SPEAKING IN TONGUES

Written by
Andrew Bovell

Directed by
Brendan Ellis



20th November to 5th December 2026

MELVILLE THEATRE COMPANY

act belong commit

Licensed for amateur performance

MELVILLE THEATRE COMPANY

MELVILLE MAZDA

act belong commit

This community theatre company that has been running for over 40 years.
Our first production was in 1983 and we have members who have been involved continuously since our first show.

As a theatre company we are committed to putting on high quality shows and this has been recognised through many awards throughout the years.

We are run by a dedicated committee of volunteers and every aspect of our productions is put together by volunteers. We are lucky to have an exceptional group of members.
Some bring professional theatre experience and some bring willingness to learn.
All bring a huge amount of enthusiasm and we value each and every one of them.

If you enjoyed the show and would like to find out more about how to get involved we would love to hear from you!

Acknowledgement of Country

This theatre stands on Country where jarrah forests once grew, and where Yagan called his lookout and home.
We pay our respects to the Elders of this place and acknowledge their continuing connection with Country.
We acknowledge the Bibbulmun People as the traditional custodians of this land where the koolbardi (magpie) sings and the biyara (banksia) grows.
The Noongar People have a rich history of coming together as a community to share through dance, stories and songs.
It is a privilege to gather, perform and reflect on Whadjuk Noongar Boodjar.

Become a MTC member today

Memberships purchased in this final season of 2026 carry over to our full 2027 season.

Members receive:
Discount tickets to shows
Invitations to MTC events
The ability to get involved in shows!

Family Membership (up to 4 family members) $20

Individual Membership $10

@melvilletheatrecompany

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The show is in two approximately one hour acts, with a 20 minute interval.

Synopsis

Nine lives weave together in ways known and unknown in Andrew Bovell's piercing drama, *Speaking in Tongues*.

Leon is married to Sonja, Jane is married to Pete. By chance, each spouse meets the other's one night and wind up in motel rooms.

A lonely man, Neil, pines for the love of his life, Sarah, who moved on decades ago. A woman, Valerie, goes missing and her stiletto was last seen in Nick's car.

Love, marriage, infidelity and betrayal are all tackled in this tense, electrifying play about the relationship between lovers, strangers, and the infinite ways people may wound one another.

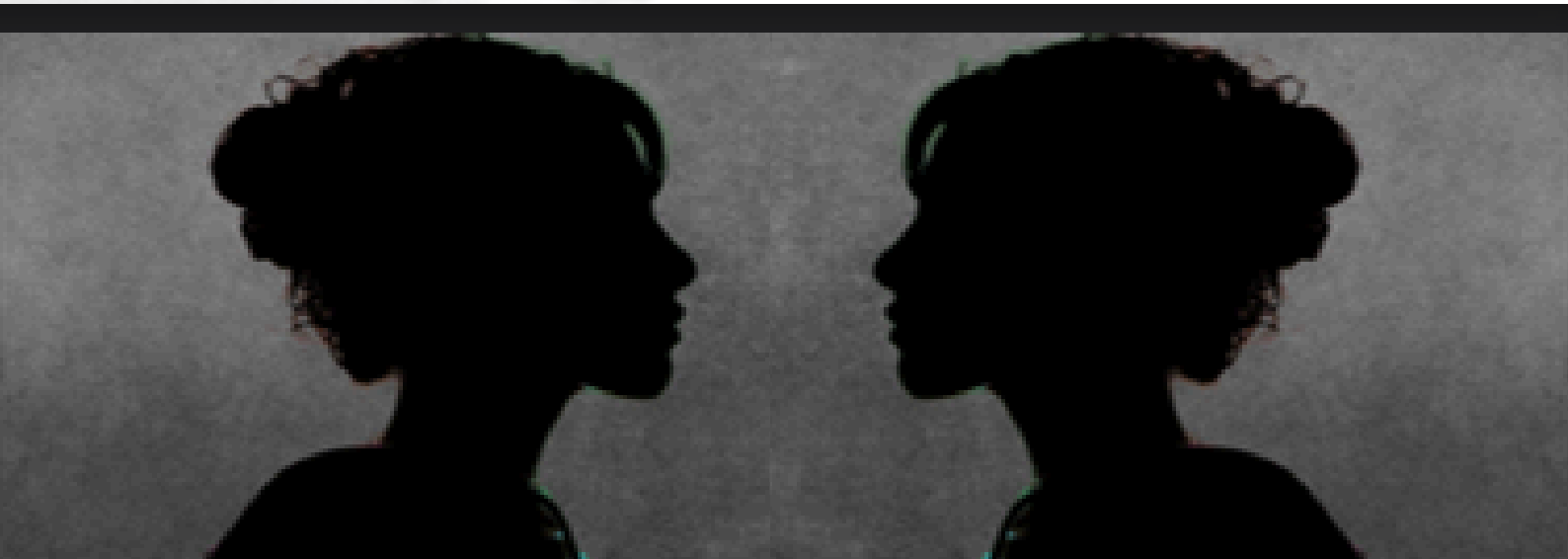
Content Warning

This production contains strong language, adult themes and content that may be disturbing to some. More details are available on the Melville Theatre Company website.

