

BLACK SWAN STATE THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS A SOFT TREAD PRODUCTION

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

Paul

WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY
JONATHAN BIGGINS

23 JULY – 3 AUGUST
HEATH LEDGER THEATRE



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Black Swan State Theatre Company of Western Australia acknowledges the Whadjuk people of the Nyoongar Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and live.

First Nations People have been telling stories on this country for many thousands of years, and we acknowledge their incredible contribution to the cultural and environmental landscape we reside in. In addition, we acknowledge and recognise all First Nations People with whom we work and whose lands we travel to in Western Australia. We pay our respects to all Elders past and present, and their ancestors that walked this country before them, as we stand united towards a shared future.

Total running time:

1 hour 30 minutes (no interval)

Content warnings:

Contains coarse language

Hero Image

Photography by Brett Boardman

Design by Troy Barbitta

Program Design

Troy Barbitta





A NOTE FROM THE PERFORMER & WRITER



I'VE BEEN PLAYING PAUL KEATING FOR MANY YEARS NOW – WHEN HE SAW ME APPEARING AS HIM IN THE WHARF REVUE, HIS FIRST COMMENT WAS: “I'D HAVE BEEN WEARING A BETTER SUIT.” SADLY, WE DIDN'T HAVE THE BUDGET FOR A ZEGNA THEN AND TO BE PERFECTLY HONEST WE STILL DON'T, BUT THIS PLAY IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE ATTEMPTED TO EXPLORE ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S MOST ENDURING POLITICAL FIGURES IN SOMETHING MORE COMPLEX THAN THE SKETCH OR SHORT MONOLOGUE FORMAT.

I like to think of it as the first three-dimensional, unauthorised autobiography written by someone else. I'm pretty sure most of it is true and the bits that may not be, I certainly wish they were. Keating is such a great character to write for and perform – he was funny, sharp, emotional and flamboyant; the bovver-boy from Bankstown who was as comfortable writing an essay on neo-classicism and the architecture of Berlin as he was staring down the Head of Treasury to float the dollar. No government has tackled as much difficult reform as the Hawke-Keating ministries and while some of the long-term results have unsettled many, they certainly changed Australia's perception of itself and where it might find a place and a role in the world.

I'd like to acknowledge the three authors who I leant on most for the research: Troy Bramston, Kerry O'Brien and Don Watson. And of course, the words of PJK himself. This is “his” view of himself and his significance in the national discourse, so naturally, some may think it leans a little heavily in his favour. But let's face it, he was never the shrinking violet; public self-criticism was never his long suit. Yet the private man wore a very different face, and although this is a study of his public service and no intrusion on his personal life, I hope we shed the occasional light on the contradictions and complexities of a great leader whose vision, courage and determination are sadly missing in what passes for our contemporary political class. Do better, ya mugs!

Jonathan Biggins



PERFORMER, CREATIVES AND CREW

PERFORMER & WRITER

Jonathan Biggins

CREATIVES

Aarne Neeme
Director

Mark Thompson
Set & Costume
Designer

Verity Hampson
Lighting Designer

David Bergman
Sound & Video
Designer

CREW

Tanya Leach
Stage Manager

Marcus Kelson
Technical Director

Samuel Read
Tour Production
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Jo Dyer
Producer

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Lighting Supervisor

Brendan Dietrich
Audio Supervisor





JONATHAN BIGGINS PERFORMER & WRITER

Jonathan Biggins is an award-winning writer, director, and performer, perhaps best known as one of the creators and performers of Sydney Theatre Company's long-running and much loved annual political satire, *The Wharf Revue*, which came to the end of its astonishing 25 year run in April this year.

