At Darlinghurst Theatre Company we believe that theatre is a democratic platform and a place for exploration, different points of view and diverse discussions on our lives, society and our existence. We allow artists the freedom to work with their chosen artist collaborators. Outstanding artists given reign to create work they are most passionate about, makes for powerful theatre. It creates a strong connection between audience and performance and makes for potent explorations of our world.

To achieve our mission and mandate, each year we open our doors and put out a call to the artistic community for production concepts for our company to produce. From the proposals we select our season of productions.

Thank you to Andrew Henry who originally suggested that our company produce A Life in the Theatre. Our 2016 season has been potent in content and David Mamet’s gentle existential comedy about aging and inheritance is a very fitting finale to our 2016 season and a wonderful ode and dedication to theatre makers.

GLENN TERRY
Executive Producer
Darlinghurst Theatre Company
DIRECTOR’S NOTE

When this play first opened, the New Yorker declared “Mr Mamet has written – in gentle ridicule; in jokes, broad and tiny; and in comedy, high and low – a love letter to the theatre.”

Before he became one of the great American playwrights of the twentieth century, David Mamet had a short-lived and unsuccessful career as an actor in a repertory company not unlike the one in which our characters are working. As a result he has great respect and admiration for actors. Here he shows us an actor at the beginning and an actor at the end of his life in the theatre. Robert carries the pretension and pomposity of experience, whilst John displays the arrogance and hubris of youth. It’s clear that Mamet loves them even as he mocks them. His is a picture of a vulnerable profession, unstable, evanescent, impecunious and often lonely. The relationships forged in the theatre are like those of siblings, parents, lovers. Actors live in each other’s pockets and often see more of each other than their own families. Lives on and off stage blur. Then the show, the season, the career is over and they say goodbye. But what is left when one has given one’s life to the theatre?

Shakespeare, Pirandello, Stoppard, Beckett – so many have drawn on the metaphoric connections between life and the theatre. Mamet explores them via the ridiculous scenes that Robert and John must perform together. Marooned together on a lifeboat. Being shot at in the trenches. Stuck together in a Chekhovian drawing room with no chance of escape. Even an operating theatre, where saving the scene is harder than saving the patient.

It’s always particularly pleasurable to work on subject matter that is so familiar. During the rehearsal process John Gaden, Akos Armont and I sometimes wept with laughter at stories shared from our lives on stage. In fact, there are moments in this play that are almost too close to the bone.

The set was fun to solve. In order to create the feeling of really being behind the scenes, designer Hugh O’Conner and I decided to put the “stage” at the back, so the actors would be playing their scenes with their backs to us. Their performance can be seen by you, the Eternity audience, via video on the backstage monitors. Lighting designer Chris Page magically created an “auditorium” in the Eternity’s iconic heritage dome. Sound designer Jed Silver chose some hilariously cheesy sound effects and helped keep us in the mood when the costume changes were, by necessity, often longer than the scenes (thanks Mr Mamet).

Mamet writes dialogue like musical notation. If the pauses and punctuation are correctly observed, the character’s inner life is revealed and the jokes are perfectly timed. It’s so different from working with naturalistic text that at first an actor or director might feel as though they were being robbed of their own choices. Many bad words were used in the rehearsal room in defence of Mr Mamet’s pedagogy. But once we got over that and started to read the music on the stave it became enormously satisfying. As with Pinter, Mamet’s inspiration, the clues are in the….

HELEN DALLIMORE
Director

Helen is a director, actress, singer and writer. Her most recent directing credits include High Society, The Fantasticks and Everybody Loves Lucy at Hayes Theatre Company.

As Artistic Director of independent theatre company Hair of the Dog, Helen directed Tragedy; a tragedy, Savage/Love, Art of Penetration and Sweet Phoebe as well as Jumpin’ the Q and The New Inhabitant for Top Shorts.

Helen was assistant director to Jonathan Biggins on STC’s Noises Off, and most recently she directed one of the shortlisted entries for Griffin theatre’s Lysicrates Prize.

Since graduating from NIDA in 1995, she has enjoyed a career as a performer in theatre, musical theatre, film and television both in Australia and in the UK.

Helen created the role of Glinda in the West End production of Wicked opposite Idina Menzel. She has performed many times with the Sydney Theatre Company as well as Bell Shakespeare, Griffin, the Ensemble and Darlinghurst Theatre. She plays Olivia O’Neill on Channel Nine’s Here Come the Habibs, on which she is also a writer.

