



LADIES IN BLACK

Book by Carolyn Burns.
Music and Lyrics by Tim Finn.
From the novel **WOMEN IN BLACK**
by Madeleine St John

26 OCT - 7 DEC

By arrangement with David Spicer Productions

Director's Note

Spoilers Alert: Read after you've seen the show!

The Genesian Theatre was thrilled when it got the rights to perform *Ladies in Black* in its first year of non-professional release. What's not to love about the show? It has a feel-good story set in a simpler era of Australian history - a time of hats and gloves. Spirits were high post WW2, possibilities were opening up and Australia was embracing immigration (though a little reluctantly) with the move to a more multicultural society. Tim Finn suggested that this musical isn't just 'joyful', it's three times joyful, with all its happy endings and I think you will have enjoyed the music, the dancing and the vibrant characters.

As a director, I find *Ladies in Black* refreshing on so many levels. Firstly, the diversity in the characters working at Goodes and their developing relationships interested me from the start. I admire how Carolyn Burn's script shows us the ladies work and private lives. I love how the story is an interweaving of four main women's journeys, as each has issues that have to be faced and conquered. Moreover, the men's characters are not tokenistic either, which means that their personalities and relationships are significant in developing the story.

Tim Finn is a master song writer and to his credit, he has delivered a musical with so many memorable tunes: the sassy 'Ladies in Black', the catchy jingle 'I got it at Goodes', the irreverent 'The Bastard Song', the light-hearted 'A Nice Australian Girl', the cheeky 'I Just Kissed a Continental', the joyous 'Always be Happy'. Or maybe you'll love Finn's sensitivity when he allows us into the minds of the characters in 'A Proper Family Man', 'Lizette', 'Model Gowns' or 'Lesley or Lisa'?

It's been a delight to do the choreography. Importantly, I wanted to make sure each song had a distinctive style and mood. Whenever possible, I emphasised our cheeky, Aussie humour, which I believe is something unique and needs to be celebrated, especially in Australian theatre. You might have noticed homages to a variety of eras and styles? Although our stage has been reduced by one third for this production (to accommodate the band), I think you'll find there's nothing 'small' about *Ladies in Black*. It's a big musical with a big heart.

Finally, it's been a pleasure to have worked with so many talented and creative people and without their dedication and enthusiasm, the show could not have been realised. I hope you enjoyed the night, went home feeling refreshed and when you next go shopping in the city, you might think of the Ladies in Black.

Debbie Smith
Director

Madeleine St John St John was an Australian writer, the first Australian woman to be shortlisted for the Booker Prize, and the author of four novels.

Carolyn Burns Burns is a New Zealand TV scriptwriter, dramaturg and playwright who has written a large number of stage adaptations and TV drama series as well as original theatrical works.

Tim Finn Finn is a New Zealand singer and musician whose career includes forming the band Split Enz, collaboration with Crowded House, and musical work with his brother Neil as the Finn Brothers.

DEBBIE SMITH - Director / Choreographer Debbie has been a member of the Genesian Theatre for over 20 years, was on the board and recently was awarded Life Membership. For the GTC she has directed numerous plays including *Journey's End*, *Frankenstein*, *Far from the Madding Crowd*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. She has worked as choreographer on *Northanger Abbey*, *By Jeeves*, *Dickens Down Under*, *Our House*, *Star Child*, and *Enright on the Night*. Other directing highlights include *Pygmalion* and *Educating Rita* (Riverside Lyric Ensemble), *Come Blow Your Horn* and *Cosi* (Lane Cove Theatre), *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and *Enchanted April* (Hunters Hill Theatre), and *Deathtrap* and *Elephant Man* (Endgame Productions). She has been a regular director for the Short and Sweet Festival. Moving to Tassie.

OMID MOHEB ZADEH - Musical Director Omid studied Bachelor of Music majoring in classical piano performance and conducting from Australian Institute of Music (AIM) under many prominent teachers such as Dr Wojciech Wisniewski, Dr Suzanna Hlinka, and Dr Alistair Noble. From early on with his passion for conducting, he received the assistant conducting position for the AIM Chamber Orchestra and started his conducting journey with studying under the tutelage of Sarah-Grace Williams. Later on, he received a scholarship from The Metropolitan Orchestra as a mentee to further study orchestral conducting. Omid has conducted for various ensembles, choirs and orchestras such as North Sydney Youth Orchestra, North Sydney Wind Band and Concert Band, Melbourne Youth Orchestra, and Sydney Male Choir. He also has worked on many musical productions around Sydney such as *Sweeney Todd*, *Reefer Madness*, and *Into the Woods*. This year he conducted *Ladies in Black* for Strathfield Musical Society. Nutella addict.

