

Sunnybank Theatre Group
in association with Australian Plays presents

EVENTIDE



by Bianca Butler Reynolds
Directed by Nathaniel Young

17 Sept - 2 Oct, 2021

The play takes place in the Murdoch family home in Eventide, a fictional small town on the east coast of Australia, over a period of nine days in May, 2017.

From the Playwright

I wrote *Eventide* because I wanted to dissect the nuclear family. The play formed part of my thesis while undertaking a PhD at QUT during 2016-2019. I was looking at family relationships through a psychological lens – wanting to understand the unique and powerful bonds that form between parents, children and siblings in those formative years in the family home. Why do we so desperately crave our parents' approval, and fear their judgment or dismissal? Why do we fall into such competitive dynamics with our brothers and sisters, always envying the higher status we perceive them to hold? And – perhaps most interestingly – why do these familial complexes still hold such sway over us in our adult lives? Why is it that, as soon as we set foot in our childhood home, all our adult accomplishments seem to disappear, transforming us back into the insecure children we once were? The Murdoch family of Eventide may be unique, but they are also universal. Wrapped up in unresolved tensions, haunted by secrets and unspoken jealousies, and ultimately driven by that most basic human need – the need to be accepted – they are all of us. My hope is that you, the audience, find something of your own experience reflected in these characters. I hope their pain moves you. I hope their humour buoys you. And I hope their bumbling attempts to do better, to connect more fully as people, offer you encouragement on your journey to better understand your own family, and your place within it.



(formerly Gold Coast Theatre Awards)

Sunnybank Theatre Group is a participant in the 2020 Gold Palm Theatre Awards

From the Director

I first discovered *Eventide* in 2018, when I was fortunate enough to attend an early staged reading at Nash Theatre. It was as captivating then as it is now fully realised. There's a terrific blend of dry humour and gut-punching drama, all contained within in a domestic setting that anybody can identify with.

The titular Eventide the sort of sleepy little coastal town which makes the perfect setting for a tortured big city detective to be transferred out to at the start of a BBC crime drama miniseries (Hey, Bianca, let's talk potential spin-offs!) The Murdoch family could easily feature as supporting characters in a tantalising sub-plot, when not part of the investigation itself!

But I digress, this family has plenty of its own drama!

The real emotional core of this play is of course, family. We've all got one in some form or other, whether it's biological, adopted, or otherwise found. And sure, your family is probably different to the Murdoch clan, but you may find similarities.

From Dex, the gruff authoritarian who's nevertheless worked hard to provide for his family, to Michelle, the long-suffering and devoted eldest child. Jemima, the overlooked middle child trapped by small town life, to Heidi, the free-spirited youngest child. And Kendra, the idealistic and big-hearted granddaughter, who is only beginning to explore her untapped potential. It's been a privilege bringing these characters to life in what will be the world premiere of *Eventide* (no pressure!) and I hope it resonates with you as it has for me!



Nathaniel Young

Director

You'll know Nate from his numerous appearances on the Sunnybank stage, including *39 Steps*, *Wedding Singer*, *Chapter Two* and *The Tally Hall Radio Plays*. Fresh from his stint as George in *First Things First* back in June, Nate is climbing back into the director's chair for the world premiere of *Eventide*.

When not acting/writing/directing at STG, Nate is known to dabble in performing with Centenary Theatre Group, Nash Theatre, and will soon be making his debut with Savoyards. As soon as the week after this show opens, in fact, which means the utter madman is currently doing back-to-back rehearsals. He's certainly committed (or perhaps, ought to be!)

Additionally, his debut novel **Analog Cop** (as "Nathaniel James", wink wink, plug plug!) is available to purchase via Amazon.

He hopes you enjoy the show!



Bruce Edgerton

Dex

Eventide is Bruce's inaugural return to the stage after many years. He was heavily involved in amateur theatre in Melbourne in the '70's and '80's with production companies like Toorak Players, Malvern Theatre, Williamstown Theatre and Cheltenham Light Opera. His roles included parts in dramas, comedies and musicals. In his spare time Bruce is a member of an A Capella ensemble called *Alfresco* (it's all about the bass). He loves to dance with live swing bands and he's trying to master the saxophone, to the dismay of some of his neighbours. Oh, and he also likes riding his beautiful bicycle as often as he can.

He is very much looking forward to treading the boards once again.



