

BAGGAGE PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS

Myra in Space

WRITTEN BY
BRIDGETTE BURTON

DIRECTED BY
ALICE BISHOP



7-17 SEPTEMBER 2023

SUPPORTED BY THE MALCOLM ROBERTSON FOUNDATION AND URQUHART CHARITABLE FUND

 **fortyfive
downstairs**

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bookings 03 9662 9966
fortyfivedownstairs.com

Myra in Space

By Bridgette Burton



Cast

Myra Foreman	Kelly Nash
Bruce Foreman	Greg Parker
Valentina Tereshkova	Rama Nicholas
Vali Foreman / Myra's mother	Annie Lumsden
Phillip Foreman / Bob	Nicholas Jaquinot

Crew

Directed by	Alice Bishop
Set & costume design	Silvia Shao
Lighting design	Richard Vabre
Sound design	Nat Grant
Technical operation	Maureen White
Stage Manager	Nicole Riley
Russian accent coach	Tank Monsternova
Promotional image	Darren Gill
Poster design	Liam Amor
Production stills	Jody Jane Stitt
PR and marketing	Cameron Lukey and Christina Costigan

Writer's note

Myra in Space is a special play for me for many reasons. I wrote it during lockdown and I wrote it on commission. It was a lonely time for writing, but also exciting to write with purpose. I had conceived the concept two years before and bringing the play to life surprised, delighted and amused me. Myra, my lead character, became her own person in a way that I had not really envisioned. I wrote the play thinking about Kelly Nash and was so thrilled that she agreed to play Myra. The play is also special because my dear friend Alice is directing and creative partnerships are made all the sweeter with love and comradeship. I feel very proud of the work and exceptionally lucky to have all the talented people who came on board. Writing is one piece of a complicated, brilliant and exciting puzzle - I cannot wait to see all the pieces slip together on stage at fortyfivedownstairs. - *Bridgette, September 2023*

Director's note

Just last week a man told me what he thought I should be doing, and how he thought I should be doing it. (Anyone who knows me would naturally assume that the man must've had a deathwish.) As I pondered on his unsolicited - and unhelpful - advice, it occurred to me that more often than not, when I make a piece of work, events occur in my own life that bring the work's themes into sharper focus. Female agency, as you've quite rightly guessed by now, is very important to me - in life and in art. Our protagonist Myra has everything ~~she ever wanted~~ that everyone else ever wanted for her... The reason I'm drawn to work on a play is usually because the central idea or conceit provokes a reaction from me - usually anger, sometimes sympathy, and always laughter. Bridgette's play provoked all three. In Myra in Space, the two ideas that collide and provide that provocation are female agency and privilege. In addition, it's tragic, no funny, no, it's actually tragic... and funny. What is comedy anyway! Is tragedy funny? Apparently tragedy + time = comedy. Well, in that case, by the middle of next week a man telling me what he thinks I should be doing, and how I should be doing it will be absolutely hilarious. Or not. Probably not! Anyway... Many thanks, and all my love to my wonderful team of collaborators - my cast and crew of old friends, some new. You are just the best. - *Alice, September 2023*



Alice Bishop

Alice Bishop is a theatre maker and filmmaker who works as an actor, director, writer, costume and production designer. As well as being Artistic Director with le poulet terrible, she has freelanced with many theatre companies and arts organisations. She was a co-creative producer and resident director for ITCH Productions directing Tennessee Williams' Vieux Carré at fortyfivedownstairs, and Catalpa (Green Room nomination for Best Director). Directorial theatre credits include Koltès' Roberto Zucco, a co-pro with Alliance Française and La Mama; Raton Laveur with Fairly Lucid; Jane Miller's Cuckoo with 15 Minutes from Anywhere; A Stranger in Town with Essential Theatre; Peter Quilter's Mrs Vincent Price; and The Ballad of Reading Gaol at the Old Melbourne Gaol. Most recently she wrote and directed I Shot Mussolini which premiered at La Mama.

