

QUIZ

By James Graham

An entertaining, yet provocative re-examination of the conviction of Charles Ingram, 'the coughing Major' for cheating his way to one million pounds.

Directed by Vanessa Jensen

May 2023

From the Director

As a director I try to vary the kinds of plays I choose. Genre, cast size, style, nationality of playwright and setting of the play. Keeping it interesting for myself, and the audience by not always producing the same kind of thing. After the frantic chaos of *William Shakespeare's Long Lost First Play (abridged)* in 2021, where three actors played most of Shakespeare's famous characters in one fictional first play, a hoot of a show, I directed the beautiful and moving Australian play, *Things I Know To be True* last year. An incredible show that won the Robert Finley Award for Best Play in 2022.

2021 - small cast, madcap American comedy.

2022 - mid sized cast, unforgettable Australian family drama.

2023 - where does *Quiz* fit into this categorising?

It is not a traditional comedy, but it is funny. It has audience participation, but it is not a pantomime. It has some moving scenes, but it is not a drama. Based on a true story but a work of fiction. A big cast, 16, and even more characters.

I am unsure how I stumbled upon the script; my search parameters usually involve something like; Drama, contemporary, Australian, small cast, or award winning, American, classic. I don't recall typing in; British, based on true story, large cast, 40+ characters. But stumble upon I did, and I was engrossed from beginning to end of that first reading. After which, despite the clock ticking past midnight on a school night, I lost myself down the rabbit hole of online research. I was unsure if it was real, had someone really tried to cheat on *Who Wants to Be A Millionaire* by having people cough on the right answers? I had never heard about the scandal, nor about the 2020 TV miniseries of the same name.

The more I investigated and reread the script, the more fascinated I became. I was taken by questions it raised. Were they guilty? Did they get a fair trial? Was it trial by media? How real is reality TV? And some even deeper; what kind of responsibility should the media have for their manipulation of the public? Likewise, television producers. A study in how quickly a mob mentality can grow when provoked. And interestingly, how James Graham in his take on the story, does a similar thing. Is he not also manipulating the audience?

I loved the style of the play, and the clever comparison of the quiz show and the dramatics of a courtroom. The story and how it is presented is fascinating. How accurate the fictionalised retelling of that story is, in my opinion, not overly important. It is not the point of the piece. Ironic when my favourite line in the *Quiz* is; ***"that they should be able to resist the temptation of a more entertaining lie, over a less extraordinary truth."***

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to my wonderful cast and crew for helping bring my vision to life. Their talent, dedication, humour and hard work have made the process all the more enjoyable.



Vanessa has been involved in Perth community theatre for over 20 years, at both Old Mill and Melville Theatres as stage manager, crew, lighting and sound operator, box office, bar or front of house, set dressing and set painting, on committee and directing. Directing is her main love. She has directed a wide variety of shows over the past 18 years. Three Jane Austen's (one she dramatised herself), classics like *Twelve Angry Men*, *Away* and *Amadeus* and more unknown pieces like *Love, Loss and What I Wore*. Ridiculous comedies like *One Man, Two Guvnors* and *William Shakespeare's Long Lost First Play (abridged)* and moving dramas like *Rabbit Hole*, *Mr Bailey's Minder*, and *Things I Know to be True*. These last three plays, as well as *Twelve Angry Men*, won the Robert Finley Award for Best Play for their year, and also saw Vanessa win Best

Director twice. She has worked with innumerable wonderful people along the way, who've won plenty of awards themselves, and many who've become dear friends. Vanessa loves the community of community theatre; the comradery, the quick and strong bonds formed with other liked minded individuals who you share time and space with intensely for a few months; and the common goal of creating something special together.

The audience is a part of that process, that community, in this show possibly more than in most. So have your phone ready when asked, so you can enter the code given and help to give the final answer!

SPECIAL THANKS

Lars Jensen for the massive effort and inordinate number of hours he has put into the tech side of this show. As ever, his support is truly appreciated.



Jacob Jensen for his expertise and assistance.
Ryan Sedgwick for assisting in so many ways.



Marloo Theatre for the loan of costumes.

CREW

Stage Manager

ASM

ASM

Michelle Sharp

Laura Mercer

Shaeyla Oosthuizen

Lighting, Sound & AV Design

Lighting Operation

Sound and AV Operation

Lars Jensen

Lars Jensen

Vanessa Jensen

Set Design

Set Team

Assisted by

Vanessa Jensen

Lars Jensen, Jacob Jensen, Ryan Sedgwick,
Joshua Sedgwick

Paul Hogan, Benjamin Small, Ruhama Rowe

Costumes

Wigs, props and sewing assistance

Michelle Sharp

Shaeyla Oosthuizen

Poster

Photos & Program

Lars Jensen

Vanessa Jensen

Publicity

Ticketing

Chris Thomas

TAZtix

There will be a 20 minute interval between acts.

