



Presented by Arts House, Belvoir and post

post

Oedipus Schmoedipus

**Arts House,
North Melbourne Town Hall**

Wed 6 – Sun 10 May 2015

1hr 10min, no interval

Post-Show Q&A Thu 7, 8.50pm

**Warning: Violence, blood, death and suicide scenes,
loud noises, strobe lighting and coarse language.
Suitable for ages 16+**

Oedipus Schmoedipus has been supported by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body; Belvoir; Performing Lines; and the City of Melbourne through Arts House.

**artshouse.com.au
postpresentspost.com**

ARTS HOUSE





Creative Team

Written by post **Zoë Coombs Marr, Mish Grigor & Natalie Rose**
after Aeschylus, Anon, Barrie, Behn, Boucicault, Büchner, Chekhov, Euripides, Gogol, Goldsmith, Gorky, Hugo, Ibsen, Jonson, Marlowe, Mayakovsky, Molière, Pirandello, Plautus, Racine, Seneca, Shakespeare, Sophocles, Strindberg, Voltaire, Wedekind, Wilde et al

Directors **Zoë Coombs Marr & Mish Grigor**
Set & Costume Designer **Robert Cousins**

Lighting Designer **Matthew Marshall**

Lighting Realiser/Head Electrician

Ross Graham

Composer & Sound Designer **James Brown**

Dramaturge **Anne-Louise Sarks**

Fight Director **Scott Witt**

Stage Manager **Allison Jeny**

Assistant Stage Manager **Brittany Jones**

Production Manager **Eliza Maunsell**

Produced by **Belvoir & post**

With **Zoë Coombs Marr, Mish Grigor & a multitude of wonderful volunteers**

This production of **Oedipus Schmoedipus** opened at Belvoir St Theatre on 11 January 2014

Images **Ellis Parinder**

post

post's work often deals with the political; it attempts to engage with issues of control, gender, identity and politics in ways that are funny, engaging and accessible (but not always). post are concerned with the moment of theatre, live connection and the truly absurd, drag, imposters, impressions, bad acting, boy genii, *The Biggest Loser*, birth, death, auditions, shamans, epitaphs, avatars, and those nightmares where you have to give a speech, but haven't got any pants on.

post's works include *Oedipus Schmoedipus* (Belvoir St Theatre for Sydney Festival), *Who's the Best?* (Sydney Theatre Company, Arts House, Brisbane Powerhouse, Brown's Mart Theatre for Darwin Festival, Mandurah Arts Centre), *Everything I Know About The Global Financial Crisis In One Hour* (Belvoir St Theatre) and *Shamelessly Glitzy Work* (Performance Space, Arts House, Brisbane Powerhouse).

In 2015 post is developing *That's Life*, working with a playwright to create an epic drama about three women who look and sound a lot like the members of post; and *The Post Internet*, where they will invent their own analogue version of the information superhighway.

Creators' Notes

We're writing this on the second day of summer, but you're reading it far into the future. Christmas has come and gone (hope the weather was nice) and it's 2015. Elvis would have been 80 (it was just his birthday on the 8th of January) but of course he's dead. He's been dead since 1977, which was at least three years before any of us were born.

You might be reading this before the show, sitting in your seats waiting for those pesky loiterers in the foyer to hurry up and finish that wine. We're backstage, waiting for them too.

Some time ago on the south coast of NSW we were surrounded by a pile of books, great plays written between 2000 and 20 years ago, looking for all the bits about death. We wanted to know more about it. The great universal. Death – not mourning, not loss, not sadness. But death. Our death. One's own death. That impossible notion that you will cease to be. We wondered if the great minds of the theatre had anything to teach us about what it would be – to not be – any more.

For us, this is a strange pile of books to be surrounded by. Usually we write and perform new works. Someone challenged us a couple of years ago on this – 'Would you ever do a classic?' We tend to go for impossible challenges (trying to explain the global financial crisis in an hour without any research, or spending a year trying to figure out which one of us is empirically, categorically 'the best', for instance). So while not entirely against 'doing a play', we thought, if we were going to do a classic, we would probably do all of the classics. At once. And why not tackle death at the same time?

'The Canon' has a pretty intimate relationship with death, after all. You may already know this, but there are quite a few deaths in there. Murders. Suicides. Infanticide. Patricide. Matricide. Regicide. Also, most of its authors are dead.

