

STRATA Inc.

Privilege-hunting season has begun

Created by Laura Lethlean and Faran Martin

Produced by Mark Salvestro

November 20 - December 8

THE BURROW

83 Brunswick St, Fitzroy 3065

www.northofeight.com.au

CHAIR'S NOTES - Jessica Stanley

Welcome to part two of our 2018 season, 'Generation'. We really have been keeping it in the metaphorical family this year, programming an entire season of original works written by our own members and local Australian playwrights. Following the success of our last piece, *Philtrum*, written by Anthea Greco and directed by guest director Peter Blackburn, we have continued our guest artist collaborations with *Strata Inc.* This play has been co-created by our very own Faran Martin, and Melbourne-based playwright Laura Lethlean. They, along with the incredible cast they have assembled, have spent the majority of the year workshoping this script, and it has travelled so far from where it started. It is no small feat to adapt a classic Greek text into a modern context, but Faran and Laura have taken the original *Lysistrata* and made it their own. Faran has also taken on the role of director, and has been the driving force behind this piece from the beginning. We have also been fortunate to have the wonderful insights of Keziah Warner on board as our dramaturg, who has also helped shape the world of *Strata Inc.* Their vision has been brought to life by a fantastic design team and I'd like to thank Carmody Nicol, Steve Carnell and Lachlan McLean for their creativity. A huge thanks to our supportive venue, The Burrow, for being so accommodating and allowing us so much freedom. I'd also like to make special mention of our tireless producer, Mark Salvestro, as well as our assistant producer, Cathy Smith, whom we have also welcomed as our newest North of Eight member. To my fellow cast, you have been so integral to this piece, and it's been such a pleasure getting to laugh with you every day. And finally, to our audience: thank you for your continued support of North of Eight. We all believe that theatre is a vital part of our wellbeing, and we hope to bring you joy tonight.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES - Faran Martin

This play began as an adaptation of Aristophanes' farce, *Lysistrata*, which sees women deny their husbands sex and lock themselves in the treasury building until the men concede to cease fighting an expensive and violent war. I approached playwright Laura Lethlean after my initial readings of the ancient text left me unsatisfied, and suggested we set it in a rogue parliament in 2018. About 17 iterations later, we have *Strata Inc.*

I observe our current social and political context as being beyond unique, as does every wannabe revolutionary, which gives me just enough tenacity to put pen to paper and try to explain some of what I see despite having no background as a playwright. Without Laura's bold, funny and quirky sense of style and writing finesse, this play would be a veritable puddle of passion, angst and dreaming. With her magic touch, the story is at once honed and elevated to be extraordinarily character-driven and also decisively political. I was then able to create a show from the heart and find the complicated truths of contemporary activism, or lack thereof.

In researching and concocting the play, I often felt saddened by the lack of connection to internal revolution Australian culture rests on. It's in our history, without a doubt, however we don't speak to it or draw from it; we don't see ourselves in that light. Perhaps we are lucky, or perhaps we're about to turn around and wish we'd thought to attach our pride to a more active trait than "a fair go".

Some scenes from the original play have been used as vehicles for *Strata Inc.*, however I would now class it as a response to Aristophanes, remarking upon whether anything more than our language has truly changed – and if it has, if it is the change we might have hoped for. There is no hero to this play; I do not believe any of us can be heroes. In an age, however, where every day acts of kindness are elevated to hero status across the globe at every opportunity, we may just muster up enough tenacity to create a revolution.

CAST

SIOBHAN CONNORS - Mariella

Siobhan works in the arts as an actor, producer and event organiser. Since moving to Melbourne in 2011 Siobhan has co-founded two theatre companies; Key Conspirators and North of Eight, and been cast in multiple theatre, film and television productions and has invested time creating and managing live music events and performance based charity fundraisers. Siobhan is an independent theatre producer, the Festival Producer of Poppy Seed Theatre Festival and works in the Programming department at Regional Arts Victoria. This year, Siobhan was selected to be one of 12 women taking part in Melbourne Theatre Company's Women in Theatre program.



Siobhan's recent acting highlights include tv series; *Romper Stomper* and *Neighbours*, feature films; *A Long Night in Pexington*, *Bugs* and *The Neon Spectrum* and theatre credits; *Navy Pier* by John Corwin, *The Proposal* by Anton Chekhov and *Loose Teeth* by Cassandra Elli. Her producing highlights include *Terminus* by Mark O'Rowe and *Her Father's Daughter* by Keziah Warner.

