



## **CONNECT with State Theatre Company SA**

### **Post Show Talk with Cast members from The Popular Mechanicals**

Have you ever asked yourself, how an actor prepares for a role, how to they make the decisions they do? Or how they prepare for creating a new work and going on tour for 3 month?

Be a part of CONNECT and meet our special guest cast members from The Popular Mechanicals.

Admission to CONNECT is FREE – just stay in your seats after the show

#### **About CONNECT**

CONNECT is a new audience development program that provides opportunities for conversations with some of Australia's top arts practitioners and find out more about how their art is made and get behind the scenes of our 2017 season.

If you'd like to stay in touch and receive updates about future CONNECT activities for 2017 or want to make any suggestions for future connect events please contact your local theatre.

If you are new to CONNECT and want to find out more about our future events just call us!

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## About the Playwrights

The Popular Mechanicals was co-written by **Tony Taylor** and **Keith Robinson**, using the original works of **William Shakespeare**.

**Tony Taylor** is an actor, playwright and director. Prior to *The Popular Mechanicals*, Taylor worked in productions such as *As You Like It*, *The Hills Family Show*, and *The Venetian Twins* as an actor. In the original Company B 1987 production directed by Geoffrey Rush, Taylor played the character of Francis Flute.

**Keith Robinson** is an Australian actor and playwright. Robinson is predominantly known for his acting, having performed in many productions including *Twelfth Night*, *Hamlet* and *The Tempest*. *The Popular Mechanicals* is his only known work as a playwright.

**William Shakespeare** was an English poet, playwright, and performer. He is widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English vernacular and the world's pre-eminent dramatist. His works remain highly popular and are constantly studied, performed, and reinterpreted in theatres throughout the world; an example of this being Taylor and Robinson's *The Popular Mechanicals*, which was adapted from his original comedy play *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

## Play History

The Popular Mechanicals developed out of the 1987 'Stand up for Shakespeare' jigs that occurred after the productions of *Hamlet* and *Henry IV, Part One* at Sydney's Wharf Theatre. The Popular Mechanicals was a piece working Australian-ness into the Shakespearean text of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

The original production in 1987 performed by Company B at Belvoir Street Theatre was directed by Geoffrey Rush. Rush described the play as, "Shakespearean vaudeville, consisting, as it does, of songs, sketches, novelties, dance – something to celebrate the traditions of theatre clowning. It mines silliness, rudeness, it deploys surreal routines that seem to go on and on, and, like many farces, jigs or vaudeville sketches, *The Popular Mechanicals* performs better than it reads."



## **About the Director      SARAH GILES**

Sarah Giles graduated from NIDA in 2008 with a graduate diploma in dramatic art specialising in directing, and has a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Melbourne with a double major in History and Italian.

She has been involved in a range of productions including: operas *Pas a Pas – Nulle Part* and *Into the Little* for the Sydney Chamber Opera; classic and contemporary productions such as *Perplex*, *Mrs Warren's Profession*, *The Bald Soprano*, *Face to the Wall* (NIDA) and *The Maids* (La Mama).

Sarah was the Affiliate Director in Residence at Griffin Theatre Company in 2009, the Richard Wherrett Fellow at Sydney Theatre Company in 2011 and was Co-Resident Director at Sydney Theatre Company in 2013. In 2011 Sarah won a Sydney Theatre Award for Best Direction of an Independent Production for her production of *The Ugly One* at Griffin Theatre.



## Actor Profile      Lori Bell

Lori Bell graduated AC Arts in 2004 and in 2009 was a part of the team that took out the Best Cabaret Ensemble at the 2009 Melbourne Greenroom Awards for *Mutzenball*. While Lori was part of the Women's Chorus in *Euripides' Trojan Women* as an AC Arts student, Lori makes her State Theatre Company debut with *The Popular Mechanicals*.

Lori also works as a comedian having won the Adelaide Comedy's People Choice Award 4 out of the last 5 years, as well as a stack of other awards including Comedian of the year and Host of the Year. In 2010 Lori Bell won an Adelaide Fringe Award for Best Emerging Comedian as her alter ego *Granny Flaps*. As *Granny Flaps*, Lori has toured with *Puppetry of the Penis*, played at Big Day Out in Melbourne and Adelaide and released a DVD titled, *Granny Flaps – Opens Up*.

