

PEER GYNT

[recycled]

BY ELI KENT

PRESENTED IN ASSOCIATION WITH AUCKLAND ARTS FESTIVAL

ON STAGE
Vol. 3 No. 2, March 2017

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“To live is to war with trolls in heart and soul; to write is to sit in judgement of oneself.”

— Henrik Ibsen



“Inside Eli’s play, with its wild imaginings and sometimes monstrous reflections, lies a simple and beautiful hope - that being together in the theatre tonight accompanying our reckless recycled Peer on his epic journey, will bring us all to ‘somewhere new, somewhere helpful.’”

– Dramaturg Philippa Campbell

PEER GYNT [recycled]

BY ELI KENT

CAST

Peer #1 / Thomas / Ghost Writer #1 / Ensemble – **Oscar Wilson**
Mads / Peer #2 / Jason / Milo / Captain / Ensemble – **Jordan Mooney**
Troll King / Dr Griffin Feldt / John / Peer #3 / James Cameron / Ensemble – **Adam Gardiner**
Eli / Peer #4 / Strange Passenger / Ensemble – **Jack Buchanan**
Mad’s Mum / Peer’s Mum / Terry Richardson / Anatta / Ensemble – **Lisa Chappell**
Huhu / Simone / Air Hostess / Boatswain / Nurse / Ensemble – **Brynley Stent**
Troll Child / Andrew / Ghost Writer #2 / Ensemble – **Benjamin Henson**
Inka / Troll Princess / Phillipa / Air Hostess / Angel / Ensemble – **Ella Gilbert**
Sol / X / Mattie / Starbucks Employee / Ensemble – **Ana Scotney**
Photographer / The Boyg / Ibsen / Button Moulder / Ensemble – **Peter Hayden**
Eli’s Mum – **Katherine Baxter**


CREATIVE

Director – **Colin McColl** | Assistant Director – **Benjamin Henson**
Dramaturg – **Philippa Campbell** | Set Designer – **John Parker**
Costume Designer – **Nic Smillie** | Music & Sound Designer – **Eden Mulholland**
Lighting Designer – **Bryan Caldwell** | AV Designer – **Simon Barker**

PRODUCTION

Production Manager – **Robert Hunte** | Company Manager – **Elaine Walsh**
Technical Manager – **Nik Janiurek** | Venue Technical Manager – **Josh Bond**
Stage Manager – **Kirsten Lee** | Assistant Stage Manager – **Lucie Everett-Brown**
Lighting Operator – **Michael Craven** | Sound and AV operator – **Zac Howells**
Props Master – **Amy Snape** | Flyman / Mechanist – **Michael Keating**
Wardrobe Assistant – **Ruby Read** | Set Construction – **2Construct**

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AGENT, ADVISOR, BOOKSHOP

Presented in association with  **AUCKLAND ARTS FESTIVAL**

Thanks to the ATC Patrons for their support of the original commission from Eli Kent in 2014.

AUCKLAND THEATRE COMPANY WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING FOR THEIR HELP WITH THIS PRODUCTION: Reuban Turner, Leon Wadham, Alison Bruce, Victoria Abbott, JJ Fong, Christina Riisnes, Kristian Eek, New Zealand Stunt School, The Cut (Dominion Rd), The New Zealand KuneKune Association, Chris Brown and CP solutions.

Peer Gynt [recycled] is the first Auckland Theatre Company mainbill production for 2017 and opens on March 9th at ASB Waterfront Theatre. The production is approximately 3 hours 10 minutes including a 20 minute interval. Please remember to switch off all mobile phones, pagers and watch alarms.



ORIGINALLY INTENDED as a long dramatic poem, this sprawling, picaresque masterpiece that spiralled recklessly from the mind and imagination of Henrik Ibsen one hot Italian summer in 1867 is famously unstageable. Despite this, it quickly entered the canon of European theatre classics and 150 years later is one of Ibsen's most produced works.

In Willy Russell's charming comedy *Educating Rita*, the university professor poses the question: "How would you solve the staging problems in Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*?" His sassy student replies "Do it on the radio". Fair enough!

It's a pitiless, satiric self portrait of a man fleeing the most essential conflicts within himself, endlessly seduced by his own trolls. Peer is a loser, a liar, a narcissist, an Emperor of Self so fixated on his own desires that he almost loses himself altogether. But he's beguiling - a dreamer and maybe his fevered imagination can just save him. But what is he? Does

he really exist? Did all these adventures of his really happen? What's true and what are lies? What is reality and what is illusion? Is this theatre? What is theatre? Like all great sustaining works of theatre that earn the right to be deemed classics, Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* is thick with theme. And its excoriating exposé of the culture of narcissism seems

scarily contemporary; it screams post-truth as well as post-modernism. I've always been attracted to Ibsen's later, more well-known, more considered social dramas: *A Doll's House*, *Ghosts*, *Enemy Of The People*, *Hedda Gabler*, but the audacious high spirits of *Peer Gynt* - challenging, infuriating, mysterious and mad - offered a wild ride I couldn't

resist. I knew there was no "correct" way to interpret this work, no "accepted" style of presentation, but I needed a Kiwi playwright who could take on the depth and breadth of the work and make it their own. Eli Kent was always going to be the man I needed. He's taken the Ibsen quote "To live is to war with trolls in heart and soul; to write is to sit in judgement of oneself" as the genesis of his recycled version and in a very clever, funny, meta-theatrical way has worked himself and Ibsen into the Peer story, wrestling with this genius work to make it his own. Both Ibsen and our core character are self-obsessed. Self is at the heart of the piece yet beneath the Ibsen play is an urgent questioning of authenticity, of life experiences, and of theatre art as it affects playwrights, actors and audiences.

It's been an engrossing and thrilling voyage of discovery for Eli and all of us on this project: our dramaturg, Philippa Campbell, our talented design team and fabulous cast of actors. Huge thanks to all of them for coming on the journey. Now we invite you to join us. Enjoy.

WHEN WRITING THIS PLAY I was often reminded of the first play I ever loved: *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, in which the mercurial character of "The Player" claims "We're actors. We're the opposite of people!" A play about art versus reality. A play about bit-players with ideas above their station.

It seems that the very form of theatre might have ideas above its station. Theatre pleads with us to believe it, but is so easily undone by reality. A live animal on stage for instance threatens the constructed reality of a theatrical piece because it doesn't know how to lie. Writer Peter Handke put it this way: "...in the theatre, light is brightness pretending to be other brightness, a chair is a chair pretending to be another chair." And I am pretending to be someone who has read a lot of Peter Handke when really I just found that quote after googling "Reality in theatre quotes???"