Music

Music in this production is royalty free, licensed through APRA or under creative commons.

This includes:
Bittersweet, *Ghost Story*, *Heart of Nowhere* and *Soaring*
by Kevin MacLeod (incompetech.com)
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Brendan Ellis has over twenty years of experience in theatre as an actor and director. Plays he has directed include *Ninety* (Garrick Theatre), *Cloudstreet* (Old Mill Theatre), *Constellations* (Irish Theatre Players), and *Incognito* (Melville Theatre). Most recently he directed *The Last Days of Judas* Iscariot with Irish Theatre Players.

Director's Note

People who saw the previous play that I directed have noticed the title of this one and astutely asked if it explores religion as well. *Speaking in Tongues* is simply a clever metaphor that Andrew Bovell has become famous for amongst our team, but it does refer to what I feel is the ultimate theme of this show: being unable to communicate your needs and desires to those close to you, thus leaving them unfulfilled. With your partner unable to meet your needs, what values will you compromise to have them met?

I have joked with the cast that the characters might have a better chance of finding happiness without hurting each other if this play was set in 2026, where there is greater social understanding of emotional and mental health, and where polyamory is more commonly practiced. Unfortunately for them it takes place in 1996, which makes me cringe to recognise as being thirty years ago! I had considered setting the show in the modern day, but everyone owning a smartphone would invalidate an important plot point where a husband misses his wife's messages left on their answering machine at home, that she has left from a trusty Telstra phone booth. Speaking of which, I am really proud of how we represented the booth as I did not feel it was worth the money or effort to fly in an accurate recreation from above the stage.

Being set in an Australian city (state unimportant) in 1996 allowed me to invoke that era through music, which you will notice both within the play itself and in our house music. I hope these songs give a pleasant dose of nostalgia for those of you who experienced that time, and for those of you who didn't, you are welcome for being introduced to some bangers.

As you may be able to tell as soon as the opening lines of the play, the thoughtfully written dialogue is incredibly complex to learn and perform, and I would like to acknowledge my dedicated cast for putting in the hard work required to pull it off while simultaneously portraying the deep and complicated emotions their characters are experiencing. To do this whilst performing in the round is a challenge that they have all embraced, and with that close proximity to the audience there is a sense of vulnerability and discomfort that is ultimately very rewarding, which I found necessary to provide the sense of intimacy that I have felt was missing in previous productions of this show.

Finally I would like to thank the committee of Melville Theatre for their overwhelming support in making sure the show hit the stage, whose encouragement of my ambitious ideas has made it a joy to be directing for them once again. I would particularly like to thank Vanessa Jensen who enthusiastically offered to be my stage manager and has subsequently poured many hours into seemingly unrelated tasks such as sourcing and transporting seating, buying lamps, requesting music rights and tracking the ever-changing blocking, and doing all of it with a sense of grace, humour and patience that I have tremendous respect for. This show is what it is because of your efforts.



Cast

Pete, Nick & John	Patrick Downes	**Leon & Neil**	Shivas Lindsay
Sonja & Valerie	Maree Grayden	**Jane & Sarah**	Madelaine Page

Crew

Stage Manager	Vanessa Jensen
Lighting Design	Lars Jensen
Sound Design	Alan Gill
Lighting/Sound Operation	Brendan Ellis
Intimacy Co-Ordinator	Michelle Ezzy
Ottomon Construction	Lars Jensen
Ottoman Upholstery	Michelle Sharp and Kate Welch
Costumes	Michelle Sharp
Publicity & Photography	Alan Gill
Poster & Program Design	Ruhama Rowe
Front of House	Julia Calvert and her volunteers

