

QUEENSLAND THEATRE

A Queensland Theatre and Melbourne Theatre Company co-production

David Williamson's

Emerald City

Directed by Sam Strong

Return to the Emerald City of Oz...

Two theatre powerhouses reunite for a special 50th anniversary production

In 2020, **Queensland Theatre** celebrates 50 Seasons of Stories and, in a fortunate coincidence, it is also marks 50 years of play writing for the indomitable **David Williamson**, the most produced playwright in the history of Australian theatre. To celebrate this joint stage milestone, Williamson's 1987 satire, ***Emerald City***, under the direction of outgoing Artistic Director Sam Strong, will open Queensland Theatre's much-anticipated 50th Anniversary Season from Saturday 8th February to Saturday 29th February 2020 in the Playhouse, QPAC.

Says Sam Strong, "I have wanted to direct this play for many years. Over half a century David has written many extraordinary plays but *Emerald City* must rank as his finest comedy. It is very funny and is rich in ideas as well as being a complex and relatable relationship story."

Emerald City tells the tale of a creative couple, publisher Kate, played by **Nadine Garner** (TV's *The Dr Blake Mysteries*, *City Homicide*) and screenwriter Colin portrayed by **Jason Klarwein** (QT's *Hedda*, *Once in Royal David's City*, *Macbeth*) who move to Sydney to pursue their careers. There they are confronted with an age-old dilemma about staying true to their principles or selling out.

Sam Strong elaborates, "*Emerald City* is a vivid portrait of the era that was late 1980s Australia. It captures the unique optimism, the entrepreneurial spirit, and the evolving sense of the importance of Australian (rather than international) stories. David Williamson, with his usual flair and insight, uses this specific context of late 1980s Australia to explore universal themes that transcend the play's original setting. *Emerald City* is a riff on the classic Faustian pact – a play about what we are prepared to sacrifice to get what we want."

Emerald City also stars **Marg Downey** as Elaine (*Rupert* and TV's *Kath & Kim*), **Ray Chong Nee** as Malcolm (QT's *Hydra*, *Noises Off*), **Megan Hind** as Helen (TV's *Secret Bridesmaid's Business*, *Cleverman*) and **Rhys Muldoon** as Mike (TV's *House Husbands*), reuniting him with David Williamson after his starring role in Queensland Theatre's 2018 award-winning *Nearer the Gods*.

Playwright David Williamson said *Emerald City* was as relevant today as it was 30 years ago when it was written.

"Human nature doesn't change. The hunger for fame and recognition eating at our two married protagonists, Colin and Kate, is a need that still consumes many of us. The competitive struggle at the heart of many marriages is just as prevalent. The rivalry between Sydney and Melbourne is just as strong as ever, and the human comedy – our ability to make fools of ourselves – never diminishes."

"Before my stage career took off I was headed for a career as an academic psychologist whose research area was social psychology - the study of the way we influence each other's behaviour as a result of our highly social nature, our need to be accepted and admired, and our ability to use language to attain our ends by deceiving others and often ourselves.

"It's still my obsession, and what I have continued to investigate on stage. Luckily for me, it's something audiences find very interesting, as it relates directly to the social milieu they have to negotiate every day of their lives."

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He said he was looking forward to seeing his play under the direction of Sam Strong. "Sam is a director with a great ability to understand the essence and to realise the potential of any script he works with. He has style, flair, casts brilliantly and imbues his productions with clarity and theatrical momentum."

Sam Strong added he was excited about the cast for *Emerald City*. "I couldn't be more delighted about the cast we have assembled - it's a dream team of some of my favourite performers to tackle one of my favourite plays. I'm thrilled to be working with a cast who have the comic chops to make the play as funny as it should be, but who are also able to do justice to the complexity of its ideas and relationships."

Emerald City in a nutshell

Fade in. Sydney in the 1980s. The Emerald City of Oz, luring unsuspecting idealists with the promise of fulfilled fantasies, and leaving them with their dreams shattered on the pavement. Colin is a one-time gun screenwriter who is off his game these days, and his wife Kate is a publisher on the rise with a penchant for taking risks. Seduced by the scent of success, they move their family to the Emerald City in pursuit of a share of its fame and fortune. Colin teams with a hack writer to work on his pet project screenplay, but soon finds himself faced with a stark choice: make art or make a motza?

EMERALD CITY

February 8 to 29, 2020 | Playhouse QPAC

Tickets at www.queenslandtheatre.com.au | Tel 1800 355 528 | Email mail@queenslandtheatre.com.au

CAST

Kate	Nadine Garner
Colin	Jason Klarwein
Elaine	Marg Downey
Malcolm	Ray Chong Nee
Mike	Rhys Muldoon
Helen	Megan Hind

CREATIVES

Director	Sam Strong
Associate Director	Travis Dowling
Designer	Dale Ferguson
Lighting Designer	David Walters
Composer/Sound Designer	Russell Goldsmith

Accessibility

Auslan Interpreted Mon 17 Feb, 6:30pm | Audio Described Sat 29 Feb, 2pm

Play Briefing

Tue 4 Feb, 6pm | Playhouse, QPAC

Night with the Artists

Mon 17 Feb, 6:30pm

Melbourne Season

Emerald City opens at the Southbank Theatre in Melbourne from March 6 to April 18.

Queensland Theatre is assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body. Queensland Theatre is supported by the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland.