

FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD

SYDNEY PREMIERE

by Thomas Hardy
Adapted by Mark Healy

By arrangement with Dominie Drama, on behalf of Nick Hern Books

About the Play

Thomas Hardy's novels were concerned with the lives of country folk and the land. Set at the beginning of the industrial revolution, *Far From the Madding Crowd* is perhaps foreshadowing the changes and social breakdown of country life in South West England; as the novel creates a sense of nostalgia for the traditional way of life - despite its harshness and hardships. Mark Healy's close adaptation of the narrative was commissioned by the English Touring Theatre in 2008 and toured extensively during that year. Healy recognised that much of early nineteenth century writing tends to be melodramatic, and with so much drama happening within the story he focussed on showing as much of the day-to-day life of the individuals by grounding the play in authentic activities. He also gives permission to producers to embrace his work and adapt it as needed. The Genesian Theatre production has been edited, in terms of the script and characters, with original music for the folk songs and choreography for the country dances.

Director's Note

This play was a challenge and I'm very pleased and proud of GTC for embracing such a fine work and presenting it as a premiere season for Sydney. Thanks to my Assistant Director Michael and all the cast and crew for their tireless efforts during such a long and intense rehearsal period.

Far From the Madding Crowd is a big play: It has 40 scenes, 12 actors playing multiple roles, numerous lighting and sound special effects, music, dancing and a complex soundscape. It has fast paced dialogue and quick vignettes of storytelling, as well as highly choreographed scenes of intense drama. The audience is swept along by the waves of intense action and they catch their breaths in the moments when the characters themselves have a chance to connect. Although it only covers a year in the lives of the characters, it is an epic adventure full of self-discovery, choices to be made, passion, and love. Another reason why I was attracted to this play is the main character of Bathsheba Everdene. She is as feisty as she is flawed, and this creates interesting theatre. She is a true heroine of her time or any other. The historical context of *Far From the Madding Crowd* also enticed me. It was rewarding to work with a team of creatives, particularly in Costume, Sound, Lighting, and Songs/Music, and the actors to research English farm life of 19th century England and bring close representations of it to the stage.

Debbie Smith
Director

DEBBIE SMITH - Director *Far From the Madding Crowd* is Debbie's ninth production for the GTC. Previous productions include *Journey's End*, *And Then There Were None*, *Enchanted April*, *Coward at Christmas*, *Frankenstein*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Debbie has also directed for Hunters Hill and Lane Cove Theatres, Riverside's RLE, New Theatre, Twin Town Players, Short and Sweet Sydney and for her own company Female Actors Theatre (FAT Productions). Apart from directing, she also designs sets and does choreography. Debbie is currently on the board.

SUSAN CARVETH - Costume Design Susan, a long term member, is Wardrobe Co-ordinator for the Genesian Theatre. Her wardrobe credits are extensive and include *A Man for All Seasons*, *An Ideal Husband*, *Dead White Males*, *Crown Matrimonial*, *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, *By Jeeves*, *Witness for the Prosecution*, *Hay Fever*, *Murder on the Nile*, *Star Child*, *Morning Sacrifice*, *Richard III*, *Frankenstein*, *The Three Musketeers*, and *Go Back for Murder*. She has also worked for Opera Australia, ABC, and BBC, as costume co-ordinator and costume maker for Tall Poppeas, Ondine Productions, and Opera Bites. Sometime she even gets to tread the boards!

MICHAEL SCHELL - Lighting and Sound Design Michael has been a member of the Genesian Theatre for over 35 years. A professional Sound and Lighting Designer, his Genesian credits include *Great Expectations*, *St Joan*, *The 39 Steps*, *Terra Nova*, *Frankenstein*, and *Sherlock Holmes: The Final Adventure*. Other recent Genesian sound design credits include *Pride and Prejudice*, *The Mousetrap*, *Crown Matrimonial*, *Spider's Web*, and *Three Sisters*.



NICOLE HARWOOD - Bathsheba Nicole Harwood graduated from the Australian Institute of Music in 2014 with a Bachelor of Music (Music Theatre). During her studies, she performed in AIM's productions of; *Sweeney Todd*, *NINE*, and *Parramatta Girls*. After graduating she studied screen acting at TAFTA Sydney and since then has performed the role of Meg in Alex Broun's *Afterwards* for Short+Sweet Sydney, and most recently the role of Trini in The Acting Factory's production of *The Taming of the Shrew*.

JULIA ROBERTSON - Fanny Julia became involved in the Sydney University Dramatic Society in 2012 and since then she has travelled to Melbourne and Brisbane with various productions. She has experience as an actor, singer, designer, deviser and director. She is now a children's acting teacher and hopes to pursue acting at a Conservatorium level.



KATHRYN HUTCHINS - Liddy Since moving to Sydney to study acting Kathryn has appeared on the stage in various roles, developing a deep appreciation for story-telling and stagecraft along the way. Her interest in the arts extends beyond the theatre to a passion for music, in particular a love of playing the violin. Kathryn was most recently seen in the Genesian Theatre's 2015 production of Anton Chekhov's *Three Sisters*.

PENELOPE BERKEMEIER - Maryanne Penelope first studied at Sydney Film School and since then has worked as an Assistant Director, Production Co-ordinator in television and film. She then went to Actors Centre Australia to study drama and Shakespeare, and since then she has appeared on stage at the Genesian Theatre as Annie Fitzpatrick in their production of *Simpson J. 202*, and various short films.