### INTERVIEW WITH LORI

- 1. What training have you done as an actor?** I trained at AC Arts (Adelaide College of the Arts).
- 2. How did you get into stand-up comedy?**  
Accidentally. I was asked to do a female monologue for a magazine launch and couldn't find one for my age that wasn't about women hating on themselves or a man, so I wrote my own. Turns out that monologue was my first set.
- 3. What attracted you to the role of Tom Snout?**  
They let me play the part.... But no, it's written for a female actor, pretending to be a male, who does a stand-up routine... It was a good fit. I walk funny and my natural voice is deep.
- 4. What do you see are the difficulties with comedy?**  
Getting it right. Stand up is all about reading a crowd and flexibly moving along with them. The control is yours. Theatre is more set. My role is shaped by writers, designers, other actors, and most of all the director. So, trust in everyone and remember to have fun.
- 5. Give a brief description of your character.**  
I am one of the village idiots at this stage. But a bit of a turd. But that may change by the time the show gets up.
- 6. What have been your favourite two roles that you've played and why?** Played 'The Host' in *Mutzenball* which I co-wrote and also won a Melbourne Green Room award for. That was a very personal show and performance. And I also loved the show I did before this which was called 'One for the Ugly Girls' I played the 'ugly girl'. I liked it because it was a funny role that also let me flex my drama muscles. Sometimes when you're the funny girl, that's all you get to be.



## SET DESIGNER Jonathon Oxlade

Jonathon studied Illustration and Sculpture at the Queensland College of Art.

Jonathon has designed sets and costumes for Windmill Theatre, The Queensland Theatre Company, Is This Yours?, Aphids, Circa, Arena Theatre Company, Polyglot, Bell Shakespeare, Polytoxic, Men Of Steel, The Real TV Project, Terrapin Puppet Theatre, The Escapists, The Border Project, State Theatre Company of South Australia and LaBoite Theatre.

His designs has been seen at venues and festivals including the Sydney Opera House, Melbourne Festival, Adelaide Festival and Fringe, The Malthouse, Performance Space and the Queensland Art Gallery. Jonathon has illustrated the picture book *The Empty City* for Hachette Livre/Lothian and *The Edie Amelia* series by Sophie Lee, was Festival Designer for the 2010 *Out Of The Box* festival and is currently the Resident Designer at Windmill Theatre.

He has received a 2005 'Best Designer' Matilda Award for *A Christmas Carol* and Contribution to Queensland Theatre, and a 2009 'Best Designer' Matilda Award for *Attack of the Attacking Attackers*. He was nominated for a 2010 Greenroom Award for *Goodbye Vaudeville Charlie Mud* for Best Design, a 2011 Ruby Award for *School Dance*, a 2013 Helpmann award, 'Best Scenic Design' for *School Dance*, and in 2014 for *Pinocchio* along with a Greenroom nomination for *Skeleton* and *I Heart John McEnroe*.

Jonathon was awarded the Lord Mayors Fellowship Grant to attend the Prague Quadrennial of Scenography and Theatre Architecture.

## COSTUMES

The costumes in *The Popular Mechanicals* are all period costumes or 'Tudor' costumes, referencing Shakespeare's time. This includes the 'ruff' collar and tights.

Some of the design inspiration came from the television series, "*The Blackadder*"



**Post show Talk**

**SCHEDULE**

<b>VENUES</b>	<b>Date &amp; Talk time</b>	<b>PERFORMANCE TIME</b>	<b>POST SHOW TALK approx. 9pm</b>
<b>Middleback Theatre</b>	Tues 19 sept 8.30pm	7pm	Join some of the cast as they talks about their experiences on the road <b>Inquiries</b> : contact Jenna on 8644 7300
<b>Northern Festival Centre</b>	Sat 23 Sept 8.30pm	7pm	Join some of the cast as they talks about their experiences on the road <b>Inquiries</b> : contact Bianca on 8633 8500
<b>Chaffey Theatre</b>	Tues 26 <sup>th</sup> Sept 8.30pm	7pm	Join some of the cast as they talks about their experiences on the road <b>Inquiries</b> : contact Nicole on 8586 8500
<b>Sir Robert Helpmann Theatre</b>	Sun 1 <sup>st</sup> Oct 4.30pm	3pm	Join some of the cast as they talks about their experiences on the road <b>Inquiries</b> : contact Caitlin on 8723 5741