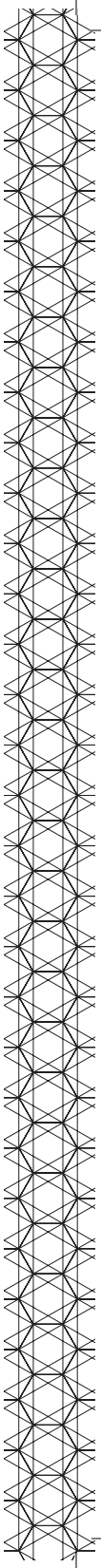
Dead people and Dead words breathed into life again and again by university dramatic societies and budding Kenneth Branaghs everywhere. An author's 'legacy' equals a kind of immortality. As nearly *all* of these 'immortals' are white men, this then is a kind of immortality that has traditionally been inaccessible to anyone else.

Imbued with an almost magic authority, these texts are handed to us, thrust upon us, deemed important and tattooed on our brains. They've become a collected wisdom, which has somehow withstood the test of time.

And some of them are quite good, some touch us, some have language that is casually, or forcefully, transcendental. But others are a bit shit. But they're universal, right? They speak to, and for, all of us. Right? And so we keep putting them on.

Their restaging though, maintaining the narratives, leaves the original messages, hierarchies and patterns unchallenged. The sanctity of the truth of the work and its rightful place in the canon is reinforced. By reordering the raw ingredients, removing the parts from the meaning of their fictional contexts, we hope to uncover something larger: a portrait, not of the playwright's vision, but of ourselves.

So, we don't normally make 'plays' in the traditional sense, but there is a reason





we make theatre. While we're very cool subversive contemporary theatre makers now, we're also drama nerds from way back. This is our reanimation of the corpse of the canon we once loved, a cutting up, a dismembering, a ritualistic, shamanistic channelling. A wake. It is both reverent and deeply irreverent. We take being silly very seriously.

The people you are seeing perform with us tonight entered the theatre for the first time three hours ago. They haven't rehearsed, beyond a brief run-down. They are us, and you, and me... and themselves, obviously. Just people trying to find something sublime in the

cacophony. Possibly asking (as we are), 'What even is this? We're all going to die!'

So hopefully those foyer loiterers have finished their wine by now. In a second the lights will go down on you and up on the stage, and then we'll do some things, and then when we've finished, you and we and everyone on the stage and in the building will be an hour closer to our deaths.

Thanks for choosing to spend that hour with us.

Zoë Coombs Marr, Mish Grigor & Natalie Rose

The Thing about Death

I cannot endure my own littleness unless I can translate it into meaningfulness on the largest possible level.¹ Death is not the greatest of evils; satisfaction is death.² As long as I have a want, I have a reason for living.³ I like living. I have sometimes been wildly, despairingly, acutely miserable, racked with sorrow, but through it all I still know quite certainly that just to be alive is a grand thing,⁴ and whether you think of it as heavenly or as earthly, if you love life, immortality is no consolation for death.⁵ But how do I know that loving life is not a delusion? How do I know that in hating death I am not like a man who, having left home in his youth, has forgotten the way back?⁶ Today we are having a hard time living because we are so bent on outwitting death.⁷ There's no such thing as old age, there is only sorrow⁸; to want to die, and not be able to⁹; to leave the company of the living before you die.¹⁰ I want to die in my sleep like my grandfather... Not screaming and yelling like the passengers in his car.¹¹

I don't know where this road is going to lead
All I know is where we've been
And what we've been through
If we get to see tomorrow
I hope it's worth all the wait
It's so hard to say goodbye to
yesterday.¹²

Life does not cease to be funny when people die any more than it ceases to be serious when people laugh.¹³ Humor is always gallows humor, and in this case you will learn it on the gallows. Are you ready for it?¹⁴

¹ Ernest Becker (cancer, 6/3/1974)

² George Bernard Shaw (renal failure due to injuries sustained by falling while pruning a tree, 2/11/1950)

³ George Bernard Shaw

⁴ Agatha Christie (natural causes, 12/1/1976)

⁵ Simone de Beauvoir (pneumonia, 14/4/1986)

⁶ Chuang Tzu (unknown cause, 286 BC)

⁷ Simone de Beauvoir

⁸ Edith Wharton (stroke, 11/8/1937)

⁹ Sophocles (disputed cause, 406 BC)

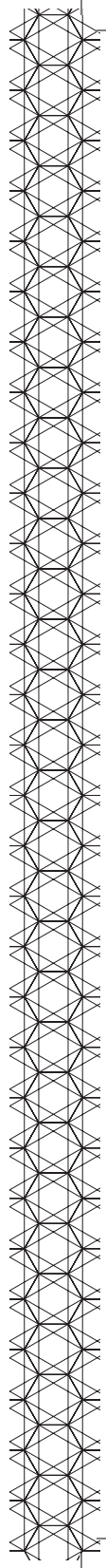
¹⁰ Seneca (suffocation in bath, 65 AD)

