

24 February 2020

Country Arts SA presents
Soft Tread's

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO PAUL

Written and performed by Jonathan Biggins

Jonathan Biggins is Paul Keating in the smash hit comedy about a critical time in Australian history and the man who shaped it.

One of Australia's favourite performers, Jonathan Biggins, is Paul Keating – visionary, reformer and rabble-rouser – in THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO PAUL. Full of intelligence and wit, THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO PAUL is a funny, insightful and occasionally poignant portrait of Paul Keating. The man that – as he tells is – single-handedly shaped contemporary Australia.

Biggins is one of the masterminds behind *The Wharf Revue*, a satirical political chuckle-fest in which his Paul Keating stole the show, so he had to bring us this one-Paul show.

Like so many Australians, Biggins has long been fascinated by Keating and what Keating means to Australia. Showcasing his eviscerating wit, rhetoric and ego the size of Everest, THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO PAUL distills Keating's essence into 90 minutes, focusing on key biographical milestones, landmark political achievements and personal obsessions. It shows the man who grew up in the tribe of the Labour Party and gained an education at the knee of Jack land, who treated economics as an artform, and demanded we confront the wrongs of our colonial past.

Biggins asks the questions – what can we learn from today from this singular politician, and the momentous time in our country's history he dominated?

A fascination with Paul Keating is not necessary to enjoy this piece of theatre. The wit, intelligence and humour compiled with Biggins' terrific performance is an ode to satirical theatre.

"In all my years writing and performing for the Wharf Revue, one character has remained a constant favourite of the audience: Paul Keating," said Biggins. "Love him or hate him, he is universally recognised as a leader who not only had a vision for Australia but could articulate it, fight for it and, most importantly, deliver it; the Bankstown boy with no formal education who quickly realised that to get things done in political life, it's better to be needed than loved. A razor-sharp wit who could destroy opponents with words alone, a romantic and a melancholic who bestrode the public stage yet remained intensely private. I can't think of more entertaining or significant figure in recent Australian history with whom to spend an evening. All iceberg, no tip."

Sir Robert Helpmann Theatre manager Frank Morello said anyone with a sense of humour would appreciate the show.

"I encourage everyone to set aside their political colours and enjoy the mastery of Jonathan Biggins' portrayal of one of Australia's most fascinating political figures," Mr Morello said. "While Keating brandished a healthy ego, he also possessed the oratory skills to eviscerate opponents with a single syllable. Question time was never dull and THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO PAUL will be just as lively."

Sir Robert Helpmann Theatre

March 19, 7.30pm

Tix \$15-40 | 90 mins, no interval

Theatre/comedy, coarse language 15+

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