



MELVILLE
THEATRE
COMPANY

Escaped Alone
and
What If If Only
by Caryl Churchill

Directed by
Lucy Eyre

Directed by
Natalie
Burbage

February 14th
to
March 1st 2025



Escaped Alone

Directed by Lucy Eyre



In October 2023 a group of women got together to read plays and Act Up was formed. I went back to the first message on our group chat, written by Caroline McDonnell, which read: “We have been talking about creating a creative space for us to share for a long time. A place for us to collaborate on plays that challenge us.” After I first read *Escaped Alone* by Caryl Churchill I decided to share it with everyone as a possible contender for our first production together. Everyone agreed that it certainly did meet the criteria for a play that will challenge us, and challenge audiences, but we thought it was worth the risk. We read the play a few times and it instigated interesting discussions which I ruminated over during the following months.

When the world becomes too much, we’re grateful for the small things in life: catch-ups with friends and family over a cup of tea or coffee, or our preferred tippie; watching a movie or listening to our favourite music. At the moment, there’s a lot to be overwhelmed by and each of us has our way of engaging with it, or ignoring it, and most of us are preoccupied with our own ‘stuff’ and haven’t the capacity to deal with it. But, when that moment comes when we’re directly affected by it, will we finally push back against the forces that keep us on a scary and unpredictable trajectory, or will we go mad? History is replete with examples of civilisations that have faced similar predicaments, and though the pendulum seems to be swinging further toward the extreme, the question is... can we arrest it while maintaining our sanity?

It has been a wonderful experience to work with this extraordinary group of women. We are very grateful to Melville Theatre Company for giving us the opportunity to present this play to you. The warm and generous Siobhán O’Gara joined us as Stage Manager to keep us honest, organised and connected over a cup of tea at the beginning of rehearsals.



Lucy Eyre

Lucy is a director, playwright, performer, and researcher. Directing credits include: *By the Bog of Cats* by Marina Carr for the Irish Theatre Players; *Conundrum* at the Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (PICA); *Shift Swapping* by David Ryding at The Blue Room Theatre; *No Refunds* by Trent Burton at the Regal Theatre; *The Woman Who Cooked Her Husband* by Debbie Isitt at the Sun Room; *Return to Sender* by Anne Sorenson at the Midland Railway Workshops and for the WA Fringe and Perth International Arts Festivals. Lucy has adapted and directed Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice* at the New Fortune Theatre, UWA, and *Othello* for the Hills Shakespeare 450th Anniversary Festival. In 2017 Lucy graduated from WAAPA with a PhD in Performing Arts and is currently employed as a Casual Lecturer in Creative Writing at Edith Cowan University.



Escaped Alone

Directed by Lucy Eyre



Sally

Suzannah Churchman

Vi

Caroline McDonnell

Lena

Natalie Burbage

Mrs Jarrett

Susan Lynch

Setting: Sally's backyard, somewhere in the UK.

Escaped Alone contains adult themes, and minimal coarse language.

Stage Manager

Siobhán O'Gara

Lighting Design

Lars Jensen

Visual Design

Dylan Randall

Sound Design

Myles Wright

Bio Box Operation

Lars Jensen

Set Design

Lucy Eyre

Set Construction

Lars Jensen, JP Della Favory, Claire Wynne,

& Dressing

Barbara Lovell, Chris Rowe, Guy Burbage, and

Susan Lynch

Program

Vanessa Jensen

Publicity

Curtin Call Creatives

Front of House & Bar

MTC volunteers coordinated by Julia Calvert

Special Thanks

JP Della Favory, Simon Dreyer, Lars Jensen, Vanessa Jensen, Marloo Theatre, Claire Wynne, and the amazingly supportive committee at Melville Theatre Company.



Escaped Alone

Directed by Lucy Eyre



Suzannah Churchman

This is Suzannah's fourth outing at Melville after her debut with Tim Winton's *Shrine*, she then played in *Incognito* and the hilarious *Six Dance Lessons in Six Weeks*. It has been an absolute delight to rehearse and perform with such a talented and creative cast and crew, and a particular pleasure to work with our director Lucy again after the production of *By the Bog of Cats* for Irish Theatre Players. Suzannah's last play, *Top Girls*, also by Caryl Churchill laid some valuable groundwork for a playwright who is often challenging, thought provoking but relevant in these interesting times.