¹¹ Will Shriner (TBA)

¹² Boyz II Men (TBA)

¹³ George Bernard Shaw

¹⁴ Hermann Hesse, Steppenwolf (cerebral haemorrhage, 9/8/1962)





Biographies

Zoë Coombs Marr

Writer/Director/Performer

Zoë Coombs Marr is an artist, writer, theatre-maker and comedian, and one third of the collective post. She grew up in Grafton, New South Wales, where she and her best friend wrote and staged a musical instead of going to Schoolies week. Her play *Is This Thing On?* recently premiered at Belvoir. Her solo works include *And That Was The Summer That Changed My Life* (2011), *Gone Off* (2012) and *Dave* (2013). She is a regular on ABC2's *Dirty Laundry Live*, and in 2006 won the National Poetry Slam Championships under dubious circumstances.

Mish Grigor

Writer/Director/Performer

Mish Grigor is an artist based in Sydney, and one third of the collective post. In 2014 she presented *Man O Man* at Arts House for the Festival of Live Art and at Vital Statistix, Adelaide. In 2015 she is writing *EMPIRE* for Belgian-based company, Reckless Sleepers, developing a new work for Punctum in Castlemaine, and will present *The Talk* through Field Theory in September.

Other performance works include *We Will Build Our Own Mountain* (PICA) and *The Short Message Service* (Arts Centre Melbourne/Next Wave). Mish Grigor also works as a visual arts curator, having co-curated the Tiny Stadiums Festival from 2009 to 2011, directed Quarterbred, co-directed The Imperial Panda Festival, and presented *WINNER!* at Firstdraft Gallery in 2013.

Natalie Rose

Writer

Natalie Rose is a theatre-maker and one third of the collective post. Her work has been seen at FUNPARK and Belvoir for the 2014 Sydney Festival, Sydney Theatre Company, PACT centre for emerging artists, Arts House, Brisbane Festival and Next

Wave Festival. She has worked extensively with young people for the past 14 years at Shopfront, Bankstown Youth Development Services, Urban Theatre Projects, and in the UK. Her most recent children's theatre work, *The Drawing*, was presented at Blacktown Arts Centre and PACT centre for emerging artists in 2015.

Robert Cousins

Set & Costume Designer

Robert Cousins has worked extensively throughout Australia, with set design credits for companies including Belvoir, Opera Australia (Melbourne *Ring Cycle* 2013), Sydney Theatre Company, Malthouse Theatre, Lucy Guerin Inc, Sydney Dance Company and the State Theatre Company of South Australia; and internationally for Almeida Theatre, London. He has designed sets and costumes for Sydney Theatre Company, Shaun Parker, the State Theatre Company of South Australia, Comeout01 and Brink Productions. For film, he was production designer for *Candy*, *Romulus*, *My Father* and *Balibo*. He wrote and edited 25 *Belvoir Street*, a history of the first 25 years of theatre at Belvoir.

Matthew Marshall

Lighting Designer

Matthew Marshall has designed for theatre, opera and dance. His credits include work for Belvoir, Perth International Arts Festival, Griffin Theatre Company, Sydney Theatre Company, Sydney Opera House, OzOpera, Sydney Festival, Perth Theatre Company, Showqueen, Performing Lines, New Zealand Dance Company and Black Swan State Theatre Company. He received a 2012 Helpmann Award nomination for Best Lighting Design for *The Red Tree* (Perth Festival/Barking Gecko Theatre Company).

Ross Graham

Lighting Realiser/Head Electrician

Ross Graham's lighting design credits include work for Sydney Theatre Company, Melbourne Theatre Company, Hayes Theatre Company,

Darlinghurst Theatre Company, Theatre Works, Red Stitch, Ensemble Theatre, Griffin Theatre, B Sharp, Sydney Chamber Opera, ATYP, Milk Crate Theatre, Deckchair Theatre, Arthur Theatre Co and Carriageworks. Off-broadway credits include *Beirut* and *True West* for Athena Theatre Company; *Dialogues of Travelers* for Kirk Theatre; and *Atomic: The Musical*. For Belvoir he was Associate Lighting Designer for *Angels in America Parts 1 & 2*.