Complimentary tea and coffee are available in the foyer during interval.

Riches Bar is open 45 minutes before the show, during interval and for one hour after the curtain.

CAST

Benjamin Small	Major Charles Ingram
Ruhama Rowe	Diana Ingram
<i>(Ensemble Cast in alphabetical order)</i>	
Phil Bedworth	Major General Roberts, Tecwen Whittock, John De Mol, David Briggs & ensemble
Paul Cook	Nicholas Hilliard QC, journalist & ensemble
Nikki Di Camillo	Production Manager, Rachel Da Costa & ensemble
Sarah Diggins	Warm-up, pub quizmaster, Elsie Tanner & ensemble
Paul Hogan	Judge Rivlin, David Liddiment & ensemble
Murray Jackson	Chris Tarrant, Jim Bowen, Des O’Conner, Leslie Crowther & ensemble
Sandhya Krishnan	DS Williamson, Adrian Wolfe & ensemble
Jayma Mathewson	Sonia Woodley QC, Helen Carrington & ensemble
Laura Mercer	Gloria & ensemble
Brian O’Donovan	Paul Smith, Paddy Spooner & ensemble
Shaeyla Oosthuizen	Attractive Assistant, Police Constable, Head Juror & ensemble
Paul Reed	Adrian Pollock, Mark Burnett & ensemble
Michelle Sharp	Hilda Ogden & ensemble
Alanna van Mierlo	Claudia Rosencrantz, Ruth Settle, Alyn Morice & ensemble

The action takes place in multiple locations but mainly switches between,

Elstree Studios, Borehamwood, Hertfordshire
Southwark Crown Court, London
The Ingram’s home, Upavon, Wiltshire

The show was filmed in September 2001,
the court case took place over 4 weeks in 2003.

Quiz is a fictional imagination based on real events which took place in 2001 following an episode of *Who Wants to be A Millionaire?* It is not in any way connected with the makers of the programme or any of the individuals portrayed.

James Graham, forward Methuen|Drama



Phil Bedworth

Phil's first role in Perth was in 2019 as Dr. Watson after tentatively responding to an audition call due to his love of the "Holmes" books. Since that time, he has appeared in at least one show per year, as well as several short films. He has also directed the Ben Elton comedy *Gasp!* and the very popular *The Full Monty*, at Limelight Theatre, but still very much regards himself an emerging director. *Quiz* is his debut at Melville, due to not being able to have the stars align to allow it sooner.

In a 2023 interview with Terry Wogan, Phil commented "The show? Well, it could be A) Quixotic; B) Unequaled; C) Iconic; D) Zestful" (note: truth not verified).

Paul's stage debut in 2015 commenced with him performing as Magistrate, Colonel Julyan, in *Rebecca* and immediately thereafter doing a further 2 plays back-to-back. Since then, Paul has performed in around 3 plays each year as well as doing paid film work. *Don't Dress for Dinner*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Sunshine Boys*, *When Dad Married Fury*, *In Bed with the Bishops* being some notable productions. Paul is thrilled to be working with a stellar cast and crew, under the direction of the immensely talented Vanessa Jensen.

Paul believes "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players" and it's time to play *Who Wants to be a Millionaire!*



Paul Cook



Nikki Di Camillo

As a self-confessed reality TV addict, Nikki is thrilled to be performing in *Quiz*. Her first taste of the acting life was under the bright lights of the Cummins Theatre in Merredin at the age of seven. She loved making people laugh and realised it was an awesome hobby where her ability to memorise random things would come in handy. Nikki has reignited her passion for treading the boards over the past few years at a number of community theatres around Perth. Against all logic, she is addicted to the exhilarating mix of sheer terror and excitement she feels each time she steps on stage. This is her third show at MTC and second time being directed by Vanessa Jensen. Her favourite roles so far have included Mrs White in *Clue*, Kitty in *Old Love* and Bobbie in *The Railway Children*.

Nikki has loved being part of a very funny and talented cast and hopes you enjoy the show.

Sarah fell into theatre when she signed up to Play-building classes in Year Nine thinking it was linked to Woodwork. Initially disappointed that she was going to have to actually talk to people, she fell in love with the creative freedom of drama class. Since then she hasn't looked back, participating in community theatre from aged 15 in Pinjarra, Mandurah and Perth.