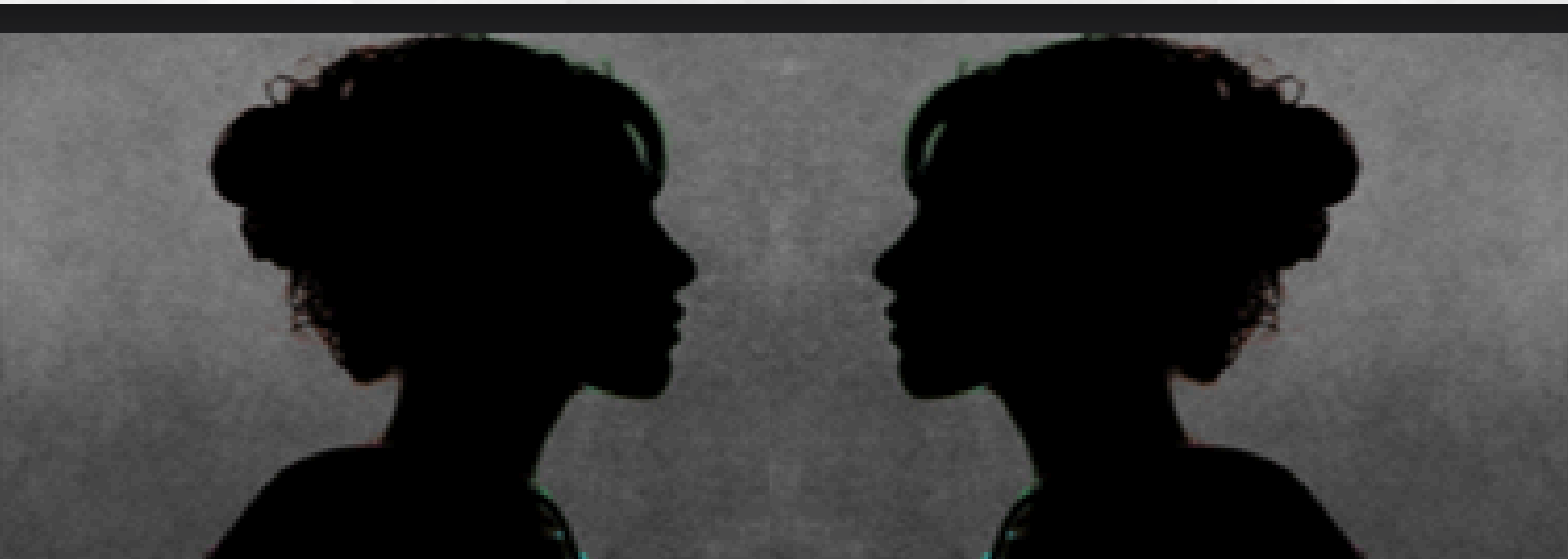
Special Thanks

Geoff Leeder, Julia Calvert, Virgina Moore–Price and Stirling Theatre for the loan of lamps.

Old Mill Theatre for the loan of Speed Drapes.

Applecross Senior High School for the loan of the auditorium chairs.

Peter Bloor, Barbara Lovell, Michelle Sharp, Clare Talbot and Julia Calvert for setting up our unique “in the round” space.



Cast



Pete, Nick & John

Patrick Downes has been involved in the Perth theatre scene for over twenty years. He got his start with the WA Youth Theatre Company where he was mentored in performance and theatre-making. In a previous life he performed, directed, produced, built sets, rigged lights, ran publicity, and was general manager of his own company Upstart Theatre Co. Some of Patrick's credits include: *Macbeth* (Grads Theatre Co.), *The Zoo Story* (ITP), *Richard III* (Grads Theatre Co.), *Arcadia* (Harbour Theatre), Julius Caesar (Roleystone Theatre), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Roleystone Theatre), *Henry V* (Blak Yak), and *Romeo and Juliet* (Upstart Theatre Co.), and *The Lisbon Traviata* (Garrick Theatre), for which he won Best Supporting Actor at the 2024 Finley Awards. *Speaking in Tongues* will be Patrick's second appearance at Melville Theatre, having previously appeared in *Breaking the Code* earlier this year. He has also thoroughly enjoyed reconnecting with Brendan for their first collaboration since their WA Youth Theatre Co days back in 2012.



Sonja & Valerie

Maree Grayden is delighted to be treading the boards again for Melville Theatre, following her most recent performance as Lindy Chamberlain in *Letters to Lindy*, directed by Melissa Merchant (2025).

Maree has acted and worked in various and vast theatre contexts, sharing the privilege of working with numerous players and companies throughout her time in theatre; as an actor, director, producer and arts educator and arts leader for the past 25 years.

Speaking in Tongues will be firmly etched in her memory as one of the most challenging scripts to rehearse, long after the words of Sonja and Valerie fade. She is looking forward to sharing this play, carefully crafted by director Brendan Ellis, and sharing the unique characters and playing space with such a talented cast and the audience. Maree would like to acknowledge the creative team for all their work to create such a special show.





Leon & Neil

Shivas Lindsay makes his MTC debut in *Speaking in Tongues*, diving headfirst into one of Andrew Bovell's most intricate works. Having learned his craft on the job rather than through formal training, he found the director's intensive course earlier this year invaluable preparation for the play's complexity. Performing in the round has added an extra challenge, while trading his usual larger-than-life characters for recognisably human ones has proved both daunting and rewarding.

