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street



World Premiere

# breaking thecastle

written and performed by petercook

A young man yearns for connection.

The Street Theatre presents

# Breaking the Castle

Written and performed by peter cook

29 February – 14 March 2020  
The Street Theatre, Street Two, Canberra



“So now you have the sounds, the visuals, the feeling...this feeling in the stomach, because you know everything is about to go away.”

## Government Acknowledgements

This project would not have been possible without the support of the ACT government.

Supported by



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## About the play

David can't get enough, of anything. Alcohol, drugs, women, gambling – whatever it takes to escape the bark of the black dog. Consumed by an overwhelming feeling of never belonging anywhere, days and nights are lived through a thick haze of drugs and alcohol. This bender could be his last, but he doesn't care – there are worse things than death.

Then David is thrown an unlikely lifeline. Finding himself in the mountains of South-East Asia he is offered a chance at redemption.

The action of Breaking The Castle takes place in various locations including: a theatre, a rehabilitation centre in Thailand, Dave's flat, the TAB, a casting agency, Darlinghurst Rd King's Cross, a hospital, and a remote outback town.

## Cast

Dave Smith	Peter Cook
Recorded Voices	PJ Williams
	Lainie Hart

## Creative team

Director	Caroline Stacey
Dramaturge	Shelly Higgs

Production Design	Imogen Keen
Sound Design	Kimmo Vennonen
Lighting Design	Gerry Corcoran
Stage Manager	Kitty Malam
Lighting Operator	William Malam
Sound Operator	Kimmo Vennonen

Production Technicians	James Tighe, Darren Hawkins, William Malam, Craig Sheedy, Chris Berry, Kyle Sheedy
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Set Build	Tony Theobold
Publicity	Su Hodge
Social Media	Jessica Conway
Production Photography	Shelly Higgs
Production Videography	Craig Alexander
Marketing Artwork	DAMS

Breaking The Castle opens at The Street Theatre Saturday, 29 February 2020. The performance runs for 90 minutes without an interval.

### From the Writer

Whenever I get asked what this play is about, I always take a moment to think, I don't know what to say. I should know the answer, after all, I wrote it. But I can never adequately answer that question, as the play – to me at least – is about the vast complexity of the human condition. Sure, the play looks at the issues of addiction, mental health and rehabilitation but it also explores what lies beneath these issues, as they are only the manifestations of a deep sea of the human experience. The play explores how the memory of things that have gone before shapes us and that ultimately as humans we need connection to people and the world around us. It touches on our need for fulfilment, our need to pursue our passions and chase our dreams. The play is about healing and hope and the resilience of the human spirit.

As I started to write the piece, the more I believed it was a story that needed to be told. Although Dave's story is very particular, it is also universal - the detail is different but his story is the same as the millions of people around the world who find themselves afflicted with an addiction. It's worth noting that Australia is the most highly medicated country in the world, both legally and illegally. Addiction affects many people, the sufferers as well as the friends and family members. Mental illness is now one of the hottest topics of conversation around the world and we all can relate to times when we've suffered ourselves or when we have witnessed the suffering of someone we love. It's time as men we asked for help when we need it and know that's it ok to feel things at a deep level. I think no matter what your gender, you'll see parts of yourself in Dave, you'll recognise parts of your life story in his, because he's just a human who's on a journey and so are you.

I don't want to write too much about the play because you're about to watch it and you'll experience it in your own unique way, and because I need to get back to learning my lines. There are a lot. I hope, with all my heart, that you have an enjoyable, challenging and uplifting night at the theatre and that you leave the place with a warm heart. Thanks for coming and supporting new Australian work.

Peace, Love and Light  
Peter Cook.

Breaking The Castle was developed in 2019 through The Street's First Seen: new works-in-progress program and further developed later in the year with dramaturgy support from Shelly Higgs.

### From the Director

*Breaking The Castle* is the 15th new Australian work to be brought to life on Australian stages from beginnings in our *First Seen: new works-in-progress* creative development program. Offering playwrights and theatre-makers the opportunity to collaborate with a creative team of actors directors, dramaturgs, designers, intensive practical investigation sees ideas, words and images wrestled into shape ready for rehearsal and to be produced.

The imaginative reach of the writing and vision and the distinctive voice of the creator are key factors in selection and Peter Cook's *Breaking The Castle* was simply gripping from the first scene received. Titled 'The Ice Storm' it took us on a visceral, explosive, unrelenting ride into the belly of addiction. And amidst many rewrites that scene has never changed - although everything around it has. This is a work that pulls you in all directions brimming with life and humanity it is fearless in what it lays bare. Complex and messy and utterly real it is a work of courage and love. It invites us to face ourselves both personally and as a nation, asking who we are in the most compelling of ways.

As always I am filled with gratitude to all who have contributed to making *Breaking The Castle* and to creator Peter Cook himself for his big heart and clarity of vision. Part of this work addresses mental health in Australia's performing arts industry and recent research has identified that performers, technicians and other support workers experience an unusually high incidence of depression, anxiety and other aspects of mental distress. If you know of someone that may be struggling, please let them know they're not alone.