I'm interested in the relationship, or battle, between theatre and reality. Art and life. Truth and fiction. When is fiction helpful? When is it

dangerous? When is truth... actually...um...

In all honesty, it feels a little strange trying to write a writer's note about a play that is in many respects one giant writer's note. And then to start writing about the writer's note within the writer's note itself. Apt perhaps, as we are about to cross the event-horizon of self referential meta-theatre and be sucked deep into the

who were instrumental at various stages throughout this play's bizarre journey: (in alphabetical order sorry no favourites)

Victoria Abbott, Kirstie Baxter, Eleanor Bishop, Sam Brooks, Milo Cawthorne, Eddy Dever, Laurel Devenie, Chye-Ling Huang, Robin Kerr, Murray Lynch, Rachel Marlow, Molly O'Shea, Georgie Silk, Rosabel Tan, Leon Wadham - Heroes ALL!

"We are about to cross the event-horizon of self referential meta-theatre and be sucked deep into the tesseract of postmodernist navel-gazing. It'll be fun!"

tesseract of postmodernist navel-gazing. It'll be fun!

I do enough talking in the play already. So I want to use the remaining space to say thank you to everyone at ATC, and all the cast and crew. Colin and Philippa, thank you so much for coming to me with this gift of a project. And then lastly I want to thank some friends

And lastly but most importantly, my mum Katherine Baxter, who is probably my favourite mum. She should really have some kind of dramaturgy credit for this show.

Love and thanks,
EPK

Referencing in play...



HENRIK IBSEN

Henrik Ibsen was a major 19th century Norwegian playwright, theatre director, and poet. He is often referred to as “the father of realism” and is one of the founders of Modernism in theatre. His major works include *Peer Gynt*, *A Doll's House* and *Hedda Gabler*. He is the most frequently performed dramatist in the world after Shakespeare.



JAMES CAMERON

James Cameron is a Canadian director, screenwriter, and producer who has had an extensive career in film

and television. Films he is best known for include *The Terminator*, *Titanic* and *Avatar*. *Titanic* and *Avatar* are the two highest grossing films of all time. Cameron quit his job as a truck driver to enter the film industry after seeing *Star Wars* in 1977. Cameron divides his time between his home in California and his second home in New Zealand, a country he fell in love with when he was filming *Avatar*. In 2016, Cameron partnered with Tourism New Zealand to produce a series of videos that expressed his love for the country.



TERRY RICHARDSON

Terrence “Terry” Richardson is an American fashion and portrait photographer who has shot advertising campaigns for Marc Jacobs, Aldo,

Supreme, Sisley, Tom Ford, and Yves Saint Laurent among others. He has also done work for magazines such as *Rolling Stone*, *GQ*, *Vogue*, *Vanity Fair*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *i-D* and *Vice*. He also directed Miley Cyrus's ‘Wrecking Ball’ music video.



MILO YIANNPOULOUS

Milo Yiannopoulos is a British journalist, author, entrepreneur and public speaker. Yiannopoulos is a popular YouTuber with predominantly conservative/libertarian content. As of 20 February 2017, he had over 500,000 subscribers. Recently his book deal was cancelled after after a pro-paedophilia podcast controversy.


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Synopsis.

SPOILER ALERT!



Peer Gynt [recycled] relates key incidents in Ibsen's story of a ratbag bad boy with big dreams, a bigger imagination and a lust for life. But woven through it is a young Kiwi playwright's struggle to adapt the play to a contemporary setting.

Characters (in order of appearance - mostly)

PEER GYNT - A title character played by several actors
ELI - The writer of this play
IBSEN - A dead Norwegian playwright
MUM - Eli's mum who occasionally plays Peer's mum
SOL - A musician, Peer's soul mate
INKA - A bride
"X" - An ex-girlfriend of Eli's
THE WOMAN IN GREEN - A Troll princess
THE TROLL KING - A party monster
TERRY RICHARDSON - A photographer
THE PIG KID - A Troll/Human hybrid
HUHU - A Norwegian translator
PROFFESOR GRIFFIN FELDT - A lecturer and Ibsen enthusiast
ANATTÄ - A soul-less woman and commune leader
TWO GHOSTWRITERS
MILO YIANNOPOULOS - An internet troll
A STARBUCKS EMPLOYEE
JAMES CAMERON - A filmmaker
A STRANGE PASSENGER - Played by Eli
A BUTTON MOULDER - Played by Ibsen
THE BOYG - The Boyg
WEDDING GUESTS/ACQUAINTANCES
TROLLS
EMIRATES FLIGHT ATTENDANTS
THE COLONY - A spiritual haven in San Francisco
THE IBSEN APPRECIATION SOCIETY - A death cult

Act one.

ELI EXPLAINS his struggle to adapt Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* in a contemporary context - even sharing with us secret recordings of phone conversations between him and his mother when he was seeking her advice.

We snap into the *Peer Gynt* story at a society wedding where Peer's ex, Inka Highbury, is having misgivings about marrying The Bachelor. At the event Peer also unexpectedly meets an old school friend, Sol, who consoles him when the wedding guests attack him. Meanwhile Eli has skyped an ex-girlfriend for advice. However, she's suspicious of Eli's intentions and doesn't want to

contribute to the play unless she gets a writer's credit.

At a cheap strip joint Peer is bewitched by a gorgeous young woman. He goes off with her only to find himself at a Troll Party, presided over by the girl's father - the Troll King - and Terry Richardson, the Vice photographer. They convince Peer he needs a reconstruction to get the most benefits of Trolldom. Peer wakes up to their game at the last minute and manages to escape the bad dream but finds himself lost in a void. A mysterious character called The Boyg offers Peer some advice.

Eli introduces Huhu to the audience. She's the Norwegian translator ATC has provided for him. They discuss the similarities and differences between New

Zealand and Norway but Huhu is very surprised when Eli seems to understand the Norwegian she's speaking.

Peer is keen to see Sol again but as he arrives at her flat he's accosted by an ugly harridan and a Pig child who the woman claims is Peer's. When Peer vehemently denies paternity, the child attacks him and the woman curses that she'll make his life a nightmare of hell. When Peer explains that he has to go away, Sol promises to wait for him. Peer arrives to say goodbye to his dying mother. He helps ease her pain and fear with his glorious story telling. The playwright explains that it's the end of the first half and is apologising for any deleted scenes when he's accosted by members of the Ibsen Appreciation Society, very

unhappy with what they've seen on stage so far. Huhu joins them: they perform a caesarean on him to extract the baby Henrik Ibsen. The I.A.S. members are only too keen to contribute to the newly born Ibsen's cannibalistic tendencies.