Siobhan is on the Board of Trustees at Howard Fine Acting Studio Australia, the Art and Soul Advisory Panel for City of Port Phillip and is proud to be working with Gasworks Arts Park in a partnership with Key Conspirators to present Script Nights- a monthly initiative that supports local writers in the presentational aspect of developing new work.

Siobhan is thrilled to be working on *Strata Inc.* with such an incredible team and is excited to be speaking in her native accent and contributing to such a clean set.

JORDAN FRASER-TRUMBLE - Andrew

After graduating from Melbourne's 16th Street Actors Studio in 2014, Jordan Fraser-Trumble's career kicked off as he was cast in his first feature film and awarded the esteemed graduate position at Red Stitch Actors Theatre. Since then his stage credits include working with the Melbourne Theatre Company alongside Lisa McCune in Branden Jacobs-Jenkins' *Gloria*, starring in Taylor Mac's *Hir* directed by Dan Clarke (Red Stitch); *Love Song* directed by Francis Greenslade (Melbourne Fringe); *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (Winterfall Theatre Company); *You Got Older* (Red Stitch); *The Glass Menagerie* (Melbourne Fringe); *Middletown* (Red Stitch), *Jurassica* (Red Stitch), *Love, Love, Love* (Red Stitch) and *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* (Melbourne Fringe). Jordan's screen credits include *The Legend of Ben Hall*; *Boundless*; *The Family* (BBC/MIFF) and *Lawless - The Real Bushrangers* (Foxtel).



JESSICA MARTIN - Angie

Jessica is a Melbourne based actor, director and stage manager. After completing a Bachelor of Creative Arts (Drama and Dance) at Deakin University, Jessica went on to study at the Howard Fine Acting Studio Australia, graduating from the Full-Time Program.

Recent stage credits include North of Eight's production of *Philtrum* with director Peter Blackburn, *Love Bird* directed by Phoebe Taylor, a Regional Victorian tour of *The Truth Is Longer Than A Lie*, and The Key Conspirators sell out season of *Tea With Chekhov*, directed by Philip Hayden. Jess has worked on various productions in Melbourne Fringe and at the Melbourne International Comedy Festival. She also starred in and co-wrote the original work, *Let Them Eat Cake*. Jessica is proud to be a Founding Member and the Co-Artistic Director of North of Eight.



PAT MOONIE - Dave

Pat Moonie is an award-winning actor working in Melbourne. Since finishing his training in 2013, Patrick's stage appearances include *Orphans* by Dennis Kelly, *Abigail 1702* by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa and *Sundays Roast* by Tim P Driver. His film and TV credits include the multi award winning *Cake*, *Winning the Fox Hunt*, *The Neon Spectrum* and *Jack Irish*.

Outside of acting Pat is an accomplished set builder, stage manager and producer. Pat is on the board of trustees at Howard Fine Acting Studio and a founding member of Key Conspirators.



MARK SALVESTRO - Barry & Producer

Mark Salvestro is an actor, writer, producer and founding member of North of Eight.

Mark's most notable accomplishment is his critically acclaimed one-man show, *Buried at Sea*, which he wrote, produced and performed for Melbourne and Adelaide Fringe Festivals, Brisbane Anywhere Festival, and a NSW Snowy Mountains tour.

He has trained extensively as a performer in Sydney and Melbourne, and graduated from the Full-Time Program at the Howard Fine Acting Studio Australia in 2014.



Theatre credits include *Comedy of Errors* (Australian Shakespeare Co. Graduate Players – Prague Fringe), *Buried at Sea* (Dir. Phoebe Anne Taylor), *Lonely People are Always Up in the Middle of the Night* (La Mama), *Navy Pier* (North of Eight), *Couch Potato* and *Fairy Tale News* (WIT Inc.), and *Private Moments: A Double Bill* (Anywhere Festival).

Mark has been a provocateur at the Malthouse Theatre, an intern at Red Stitch Actors Theatre, and is currently a Trust Member at the Howard Fine Acting Studio Australia.

JESSICA STANLEY - Lysa

Jessica is an actor and playwright from Melbourne.

After topping the state of Victoria with a perfect score in Drama, Jessica went on to receive a Victorian Premier's Award, the Jennifer Francis Drama Prize, and a scholarship to study at Monash University. There she completed her Bachelor of Performing Arts and performed in numerous productions, including *The Pillowman* and *August: Osage County*, the latter for which she was awarded Outstanding Year Level Achiever and a Dean's Recognition Award. Other stage credits include her critically acclaimed solo performance in *Ross & Rachel* (Theatre Works, 2018), *Navy Pier* (North of Eight, 2017) and *Ménage* (2016), for which she was nominated for Best Performance Award at Melbourne Fringe.

