

BACK
TO
BACK
THEATRE



small metal objects

Sneak Peek VCE Pack

Image: Nate Schilling



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INTERNATIONAL REVIEWS

"This small story in the middle of the New York chaos has a poetic stillness that is quite moving and often even magical"

– The New York Times

"Shakespeare's suggestion that 'all the world's a stage' has seldom been better demonstrated, and the achievement of small metal objects is that it not only makes you look, it makes you see."

– The Guardian, London

"the issue is in no way that it's remarkable that people "perceived to have intellectual disabilities" could make a show this good — the issue is that it's remarkable that anyone could make a show this good."

– New York Theater

"Its beauty lies in the way that it forces you to concentrate on the things and people who are normally rendered invisible. In their accidental participation in the show, the people in the crowds become distinct individuals..."

– Time Out London

ARTISTIC TEAM

Director and Devisor Bruce Gladwin

Devisors Simon Laherty, Sonia Teuben, Jim Russell, Genevieve Morris

Sound Composer & Designer Hugh Covill

SYNOPSIS

A theatre show in the public domain; part voyeuristic meditation, part urban thriller.

An ingenious theatrical gem, small metal objects unfolds amidst the high volume pedestrian traffic of the city. With individual sets of headphones, the audience is wired into an intensely personal drama being played out somewhere in the crowd.

Gary and Steve are the kind of men who normally escape notice. But here they play an inadvertent but pivotal role in the night of two ambitious executives they've arranged to meet for a transaction. As the intimacy of their situation develops, small metal objects emerges as a sly and luminous depiction of everyday issues most take for granted.

Back to Back Theatre is driven by an ensemble of actors with intellectual disabilities. Here, the company explores how respect is withheld from outsiders — the disabled or unemployed — who society deems 'unproductive'.

Set against the shifting backdrop of the city, the notion that everything has its price couldn't be called into starker relief.



Images: Jeff Busby

BIOGRAPHIES

Bruce Gladwin

Bruce Gladwin is an Australian artist and performance maker. He has been the Artistic Director of Back to Back Theatre since 1999, creating MENTAL (1999), DOG FARM (2000), SOFT (2002), SMALL METAL OBJECTS (2005), FOOD COURT (2008), THE DEMOCRATIC SET (2009), GANESH VERSUS THE THIRD REICH (2011), SUPER DISCOUNT (2013), LADY EATS APPLE (2016), ODDLANDS (2017) and THE SHADOW WHOSE PREY THE HUNTER BECOMES, which premiered in September 2019. In 2022, a screen adaptation of SHADOW premiered at SXSW Festival, marking the company's first feature film: it was awarded the festival's audience award.

Bruce's works with Back to Back Theatre have toured extensively, including presentations at the world's preeminent contemporary arts festivals and cultural venues. In 2015, Bruce was awarded the Australia Council for the Arts' Inaugural Award for Outstanding Achievement in Theatre and under his leadership, the company has received 22 national and international awards including the International Ibsen award, a Helpmann Award for Best Australian Work, an Edinburgh International Festival Herald Angel Critics' Award, two Age Critics' Awards, a New York Bessie and the Sidney Myer Performing Arts Group Award for our long-standing contribution to the development of Australian theatre. In 2019, the ensemble were awarded the 'Best Ensemble' in the Green Room Awards.

Simon Laherty

Simon's involvement with Back to Back Theatre started in 1999 with his participation in its community performance-making group, THEATRE OF SPEED. Apart from his incredible performances with Back to Back Theatre, he is recognised for his work in film and television including Matthew Saville's feature film Noise.