Shivas made his stage debut in a GRADS production of *Macbeth* and has since returned to Shakespeare several times, notably as Oberon opposite Madelaine (Jane/Sarah) in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Don John in Marloo's *Much Ado About Nothing*. He has also appeared regularly with the Irish Theatre Players, earning Finley Award recognition for his portrayal of Gus in Pinter's *The Dumb Waiter*. Other favourite roles include Creon in GRADS' *Antigone* and Koroviev in the company's anarchic *The Master and Margarita* at The Old Mill. It's not all high drama, though. He also relishes panto Dame roles, embracing every outrageous costume, terrible jokes, and opportunity to shamelessly steal the spotlight.

Shivas is deeply grateful for the talented cast and crew assembled by Brendan and for the chance to discover Bovell's remarkable writing through this production. He now looks forward to a well-earned beer afterwards and hearing your take on what, exactly, just happened.



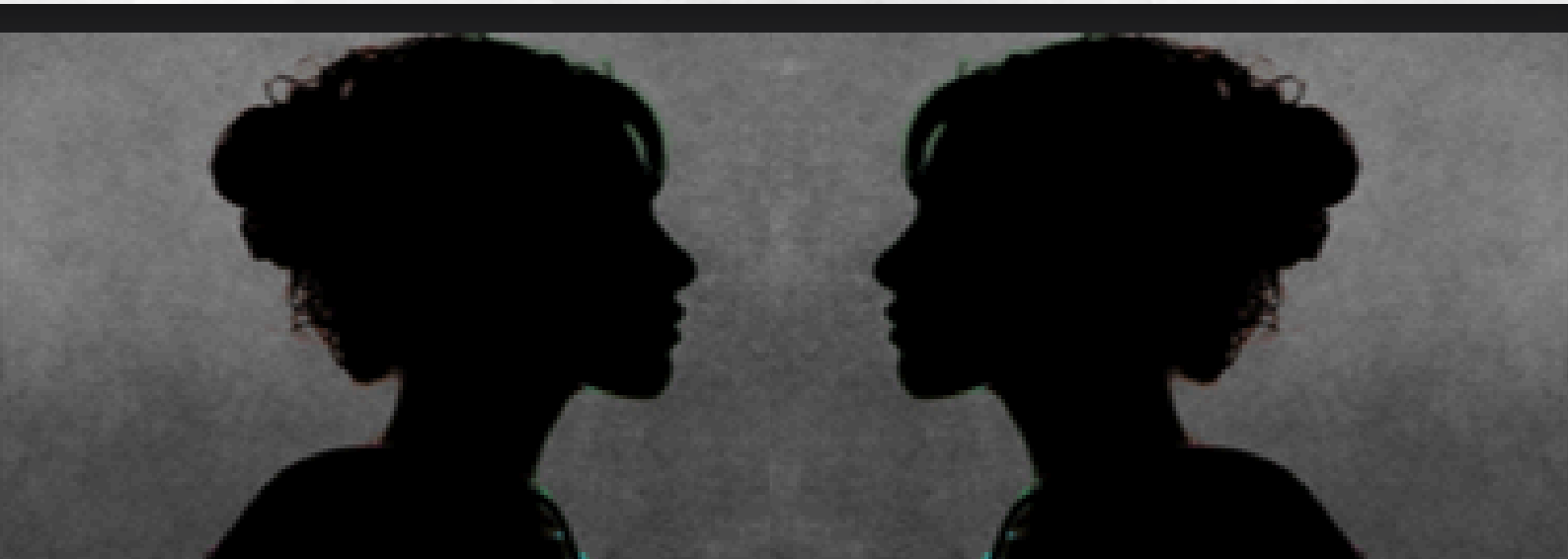
Jane & Sarah

Madelaine Page returns to the MTC stage for her fourth production, excited (and only a little terrified) to take on *Speaking in Tongues*. Having always been drawn to Bovell's writing, Madelaine jumped at the chance to explore the play's complex, interwoven story.

Madelaine has worked with Brendan Ellis on a number of memorable shows over the years, including *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* and *Constellations*. She's grateful to be part of a process driven by such an ambitious and collaborative creative team.

Most recently, she appeared in Theatre 180's *Moments in the Park* and continues to flex her improvisation muscles with Cluedunnit's murder mysteries.

At times, untangling *Speaking in Tongues* has felt almost impossible, but working through the confusion together has made it all the more rewarding. Madelaine feels lucky to share the stage with such a talented, hardworking and generous group of humans.



MELVILLE THEATRE COMPANY

A story of imagination, survival and finding light in the darkness.

STORIES IN THE DARK

BY DEBRA OSWALD

DIRECTED BY CLARE TALBOT



act belong commit

February 12 to 27
2027