Act two.

WHILE THE FULLY GROWN Ibsen is discovering the joys of an electronic world, Eli points out to him he has so much work to do to keep up with the zeitgeist. Ibsen claims he's up for the challenge.

Peer, now in his 30s, still on a search for himself, seeks enlightenment at a Californian retreat. He and the commune leader become lovers but he becomes disenchanted by her lack of commitment to the relationship. When she returns from a trip to her doctor, Peer realises too late what her true intentions are. He needs to run away.

At the airport check in he comes across The Boyg – who's also been suffering an existential crisis about who and what he is – and has decided to take a little holiday. Ibsen is thoroughly frustrated with the lack of depth in Eli's version of his play and demands to see what he has done with the famous Madhouse scene.

Suddenly we're in Dubai where 40 year old Peer, now a successful entrepreneur, is entertaining a couple of ghost writers he's employed for his autobiography: "The Emperor of Self". They're joined by Peer's friend, the alt-right commentator Milo Yiannopolous and a couple of Air Emirates flight attendants who are there for the party. A young Starbucks worker, with a gripe about Peer's mistreatment of her, turns up, creating chaos. Her actions cause Peer to consider what his life has become.

Sol is still waiting patiently for Peer to return home, but the actress playing the role has issues with Eli's misogynistic writing and leaves the show. Convinced that enough damage has been done to his classic, Ibsen decides to take a firm hand with the play. He scares Eli off the stage.

In a post-apocalyptic near future, Peer, now a very old man (or so it seems) is travelling back to New Zealand when his ship is wrecked by a violent storm off the coast of Taranaki. Peer drifts on a large wooden door, fighting off bribes from filmmaker James Cameron, who is trying to clamber aboard. Eli sneaks into the play as a Strange Passenger who shares the floating door

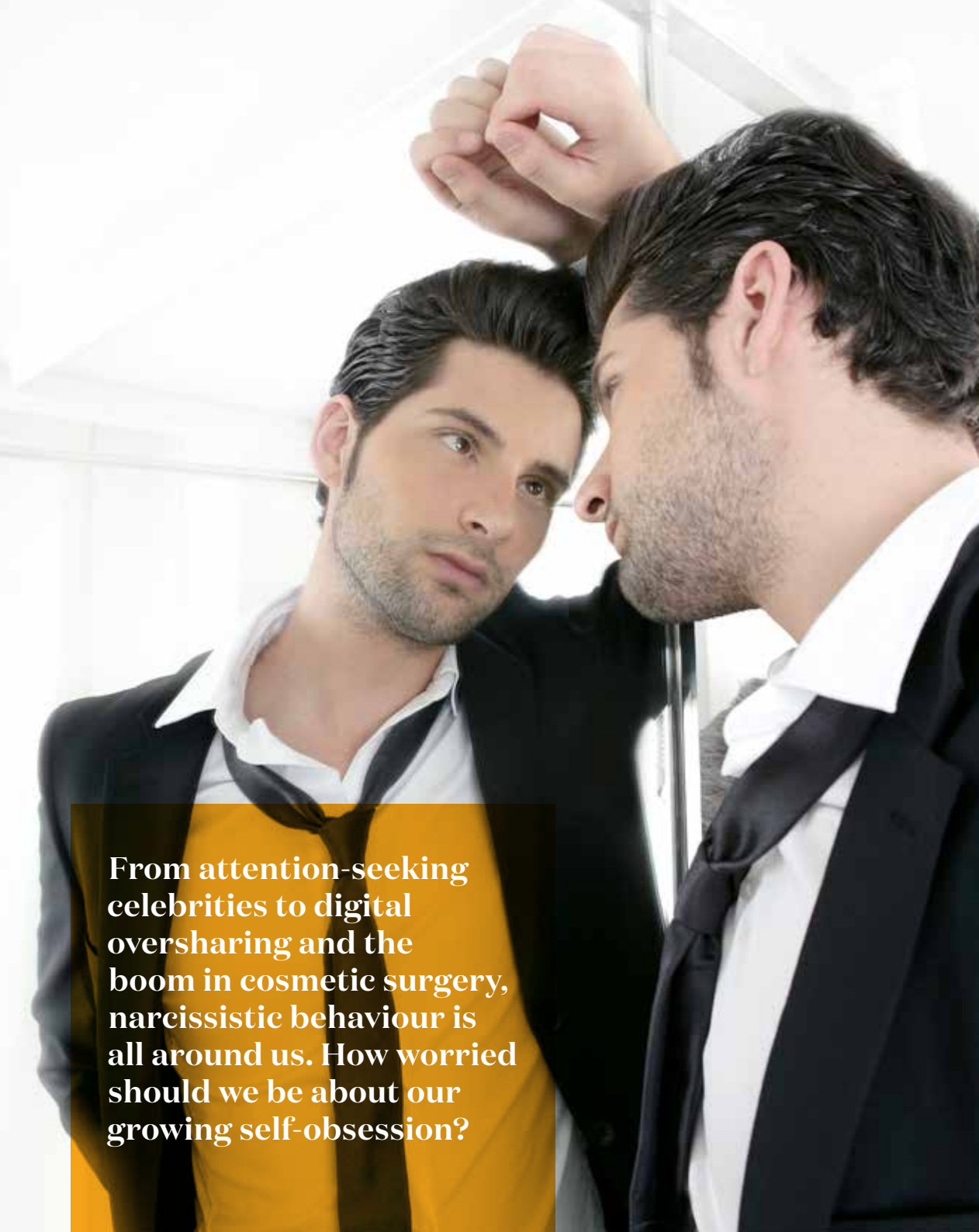
with Peer and convinces him to change personas with him. On a dock old acquaintances of Peer's are returning from a funeral. From their chat he learns that Inka Highbury is dead and that stories about his adventures have become local myths. He attempts to tell one of his infamous and improbable tall stories but the crowd aren't impressed and don't recognise him. Ibsen, who has now twigged that Eli is hiding in the play as Peer, disguises himself as a Button Moulder and informs Peer he is nothing special and has to be merged with the molten masses in his casting ladle.

Peer (Eli) manages to convince The Button Moulder to give him until sunrise to prove he's someone special and seeks testimonials from the now invalidated Troll King and Terry Richardson to no effect. In the end Ibsen presents Peer (Eli) with an onion. When he peels it he realises there is nothing but layer after layer – there is no core.