Helen won a Helpmann Award for her performance in Legally Blonde the Musical and was nominated for her performance in Blood Brothers.
AKOS ARMONT
Performer

Since graduating NIDA, Akos has worked extensively in theatre, film and television. Akos’s theatre credits include Neighbourhood Watch (Melbourne Theatre Company); Romeo and Juliet, Spring Awakening and The Lost Echo (Sydney Theatre Company); Strange Interlude and As You Like It (Belvoir/Company B); A Midsummer Nights Dream (Arts Radar); The Lovebirds for Idolize Spiegel Tent (Strut and Fret); The Kid (Griffin Theatre Company) and The Web (Black Swan Theatre Company).

His television work includes House Husbands, Winter, Janet King, Spirited, Rescue Special Ops, Home and Away, The Strip and The Pacific. Akos’s film credits include Pirates Of The Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales, Lone Wolf, The Railway Man, LBF, Andy X, The Shed, Decrepit, Lichen and The Incredible Parker Brothers. He will next be seen in the new feature Harmony directed by Corey Pearson. Akos is a member of the managing committee of the Actors Benevolent Fund NSW.

JOHN GADEN
Performer

John Gaden has worked extensively in film, theatre and television for over forty years and has built a solid reputation as an outstanding actor. John recently appeared in Fred Schepisi’s The Eye of the Storm, with his performance garnering AACTA and FCCA Award nominations. Other film credits include performances in the acclaimed Muriel’s Wedding, Thank God He Met Lizzie, Right Here Right Now, Willful, A Little Bit of Soul, Children of the Revolution, Caddie and many more. John’s most recent film was The Death and Life of Otto Bloom which enjoyed its premiere at the Opening Night Gala at the Melbourne International Film Festival. On the small screen, John has recently been seen in the award winning A Place to Call Home, Rake and Underbelly: Badness. Other notable television performances include Halifax F.P., Mother and Son, Homicide, Matlock Police and the telemovies Conferenceville, Big Toys, The Taming of the Shrew and the miniseries A Place in the World. John is renowned for his exceptional stage performances and has worked with many major theatre companies in Australia and internationally. Recent highlights include Belvoir’s The Wild Duck performances in Sydney, Perth, London, Vienna and Amsterdarm, as well as Seventeen, Hamlet and Cloudstreet (National and International tours) also with Belvoir. For Sydney Theatre Company he was recently seen in Orlando, Macbeth, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead, Face to Face, The War of the Roses and Copenhagen. John recently performed in Melbourne Theatre Company’s Straight White Men, as well as appearing in their production of Other Desert Cities, in Pericles for Bell Shakespeare and in the State Theatre Company of South Australia’s King Lear in the title role. He most recently appeared in the topical political drama The Hansard Monologues with the Seymour Centre. John’s most celebrated performances include The Lost Echo and The Unexpected Man which have won him Helpmann Awards and Travesties, Kold Komfort Kaffe and Galileo winning Sydney Critics Circle Awards. John has directed many plays and has held the position of Artistic Director for the State Theatre Company of South Australia and Associate Director at the Sydney Theatre Company. In 1986 he was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for his services to the performing arts.
Hugh O’Connor is a production designer who works within contemporary and experimental performance across Australia. Hugh holds a Bachelor of Design from NIDA where he graduated in 2013. He was nominated for ‘Best Set Design’ at the 2015 Sydney Theatre Awards for his work on The Aliens. Production credits in set/costume design include: We’ll be Good People, You’ll See (Crack Theatre Festival); 4 Minutes 12 Seconds (Outhouse Productions); Hidden Sydney: The Glittering Mile (Live Ideas & Working Management); My Name is Asher Lev (Moira Blumenthal Productions); The Fantastiks (Wooden Horse Productions in assoc. with The Hayes Theatre); We are the Ghosts of the Future (Balcmane Productions); Goodworks (Darlinghurst Theatre Company); The Aliens (Outhouse Productions); Ride and Fourplay (Darlinghurst Theatre Company); This House is Mine (Milk Crate Theatre Company); The Wind in the Willows (La Boite Theatre Company); Daylight Savings (Darlinghurst Theatre Company); A Doll’s House (Sport for Jove); The Witches (Griffin Theatre Company and Malthouse Theatre) and Cosi (La Boite Theatre Company).