PAULINE GARDNER - Soberance / Mrs Hurst After a long absence from Genesian Theatre, this is Pauline's fourth performance with the company, after performing in *Wind in the Willows*, *A Murder is Announced*, and *Cards on the Table* in 2005 and 2006. Other works include playing in shows such as *Billy Liar* and *Deathtrap* for Hunters Hill Theatre, *Lovepuke* and *Who's Afraid of the Working Class?* at Darlinghurst Theatre, *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, *Dearly Beloved*, *Fox on the Fairway*, and *Beyond Caring*.

LUCIE WARDLE - Henrietta Frey Lucie Wardle is a passionate and vibrant actress based in Sydney. Lucie studied acting with Darlo Drama and has featured in a range of stage and screen productions. Lucie most recently played Meg in Elizabeth Coleman's *Secret Bridesmaid's Business* at The Eternity Playhouse.





BEN DEWSTOW - Farmer Oak Ben is debuting following a successful run as Sam in *Angelfish* at Short+Sweet (2016). He performed with RAPA (2013), and played Phaeton, Erysichthon, Hades and Bacchus in *Metamorphoses* at UNDA (2008). Ben has worked on several short films screening around the world, and been an extra in television for *Home and Away*, *All Saints*, and *Fat Pizza* (2004). Ben studied theatre at the University of Notre Dame (2006-2010), NIDA Open, and Screenwise (2015).

LOUIS CUMMINGS - Sergeant Troy This is Louis's third production with the Genesian Theatre Company and his final production in Sydney before relocating to London. After studying at Screenwise Acting School, Louis trained extensively with Benjamin Matthews at the Actors Co-op and has since attended workshops with renowned American acting teachers Larry Moss and Margie Haber. Past productions include *Black Rainbow*, *Go Back for Murder*, and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.



BOBBY BABIN - William Boldwood Bobby has acted in over 35 TV shows (*A Place To Call Home*, *Deadly Women*, *Behind Mansion Walls*, *Wanted*, *Australia: The Story Of Us*, *Dark Minds*, *Underbelly*), films (*Rough Stuff*, *Thavailaa*, *Better Luck Next Time*, *The Day Hollywood Died*, *Being In Heaven*, *The Beautiful Life*) stage (*Tommy*, *Secret Bridesmaids' Business*, *Enchanted April*, *The God Of Carnage*, *Parade*, *Speaking In Tongues*, *Key For Two*, *Merrily We Roll Along*).

ROB DREW - Laban / Banks / Vicar Rob has performed in several productions in numerous theatres around Sydney; for GTC *Hamlet* and *Blithe Spirit*; for Riverside Theatre *Pygmalion*; for Sutherland Theatre Company *Sleuth*; for Cauldron Theatre *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Abelard and Heloise*, and for Arts Theatre Cronulla *Volpone* and *The Imaginary Invalid*.



TOM MARWICK - Coggan / Pennyways This is Tom's fourth foray at the Genesian, having played Solyony in *Three Sisters*, Mr Woodvine in *Simpson J. 202* (2015), and Mr Bingley in *Pride and Prejudice* (2014). Starting young his first role was as elevator-squashed Giuseppe. He's since risen to greater heights playing geek Eugene in *Grease* and Shakespearean manservant Speed, amongst other roles. In 2005 Tom was 'Young Wellington Actor of the Year' in the two-man *An Unseasonable Fall of Snow*.

MAX MULVENNEY - Teddy Coggan Max recently played Jones Boy in *The Trolleys* at ATYP (winner of the 2015 Foundation Commission award), following his lead role in *Going Viral* at Short+Sweet last year. He first appeared on stage in *Tales of the Arabian Nights* at NIDA (2014), where he developed his passion for live performance. Max has appeared in lead and supporting roles in numerous short films, including as Dorian Clements in *The Moustache of Dorian Clements*.



Production

Director

Debbie Smith

Assistant Director

Michael McCrann

Set Design

Debbie Smith

Costume Design

Susan Carveth

Lighting & Sound Design

Michael Schell

Production Manager

Roger Gimblett

Choreography

Debbie Smith

Musical Recordings

Dereck Cameron

Song Arrangements & Chorister

Cassady Maddox

Special Properties

Paul Gilbert

Lighting Assistant

Daniel Hitchings

Set Construction

Members of the Company

Photography

Mark Banks

Graphic Design

Tom Massey

Ticketing

Shane Bates

Transport

Debbie Smith

Crew

Stage Manager

Macushla McGown

Lighting & Sound Operation

Janina Olmos-New, Leah White, Rob White

Cast

Bathsheba

Nicole Harwood

Fanny

Julia Robertson

Liddy

Kathryn Hutchins

Maryanne

Penelope Berkemeier

Soberance / Mrs Hurst

Pauline Gardner

Henrietta Frey

Lucie Wardle

Farmer Oak

Ben Dewstow

Sergeant Troy

Louis Cummings

William Boldwood

Bobby Babin

Laban / Banks / Vicar

Rob Drew

Coggan / Pennyways

Tom Marwick

Teddy Coggan

Max Mulvenney

About the Genesian Theatre

The Genesian Theatre Company celebrated our 70th year as a company in 2014. For over 60 years we have been operating from an historic church in Kent Street, in the heart of the Sydney CBD. We boast among our alumni numerous household names in Australian theatre and film such as Bryan Brown, Baz Luhrmann, Judi Farr, and John Bell. We are also just as proud of the hundreds of other talented actors, directors, designers, lighting and sound specialists who have contributed to Sydney's unique little theatre.

Over the years the company has developed into a theatre providing a training ground for young actors and a place where those who love the theatre can meet, share and extend their knowledge of the performing arts. The Genesian Theatre 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 has 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.

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