



Queensland Theatre Company presents

The Seagull

By Anton Chekhov | Adapted by Daniel Evans

29 August to 26 September at the Bille Brown Studio, The Greenhouse

Original Concept – Anton Chekhov Director – Daniel Evans

Designer – Kieran Swann Lighting Designer – Ben Hughes

Composer/Sound Designer – Guy Webster Dramaturg – Saffron Benner

Cast includes: Emily Burton, Helen Cassidy, Nicholas Gell, Amy Ingram, Jason Klarwein, Barbara Lowing, Brian Lucas, Christen O’Leary, Hugh Parker and Lucas Stibbard

To create a gem, you need pressure, time and white hot heat. That’s why Anton Chekhov’s *The Seagull* and Queensland Theatre Company’s Actors Studio are perfect partners, presenting one of the must-see shows of 2015.

A paean to unrequited love, *The Seagull* is one of the greatest plays of the modern era. Following the romantic and artistic conflicts between four characters: the famous middlebrow writer Boris Trigorin, the ingénue Nina, the fading theatrical actress and diva Irina Arkadina, and her son the unconventional playwright Konstantin, *The Seagull* explores emotion, creativity and romantic conflict with the incisive clarity of a physician and the passionate heart of a poet.

In his directorial return to QTC **Daniel Evans**, the writer behind the recent critically acclaimed *Oedipus Doesn’t Live Here Anymore*, has marshalled an ensemble cast of 10 celebrated actors in this contemporary retelling of a play with grand themes.

Evans directs his own adaptation of this extraordinary play where the enduring brilliance of the text is emphasised in a stripped-back, raw experience that cuts to the heart of the heartbreak in a classic play about all the things which still fascinate humankind – family, power, sex, fame and passion.

Matilda Award winner and Helpmann nominated **Christen O’Leary** together with the multi-talented actor/director **Jason Klarwein** are joined by **Emily Burton**, fresh from the set of *Oedipus Doesn’t Live Here Anymore*, and QTC favourite **Lucas Stibbard** who shared the stage in 2014 with Jason Klarwein in *Macbeth*.

Two greatly admired actors, **Hugh Parker** and **Barbara Lowing**, will reunite, two years after they starred in *The Pitch & The China Incident*, joined by standout young actor **Amy Ingram** (*I Want To Know What Love Is* and *Trollop*) as well as *Boston Marriage* and *Sisters of Wars* (ABC) star **Helen Cassidy**. Famed performer, choreographer and director **Brian Lucas** rounds out the cast together with Melbourne-born **Nicholas Gell** who will make his QTC debut.

A story about how we create stories, the heartbreakingly wide expanse between the life we live and the life we long for, Chekhov’s *The Seagull* was a spectacular failure when it premiered in 1895, but has survived to become one of the masterpieces of the modern era.

The Story:

A successful actress visits her brother’s isolated estate far from the city, throwing the frustrated residents’ unfulfilled ambitions into sharp relief. As her son attempts to impress with a self-penned play, putting much more than his pride at stake, others dream of fame, love and the ability to change their past. Dissatisfaction is rife. Flames of passion are lit and extinguished. Love triangles mesh together and drift apart. Some desire love. Some desire success. Some desire artistic genius. No one, however, ever seems to attain happiness.



"... Anton Chekhov casts an extraordinary spell over 21st-century theatre audiences. A century after his death, he speaks with a mix of wit, idealism, sadness and wisdom that connects with the hopes and fears of today's audiences." The Guardian

Observations from the Director, Dan Evans:

The Seagull, by Anton Chekhov, is one of the most prized and famous works of the Western classic canon. It's considered a touchstone in not only the development of Realism but the basis of so many 'dramedy's' (think *Transparent*, *Six Feet Under*, *Orange Is The New Black*) we see today. Chekhov was messing with form in a way that may seem quite normal to us but, at the turn of the century, was extremely progressive. He blended comedy with drama to create a sort of melancholic new form of storytelling; equal parts funny and sad.

This story isn't mine. It's Chekhov's. He wrote *The Seagull* after a series of farces which explains – stylistically – why the first three acts bristle with comedy before things take a melancholy turn in the final act ('it begins forte and ends pianissimo,' he said, 'contrary to the rules of dramatic art'). His fondness for opposing binaries – funny-vs-sad, old-vs-new, love-vs-hate, past-vs-future, fame-vs-anonymity – reverberate through this, his defining work. *The Seagull* would lay foundations for the *Uncle*, the *Sisters* and that *Orchard* to follow and, in many ways, the play feels like a love letter to The Theatre. It's a complex story, insightful and imperfect, combusting with archetypal characters, fraught relationships, strange symbols, intertextuality and irresolution.

This version relocates *The Seagull* to 2015. Surprisingly, Chekhov's world – equal parts passion and apathy – feels weirdly befitting to a contemporary Australian landscape. We've maintained fidelity to the original play's key events, themes, stakes and anxieties while tinkering with a couple of strands in the play's DNA. Adaptation is like having a conversation with an author and ol' Anton is something of a clever bastard. Dramaturg Saffron Benner and I posited many ways to reimagine his story but the work only started to sing once we followed the path he had set for us (... like I said: clever bastard). It's been an honour to work with this epic team on re-imagining this classic; feeling out how a dead Russian dude can speak with sparkling clarity to what it means to be alive here, and now. What endures, what echoes, on this stage is the essence of Chekhov's *Seagull* – to live a life without art and love is like telling a story without risk or bravery.

The Seagull

29 August to 26 September at the Bille Brown Studio, The GreenHouse

Tickets are available at queenslandtheatre.com.au or by calling 1800 355 528

Creative Team

Director - Daniel Evans

Design Consultant - Kieran Swann

Sound Designer/Composer - Guy Webster

Lighting Designer - Ben Hughes

Dramaturg - Saffron Benner

Cast

Nina – A Wannabe

Emily Burton

Polina – A Caretaker

Helen Cassidy

Konstantin – A Renegade

Nicholas Gell

Masha – A Depressive

Amy Ingram

Trigorin – A Writer

Jason Klarwein

Illya – A Manager

Barbara Lowing

Sorin – A Sick Brother

Brian Lucas

Irina – An Actress

Christen O'Leary

Dorn – A Doctor

Hugh Parker

Medvedenko – A Hopeful

Lucas Stibbard

For interviews, imagery and more, please contact Kath Rose & Associates on 07 3357 9054 or mobile 0416 291 493 or email kath@kathrose.com