Jessica's on-screen credits include roles on the ABC's *The Doctor*, *Blake Mysteries* and *Glitch*. In 2015, Jessica concurrently took part in the full-time program at the Howard Fine Acting Studio, Melbourne, and finished her Bachelor of Psychology. She continues to write new plays and films, and study at the Howard Fine Acting Studio, where she also sits on the Board of Trustees.

Jessica is also the Co-Founder of new theatre collective Spinning Plates Co., and the Chair of North of Eight. In 2018, she was the sole playwright from Australia who was invited to attend the Last Frontier Theatre Conference, held annually in Alaska, for her new play *Sisters, Inferno*. She is fuelled by a passionate drive to continue learning and training at every opportunity.



PHOEBE ANNE TAYLOR - Rachel

Phoebe Anne Taylor is an independent actor, writer, director and photographer based in Melbourne. She is a graduate of the Howard Fine Acting Studio Australia Full Time course (2012) and the Monash Graduate Ensemble (2009). Recently, she performed in Georgina Harriss' *Love Bird*, *Never Ending Night* (Melbourne Fringe), Kotryna Gesait's *The Cocoon*, Baggage Production's *Madwomen Monologues* and the internationally acclaimed and award winning web series, *Shakespeare Republic*. Her recent directorial credits are Georgina Harriss' *Love Bird*, John Corwin's *Navy Pier* and Mark Salvestro's *Buried at Sea*.



Her work *My Kingdom for a Noodle* was recently performed as the 2018 *Madwomen Monologues*, and her piece *The Art of F**king* became a cult hit at the Melbourne institution, La Mama in 2014. Phoebe is passionate about just about everything and, therefore, is often heard mumbling “if only there were more time...”

CREATIVES

STEVE CARNELL - Sound Design & Voice Over

Melbourne based sound designer/composer Steve Carnell uses layers of his own field recordings and original music to weave a net that gently draws the audience into a story. Steve firmly believes that sound in storytelling should play a pivotal role by elegantly supporting the action. Most recently he's created music for *Love Bird* by Georgina Harriss which has had successful runs at the Butterfly Club and La Mama. You can hear more of Steve's work in his short film project called *Peace and Quiet*. He wrote, shot, edited and designed sound for the piece which raises some interesting ideas around sound ecology, noise pollution and negative self talk.



JAMES CERCHE - Stage Manager

James is a graduate of the Howard Fine Acting Studio Full Time program.

He previously attended Monash University, where he achieved his Bachelor of Arts, majoring in English, Theatre and Film Studies. He performed regularly with the Monash University Student Theatre company in a number of roles that included lead performances in 'Spring Awakening' directed by Yvonne Virsik (co-production with the Monash Performing Arts Academy), *Romeo & Juliet* directed by Mark Wilson (with the Monash Shakespeare Company) and Martin McDonagh's *The Lieutenant Of Inishmore*.

James is an active member of the Melbourne independent theatre scene, engaging on and offstage in productions with several companies including performances at The Arts Centre. He appeared on stage in the acclaimed 2015 production of *Psychopomp* at LaMama and premiered new work *Rainbow Man* at Forty-five Downstairs with collaborative company Goodnight Darlings in 2017.

James joined a collective of other Howard Fine alumni in North of Eight for their second year, staging new Australian work *Philtrum*, to great acclaim in July 2018. He is also pleased to announce Spinning Plates, a company formed with Jessica Stanley. Their debut production *Ross & Rachel* had its Australian Premier in September at Theatre Works for the 2018 Melbourne Fringe Festival.

Screen credits include the upcoming Stan Original series *Bloom*, feature film *Angel Of Light*, shorts *Utopia*, *Skateboys*, *Rest In Piss*, *Break & Enter* and 48 Hour Film Festival finalist *Apocabricks*.



ANTHEA GRECO - Voice Over & Marketing

Anthea is an Actor and Voice Artist currently based in LA. She is a founding member of North of Eight and wrote and performed in its recent production *Philtrum*.

She began performing as an Actor in various theatrical productions throughout her teenage years, continuing through University and further Acting study.

After knocking the ball out of the park with “Woman Pushing Pram” in a TVC -and exhausting all roles available to her in Australia- she decided to make the move to the US.

Most recently, she has been lending her voice to characters in audiobooks, animations and TV and Radio commercials.



LAURA LETHLEAN - Co-Creator

Laura Lethlean is a Melbourne based playwright, with work produced in Melbourne, Sydney and Canberra. Laura is a co-founder of The Anchor Theatre Company. This year, The Anchor produced Laura's play, *Two Hearts* at the Kings Cross Theatre in Sydney. Laura's play *Fading* was also produced this year at the Canberra Theatre Centre. Laura is currently undertaking a Play Writing Australia long form development with her play *The Three Graces*. Laura's play *The Space Between the Fuel and the Fire* was published by NoPassport Press in 2016. Laura has a BA from Melbourne University and an MFA in writing for Performance from the National Institute of Dramatic Arts.



FARAN MARTIN - Director & Co-Creator

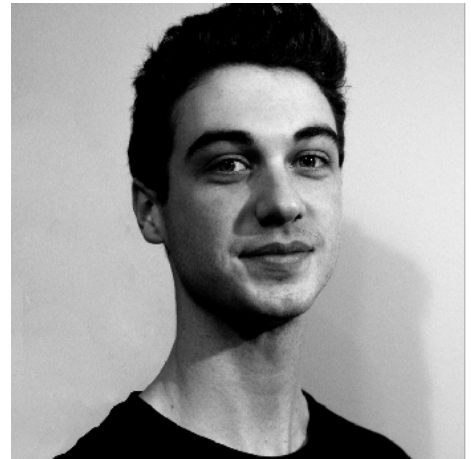
Faran is an actor, director and theatre maker, and founding member of North of Eight. Credits as director and theatre maker include: *The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock* (Sydney Fringe Festival), *Outside In* (WiT Inc) and *Ross & Rachel* (Spinning Plates/Melbourne Fringe Festival); as assistant director *Navy Pier* (North of Eight); *Ruby Moon* (Twisted Tree Theatre) and *The Third Degree* (playreading). As Producer *Tea With Chekhov* (Key Conspirators/Melbourne Fringe Festival); as assistant Producer *Terminus* (North of Eight). Faran has appeared as an actor for the collective as Maude in *Toyer* (2017), and Nikki in *Philtrum* (2018).



LACHLAN MCLEAN - Lighting Design

Lachlan is a young lighting designer and is currently an undergraduate at VCA, studying Production Fine arts. Lachlan was a part of the North of Eight creative team in 2018 as lighting designer for the well-received play *Philtrum* written by Anthea Greco and directed by Peter Blackburn. Lachlan has also been a part of the Melbourne Fringe Festival as the lighting designer at theatre works for *Ross & Rachel* written by James Fritz and brought to stage by Spinning Plates Co.

With various different production roles, he has also been a part of the production crews for *The Antipodes* by Annie Baker at Red Stitch Theatre company and Victorian College of the Arts productions of *Peter Pan*, *A View from The Bridge*, *Fefu and Her Friends* and more.



CARMODY NICOL - Set Design

Carmody is from Newcastle where her interest in Costume and Set design began. She is currently studying at the VCA and has worked on a variety of shows. This is her first time collaborating on a professional show and hopes to continue associating with groups like North of Eight. Carmody enjoys working with new people to work together on designs and is hoping to continue that through working in the industry.



CATHY SMITH - Assistant Producer

Catherine Smith is an actor and writer from Melbourne, Australia. She is best known for her role on ABC's *Myf Warhurst's Nice*, where she played a young Myf in the midst of her Debutante Ball. In 2015, Catherine graduated from the Full Time program at the Howard Fine Acting Studio. Since studying, she has gone on to work on a myriad of short films and plays, co-hosted a live music show and will be going on tour later this year with the play, *The Truth is Longer than a Lie*.

While juggling all of this Catherine has been studying Journalism, majoring in politics.



She recently returned from living in Milan, Italy where she studied Commedia dell'arte with the Piccolo Teatro of Milan.

Catherine is proud to have been invited to join the North of Eight ensemble this year, and is looking forward to working with such a talented company.

KEZIA WARNER - Dramaturg

Keziah is a dramaturg and playwright. She has worked as a script reader in London (The Cock Tavern, The Space, Rich Mix, The Last Refuge, Descent Theatre), Auckland (Playmarket, Scratch New Writing), New York (Soho Rep) and Melbourne (Melbourne Theatre Company, Red Stitch, MKA). In 2018 she was awarded a dramaturgy placement on Malthouse Theatre's Besen Family Artist's Programme. She is a graduate of Soho Theatre's Writer's Lab in the UK, where her play *The Rest of the World* was long-listed for their Young Writer's Award. Her new play *Control* is currently being developed under Red Stitch's INK Programme and was short-listed for the 2017 Patrick White Playwrights' Award.



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