Sarah loves working with the team at MTC and has worked with her *Quiz* director, Vanessa in *Pride and Prejudice* (2007), *Sense and Sensibility* (2019) and *Old Love* (2021). So, after promising herself a quieter 2023, she immediately jumped into rehearsals for *Quiz* with her friend after completing the 2023 run for *Plaza Suite* at MTC.



Sarah Diggins



Paul Hogan

Paul got the theatre bug in 1979 playing Harry Butler in a lunch time comedy skit at school. He was involved in St Vincent Hospital reviews in Sydney in 1980 and 1981. He then joined the Australian Theatre for Young People in Sydney, notably playing 15 year old Nicole Kidman's father in *Spring Awakening*. He studied theatre for a year in Melbourne in 1985 and then joined a Community Theatre in Goulburn performing health promotion shows in the community and in schools. In Goulburn he also performed as the titular character in Chekhov's *The Bear* in 1987. His last performance was in 1992 when he was sponsored by Perth's Artrage Festival to perform *Day Dream Yard*, a one hander, one act play that he had written whilst studying Art at East Sydney Tech.

It has been a long time between drinks and Paul is loving his first engagement with Vanessa Jensen and the other actors at Melville Theatre Company.

Murray was last seen on stage at Melville Theatre a decade or so back in two plays directed by his dearly missed friend Jeff Hansen. The first of those, *Don's Party*, saw him play an inebriate far too convincingly whilst the latter, *The Goat, or Who is Sylvia?*, placed him in the role of man who develops a carnal fixation for livestock. Most recently he was Barney in Old Mill Theatre's *Last of the Red Hot Lovers*, for whom he also played the evil Brett Sprague in their production of *The Boys*, a lifetime ago.

Whilst Murray would like to wax lyrical about how much fun he has had playing game show hosts in *Quiz*, I'm afraid that's all we have time for... time to roll over...



Murray Jackson



Sandhya Krishnan

Sandhya first took to theatre while studying for a completely unrelated Technology degree in India, essaying Betty in *The Crucible*. She went on to do plays and comedy sketches over the next few years, learning from different groups across the country. In 2008 she moved to Pittsburgh where she directed two comedy plays with colour-blind casting. After a long hiatus, and a move to Perth, she played Dr Armstrong in Roxy Lane Theatre's production of *And Then There Were None* last year. She is very thrilled for her debut with Melville Theatre Company with this uber-talented cast and crew, right here in her 'hood.

Incidentally, Sandhya was once a live quiz show host on a local TV channel (cough).

An intriguing and engaging story, awesome cast and being able to say "Objection!" multiple times (not to mention the opportunity to work with Vanessa again), was enough to get Jayma back on stage. Last seen at Melville in Vanessa Jensen's 2019 production of *Sense and Sensibility* and before that in the 2018 Finley award winning best play *Mr Bailey's Minder*, Jayma has appeared in Melville performances of *Gentlemen Incorporated*, *The Real Thing* and *Pride and Prejudice* (winning a Finley Award for her performance as Miss Caroline Bingley) and *After Dinner, Away* and *A Streetcar Named Desire* at Old Mill Theatre.



Jayma Mathewson

A fan of a good quiz night Jayma has been part of the odd winning team!



Laura Mercer

Laura's first and most treasured role for Melville Theatre was playing Bubba in *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* in 2001. More recently, in 2017, she enjoyed getting her teeth into her biggest and most challenging role as Francis in *Jumpy* at Melville Theatre in which she even had to perform a Burlesque dance. Laura also enjoys backstage roles. No matter how small or big a role Laura has, she is just so happy to be a part of a production and the creative process.

Laura jumped at the chance to work again with Vanessa Jensen and has enjoyed being a part of such a big cast and playing 9 different characters as part of the ensemble in *Quiz*.

After ten years away from the stage Brian made his Perth debut when he played the memorable role of 'Man' in *Voices in the Rubble* for the Irish Theatre Players one act season in 2015. Since then he has been a semi permanent fixture at the ITP performing in diverse plays such as *The Plough and the Stars*, *The Trappe Family* and *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot*. Those latter two plays both earning him a Finley nomination for Best Actor in a Play.



Brian O'Donovan

His most recent performance was on the famous Melville Theatre stage as Jesse in *Plaza Suite*, an experience he enjoyed so much he jumped straight into *Quiz*!



