

QUEENSLAND THEATRE

31 May 2021

Savage beauty shines in the sharp satire of *White Pearl*

Anchuli Felicia King's toxic workplace comedy commences its east-coast tour at Queensland Theatre

An hilarious new Australian play shows how beauty can get ugly, with the smash hit *White Pearl* coming to the Bille Brown Theatre from 17 June to 10 July.

This searing satire will heat up a chilly Brisbane evening with laughs and gasps a plenty, shining a light on toxic workplace culture, not-so-casual racism and the business of selling shame.

White Pearl is set in the offices of Clearday, a cosmetics start-up in Singapore that hits the big time... before something else hits the fan! When a video goes viral for all the wrong reasons, a nest of secrets, lies and resentment soon opens amongst Clearday's all-women team. Someone is definitely getting fired today.

Penned by prolific playwright **Anchuli Felicia King**, and winner of the Sydney Theatre Award for Best Ensemble in 2019, *White Pearl* touches on some timely topics that got under the skin of the young Thai-Australian writer.

"My play explores a grocery list of themes — the beauty industry, the multiplicity of 'Asian' identities, intra-cultural racism, millennial corporate culture, global discourse and the internet, and shame as a cultural commodity. At its core, *White Pearl* is really about communication: the ways we use language to gain or cede power."

"I'm so excited to get to bring this play to Queensland audiences, particularly Asian and Asian-Australian audience members. The original season had such a strong resonance, and we got such amazing responses from Asian audiences in Sydney and I can't wait to see what Queenslanders make of it."

The 2021 east-coast tour stars **Deborah An, Cheryl Ho, Mayu Iwasaki, Nicole Milinkovic, Vaishnavi Suryaprakash, Lin Yin** and Bundaberg's own **Matthew Pearce**.

Directed by **Priscilla Jackman** (*Still Point Turning*) the characters of *White Pearl* reflect a cross-cultural mix of Chinese, South Korean, Japanese, Singaporean, Thai, English and American women, with the play highlighting the complexity of such pan-Asian relations, along with the worst of corporate culture.

"*White Pearl* is a great office comedy," says Queensland Theatre's Artistic Director **Lee Lewis**. "That's why it's onstage in 2021 — we all recognise the office politics. We all recognise the fear of things going wrong online, and it's funny when it happens on stage, but wow, Clearday is having a really bad day!"

"Yes, there are big politics embedded in *White Pearl*, but sometimes comedy is the best way to consider some issues. There are things David Williamson has been able to say that can be really confronting, but he has put his politics into comedy — we hear big ideas differently when we are laughing as an audience, and Anchuli takes outrageous advantage of this," Lewis continues.

"Anchuli is one of the global theatre thinkers. She has a distinctly Australian interpretation of the world — definitely an Australian sense of humour — along with an international confidence that makes her a leader amongst the next generation of Australian writers.

"Anchuli's writing is irreverent, hilarious, confronting and clever — which all adds up to her being one of the new powerhouse voices on the Australian stage. We can't wait to premiere *White Pearl* in Queensland."

WHITE PEARL by Anchuli Felicia King

Directed by Priscilla Jackman

17 June to 10 July 2021

Bille Brown Theatre, South Brisbane

Bookings queenslandtheatre.com.au | 1800 355 528 | sales@queenslandtheatre.com.au

A Sydney Theatre Company and Riverside's National Theatre of Parramatta Production

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ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

In the boardroom of Clearday cosmetics, beauty is only (white) skin deep.

In Singapore, it's just another day at the office of Clearday cosmetics. That is, until they discover that their new TV commercial has been leaked online. The video goes viral for all the wrong reasons. Someone is definitely going to get fired.

Can the high-flying team at Clearday rise above their personal squabbles to save the company?

As they scramble to contain the fallout before the American market wakes up, the open-plan, glass-door office proves to be a nest of secrets, lies and resentments.

Anchuli Felicia King's new play is a ruthlessly entertaining portrait of toxic corporate culture, casual racism and the complexity of pan-Asian relations.

CAST and CREATIVES

Soo-Jin Park	Deborah An
Sunny Lee	Cheryl Ho
Ruki Minami	Mayu Iwasaki
Built Suttikul	Nicole Milinkovic
Marcel Benoit	Matthew Pearce
Priya Singh	Vaishnavi Suryaprakash
Xiao Chen	Lin Yin

Writer	Anchuli Felicia King	
Director	Priscilla Jackman	
Designer	Jeremy Allen	
Lighting Designer	Damien Cooper	
Composer and Sound Designer		Michael Toisuta
Composer and Associate Sound Designer		Me-Lee Hay
Projection Designer	Anchuli Felicia King	
Dramaturg	Courtney Stewart	

Production Partners



For further information, imagery or interviews, please contact Amanda Lawson, Queensland Theatre via publicity@queenslandtheatre.com.au or phone 07 3010 7669

Queensland Theatre acknowledges the Jagera and Turrbal people who are the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work, and their unique relationship with the lands, seas and waterways. We pay our respects to their Elders both past and present, and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



GOVERNMENT PARTNERS



PRINCIPAL PARTNER