James Brown

Composer & Sound Designer

Sydney-based composer and sound designer, James Brown, works collaboratively with local and international theatre companies to produce live soundtracks and visuals for performances, television, animation and games. His credits include sound scores for *The Lee Ellroy Show*, *Messiah Run!*, *We Was Them* and *Nomads* (SOIT, Belgium); *Copper Promises* (Victoria Hunt); *Intermission*, *Cannibal* and *Thousands* (Matthew Day); *Hole in the Wall* (Matt Prest and Claire Britton); *Who's the Best?* (post); *Inflection* and *I met you in a city* (Unhappen); *TRTH* and *The Memory Progressive* (Phantom Limbs); *Scope* (The Australian Ballet); and *Top of the Lake* (Jane Campion).

Anne-Louise Sarks

Dramaturge

Actor, director and dramaturge, Anne-Louise Sarks, is a Resident Director at Belvoir. She has previously been Artistic Director of The Hayloft Project, Associate Artist at Belvoir and Director-in-Residence at Malthouse Theatre. For Belvoir, she directed *Stories I Want to Tell You in Person*, directed and co-wrote the multiple-award-winning *Medea*, and was assistant director on *The Wild Duck* and dramaturge on *Thyestes*. Other theatre credits include works for Melbourne Theatre Company and The Hayloft Project. Her acting credits include work for B Sharp/The Hayloft Project, Melbourne Theatre Company, Malthouse Theatre and Arena Theatre Company.

Scott Witt

Fight Director

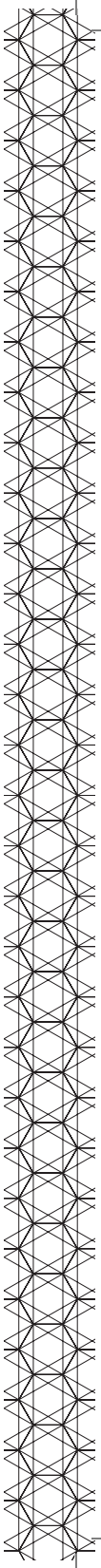
Scott Witt has close to 30 years experience as a writer/adaptor, fight director, movement consultant, actor, director and clown. As a fight director and movement consultant his theatre credits number well over 200 professional productions, including works for Belvoir, Sydney Theatre Company, Bell Shakespeare, Sport for Jove, Opera Australia and Queensland Theatre Company, among others. He is also Artistic Director of the International Order of the Sword and the Pen.

Belvoir

When Sydney's Nimrod Theatre building was threatened with redevelopment in 1984, more than 600 theatre lovers and arts, entertainment and media professionals formed a syndicate to buy it and save this unique Sydney performance space. Thirty years later, under Artistic Director Ralph Myers and Executive Director Brenna Hobson, Belvoir engages Australia's most prominent and promising playwrights, directors, actors and designers to realise a dynamic, challenging and visionary annual season. Belvoir also regularly tours both nationally and internationally.

Belvoir St Theatre has nurtured the talents of many of Australia's renowned actors, writers and directors. Its reputation as one of our most innovative and acclaimed theatre companies has been cemented by landmark productions including *The Wild Duck*, *The Diary of a Madman*, *The Blind Giant is Dancing*, *The Book of Everything*, *Cloudstreet*, *Measure for Measure*, *Keating!*, *Parramatta Girls*, *Exit the King*, *The Alchemist*, *Hamlet*, *Waiting for Godot*, *The Sapphires*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, *Stuff Happens* and *Medea*.

Belvoir receives government support from the Major Performing Arts Board of the Australia Council and Arts NSW.





Thank You

post would like to thank the cast, crew and creative team, everyone at Belvoir, everyone at Performing Lines, Clare Grant, Emma Saunders, Kate Johnson, Sandra (deceased), Mabelle, the old Queen Street Studios/Brand X, Hazel (missing, presumed dead), all at Bundanon, all at P Space especially Jeff and Bec, all at Arts House, all at Brisbane Powerhouse, all at UTP, God, our friends, God, our families, God. And Mark Mitchell.

Arts House

Arts House presents contemporary arts in programs encompassing performance, festivals, live art, residencies and other activities that nurture, support and stimulate cultural engagement. We value work in which artists at different stages of their careers, as well as our diverse audiences and communities, are actively involved in creating an imaginative, just and environmentally sustainable global society.

Arts House's programs include two curated public seasons of multidisciplinary work each year. Approximately half of this work is selected through an Expression of Interest process. We seek artists who are responding to the urgent issues of our time in imaginative and surprising ways, taking artistic risks and offering multiple ways for audiences to engage with or co-author their work.

For more information, please contact us on the details below.

521 Queensberry Street
North Melbourne VIC 3051
(03) 9322 3720
artshouse@melbourne.vic.gov.au
artshouse.com.au

ARTS HOUSE