Eli sheds Peer's persona, and in a desperate effort to end the play in a satisfying way, skypes his mother. Together they read the last scene of Ibsen's play. Eli enlists the audience's help: "If we all believe in the lie together, isn't that as good as the truth?"

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From attention-seeking celebrities to digital oversharing and the boom in cosmetic surgery, narcissistic behaviour is all around us. How worried should we be about our growing self-obsession?

Me! Me! Me!

by Zoe Williams

Are we living through a narcissism epidemic?

‘THEY UNCONSCIOUSLY DENY an unstated and intolerably poor self-image through inflation. They turn themselves into glittering figures of immense grandeur surrounded by psychologically impenetrable walls. The goal of this self-deception is to be impervious to greatly feared external criticism and to their own rolling sea of doubts.” This is how Elan Golomb describes narcissistic personality disorder in her seminal book *Trapped in the Mirror*. She goes on to describe the central symptom of the disorder – the narcissist’s failure to achieve intimacy with anyone – as the result of them seeing other people like items in a vending machine, using them to service their own needs, never being able to acknowledge that others might have needs

of their own, still less guess what they might be. “Full-bodied narcissistic personality disorder remains a fairly unusual diagnosis,” Pat MacDonald, author of the paper “Narcissism in the Modern World”, tells me. “Traditionally, it is very difficult to reverse narcissistic personality disorder. It would take a long time and a lot of work.”

What we talk about when we describe an explosion of modern narcissism is not the disorder but the rise in narcissistic traits. Examples are everywhere. Donald Trump epitomises the lack of empathy, the self-regard and, critically, the radical overestimation of his own talents and likeability. Katie Hopkins personifies the perverse pride the narcissist takes in not caring for others. (“No,” she wrote in the Sun about the refugee crisis. “I don’t care. Show me pictures of coffins, show me bodies floating in water, play violins and show me skinny people looking sad. I still don’t care.”) Those are the loudest examples,

blaring like sirens; there is a general hubbub of narcissism beneath, which is conveniently – for observation purposes, at least – broadcast on social media. Terrible tragedies, such as the attacks on Paris, are appropriated by people thousands of miles away and used as a backdrop to showcase their sensitivity. The death of David Bowie is mediated through its “relevance” to voluble strangers.

Older people have more formed personalities and are less influenced by socio-cultural pressures; when they were young, these pressures simply didn't exist.

It has become routine for celebrities to broadcast banal information and fill Instagram with the “moments” that constitute their day, the tacit principle being that, once you are important enough, nothing is mundane. This delusion then spills out to the non-celebrity; recording mundane events becomes proof of your importance. The dramatic rise in cosmetic surgery

is part of the same effect; the celebrity fixates on his or her appearance to meet the demands of fame. Then the vanity, being the only truly replicable trait, becomes the thing to emulate. Ordinary people start having treatments that only intense scrutiny would warrant – 2015 saw a 13% rise in procedures in the UK, with the rise in cosmetic dentistry particularly marked, because people don't like

their teeth in selfies. The solution – stop taking selfies – is apparently so 2014.

The compelling epidemiological evidence comes from *The Narcissism Epidemic*, in which the American academics Jean Twenge and Keith Campbell found that narcissistic personality traits rose just as fast as obesity from the 1980s to the present, with the shift

in women particularly marked. Scores have risen faster since the turn of this century.

Campbell is also the author of a meta-analysis of three cohort studies that found increases over the generations in the Rosenberg self-esteem scale among US middle school, high school and college students in the two decades to 2008. By 2008, a score of 40 (perfect self-esteem) was the modal response of college students, chosen by 18% of participants; 51% scored 35 or over. At this point, the test has to change or the measurement has to stop: the self-esteem of nearly one in five college students could not get any higher.

One study, sponsored by the US National Institutes of Health, looks at lifetime prevalence: you'd expect any trait to become more pronounced over time, since people who have lived longer have more time to develop it. In fact, narcissistic traits afflict almost 10% of people in their 20s, compared with 3% of people in their 60s. Older people have more formed personalities and are less influenced by socio-cultural pressures; when they were young, these pressures simply didn't exist.

‘The best-case scenario is disillusionment’

MOST OF THE TRAITS have at their core the belief that one is extraordinary. The problem is obvious immediately: most people are not extraordinary.

The problem with narcissistic traits is that they're unrealistic;

the belief in one's own extraordinariness will sooner or later about the world, and the result will be disillusionment in the best-case scenario or ever-greater fake grandeur in the worst. “Especially when you're talking about

traits and not the disorder, it's correlated in youth with less depression, less anxiety,” says Twenge. “It wasn't until middle age that narcissists became depressed, because of their failed relationships.”

Your immediate worry, obviously, is that you have narcissistic traits yourself. Experiencing this anxiety means you don't, since true narcissists know it – and freely admit it. Another major figure in the narcissism field, Brad Bushman, has shown that agreeing with the statement, “I am a narcissist” correlates highly with narcissistic traits. They are proud



Photo credit: JStone / Shutterstock.com

of it: they would say it helps them succeed. They also relate proudly, in surveys, that they're low on empathy and caring isn't their thing. There's not much guilt in narcissism.

If you're still anxious, or

“There’s a good accumulation of evidence that narcissists have more friends on Facebook,”

just curious, you should take the narcissistic personality inventory (NPI). “I made my husband take it on our fourth date,” says Twenge. “I’m not joking.” And he passed with flying colours? She laughs. “Yes. You don’t have to score zero. A little above or a little below the average, you’re fine. It’s when people start scoring a 20 or above [out of 40] that there’s some potential to worry.” It has seven strands: authority, self-sufficiency – a belief that you’ve achieved everything on your own – superiority, exhibitionism,

exploitativeness, vanity and entitlement. I scored 11, mostly on exhibitionism. Now I’m worried that it’s narcissistic even to tell you that. God, it’s a swamp.

The damage narcissism brings can be quite amorphous and ill-defined. “Much of our distress,” MacDonald notes, “comes from a sense of disconnection. We have a narcissistic society where self-promotion and individuality seem to be essential, yet in our hearts that’s not what we want. We want to be part of a community, we want to be supported when we’re struggling, we want a sense of belonging. Being extraordinary is not a necessary component to being loved.”

The full-blown disorder is associated with harsh, critical parenting, but a mass rise in narcissistic traits is partly ascribed by MacDonald to lax and indulgent parenting: “[With] parents seeing their children as extensions of themselves – they want to be mates, the boundaries aren’t set – the child gets very confused: ‘You’re great, you’re terrific.’ Maybe we’re not, maybe we need to know we’re just ordinary.”