Caroline McDonnell

Caroline is thrilled to be making her debut at Melville Theatre. She has been involved in community theatre for years, with recent

performances in *By the Bog of Cats* by Marina Carr, *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* by Stephen Adly Guirgis, and *Little Gem* by Elaine Murphy. Taking on the role of Vi has been both a challenge and a privilege — an opportunity to step outside her comfort zone and explore the depth and nuance of Churchill's powerful storytelling. Caroline is incredibly grateful to share the stage with such a talented and inspiring group of creatives, whose passion and dedication make every performance a joy. Since 2024, Caroline has been a proud member of Act Up and is honoured to be part of this extraordinary ensemble.



Natalie Burbage

Natalie is delighted to return to the Melville Theatre Company stage to work alongside, and learn from these talented people. She is an alumni of Curtin's theatre course and, since her community theatre debut in 2009, has been involved in more than 50 productions across the Perth and Peel regions. Recent on-stage roles include Carol: *Catch Me if You Can* (Koorliny Arts Centre); Fran: *Things I Know to*

be True for which she was awarded the ITA Robert Finley award for Best Actress in a Play, Helene: *Ghosts*, Karen: *Plaza Suite* (Melville Theatre Company); Tanya: *Mamma Mia* and Marion: *The Boy from Oz* (Koorliny Arts Centre). In 2019, Natalie won ITA Dramafest Best Actress for her role as Rose in *Kinetics* (MPAC)



Susan Lynch

Susan has been active on and offstage in Perth community theatres for many years. In recent years she has focused on acting with recent performances in *By the Bog of Cats* at Irish Theatre Players and *My Mother Said I Never Should* for Playlovers. Susan is familiar to Melville Theatre audiences for her many appearances on stage as well as behind the bar and on the committee. Susan has previously won both Best Actress and Best Supporting Actress Awards in the WA Finley Awards. The role of *Mrs Jarrett* is a challenging one and Susan says the warmth and support of Lucy, Siobhán, and her wonderful castmates has made the experience a joy.

There will be an interval between the two plays.
The bar is open for refreshments.

It will also be open after the second show.



What If If Only

Directed by Natalie Burbage



When I first read *What If If Only*, I was struck by the vulnerability of the grieving Someone, not a ‘woe is me’ grief, but a spectrum of emotions leaping from the page. During this short play, Caryl Churchill takes us on an adventure, a rollercoaster of exquisite language, ponderings of possibilities and impossibilities, with a persistent peppering of absurdism. There is a necessity of bringing your brain along for the ride – but also of embracing the bizarre, abandoning the need to make sense and to simply enjoy the moment, and the next, and possibly the past possibles that didn’t happen. It’s a play about life, death, and letting go. It left me thinking, what if ... and I hope it does the same for you, or at the very least, sparks some conversations.

I am deeply grateful for the amazing group of humans who came along for this What If journey and made it happen: my gorgeous cast who explored the plethora of possibilities, shed comfort zones and said, “Yes, let’s!” to the inexplicable; to Lars, who generously shared his ideas and skills and found practical and beautiful ways to make the possibilities happen; to Laura, who kept us organised and spread positivity and sunshine; to the Melville Theatre Company committee and family, for their wonderful support and trust; to my Darcy, who has felt the feels and dug into the brave to make the music; to my incredible Guy – for being there, always.



Natalie Burbage

Natalie has taken up the director’s mantle after a long hiatus and is thrilled to be doing so at Melville Theatre Company with this talented and supportive team. She cut her director’s teeth as a student at Curtin’s Hayman Theatre Upstairs. In 2016 she co-directed *Disney’s The Little Mermaid* for Koorliny Arts Centre, a production that won four ITA Robert Finley awards, including Best Musical and Best Director. Natalie has been actively involved in many production teams in a variety of ways, including fulfilling the roles of production manager/assistant director/props manager for *Chicago*, assistant director/props/actor for *Young Frankenstein*, and stage manager/props for *The Witches* (Koorliny Arts Centre).

She thrives on the problem-solving aspect of bringing a show to life, considering the what ifs and if only(s), and making them happen.



What If If Only

Directed by Natalie Burbage



Someone **Lucy Eyre**

Future/s **Jarrold Buttery**

Present **Clare Talbot**

Child Future **Tanisha Mavunduse**

Setting: Somewhere out there, Someone's kitchen
What If If Only contains adult concepts and reference to suicide.