Leisa Bye
Michelle

Since birth, Leisa has rarely been quiet and has never been silent, so the stage was a natural progression. Her first lead role came at the age of 8 in a musical ... as a singing, dancing rat ... and she's not stopped since!

Highly involved in Grownl Theatre on the Northside (both acting and directing), 'Eventide' is Leisa's first show with Sunnybank Theatre, having only joined the family two weeks before opening night - and she

has embraced her *Eventide* family with a little more ease than we witness on stage.

An accomplished and award-winning country singer and yodeller, and a High School Students Services officer by day, performing is just one of the things that really bring Leisa undeniable joy, especially in the world as it is now.

Highlighting a couple of her favourite past characters as 'Cherry' in *COSI* and 'Cookie' in *Rumours*, Leisa just loves comedy, however, she is loving the opportunity to sink her teeth into a character with the complexities of Michelle, and the emotion of everything that's happening in *Eventide*, remembering constantly that "we're not here to have fun"!



Carolyn Mills
Jemima

After her parents dashed her hopes of going to NIDA and wanting to be a regular on Neighbours in favour of getting a "real job" first (something that has probably been for the best...) Carolyn has followed in her father's footsteps and endeavoured to intertwine theatre with her life in some capacity since the age of 10. She studied Speech & Drama and performed and directed various plays throughout school and university & taught performing arts at Summer Camp in Connecticut USA. She has become a regular at STG

with recent performances in *Done to Death*, *God of Carnage* and *Secret Bridesmaid's Business*. Carolyn was drawn to Jemima immediately as she read the script for the first time. The character embodies many aspects of sibling rivalry and perceived childhood hardship that everyone can relate to in some form "The cliché's true, okay? About families..."



Isabella Pilbeam

Heidi

In her premiere scripted performance, Isabella is just trying to look like she knows what she's doing (dream big kid). With a background in improvisation, Isabella's usual forte is to make stuff up on the spot. Audience members may have seen her previously in the Theatresports Championship 2021, Iron Improvisor 2020, *OutCast* or the *Risky Business* show. Isabella's favourite performance to date was *Transported*, a 50-minute improvised extravaganza set amongst the audience on a working tram.

Isabella was drawn to play Heidi because she stans a bisexual, anti-conformist, carny Scam Queen.



Ashleigh Horsfield

Kendra

Ashleigh is an 18 year old actress who has been performing since 2016. She made her start training at NIDA doing their youth weekend classes and continued doing that until the end of 2018. She then found a passion for Shakespeare performing scenes from plays such as *Macbeth* and *A Midsummer Nights Dream*. She competed in the annual Shake and Stir Shakespeare competition in 2017 and achieved 3rd place in Queensland. Since then she has performed at QPAC in School2stage's debut of *Sound the Trumpet*, *Hiraeth Manor* and *The*

Half of It. Ashleigh did her first short film this year playing Willow in one of JMC Academy's graduate films, *Canvas*. This is Ashleigh's first show with Sunnybank Theatre and she couldn't be more excited!

"I love playing Kendra because throughout this play she begins to realise what she wants and what she needs. She finds out more about herself and her relationships with the people around her and is experiencing a lot of new emotion for the first time."

The Crew

Assistant Director
Stage Manager
Lighting and Sound Design
Lighting Operators

Sound Effects
Set Design/Build

Costumes
Props

Carolyn Mills
Loretta Donnelly
Chris O'Leary
Georgia Cooper
Joanne Sephton
Chris O'Leary
ZapSplat.com and www.bensound.com
Chris O'Leary
Nathaniel Young
Carolyn Mills
Bruce Edgerton
The Cast
Loretta Donnelly

Special thanks to the team at TruValue Hardware - Hardware and Landscape Supplies - Wellers Hill.

We'd like to thank our wonderful volunteers who manage the bar, greenroom ushering and box office without whom your experience of STG would not be as great.

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If you love theatre like we do, come and join us.
You'd be very welcome.

We're a great bunch of people who share a passion for the stage.

If acting isn't your thing, there are lots of other ways to be involved.
You could work back stage, or with sound and lighting.
You could help build sets, or make costumes.
Perhaps you could give a hand in the box office,
or the bar, or show people to their seats.
You can be involved as much or as little as you want,
but we would love you to be involved.

Talk to one of our volunteers, call us on 3345 3964,
email us at info@stg.org.au,
or chat to us on Facebook (search for @sunnybanktheatre).

Be sure to follow us on Instagram to keep in touch with what's happening at your theatre (search for SunnybankTheatreGroup).



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