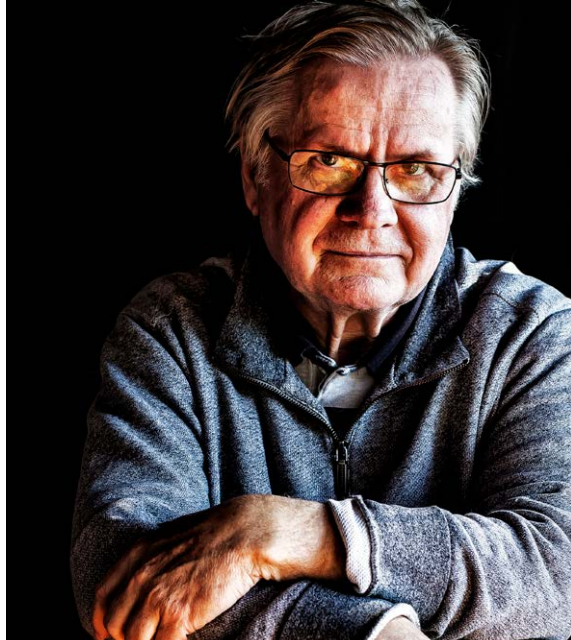
As an actor Jonathan has also worked with all the major theatre companies, including Sydney Theatre Company, Melbourne Theatre Company and the State Theatre Company of SA, and has appeared on multiple comedy shows on the ABC. He is the winner of two Australian Writers' Guild awards for *The Republic of Myopia* (with Drew Forsythe and Phil Scott) and for a new libretto for *Orpheus in the Underworld* (with Phil Scott), and a Helpmann Award for Best Director for Avenue Q. His two earlier full-length plays, *Australia Day* (2012) and *Talk* (2017) both premiered at Sydney Theatre Company before touring nationally.

SOFT TREAD ENTERPRISES

Soft Tread is led by experienced producer Jo Dyer, the co-host of *The Shot's* popular weekly YouTube show *The Sunday Shot* and a former Director of Adelaide Writers' Week, CEO of Sydney Writers' Festival, Executive Producer of Sydney Theatre Company and General Manager of Bangarra Dance Theatre. Soft Tread's recent shows include Stephen Page's *Baleen Moondjan* for the 2024 Adelaide Festival and also plays at this year's Brisbane Festival, the annual much-loved Wharf Revue, which concluded its astonishing 25 year run in April 2025, and Jonathan Biggins' acclaimed one-man play about Paul Keating, *The Gospel According to Paul*. Other notable recent productions include Emmanuelle Mattana's award-winning *Trophy Boys*, which toured nationally in 2024 and returns in 2025 due to popular demand, Jonny Hawkins' *Maureen: Harbinger of Death*, which played at Festivals nationwide before a triumphant season in Edinburgh, super-group magic show, *Band of Magicians*, which premiered at the Sydney Festival before headlining at the legendary Tropicana Hotel in Las Vegas, and celebrated artiste Meow Meow's season at the Brooklyn Academy of Music of *The Very Meow Meow Christmas Show*.

Soft Tread's films have also travelled widely. Its debut film, Michael James Rowland's *Lucky Miles* (2007), won the Sydney Film Festival's Best Film Award and its feature film co-production with Windmill Theatre Company, *Girl Asleep* (dir Rosemary Myers) (2016), had its international premiere at the Berlin International Film Festival before screening at film festivals across Australia and the world, including Sydney, Melbourne, Buenos Aires, Toronto, New York, London and Seattle, where it won the Best Film Award.





AARNE NEEME DIRECTOR

Aarne has worked in the theatre and television profession since the early 1960s, primarily as a director and teacher. He has held the position of Resident Director at the Octagon Theatre, and Nimrod Street Theatre, and that of Artistic Director at the National Theatre, Perth, the Hunter Valley Theatre, where he first worked with Jonathan, and the Hole in the Wall Theatre. He was Head of the Theatre Department at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, and Senior Fellow at the National University of Singapore. His television directing credits include *Blue Heelers*, *Neighbours* and *MDA*. Most recent productions have been *When Icebergs Burn* (The Wolves Theatre Company) *Extremities* (Intercultural Theatre Institute, Singapore) and *A Doll's House* (Canberra Repertory Theatre). A recipient of various awards in Sydney, Perth, Newcastle and Canberra, he was most notably conferred the Order of Australia (AM) in 2013.



MARK THOMPSON SET & COSTUME DESIGNER

Darwin born Mark Thompson has an extensive career as a theatre production designer and as a painter and ceramic sculptor.