In 2020 Alice founded Just Nice People Productions (JNPP) with collaborators Lauren Bailey and Susan Earl with whom she has produced, written, directed and performed in the Classic web series which has garnered laurels at international festivals. JNPP has recently produced the science fiction Classic series coming to a small screen near you in 2023. She was production designer on the feature film Some Happy Day, currently showing on SBS, and is in post-production on the music documentary You Met Me in a Bluestone Room, and the short film Dawn. Alice and Bridgette are regular co-collaborators with their feature film Trewins Lane, and a podcast in the works.



Bridgette Burton

Bridgette Burton has been writing, acting and directing theatre since the early 1990's. She formed Baggage Productions with Christina Costigan in 1999, a company dedicated to promoting the original work of women artists. Bridgette has co-written four successful comedy shows, solo written three one act plays, five full length plays, 35 short plays (which have been performed all over Australia and internationally) as well as more than 40 monologues. Bridgette won the RE Ross Trust Playwrights Script Development Award in 2005 and 2009.

Bridgette is incredibly proud of Myra in Space and grateful to fortyfivedownstairs for their ongoing support and belief in her.



Nat Grant

Dr. Nat Grant is a sound artist with more than 15 years' experience across live performance, recording and broadcast, digital arts, and community arts. Nat is interested in the power of sound and music as storytelling tools, and is invested in creating and maintaining community around sound making.

As a composer Nat has created original chamber music, durational sound art works, and composed and created sound design for theatre, dance, film, and live art. In 2018, Nat received the Age Music Victoria award for best Experimental/Avant-Garde Act.





Nicholas Jaquinot

Nicholas is known for his work in numerous theatre productions and films. His theatre credits include: Yentl (Arts Centre Melbourne, dir. Gary Abrahams), Treats (Southbank Theatre, dir. Monique Marani), Alice in Wonderland (The Athenaeum, dir. Penny Farrow), An Evening with Sam Shepard (fortyfivedownstairs, dir. David Myles) and Gruesome Playground Injuries (L1 Studios, dir. David Ward). His film and TV credits include: Lenore (Rattle the Cage, dir. David Ward), Discontent (Kewl Studios, dir. Sam Rogers), Beautiful Smile (NewCharacter Productions, dir. Eugenie Muggleton), The Surrogate (Black Spade Productions, dir. David Willing) and One-Punch (Rooftop Film Co, dir. Darcy Yuille). Nicholas has trained extensively in his craft, having spent a number of years at 16th Street Actors Studio. There he learnt from such prolific teachers and industry professionals as Mike Alfreds, Ian Rickson, Iain Sinclair and Larry Moss. In addition, Nicholas trained in the US at Susan Batson Studio in New York City, and spent time at Shakespeare & Company in Lenox, Massachusetts. Prior to beginning his studies as an actor, Nicholas received a Bachelor's Degree in Film and TV at Swinburne University, and is currently enrolled in the Masters in Screenwriting course at the VCA.



Annie Lumsden

Annie is an actor, presenter and comic working in Melbourne. She is part of the theatre collective '15 Minutes From Anywhere' and performs in a sketch comedy duo 'Annie and Lena' alongside writer and creative Lena Moon. Together they have written and performed four full length comedy shows, two online specials and a web series, as well as toured nationally.

Select theatre credits include Motherf#cker, Just a Boy Standing in Front of a Girl (15 Minutes From Anywhere), and a tour throughout Asia and Europe with Backyard Theatre Ensemble's production of Missing In Me. TV credits include Neighbours, Utopia, Why Are You Like This and Auntie Donna's Coffee Cafe (ABC).



Kelly Nash

Kelly has been acting since she discovered it was a thing (aged 4ish) but didn't get serious about it 'til the mid 90's when she became acquainted with the Melbourne Independent theatre scene and promptly abandoned her secure teaching job to dabble in the arts. She has done the aforementioned dabbling in TV, theatre, film, singing and comedy.