Shaeyla Oosthuizen

Shaeyla's first major role was as Big Mama in *Chicago* in 2016 at high school. And although it has been quite some time since her last performance, she is very excited to get back on stage. Shaeyla has enjoyed being able to incorporate her skills from another of her interests; cosplay, into her return to theatre, by creating wigs, props and accessories for *Quiz*.

Whilst this may be her debut on stage at Melville Theatre, or indeed any community theatre, Shaeyla has been having an absolute ball.

Paul has been involved with the theatre since he was 16 years old. He has performed in numerous productions such as *The Addams Family* (Dark Psychic Productions), *Macbeth*, *The Jungle Book* and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (Darlington Theatre Players). Paul has been involved in Perth's Artrage Festival and taken an original musical production 'The White Rose' to the Esplanade Theatre in Singapore. He has been seen on the big screen at the 15/15 and Pandora's Box short film festivals.



Paul Reed

Paul is very excited to be appearing in his first show with the Melville Theatre Company.



Ruhama Rowe

Ruhama developed a love for the performing arts as a child and followed this passion to university completing a Performance Studies degree at Curtin. She has appeared as varied characters ranging from the young protagonist in *The Little Good Wolf*, to Friar Laurence in *Romeo and Juliet*, and worked in many performance formats including improvised live streams for Corsairs Cove. Ruhama first performed on the Melville Theatre stage in 2010 and has performed here often, including in the award-winning productions; *Things I Know to Be True* and *Incognito*.

She is thrilled to be appearing in *Quiz*, the first production she has had the opportunity to follow her real life 'character' on Instagram, and the last play to be performed on this well-loved stage.

Michelle studied Acting and Creative Writing at Curtin's Hayman Theatre. She has acted in numerous productions in Perth at Blak Yak, Old Mill and for Night Train Productions and also in London with the Balham Players. At Melville Theatre she has appeared onstage in *One Man Two Guvnors*, *Stop Kiss*, *Old Love* and as Mrs Dashwood in *Sense & Sensibility*. She became Wardrobe Mistress at Melville Theatre in 2011 and costumes most of their productions, and occasionally works at other theatres too.



Michelle Sharp

Michelle has recently enjoyed a stint of directing, the second act in the very popular *Plaza Suite*. Her two actors are now her cast mates.



Benjamin Small

Ben has been performing since childhood. He has experience in a variety of theatrical styles from puppetry and circus, Shakespeare and Brecht - including training from WAAPA and NIDA. His recent roles include Barney in *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* (Stirling Players), Oscar in Neil Simon's *The Odd Couple* (Old Mill Theatre), and Boolie in *Driving Miss Daisy* (Koorliny Arts Centre), for which he was nominated for the 2019 Best Supporting Actor Award at the ITA Finley's.

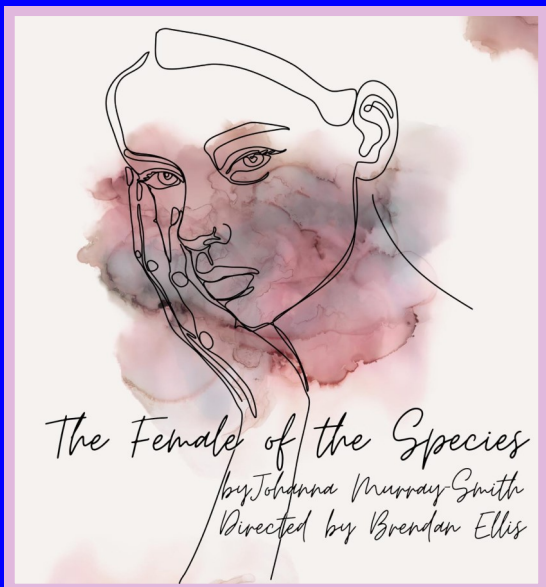
This is his first appearance at Melville Theatre and he is grateful for the opportunity to extend his experience with such a supportive and cohesive cast and director.

Alanna first stumbled onto the acting stage in 2017 doing pantomime and since that first foray they have appeared in a motley of comedies, musicals, pantomimes, improv, as well as the rare drama. Alanna especially enjoys playing the more snarky, haughty, pompous, and eccentric personalities whenever they get the chance. A particular favourite role and paradigm of such a character, Alanna memorably appeared as Francesca Bloom, in the dark comedy, *A Butler Did It!*"



Alanna van Mierlo

You'll likely find them still acting in at least one show each year, in between performing acapella and singing barbershop.



Season Four at MTC

A deliciously wicked comedy by Joanna Murray-Smith and directed by award winning (*Incognito*, 2021), Brendan Ellis.

November– December 2023

This program is being generously sponsored by

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