In 1975 Mark became established as a successful sculptor with his work collected, published, and represented in 25 State and public Art Museums including the National Gallery, Canberra and the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney.

In 1984 he began designing for theatre and has worked across all art forms; opera, music theatre, circus, dance and theatre for the Adelaide Festival Centre, State Theatre Company of South Australia, State Opera of South Australia, National Institute of Circus Arts, The Hole in the Wall Theatre Company, Sydney Theatre Company, Ensemble Theatre Company, Bell Shakespeare, Monkey Baa Theatre Company, Spare Parts Theatre Company and Christine Dunstan Productions. His most recent theatrical productions include *Talk* (Sydney Theatre Company), the national tours of *13, 26, 52, 78 and 91 Storey Treehouse* (CDP), *By the Light of the Moon* and *Metamorphosis* (Opera Australia).

Mark continues to exhibit both painting and ceramic sculpture with regular solo exhibitions with Robin Gibson Gallery in Sydney.



VERITY HAMPSON LIGHTING DESIGNER

Verity Hampson is an award-winning lighting and projections designer for theatre, dance, opera, film, and television.

Verity is the winner of three Sydney Theatre Awards and a Green Room Award for Best Mainstage Lighting Design, including for *Blackie Blackie Brown* (Sydney Theatre Company/ Malthouse Theatre) and for *Machinal* (Sydney Theatre Company). She won the APDG Award for Best Lighting Design for *Death Of A Salesman* (Queensland Theatre).

Theatre credits include: *Sweat, Fences, A Raisin in the Sun, City of Gold* (with Black Swan State Theatre Company), *Grand Horizons* (Sydney Theatre Company); *The Black Woman of Gippsland* (Melbourne Theatre Company); *The Drover's Wife, Faith Healer* (Belvoir); *Henry V, Twelfth Night, Titus Andronicus, Julius Caesar, Literati, A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Bell Shakespeare); *Nucleus. Jailbaby, Blaque Showgirls, Pony, The Bleeding Tree* (Griffin Theatre Company); *Death of a Salesman* (Queensland Theatre); *One the Bear, Blackrock, La Voix Humane* (La Boite); *The Half Life of Marie Curie, Primary Trust, The Glass Menagerie, The Heartbreak Choir, Murder at Hamlington Hall* (Ensemble Theatre); *Wake in Fright, Fiery Maze* (Malthouse Theatre); *Zombie! The Musical, Lizzie* (Hayes Theatre).



DAVID BERGMAN SOUND & VIDEO DESIGNER

David is an award-winning composer, video and sound designer for theatre, dance, opera, installation, and film.

David's theatre designs include his ground-breaking video designs for *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* for Sydney Theatre Company which toured extensively including a smash hit season at London's West End (winning two Olivier Awards) and Broadway New York starring Sarah Snook. David was nominated for a Tony Award with Marg Horwell for Best Scenic Design of a Play for the Broadway production of *Dorian* and won a Sydney Theatre Award for Best Stage Design of a Mainstage Production for *Dorian*.

Video design credits include: *Idomeneo* (Opera Australia and Victorian Opera); *Rusalka* (The Opera Conference: West Australian Opera, Opera Australia, State Opera of South Australia, and Queensland Opera); *Oscar* (The Australian Ballet); *Dear Evan Hansen* (Michael Cassell Group and Sydney Theatre Company); *Kulka, Sandsong, Spirit, Knowledge Ground* (Bangarra Dance Company); *Breaking Glass* (Sydney Chamber Opera); *Winter's Journey* (Musica Viva)

Other credits include: sound design *Playing Beatie Bow*, video and sound design *A Cheery Soul, The Wharf Revue* (from 2009-2018) (Sydney Theatre Company); *Green Park* for which he won a Sydney Theatre Award for Best Sound Design of a Mainstage Production, composer and sound designer *Superheroes*; composer, sound and video designer *First Love Is The Revolution* (Griffin Theatre Company); sound designer *Twelfth Night, The Lovers* (Bell Shakespeare); composer and sound designer for *Scenes From The Climate Era*, video designer *Blue*, sound designer *Into The Woods, At What Cost?* (Belvoir); video and sound design *The Gospel According to Paul* (Soft Tread).



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