This has been evinced – again by Bushman, alongside Eddie Brummelman – in a longitudinal study that found over-praised children showed narcissistic traits six months to a year later. It’s not so much a new kindness in parenting as a kind of lackadaisical positive assertion, where self-esteem can be conjured out of thin air simply by the people around you saying it’s so. To a degree, MacDonald traces the new style of parenting back to new media: “You see mums relating to the non-human other, the smartphone, not the baby. The child is not getting a sense of self.” But the impact of social media is more pronounced – currently, at least – in the adult with narcissistic traits. “There’s a good accumulation of evidence that narcissists have more friends on Facebook,” Twenge says. “We can’t make the case definitively that social media causes narcissism, although it does certainly call for a certain type of attention-seeking. If you look at Twitter, and the quest for followers, that has a narcissistic ring to it.”

‘Our collective narcissism is destroying the planet’

THERE IS A CONTEXT

even broader than Twitter: a competitive culture in which asserting one’s difference, one’s specialness, is the bare minimum for being market-ready. Twenge is cautious: “The market stuff hasn’t been as closely examined. Certainly, individualism tends to be correlated with materialism, and so is narcissism. Economic prosperity does seem to be linked to individualism.” Yet, it is hard to conceive of this mantra – you’re special, you’re worth it, you’re different – arriving unrelated to the call of competitiveness; the idea – popularised by monetarist

politicians since the late-70s – that self-interest is beneficial, and that all of us acting in our own self-interest will create better outcomes for all.

In a way, this is easier to see played out in group narcissism. “Take, for example, members of parliament,” MacDonald says. “It’s not individual greed, is it? It’s a culture of: ‘Let’s grab it when we can.’ You walk into that culture when you become an MP, when you become a banker. Group narcissism is huge. And the worst thing our collective narcissism is doing is the destruction of the planet. Together, we’re wiping out species

after species after species, fuelled by consumerism, fuelled by our self-importance. Our narcissism may destroy us in the end.”

One long-term study of narcissists and those with prominent narcissistic traits found that they do the most significant damage to those around them, over time. Among those with the full-blown disorder, this would

relate to their failure to consider another person on an intimate level, seeing them only relationally: what can they do for me, or, in the case of their children, how do they reflect on me, or how have they disappointed me in what they’ve failed to reflect?

Don’t forget that, in the original myth, Narcissus is punished with a terminal fascination for his own reflection in revenge for his treatment of Echo, whom he despises for loving him. It is properly understood not as self-love but emotionally monogamous self-love. Those with narcissistic traits may be more capable of considering others as discrete people, and it is this tendency to overreact

to criticism that causes the damage over time.

So, let’s say you have taken the NPI, haven’t lied (because narcissists don’t – at least, not about their own narcissism) and have scored relatively highly, and that this correlates with your observation that your high expectations of yourself are often not met, your relationships



fail and people who like you initially like you less four months later. All is not lost. MacDonald picks out five principles of self-improvement: gratitude, modesty, compassion (for self and others), mindfulness and community. Some of these are obvious – modesty as an antidote to self-love – and some have a practical application.

“If, for example, you write down at the end of the day three things you’re grateful for, that can go a long way to reverse your narcissism,” he says. (This is huge in psycho-self-help at the moment: stimulating grateful thoughts also allays guilt. Hebb’s law – neurones that fire together, wire together – suggests that your brain will always choose the more familiar pathway.) As for compassion, “if we can remain more humble, we become kinder, too”, he says, but this is a two-way street. “We need to have compassion for ourselves, as well; compassion for others will follow.”

The interesting thing, as their prevalence increases, will be seeing whether society rebels against or accommodates narcissistic traits. “There’s a natural human tendency to think that things are getting worse, or at least they’re not getting better, and you have to fight that tendency,” says Twenge. “But you also have to fight the tendency to stick your head in the sand and say: ‘The kids are great and there’s nothing wrong.’”

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Cast.



OSCAR WILSON

OSCAR WILSON

Peer #1 / Thomas / Ghost Writer #1 / Ensemble

Peer Gynt [recycled] is Oscar's second production with ATC. In 2014 he played Fred in Maurice Shadbolt's *Once On Chunuk Bair* directed by Ian Mune. Since graduating from The Actors' Program in 2013, Oscar has enjoyed a bounty of artistic opportunities. In the same year as *Once On Chunuk Bair* he played a certain Scottish King in Shakespeare's Scottish Play directed by Jacque Drew and then just to keep it interesting he played Gwendolyn in Benjamin Henson's re-imagined "wilde" ride, *Earnest*. Not to be tied down by one art form, Oscar also lent his physical talents to *The X Factor* where he worked as a dancer and assistant choreographer. In true Kiwi expat style, Oscar has worked and trained internationally. Before attending The Actors' Program, he was working as a dancer in Australia and most recently he has been living in Los Angeles, studying improv at The Upright Citizens Brigade and appearing believably American in a number of short films and web series.

JORDAN MOONEY

Mads / Peer #2 / Jason / Milo / Captain / Ensemble

Jordan Mooney first appeared on stage in Auckland in 2009 in *Young and Hungry* with ATC as a sleazy young man in the women's bathroom. Nothing has changed. *Peer Gynt [recycled]* is Jordan's 6th professional show with ATC with credits including *Anne Boleyn*, *Lord of the Flies*, *Once on Chunuk Bair*, and most recently *Enlightenment*. Lately he has been seen on the small screen in television shows such as *Ash vs. Evil Dead*, *Hillary and Westside*, prequel to the smash hit *Outrageous Fortune*. Getting back

into theatre with a fresh cast in a brand spanking new theatre is an absolute blast and a riotous bang back onto the stage.

ADAM GARDINER

Troll King / Dr Griffin Feldt / John / Peer # 3 (Dubai) / James Cameron / Ensemble

Adam Gardiner's first production was in 2003 with performances in *Play 2.03*, *New Gold Dream*, and *Ladies Night*. He has worked for ATC on numerous productions and in various capacities since then. His most recent appearances have been in *Other Desert Cities*, *Midnight in Moscow*, *Black Confetti*, *In the Next Room (or the Vibrator Play)*, *Rupert*, and *Polo*. Recent screen credits include *Pike River*, *Friday Night Bites*, *Dear Murderer*, *1953*, and *Palisades*.

"I WOULD LIKE TO extend my hearty thanks and congratulations to everyone involved in the realisation of the ASB Waterfront Theatre: the funders, patrons, ATC staff and especially Colin and Lester for seeing their vision turned into its wonderful reality. It is a privilege to be performing this new work in this fantastic space."