Christopher is a creator of worlds and has crafted unique lighting environments for a diverse range of shows. For Darlinghurst Theatre Chris has lit The Man With Five Children and Ride and Fourplay. Other Recent credits include: 4:12 (Outhouse Theatre); Betrayal, History of Falling Things, The Good Doctor, Blue/Orange (Ensemble Theatre); Journey’s End (ATYP Cameo’s); Defying Gravity, Blood Brothers, Do You Hear The People Sing? (Enda Markey Presents); The Witches, Five Properties of Chainmale (Griffin Theatre); House of Ramon Iglesia, Platonov (Mop Head); Black Jesus, His Mother’s Voice, Great Expectations (Bakehouse Theatre); The Dark Room, Windmill Baby, As You Like It (Belvoir) and Truck Stop (Q Theatre).

Chris’ site specific work includes: Ancient Lives (Upcoming, MAAS); El Anatsui (Carrigeworks); Action Stations (National Maritime Museum); Becalmed Heart, Met You in a City That Isn’t on a Map (Underbelly Arts Festival); Mangroves (Kate Richards & UNSW) and Parramasala Festival 2012 (Parramatta City Council).

Jed has spent the last 15 years working as a sound designer, composer, FOH mixer and a teacher. He is a Dadaist and a member of the group Horifice. Graduating from NIDA in 2001, Jed’s recent productions include: Little Shop of Horrors, The Fantasticks, Violet, RENT, High Society, Dogfight (Hayes Theatre); Blue Angel, Hipbone Sticking Out for Big hArt; Arms and the Man, Loot, Ying Tong – A Walk with the Goons (Sydney Theatre Company); A Steady Rain, Blonde Poison, MEN, Cock, Howie the Rookie (Old Fitz); Edward Albee’s Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?, Stuff Happens (Belvoir); The Way Things Work, Empire, The Removalists, Capture The Flag, Cross Sections, This Blasted Earth for Rock Surfers; Thursday’s Child, I am Jack, Milli Jack & the Dancing Cat, Hitler’s Daughter (Monkey Baa Theatre for Young People); Parramatta Girls, RU4ME, Rainbow’s End for Riverside Theatres; Somewhere, Car Gods Burn for the Q Theatre; Defiance (Sydney’s Quarantine Station). Jed’s Sound Operating credits include, Namatjira (Big hArt), The Women Of Troy (STC), Measure for Measure, Keating!, The Sapphires, The Threepenny Opera (Company B). TV credits include: Kitchen Whiz, Pyramid, Magical Tales. Jed was the second year Sound Tutor at NIDA 2006-2013.
AMY MORCOM
Stage Manager

Amy is Stage Manager, Producer and Yoga Teacher with a BA (Communication – Theatre/Media) (Hons I), which offered many opportunities to devise, produce and perform in various forms of theatre. Amy’s experience includes ASM for Belvoir on That Face, Peter Pan and Page 8, and all 100+ performances of The Wild Duck on tour around the world. She produced Woyzeck (Arts Radar/B Sharp); assistant produced HOLLYWOOD ENDING (Arts Radar/Theatre503/Griffin Independent); and enjoyed a glorious stint as the Apocalypse Bear and Stage Manager on Stories I Want to Tell You in Person (Belvoir). Amy has also worked for Big hART, Griffin Theatre Company, AFTT and events company The Epic Team. In the UK, Amy worked in various roles with Les Enfants Terribles, produced Bukowski’s Cass at VAULT Festival, was dep ASM on the National Theatre’s The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time; and produced for STOMP in the West End and for the world tour.

SUNIL CHANDRA
Assistant Stage Manager

Sunil Chandra is a stage manager who works within live theatre on musicals and plays in Sydney. Sunil is currently completing an Advanced Diploma of Live Production Management with the Academy of Film, Theatre and Television.

Production Credits as a Stage Manager include: Hairspray, Alice in Wonderland Jr. and The Boy from Oz, (The Regals Musical Society); Leap of Faith (Rockdale Musical Society); Know Thyself, Spring Awakening as well as Assistant Stage Manager on A Midsummer Nights Dream (Academy of Film, Theatre and Television).

ANGELA ATKINSON
Assistant Stage Manager

Angela Atkinson has spent her life in awe of the world of theatre since she was a little girl dancing on a stage in ballet slippers. The glow of the lights and the breath of the audience captured her romantic imagination.

As Angela grew up, she took acting classes, and studied drama at high school. After high school, Angela studied further; enrolling into a Bachelor of Dramatic Arts with Excelsia College. And now, she finds herself loving and working backstage while studying an Advanced Diploma of Live Production and Management Services.
Darlinghurst Theatre Company and the A Life in the Theatre team would like to thank the following for their support in staging this production:

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