Stage Manager

Laura Mercer

Lighting Design

Lars Jensen

Music

Darcy Burbage

Bio Box Operation

Lars Jensen

Set Design

Natalie Burbage and Lars Jensen

Set Construction

**Lars Jensen, Jacob Jensen, Guy Burbage, and
Chris Rowe**

Costumes

Cast

Program

Vanessa Jensen

Publicity

Curtin Call Creatives

Front of House & Bar

MTC volunteers coordinated by Julia Calvert

Special Thanks

MTC Committee for their support, the Jensens for service above and beyond.



What If If Only

Directed by Natalie Burbage



Lucy Eyre

Lucy is thrilled to be making her debut at Melville Theatre and to be working with this amazing cast and creative team. Lucy's recent performances include: Beulah in *Come From Away* directed by Katherine Friend and Allen Blachford; Carmen Bernstein in *Curtains* directed by Kimberley Shaw; and Rosie in *Mamma Mia* directed by Brad Tudor. Lucy has been performing in community, independent and professional theatre for many years, most notably in *Do I Look Like I Care* (State Theatre Centre), *Never Give all of the Heart* (Kidogo Arthouse), *Chicks and Flicks* (Downstairs at the Maj), *Italian American Reconciliation* (Blue Room Theatre), *Risky Lunar Love* (Rechabites' Hall), *Blood Relations* (PICA), and *Bombshells* (Roxy Lane).



Jarrod Buttery

Jarrod is the current president of Harbour Theatre, where in

recent years, he has directed the plays *The Ladies Four-some*, *Picasso's Women*, and *The Vicar of Dibley*, as well as appearing on stage in *Ghost Writer*, *The Woman Who Cooked Her Husband*, *The Love List*, *Love Letters*, and *Lunenburg*. Other performances include *Emerald City* (Melville), *God of Carnage* (Garrrick), *Aladdin* (Playlovers), *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* (Old Mill), *A Clockwork Orange* (Life on Hold Productions), *Present Laughter* (Roxy Lane), and *Othello* (GRADS). Last year, Jarrod appeared in *On A First Name Basis* (KADS) for which he received Best Actor at the recent KADS Awards. Jarrod was a founding member of Blak Yak Theatre — where he directed and appeared in too many roles to mention. Sort of like tonight's play.



Clare Talbot

Clare's journey in theatre began with high school productions, sparking her passion for the performing arts. She pursued her passion by studying at WAAPA, where she completed an Advanced Diploma in Lighting for Production. Clare further honed her skills by obtaining a Bachelor of Education

(Secondary) and a Bachelor of Arts with First Class Honours in Theatre and Drama. In addition to her academic achievements, Clare is dedicated to shaping the future of the industry as a Drama Teacher. In recent years, she has focused on Directing and Stage Management roles. Clare's involvement in *What If If Only*, has provided the perfect opportunity for her to further develop her acting skills, showcasing her versatility and commitment to the arts.



Tanisha Mavunduse

Tanisha is delighted to be making her community theatre debut as Child Future in *What If If Only*. Her previous experience has been predominately through her school's Drama program, where she performed the roles of Phoebe in *As You Like It*, Veronica in *God of Carnage* and various characters in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Tanisha has experience in improvisation and monologue preparation. When she is not performing, Tanisha works to deepen her skills in set, costume, lighting and sound design. She also creates music and has aspirations to pursue a career in the performing arts.

MELVILLE THEATRE COMPANY Membership

Becoming a member of the club not only means supporting a local community group, but gives you many other benefits:

- 1 x special member priced ticket to each show in that year
- MTC newsletters
- eligibility to vote at the AGM
- eligibility to stand for committee at the next AGM
- invitations to MTC social events



Individual Membership
\$10

Family Membership
(up to 4 family members)
\$20



MELVILLE THEATRE COMPANY

The Australian community theatre premier production.
With permission of the author and Yellow Creative Management.

A rowdy Australian comedy with heart and a message.
Described by playwright Angela Betzien as "a love letter to teachers".

Chalkface

By Angela Betzien

Directed by Vanessa Jensen

MAY 2ND TO 17TH 2025

Melville Theatre Company, 10 Almonbury Rd, Booragoon, entry off Davy Street.



Bookings through Trybooking



Melville Theatre Company would like to acknowledge the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation, the traditional custodians of this land we meet on, who have been sharing stories here for many thousands of years.