ELIZABETH MUNRO - Assistant Director Elizabeth grew up in the musical theatre. She has been an active member of the Genesians for 6 years, most notably as the Stage Manager for *Three Sisters* (2015), *Our House* (2016), *Figaro* (2017), *The Unexpected Guest* (2018) and was Stage Manager for *Superhall!* (Shakespeare, NIDA, Puzzle Collective, 2017) Elizabeth directed a snappy little comedy *The Sure Thing* (David Ives, 2018) for the Genesian Members Festival. Elizabeth completed a director's course at NIDA, and this year has worked as Assistant Director and Production Manager on *A Room with a View* (E.M. Forster, GTC 2019). Without the same vim, vigour and bone density of youth, but with the same enthusiasm; *Ladies in Black* takes her back to her musical roots.

SUSAN CARVETH - Costume Design Susan has worked as the designer / costumier on dozens of Genesian productions - a few favourites being: *Figaro*, *Under Milkwood*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Three Musketeers*, *Far from the Madding Crowd*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *A Man for All Seasons*, *An Ideal Husband*, *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, *Witness for the Prosecution*, *Hay Fever*, *Murder on the Nile*, *Richard III*, *Frankenstein*, *Twelfth Night*, *Forsyte Saga*, *The 39 Steps*, and *Blood Wedding*. She has also worked for Opera Australia, the ABC and BBC as a costume coordinator, and costume maker for *Tall Poppeas* (Ondine Productions - Opera Bites) and *Deadhouse* (Blancmange Productions).

KYLE STEPHENS - Lighting and Sound Design Kyle is a freelance Sydney-based lighting, sound and all-rounder production designer. Eight years ago, he started his own company Kore Productions and has produced several independent theatrical productions. Recently he formed another company Konnect events, which specialises in AV production hire. He has worked for Sydney's Ensemble theatre as a programmer on *Appleton Ladies Potato Race*, *The Last Five Years*, and more recently *Fully Committed*. Kyle was a dome operator for *Dancing with the Stars* and for Keith Urban on his Sydney tour. During 2017-2018, Kyle directed, produced, designed and marketed Kore Productions *Reefer Madness*, *Heathers*, and *Keating* (the all-female musical we had to have). Kyle lives by the phrase he learnt in high school *less is more*.



ROSANNA HURLEY - Lesley (Lisa) Miles Rosanna is very happy be playing Lisa in *Ladies in Black*. Past credits include Enright on the Night (quartet, premiere), Cecily in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Elle Woods in *Legally Blonde*, Snowflake in *What Santa Does Other Days of the Year*, the Ghost in *Haunted*, Sandy in *Grease*, Marsinah in *Kismet*, and *The Phantom of the Opera* as the Princess in *Hannibal*. Other favourites include *La Cage Aux Folles*, *My Fair Lady*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Les Misérables*, *Singin' in the Rain*, *Chicago*, *Oklahoma*, *The Mikado*, and *Sunset Boulevard*. Thanking husband Marcus, for shout-outs in all his theatre program bios.

LIBERTY THIRSK - Fay Libby's stage debut was at aged eight, and with an average of 3 or 4 productions a year, she has a prolific number of stage credits to her name. Amongst them, the role of Alice in *Alice in Wonderland*. At fourteen years old, Libby played Abigail in *The Crucible* and soon after, she played Gwendolen in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, a performance which gained her a Canberra Area Theatre nomination for best actress. Last year with Rockdale Musical Society, she appeared in *Rock of Ages*. Libby continues her training, including attending a masterclass with American acting coach Larry Moss.



ELIZABETH MACGREGOR - Patty Elizabeth is delighted to be playing the role of Patty in *Ladies in Black*. Originally from Adelaide, Elizabeth joined the Genesian Theatre in 2012. Throughout her theatrical career, she has performed in over 40 plays and musicals. Her most memorable roles include: Morticia in *Addams Family Musical* (Stage Artz), Florence in *Chess* (Hills Musical Company), Victor/Victoria in *Victor/Victoria* (Hills Musical Company), Queen Elizabeth in *Richard III*, Milady in *Three Musketeers* (Genesian Theatre) and Buttercup in *HMS Pinafore* (G & S Society, SA). When not on a stage, Elizabeth loves gardening, cooking, and flamenco class.

SONIA ALLAN - Magda Sonia has a BA in (Theatre/Digital Media) from Charles Sturt Uni with training in performance, devised theatre, and script writing and an MA (English Literature) from the University of Sydney. She has recently returned from London where she spent the eight years working as an actor, jazz singer, and music teacher. Sonia has written, performed, and produced her own work for theatre and short films. A rather surreal, yet enjoyable career highlight was somehow finding herself in a large airline hanger in Lithuania, shooting a commercial for I Can't Believe It's Not Butter, which aired across the US. This is her first production with GTC.