JACK BUCHANAN

Eli / Peer #4 / Strange Passenger / Ensemble

Peer Gynt [recycled] is Jack's debut performance for ATC. He is super excited to be playing Eli Kent, who he went to high school with. Jack is a 2013 graduate of Toi Whakaari: NZ Drama School. Since graduating, he has performed in numerous professional theatre productions all over the country. In 2015 he was nominated for Most Promising Newcomer and Best Supporting Actor at the Wellington Theatre Awards. Since moving to Auckland last year he has appeared

onstage in *Mating in Captivity* at the Basement and *Don Juan* at Q Theatre. In June he will be back onstage for ATC as Isaac in *When Sun & Moon Collide*. When he isn't performing, Jack loves playing his guitar and mandolin, writing, cooking a mean risotto, and watching the cricket.

LISA CHAPPELL

Mad's Mum / Peer's Mum / Terry Richardson / Anatta / Ensemble

Lisa started her career as a teenager in iconic Kiwi television series *Gloss*, playing Chelsea Redfern. A variety of roles followed on stage and screen including *Chicago*, *Desperate Remedies*, *Shark in The Park*, *The Herbal Bed* and *City Life*. At the age of 30 Lisa took two years away from work to study drama in Sydney and completed *The Journey*. Upon graduating she landed the lead role in popular Aussie drama *McLeod's Daughters* playing Claire McLeod. Other Australian screen roles include *Stingers*, *Small Claims*, *Crossbow*, *Cops* LAC and *Coffin Rock*. When not acting, Lisa loves to write. She's written an album *When Then Is Now*, a one woman show *Fred*, a cabaret *On/Off* and two plays: *Bad Day Insurance* and *Don't Hold Your Breath*. The latter was developed by Auckland Theatre Company in The Next Stage 2009. Recent theatre appearances include roles in *Polo*, *Detroit* and *Fallen Angels*. It's been 20 years since her first show with ATC playing Ann Deever in *All My Sons*.

BRYNLEY STENT

Huhu / Simone / Air Hostess / Boatswain / Nurse / Ensemble

Brynley is an actor, comedian and writer originally from Christchurch. In 2011 she moved to Wellington to study acting, and graduated from Toi Whakaari: New Zealand Drama School in 2013. Since then she has worked with a wide range

of companies, and performed in theatres all over the country. Since moving to Auckland, she has joined the cast of *Snort* and performs in their weekly late night comedy show. She is part of the writing team and core cast of TV3's *Funny Girls* and appears regularly on *Jono & Ben*. Brynley works with comedy duo Parker & Sainsbury and has appeared in their sell-out seasons of *Camping* and *The Opening Night Before Christmas*. Brynley was nominated for Most Promising Female Newcomer in the Chapman Tripp Theatre awards in 2014 for her work in *Revelations* at BATS theatre. This is Brynley's first show with ATC and her Dad is very proud.

ELLA GILBERT

Inka / Troll Princess / Phillipa / Air Hostess / Angel / Ensemble

Ella hails from Pukerua Bay on the Kapiti Coast of Wellington and has freshly graduated from Toi Whakaari: New Zealand Drama School. This time last year, Ella was working internationally with an underground theatre company in Tehran, Iran, presenting and developing her solo show *Gaggle*. The show has previously been staged at Toi Whakaari, Manutuke Marae, Arohata Women's Prison, Massey University and Lasalle University in Singapore. The latest edition of this work will be performed in the winter season at The Basement Theatre. *Peer Gynt [recycled]* is Ella's first work with ATC and second collaboration with Eli Kent. She is stoked to be in the big bad city - digging into a robust career and life here in Auckland.

ANA SCOTNEY

Sol / X / Mattie / Starbucks Employee / Ensemble

Peer Gynt [recycled] is Ana's first collaboration with ATC and her first professional acting venture following graduating from

Toi Whakaari: NZ Drama School in November 2016. During her time at Toi Whakaari, Ana devised and performed two original solo works, *Death of Nomad* and *Mighty Boy*, which have been staged in prisons, maraes and museums around New Zealand. Ana wrote and co-directed the short film *Dance of Lonely Birds* which premiered at the Embassy Theatre. Ana has led and facilitated workshops in performance with the young people of her tribal homeland Te Urewera, and in prisons. Ana is of Tūhoe, German, Jewish and Irish descent. She was born and raised in Wellington.

PETER HAYDEN

Photographer / The Boyg / Ibsen / Button Moulder / Ensemble

"I HAVE TO SAY I am really chuffed to be back working with the team at Auckland Theatre Company on such a wonderful and powerful play with a great bunch of fellow actors. *Peer Gynt* is Henrik Ibsen's finest work and I get to play Ibsen himself. I think Eli Kent has done a great job in 'recycling' this Norwegian classic for 21st century Kiwi audiences. I have been quite busy lately, working between stage and screen. Recent screen appearances have included TV series *800 Words*, *The Brokenwood Mysteries*, *Dirty Laundry* and *Hillary* as well as a stint on *Shortland Street*. Recent theatre work for ATC includes the stage adaptation of the novel *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* and Roger Hall's delightful grand parenting play *You Can Always Hand Them Back* at Sky City Theatre. I also appeared in Pulitzer Prize finalist *Time Stands Still*, at the Fortune in Dunedin. However, over the last 3 years I've been privileged to appear in several Auckland Theatre Company productions: *Other Desert Cities*, *Trees Beneath the Lake*, *The Ladykillers* and *Lysistrata*. I hope you enjoy *Peer Gynt [recycled]*."



JORDAN MOONEY



ADAM GARDINER



JACK BUCHANAN



LISA CHAPPELL



BRYNLEY STENT



ELLA GILBERT



ANA SCOTNEY



PETER HAYDEN



ELI KENT



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BRYAN CALDWELL



SIMON BARKER

Creative.

ELI KENT Playwright

Eli Kent is a writer, director, and performer. He's a recipient of multiple accolades, including the Bruce Mason Award for emerging playwrights and the New Zealand Arts Foundation New Generation Award. In 2010 he completed his Masters in Scriptwriting at Victoria University's International Institute of Modern Letters. Recently he wrote and acted in The Playground Collective's *All Your Wants and Needs Fulfilled Forever*, which played at London's Vault Festival following successful runs in Auckland and New York. Currently Eli is developing numerous projects in theatre and film. *Peer Gynt [recycled]* might be his eleventh work for the stage, he's not sure.

