company Performance 4a and Playwriting Australia. Paige Rattray, who as STC’s Richard Wherrett Fellow has been associated with the evolution of the show since STC’s Rough Draft workshop in 2015, directs a cast including Srisacd Sacdpraseuth, KennethMoraleda and Monica Sayers.
Sydney Theatre Company presents
a Sydney Theatre Company and Melbourne Theatre Company production

**The Father**
by Florian Zeller
translated by Christopher Hampton
19 August to 21 October 2017. Wharf 1
Opening Night: Thursday 24 August 2017

A play which has captivated Paris, London and New York, *The Father* marks the return of theatre luminary John Bell in his first STC role since performances in Sydney, Washington and New York in *Uncle Vanya*. He’s directed by Damien Ryan, Artistic Director of Sport For Jove, making his STC debut in this co-production with Melbourne Theatre Company. Now 80 years old, André (Bell) was once a tap dancer. He lives with his daughter Anne (Anita Hegh) and her husband Antoine. Or was he an engineer whose daughter Anne lives in London with her new lover, Pierre? The thing is, he is still wearing his pyjamas, and he can’t find his watch. He’s starting to wonder if he’s losing control. Written by one of France’s most celebrated contemporary writers, Florian Zeller, and translated by Christopher Hampton (*Les Liaisons Dangereuses*) this blazing new work was the Guardian’s Play of the Year in London, and nominated for two Tony Awards in New York, including Best Play.

Sydney Theatre Company presents

**Dinner**
by Moira Buffini
11 September to 28 October 2017. Drama Theatre, Sydney Opera House
Opening Night: Friday 15 September 2017

STC Resident Director Imara Savage has form with delicious comedies, following the uproariously funny *Hay Fever* and *After Dinner* at STC. Now she directs proceedings for another delightfully dire dinner party from hell with Moira Buffini’s West End hit, *Dinner*. Caroline Brazier (ABC’s *Rake*, Griffin’s *The Literati*), plays Paige, a jaded hostess throwing a soiree to celebrate the launch of her husband’s self-help book. But as a very weird evening proceeds and the surprise menu is revealed, does she have more sinister plans for her unsuspecting guests? Brandon Burke, Ash Ricardo and Bruce Spence join Brazier for a very wicked food fight, with design by STC Resident Designer Elizabeth Gadsby.
Sydney Theatre Company presents

**The Wharf Revue 2017**
written & created by Jonathan Biggins, Drew Forsythe and Phillip Scott
25 October to 30 December 2017. Wharf 1
Opening Night: Thursday 26 October 2017

With STC’s *The Wharf Revue* returning, there’s never been a more exciting time to be an Australian. The unstoppable comedic minds of Jonathan Biggins, Drew Forsythe and Phillip Scott have been keeping the nation’s political and cultural leaders on their metaphorical toes since before Sydney hosted the Olympics. In 2017, they return with an all-new, up-to-the-minute, fibre-to-the-node dose of side-splitting sketches and rib-tickling songs. From the highs to the lows, from the good to the bad to the ugly, this will be a parade of the year’s most memorable characters and the moments they’d prefer to forget.

Sydney Theatre Company presents

**Three Sisters**
by Anton Chekhov
in a new adaptation by Andrew Upton
6 November to 16 December 2017. Drama Theatre, Sydney Opera House
Opening Night: Friday 10 November 2017

Following the success of *The Present* and *Uncle Vanya*, STC serves up the third of a Chekhov-via-Upton triptych with *Three Sisters*, this time directed by Kip Williams. In a remote Russian town, the orphaned Prozorov sisters yearn for Moscow, dreaming of freedom, sex, work and romance in former STC Artistic Director Andrew Upton’s new adaptation of the emotionally devastating play. Eryn Jean Norvill continues her creative partnership with Kip Williams following *Suddenly Last Summer*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *All My Sons*. In other casting already confirmed, it’s clear Chris Ryan and Brandon McClelland (both of whom begin the year on Broadway in *The Present*) will have a year particularly steeped in Chekhov.
Sydney Theatre Company presents
A Sydney Theatre Company and Global Creatures production

Muriel’s Wedding
The Musical

book by PJ Hogan
music and lyrics by Kate Miller-Heidke and Keir Nuttall
with songs by Benny Andersson, Bjorn Ulvaeus and Stig Anderson
originally written for ABBA
6 November to 30 December 2017, Roslyn Packer Theatre
Opening Night: Saturday 18 November 2017

Muriel Heslop is back! And this time she’s singing.
Stuck in a dead-end life in Porpoise Spit, Muriel dreams of the perfect wedding – the white dress, the church, the attention. Unfortunately, there’s one thing missing, a groom. Following her dreams to Sydney, Muriel ends up with everything she ever wanted – a man, a fortune and a million Twitter followers. That’s when things start to go really wrong.

For Muriel’s Wedding The Musical, original writer-director PJ Hogan has updated his own screenplay to today, creating a dazzling new stage show with all the irreverence, naughtiness and dark edge of the original. The dream theatre director/designer team of Simon Phillips and Gabriela Tylesova (Love Never Dies, Ladies in Black and STC’s Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead) lead a stellar creative team, with original music by award-winning singer-songwriters Kate Miller-Heidke and Keir Nuttall, alongside those fabulous ABBA numbers. A co-production with Global Creatures, featuring a huge cast and a live band, this is STC’s biggest production in years.

For publicity images across the season, please click HERE. (Login & Password: STCmedia)

2017 Season Tickets are on sale from Tuesday 13 September 2016
To receive a 2017 season brochure call (02) 9250 1777


For further information: Tim McKeough (02 9250 1703
tmckeough@sydneytheatre.com.au) or Katherine Stevenson (02 9250 1705
kstevenson@sydneytheatre.com.au)