KIRSTY REDMOND - Mrs Miles This is Kirsty's first appearance with the Genesian Theatre. Kirsty is thrilled to be playing the roles of Mrs Miles and Dawn, and is excited to be involved in such a new production of an authentically 'Australian' story. Prior to finding the Genesians, she was in the ensemble for *Sweeney Todd* (Manly Musical Society, 2017) and assisted with the props in *Wicked* (Manly Musical Society, 2017). Kirsty is an avid baker and has kept the cast and crew very happily fed with wonderful cakes throughout the rehearsal period. Kirsty also loves roller derby.

ANNA DESJARDINS - Miss Cartwright Anna has been involved with the theatre ever since her first role as the Little Mouse Deer in her Year 3 class play. Most recently, she has performed in *Ruddigore*, *Kiss Me Kate*, and *Cinderella* (Eastwood Uniting Church Musical Society 2015, 2016), *Moon Over Buffalo* and *Calendar Girls* (Hunters Hill Theatre 2017, 2018), and *The Unexpected Guest* and *A Room With A View* (Genesian Theatre 2018, 2019). When not on stage, Anna develops literacy lesson materials for schools and reads stories in funny voices to her children.



DENISE KITCHING - Mrs Crown Denise studied speech and drama at Trinity College London to Grade 8 and performed at the Genesian Theatre from 1969 - 1971. At the Guild Theatre she performed in productions including *Lost in Yonkers*, *Blithe Spirit*, *Night Must Fall*, and *Quartet*. From 2015 onwards, Denise has also acted in *Go Back for Murder*, *Dinkum Assorted*, *Nothing Personal*, *Arms and the Man*, and *Elephant Man*. She has studied the Michael Chekhov Acting Technique and appeared in films, notably *The Skydiver and the Scarecrow* which was awarded Best Australian Short at the Sydney Indie Film Festival 2017. She sings with a multicultural choir each week.



JENNY JACOBS - Miss Jacobs Jenny trained with Hayes Gordon at the Ensemble Theatre. More recently, she has acted at Phoenix Theatre, the Genesian Theatre, Hunters Hill Theatre, the Short and Sweet Festival, and Insomniac Theatre. Memorable roles include Bernarda *The House of Bernarda Alba*, Mrs Higgins *Pygmalion*, Aneesi *Motherhood Out Loud*, and Dawn *It's My Party and I'll Die if I Want To*. Her role as Liz in Roger Gimblett's play *Horizons* won her the Best Actress Award at the Norfolk Island Theatre Festival (2013). For most of her 18th year, Jenny was an awkward lady in black in designer fashions at David Jones. She hopes to do better this time.

FREYA MOORE - Joy Freya has been acting since she was 8 when she played the Dormouse in *Alice in Wonderland* (Pymble Players, 2010). She has been performing ever since: acting, dancing and singing at the Sydney Opera House multiple times. She plays in bands and is involved in school musicals, most recently playing Nancy in *Oliver* at Chatswood High School (2018), where she has just started Year 12. Freya is also an active member at The Theatre on Chester where she has been involved in 6 productions in both cast and crew roles. She recently attended the Arts Unit State Drama Camp.



ROBERT GREEN - Mr Miles Robert was born the same year in which *Ladies in Black* is set. Sydney has changed much in the intervening years, and Robert has seen, if not done, it all. He is thrilled to be returning to the Genesian stage as a dad, a role he also played in *The Fantasticks* (2011) and *Star Child* (2013), both staged at the Genesian Theatre. More recently, at the GTC he played the evil property developer in *Our House* (2016). Robert is a chorister with Sydney Philharmonia and the Great Synagogue, as well as a cabaret singer. All this he does when not practising law.

PAUL ADDERLEY - Stefan Paul is honoured to play Stefan, the intellectual refugee in *Ladies in Black*. A musical theatre enthusiast since 2011, Paul's previous roles include Arnold in *Happy Days* (Rockdale), The Lecturer in *Reefer Madness* (Rockdale), Cogsworth in *Beauty and The Beast* (Strathfield), Lazar Wolfe in *Fiddler on The Roof* (Rockdale), Carl Hanratty in *Catch Me If You Can* (Regals), Professor Porter in *Tarzan* (Canterbury) and recently, Alfred P Doolittle in *My Fair Lady* (Bankstown). He has also performed lead roles in many other shows for Ashfield Musical Society, Packemin and Bankstown Musical Society. Loves craft beer.