Since joining the ensemble in 2003, Simon has made an enormous contribution to the company's major works catalogue, particularly in the role of Steve in small metal objects (2005), which has travelled to 36 cities around the world. Simon is also a co-devisor and performer in the critically acclaimed GANESH VERSUS THE THIRD REICH (2011) and LADY EATS APPLE (2016), co-starred in Back to Back's first foray into film ODDLANDS (2017) which won the Audience Award for Best Short Film at Adelaide Film Festival in 2017 and co-wrote & performed in THE SHADOW WHOSE PREY THE HUNTER BECOMES (2019) and in the company's first feature length screen adaptation SHADOW (2020) which premiered in 2022.

KEY THEMES

Friendship
Trust
Disability
Ableism
Class

KEY STYLES

Eclectic
Realism
Hyper realism
Immersive theatre
Verbatim
Devised Drama

KEY CONVENTIONS

Asides
Pathos
Stillness & Silence
Symbolism

KEY DRAMATIC ELEMENTS

Space
Sound
Tension
Contrast

KEY PRODUCTION AREAS

Costume
Sound
Theatre Technologies

KEY PERFORMANCE SKILLS

Focus
Actor–audience relationship



Image: Jeff Busby

CHARACTERS AND KEY QUOTES

Gary

Loyal, level-headed, protective, confident

"If a guy ever came to my house with a gun, I would stand in front of my wife and kids."

"I want to give."

To Steve: "I want to see you happy."

"Everything has a value."

Gary about Steve: "Steve doesn't want to leave and I won't leave Steve on his own."

Steve about Gary: "He accepts you for you, and not for the problems you have for yourself."

Steve

Compassionate, deep thinker, vulnerable, dependant, reflective

"I really want a girl friend and I can't find the right girl."

"I've got a couple of DVD's on love. I watch them, but it hasn't worked out."

"I'm trying to get total control of this. I don't want to look like a tear-jerker."

To Gary- "I don't think I'll ever get over your operation."

"Everything has a value."

"I've started being aware of myself... I'm missing something, a feeling."

"It's my task to be a total man."

"I want people to see me. I want to be a full human being."

"If I was famous, I'd send cans of food so people don't go starving. Not little ones, but 825gms of food to each person, that's what I'd do."

Alan

Lawyer, Property Investor, Self-Serving, Conflicted, Out of his depth

“Basically, Darren was ‘helping me out’ tonight... I’ve become the idiot who’s organizing this stuff then of course its fallen through and now I’ll be a in a bit of strife.”

“I just want to get the job done, get out of here.”

“No, I must have one of those faces.”

“Would it make any difference if I offered you personally another fifty?... I don’t want to put any pressure on you. I just didn’t know I would have to wait a couple of hours.”

Carolyn

Alan’s colleague, a psychologist, corporate, manipulative, ruthless

“I am very busy, if you were to ring the office you would have to go on the waiting list for 6 months.”

“Tell me what do we need to do to make this transaction go ahead.”

“I am pretty desperate at the moment. If you help me out, I’ll help you out.”

To Steve– “You’re a fucking useless piece of shit.”



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Upcoming performances:

MARKET SQUARE — GEELONG

Thursday, 27 April at 12:00pm (includes Q & A)

Friday, 28 April at 12:00pm (includes Q & A) & 6:30pm

Saturday, 29 April at 11:00am & 2:00pm

FEDERATION SQUARE — MELBOURNE

Wednesday, 3 May at 4:00pm (includes Q & A)

Thursday, 4 May at 12:00pm & 4:00pm

Friday, 5 May at 12:00pm (includes Q & A) & 4:00pm

Saturday, 6 May at 12:00pm & 4:00pm

Sunday, 7 May at 12:00pm & 4:00pm

Inspired by its own ensemble of actors, Back to Back Theatre is a leading voice in contemporary world theatre. This year, for first time, Back to Back Theatre are delighted to have their work playlisted by VCAA; 'small metal objects' is open to study for VCE Drama students and teachers in 2023. Multi award-winning, urgent and deeply moving, small metal objects is a hyper-realistic piece intended to speak with relevance and pathos to a youth audience.

Enquiries

Nikki Watson

Community and Education Producer

nikki@backtobacktheatre.com