COLIN MCCOLL Director

Colin has directed Ibsen plays for the Norwegian National Theatre and the Dutch National Theatre, as well as leading New Zealand and Australian theatre companies, and is the only New Zealand director to be invited to present his work at the official Edinburgh Festival. His production of *Hedda Gabler* played there to great acclaim in 1990 and was also presented at the Ibsen Festival in Oslo, the Covent Garden Festival in London, and the 1991 Sydney Festival. Colin has also won Best Director at the Chapman Tripp Theatre Awards several times – including for his Circa Theatre production of *A Doll's House*. In 2015 Colin directed Emily Perkin's new version of Ibsen's *A Doll's House* for Auckland Theatre Company. He has directed approximately 50 productions for Auckland Theatre Company. His opera directing credits include *Quartet* (New Zealand International Arts Festival 2004), *La Bohème* (Wellington City Opera), *The Italian Girl In Algiers*, *The Marriage Of Figaro* and *The Prodigal Child* for the

NBR New Zealand Opera. In 2009 he remounted his production of *The Italian Girl In Algiers* for the Scottish Opera. In November 2007, Colin was honoured for his artistic achievements and excellence at the eighth annual Arts Foundation of New Zealand Laureate Awards and was made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit in June 2010.

PHILIPPA CAMPBELL Dramaturg

Philippa has been involved in developing new plays since she graduated from VUW and Toi Whakaari in the late 70s. She has had a long association with the New Zealand Festival and collaborations with Theatre at Large. She has also dramaturged chamber operas and two of contemporary percussion group Strike's shows including *Between Zero & One* composed by John Psathas. Philippa's work with ATC began as dramaturg for Colin McColl's premiere production of *The Wife Who Spoke Japanese in Her Sleep*. More recently it has involved the debut productions of plays by Stephen Sinclair, Arthur Meek, Emily Perkins, Eli Kent, Grace Taylor, Briar Grace-Smith, Luke Di Somma and Greg Cooper, as well as the championing of new work through the Next Stage workshop programme. One of the country's most established film producers, she is currently completing Season 2 of Jane Campion's acclaimed international television series *Top of the Lake*.

BENJAMIN HENSON Assistant Director / Troll Child / Andrew / Ghost Writer #2 / Ensemble

Benjamin trained in Theatre Direction at the Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts, London, while directing productions for the London Fringe and cabaret circuit.

Having directed in Germany and France, as well as nine consecutive years at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Ben moved to Auckland to continue his career. Under theatre collective Fractious Tash, Ben has received critical acclaim for *Earnest*, *Not Psycho* and *Titus*, the latter remounted for a sell-out season at the Pop-Up Globe 2016. Last year Benjamin was one of two directors engaging in The Engine Room – a fast-tracking initiative between Auckland Theatre Company, New Zealand Opera and The Fortune Theatre. In 2017, Ben will be directing the Auckland University Summer Shakespeare, *As You Like It* (playing now), *Twelfth Night* for The Fortune Theatre, and *The Effect* with Fractious Tash in August.

JOHN PARKER Set Design

John Parker is an award-winning set designer with a long history of designing for Auckland Theatre Company. His set designs include *Polo*, *A Shortcut to Happiness*, *Red*, *Mary Stuart*, *Stepping Out*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *The Wife Who Spoke Japanese in Her Sleep*, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, *End of the Rainbow*, *Sweet Charity*, *Doubt*, *Mum's Choir*, *Taking Off*, *Equus*, *Caligula*, *The Bach*, *Middle Age Spread*, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, *Noises Off*, *Waiting For Godot*, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, *Into The Woods* and *The Glass Menagerie*. John has also designed for The Louis Vuitton Ball and The America's Cup Ball, Bendon's Next to Nothing, Bellsouth Pharaohs, Precious Legacy and Peru: Gold and Sacrifice for the Auckland Museum. John was awarded a Waitakere City Millennium Medal for Services to the Community, and in 2010 he was made an Arts Laureate by the New Zealand Arts Foundation.

NIC SMILLIE Costume Design

Nic Smillie has worked in theatre, film and television as a costume designer for nearly twenty years. Projects for

Auckland Theatre Company include *To Kill A Mockingbird*, *A Dolls House*, *Paniora!*, *Midnight In Moscow*, *Awatea*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Cabaret*, *August: Osage County*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *The Pohutukawa Tree*, *The Wife Who Spoke Japanese in Her Sleep*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, and *Where we Once Belonged*. For film, her work includes *One Thousand Ropes*, *Fresh Meat*, *Turangawaewae and Stickmen*. For television, *The Insider's Guide to Happiness*, *Rage*, *Tangiwai - A Love Story*, *Fish Skin Suit*, and *The Insider's Guide to Love* for which she won the Air New Zealand Screen Award for Contribution to Design. Her operatic designs include *The Italian Girl in Algiers* which was staged in both Auckland and Glasgow. Currently based in Helsinki, she continues to return for work in NZ on a regular basis.

EDEN MULHOLLAND Music & Sound Design

Eden is one of New Zealand's most respected and prolific composers and producers for theatre, film and contemporary dance. His recent credits for ATC include *August: Osage County*, *Stepping Out*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, *The Pillowman*, and *Where We Once Belonged*. Eden has written for Raewyn Hill - Dance North, Co3, Malia Johnston - Rifleman Productions, Movement of the Human, Michael Parmenter, Maria Dabrowska, Craig Bary, Ross McCormack, Sarah Foster, NZ Dance Company, Okareka Dance Company, Atamira Dance Company, Touch Compass, Footnote Dance Company, and Oneill. Eden was the winner of 2009 & 2010 Best Music at the Tempo Dance Festival, and nominated for a Qantas Media award for Best Music for a TV Series for his work on the *World Kitchen* TV Series. His commercial work has been commissioned internationally for companies like Zoomslide Media, Radiation, 42 Below, MTV, C4 TV, TV3 and licensed to MGM, CBS, *Hamish & Andy*, *Home & Away* - to name a few.

BRYAN CALDWELL Lighting Design

Since 1987, Bryan has lit more than two hundred productions for NZ's top theatre and event companies, including NZ Opera, the Watershed Theatre, NZ Actors Company, the Mercury Theatre, and Inside Out Theatre. Bryan's recent lighting designs for Auckland Theatre Company include *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Cabaret*, *Horseplay*, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, *Blackbird*, *The Pillowman*. He has won the Audience Award for Best Lighting Design for ATC productions *Hair* and *Wit*. Bryan's event designs have been seen in New York, Tokyo, and Hong Kong for the 150th birthday parties for Louis Vuitton, and in San Francisco, Sydney, and Paris for Tourism NZ with Inside Out Productions. Bryan's work extends beyond the role of lighting designer. He was co-creator and co-designer of the opera event *Viva Verdi!* (Opera NZ), and co-produced and co-adapted *Alice in Wonderland* (Aotea Centre). He also co-created the installations *Our Name Is Object* and *I Had a Thought* (Artspace Auckland), and created the video installation *Secret City Scope* in downtown Auckland. Bryan's play *Breathing Space* was workshopped for the 2013 ATC Next Stage play development program.