Kelly has been lucky enough to work with Baggage Productions on a number of occasions (Keeping up with the Jones, Beaten Hearts, The Subconscious Cometh, Rhonda is in Therapy) and is thrilled to be joining them again for Myra in Space.



Rama Nicholas

Rama Nicholas is an award-winning actor, comedian and improviser. She is also a director, writer, filmmaker, theatre maker and internationally renowned improvisation teacher. Rama was named the 2014 Melbourne 'Moosehead' award winner for comedy. She has been nominated twice for the coveted 'Golden Gibbo' award for best independent comedy at the Melbourne International Comedy Festival in 2014 and 2017. In 2017 she won the 'Brisbane Powerhouse Tour Award' and was nominated at the Melbourne Fringe Festival for 'Best Comedy' for her show 'The Lucky Ones'. Rama has also trained as an Intimacy Coordinator with 'Intimacy On Set' (UK). Rama coordinated the production of the TV series 'Shantaram' (Paramount, Apple+).



Greg Parker

Greg graduated from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) as an actor in 1989 and has worked in all aspects of the industry as an actor, writer, director and producer. In 2008, he was offered a position working with an international education organisation as the company's Senior Corporate Trainer, to bring a more theatrical and creative approach to their training both internally and externally.

Over the years that followed, travelling through South East Asia with the company, he became their Director of Media and Communications. Greg returned to Australia in 2018.



Silvia Shao

Silvia is interested in conceptual and abstract works and considers herself as a creative-work lover. She believes there is no boundary to what she can do, either as a 'designer', or as a 'human', an ideology carrier. She completed Master of Design for Performance at the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA) in 2022. Although specifically trained as a set and costume designer, she loves working closely with lighting and sound.

During her time at VCA, she developed her interests in architecture, graphic design, and contemporary dance. In 2022, she designed set and costumes for Caught (Red Stitch Actor's Theatre) as her design debut.



Richard Vabre

Richard Vabre is a freelance lighting designer who has lit productions for MTC, STC, Malthouse Theatre, Belvoir Street, Black Swan State Theatre Company, Back To Back Theatre, Victorian Opera, Circus Oz, Windmill Theatre, Arena Theatre Company, NICA, Barking Gecko, The Darwin Festival, Stuck Pig's Squealing, Chambermade, Rawcus, Red Stitch, Polyglot, Melbourne Worker's Theatre, Aphids and many many productions at La Mama.

Richard has won five Green Room Awards including the Association's John Truscott Prize for Excellence in Design (2004). He has also been nominated for 10 other Green Room Awards.

Acknowledgements

It takes a village. Baggage Productions wishes to thank the following people and organisations for their kind support in making Myra in Space possible:

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About Baggage Productions

Baggage Productions was founded in 1999 by Bridgette Burton and Christina Costigan, two actors with a love of theatre and a burning desire to perform. Passionate about their art but frustrated at the lack of roles for women, they decided to start creating their own work, the kind of energetic, thoughtful theatre they like to see themselves.

Over the last 24 years, Baggage has been dedicated to producing original scripts written by women - from sketch comedy to short and full-length plays - that have delighted audiences and critics alike.

What began as a venture to create their own work, expanded to encourage the work of other women writers by providing a platform to tell their stories and share their perspectives. In 2011, Baggage produced the inaugural Madwomen Monologues. Designed as a showcase for women writers, Baggage invited script submissions and were overwhelmed with the response. Madwomen has since become a much-anticipated annual event, attracting and nurturing a community of writers, actors and directors - not to mention enthusiastic audiences - every year.

Like most independent, grass-roots theatre companies, Baggage produces work on a shoestring budget; a labour of love occasionally boosted by fundraising activities and modest arts grants. We all have other jobs to keep a roof over our heads while we continue feeding the fire of our creativity and that of the community of artists we work with.

Find Baggage online:

www.baggageproductions.com

Facebook: baggageproductions

Instagram: @baggageensemble