DOUG RUMBLE - Frank Doug has been performing since he was seven. Career highlights include the title role in *Jesus Christ Superstar*, as the King of England in *Spamalot*, Simon Stride in *Jekyll and Hyde*, Arvide Abernathy in *Guys and Dolls*, Max Detweiler in *The Sound of Music*, the Pirate King in *The Pirates of Penzance*, Monster in *Avenue Q*, and Big Ted in *Billy Buckett*, to name a few. This is his third production at the GTC having played Santa in *What Santa Does Other Days of the Year* and Doctor Bartolo in *Figaro*. Most recently, Doug played Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof*.

GREG THORNTON - Rudi Greg is delighted to be performing with Genesian Theatre, having previously appeared with the company in *The Fantasticks* and *The Star Child*. He is excited to be revisiting this gentle and charming Australian musical, after playing Rudi in the NSW amateur premiere with Strathfield Musical Society. Recent credits include Paul Seymour in *BIG The Musical*, Greg Madison in the Australian premiere of Broadway's hilarious comedy *It Shoulda Been You*, Red Farrell in another Australian musical *Summer Rain* and John Brooke in *Little Women*. Greg was last seen playing a 1950s European in Irving Berlin's political satire *Call Me Madam*.



Production

Director / Choreographer
Musical Director
Assistant Director
Set Design
Costume Design
Lighting and Sound Design
Production Manager
Set Construction

Rehearsal Pianists
Hair and Makeup Consultant
Stage Management Mentor
Photography
Film Director / Editor
Programme
Ticketing
Transport
Acknowledgements

Debbie Smith
Omid Moheb Zadeh
Elizabeth Munro
Debbie Smith
Susan Carveth
Kyle Stephens - Kore Productions
Debbie Smith, Elizabeth Munro
Peter Curtis, Paul Gilbert, Tom Fahy,
Members of the Company
Jenny Douglas, Belinda Tan
Sandra Bass
Danielle Brown
Vicki Skarratt Photography
Molly Haddon
Tom Massey
Shane Bates
Carlin Hurdis
Strathfield Musical Society -
Sharon Palmer, Grant Fraser,
audition readers and assistants

Crew

Stage Manager
Assistant Stage Manager
Lighting and Sound Operation

Amy Roberts
Millsya Theda Wongso
Ella Monti

Cast

Lesley (Lisa) Miles
Fay
Patty
Magda
Mrs Miles, Dawn, Lady in Black, Customer
Miss Cartwright, Myra
Mrs Crown Lady in Black, Customer, Barmaid
Miss Jacobs, Barmaid
Lady in Black, Joy, Customer
Mr Miles, Vronski, Doorman
Stefan, Fred, Doorman
Frank, Lloyd, Doorman
Rudi, Joe, Soldier, Customer

Rosanna Hurley
Liberty Thirsk
Elizabeth MacGregor
Sonia Allan
Kirsty Redmond
Anna Desjardins
Denise Kitching
Jenny Jacobs
Freya Moore
Robert Green
Paul Adderley
Doug Rumble
Greg Thornton

About the Genesian Theatre

The Genesian Theatre Company celebrates our 75th year as a company in 2019! For 65 years we have been operating from our home at 420 Kent St in the Sydney CBD. We boast among our alumni numerous household names in Australian theatre and film such as Angela Punch, Bryan Brown, Baz Luhrmann, Coral Lansbury, Judi Farr, John Bell, Peter Carroll, and Nick Enright. We are also just as proud of the hundreds of other talented actors, directors, stage managers, set and costume designers, lighting and sound specialists, stage and production staff who have contributed to Sydney's unique little theatre. We are particularly proud of all our members who volunteer their time to work Front of House to help you enjoy your visit to the Genesian Theatre.

Over the years the company has developed into a theatre providing a training ground for young theatre professionals and a place where those who love the theatre can meet, share, and extend their knowledge of the performing arts. The Genesian Theatre Company is one of Sydney's most active theatre companies. In addition to six main stage productions each year we run classes, workshops, and many other activities.

The building which houses the Genesian Theatre Company was originally St John's Church, and dates from 1868. It served as both a church and a poor school until 1932 when it became the Kursaal Theatre, housing the Sydney Repertory Company. In 1938 it became the first Matthew Talbot Hostel. Since 1954 it has been the home of the Genesian Theatre Company which was formed in 1944.

The Genesian Theatre Company acknowledges the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation as the traditional custodians of the land our theatre stands on.

Membership

If you're interested in acting, directing, stage management, sound, lights, publicity, admin, etc, or if you just want to experience being a member of the group, we would welcome you as a member. You don't need to be experienced, we can provide training and can cater to different levels of involvement. Please see our web site for further information.

Coming next...