SIMON BARKER AV Design

Simon runs the successful creative video production company Lotech Media, specialising in production for many of Aotearoa's largest art and music festivals, along with numerous awards ceremonies and theatrical productions. Having worked in the creative video scene for over 15 years, Simon now has a team of digital creatives producing some of the most experimental live video in the country. Recent works include the critically acclaimed 20th anniversary retrospective *Siva* for Black Grace, the independent production *Between 2 Waves*, and ATC's production *The Glass Menagerie*.

What's on at the ASB Waterfront Theatre.

March



Auckland Arts Festival 2017 presents
The Bone Feeder

23-26 March

The Bone Feeder is a new opera, beautifully and imaginatively scored by Gareth Farr and written by poet and playwright Renee Liang, which explores the mysteries, traumas and gifts of migration, home and belonging.

May



Auckland Theatre Company presents
The ASB season of
Amadeus
by Peter Shaffer

2-17 May

In Vienna, music is the currency of power and Court Composer Antonio Salieri is the toast of the town. That is until the arrival of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

May



Royal New Zealand Ballet presents
Three by Ekman

24 May-1 June

All three works showcase the hallmarks of Ekman's style: exuberant and complex rhythms in which the dancers are at one with the music; a deep pleasure in the human interactions of dance; and witty, stylish staging.

June



Auckland Theatre Company presents
When Sun & Moon Collide
by Briar Grace-Smith

20 June-5 July

A small, rural settlement in the middle of nowhere is in turmoil. Somebody knows what happened to two Danish backpackers who disappeared a year ago on a local walking track.

August



Auckland Theatre Company presents
The Kensington Swan season of
Nell Gwynn
by Jessica Swale

15-30 August

London, 1660. There's a new fad for putting a woman, an 'actor-ess', on the stage and when The King's Company at Drury Lane casts the pretty, witty orange-seller Nell Gwynn as its first leading lady, its royal patron, Charles II, is immediately smitten.

September



Auckland Theatre Company presents
The Giltrap Audi season of
Last Legs
by Roger Hall

12-27 September

News that Bill English is to open a new wing of the Cambridge Retirement Village sparks a revolution amongst its residents.



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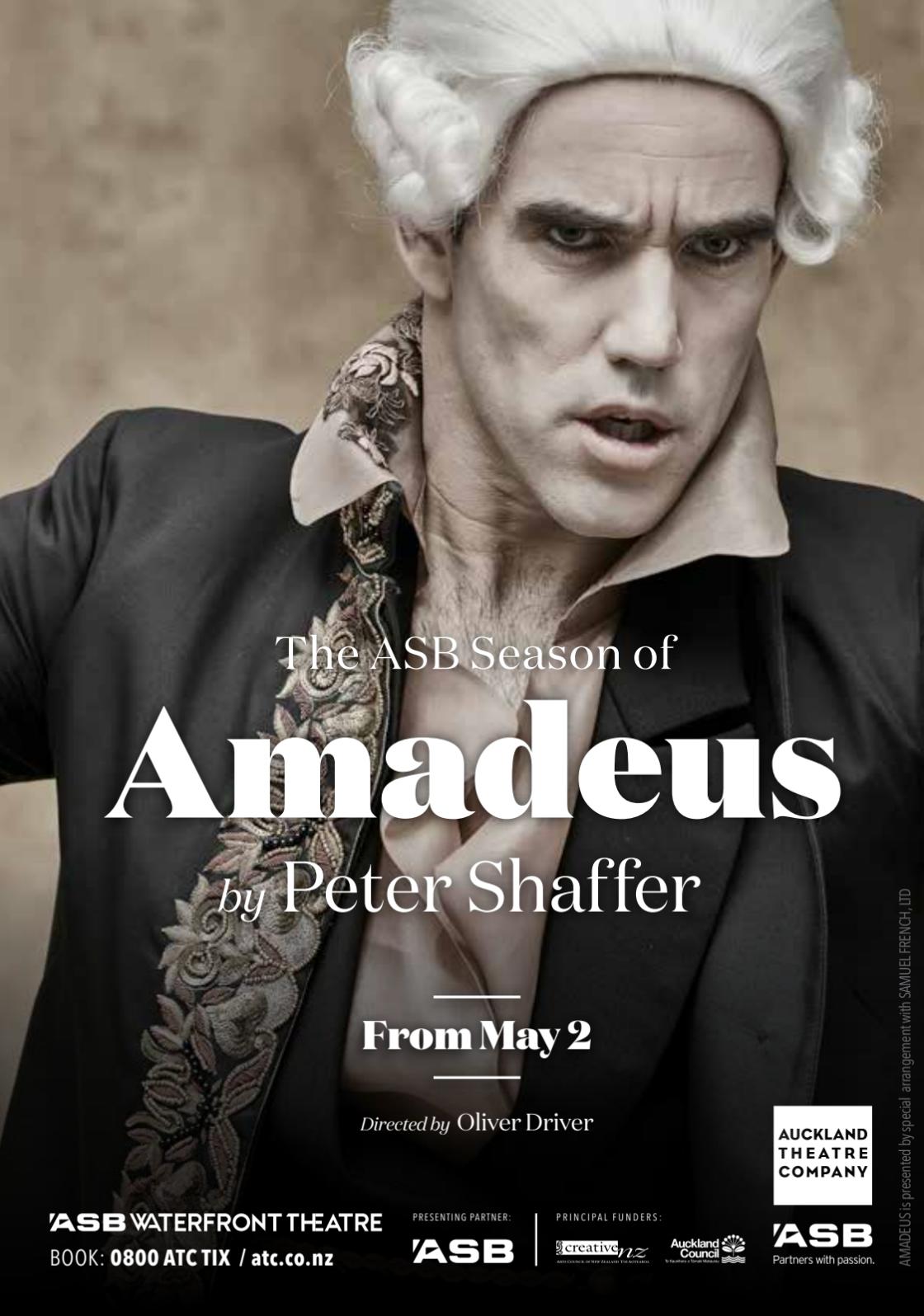


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