It is not easy to make new work in Australia and we stand firm in telling the stories that need to be heard and speaking to lived experience in our theatre.

Caroline Stacey  
Artistic Director, February 2020





Peter Cook

Peter graduated from the Victorian College of the Arts in 2001. Since graduating Peter's theatre credits have included *Cigarettes and Chocolate* (Darlinghurst Theatre), *Europe - The QLD Premiers Drama Awards* and *The Removalists* (Queensland Theatre Company), *The Eisteddfod*, *Breathing Corpses*, and *The Chain Bridge* (The Street Theatre, Canberra), *Wet and Dry* (NIDA Director's Season), *Anatomy Titus Fall of Rome* (QLD Theatre Company and Bell Shakespeare), and *Tender* (Metro Arts, Brisbane). His TV credits include: *All Saints*; *Young Lions*; *Terra Nova*; *Redfern Now*; *The Gods of Wheat Street*; *Secrets and Lies*; *Old School*; and *The Secret Daughter*. His Feature film credits include: *Danny Deckchair*; *Down Under Mystery Tour*; and *Beauty and the Beast* for American Sci-Fi Channel. Peter has also featured in a number of award-winning short films and won the Warner Brothers QLD New Filmmakers best actor award.

Peter also has extensive experience in Theatre in Education. He was the Head of Acting at the Aboriginal Centre for Performing Arts in Brisbane where he also devised new works with the students. He has worked as an arts educator across the country for major theatre companies and has written, devised and directed numerous plays with students across Australia.

Caroline Stacey  
Director

Caroline Stacey is the Artistic Director/CEO of The Street Theatre, Canberra's leading creative producer of contemporary theatre and live performance and the creative hub for professional and independent artists. A multi-award winning director in 2012 Caroline received the Canberra Artist of the Year Award for her outstanding contribution to theatre and the performing arts. Caroline has an extensive career as a festival director leading Castlemaine State Festival for seven years and as a stage director of theatre and opera working for companies as diverse as West Australian Opera, Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, Melbourne International Arts Festival, Sydney Opera House, Queensland Music Festival, Victorian Opera, Canterbury Opera, Melbourne Opera, Saltpillar Theatre, and Downstage Theatre (NZ). Works directed for The Street include: *Flight Memory*; *A Doll's House, Part 2*; *Venus in Fur*; *Diary of a Madman*; *The Weight of Light*; *Boys Will Be Boys*; *Cold Light*; *Constellations*; *The Chain Bridge*; *The Faithful Servant*; *MP*; *To Silence*; *The Give and Take*; *Where I End & You Begin*; *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris*; *Dido and Aeneas*; *Capital*; *Medea*; *The Jade Harp*; *Albert Herring*; *The Six Memos*; and *From A Black Sky*.

Imogen Keen  
Production Designer

Imogen is an award-winning set and costume designer for professional theatre production. She has enjoyed a long collaboration with The Street Theatre, including design for: *Flight Memory*; *Fragments*; *Metamorphosis*; *A Doll's House, Part 2*; *Venus in Fur*; *Diary of a Madman*; *The Weight of Light*; *Boys Will Be Boys*; *Under Sedation: Canberra verse Remixed*; *Constellations*; *Cold Light*; *The Faithful Servant*; *The Chain Bridge*; *MP*; *Where I End & You Begin*; *The Give & Take*; *To Silence*; *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris*; *Lawrie and Shirley*; *Albert Herring* and *Dido and Aeneas*. Imogen has received Canberra Critics Circle Awards for Theatre Design (2009; 2011) and an MEAA Peer Acknowledgement Award (2011). She has worked on a wide variety of theatre, film, music and cross-disciplinary productions for: Aspen Island Theatre Company, This Band Will Self Destruct, COUP Canberra, Handel In The Theatre, Barking Spider Visual Theatre, Polyglot Theatre, Canberra Youth Theatre, Little Dove Theatre and Urban Theatre Projects. Imogen graduated from the ANU School of Art in 1993.

Kimmo Vennonen  
Sound Designer

In 2010 Kimmo won the MEAA Green Room Award for creative and innovative sound design. In 1991 his work on *Collaborations* with Jim Denley won the prestigious Prix Italia for the ABC. He studied immersive sound in a geodesic dome, becoming an ANU Visiting Fellow in the late nineties. He has run a music mastering studio at Gorman Arts Centre since 1997. Designs for The Street include: *Flight Memory*; *Metamorphosis*; *Icarus*; *Revolt. She Said. Revolt Again*; *Cold Light*; *The Faithful Servant*; *The Chain Bridge*; *Where I End and You Begin*; *Bartleby and All This Living*. Other work includes *The Slip Lane* (AITC); *Ghosts in the Scheme* (bigHart); *Verbatim*; *Antigone* (CYT); *Blue Roof*; *The Lost Thing*; and *Pearl vs the World* (Jigsaw Theatre). He collaborated with Denise Higgins and Gary Smith on *Vox Nautica* (ANCA), *The Barbed Maze* (CCAS) and on *Anthology* (Morris & Buining) at Westlake.



**Gerry Corcoran**  
Lighting Designer

Gerry Corcoran is a Lighting Designer/Technician based in Wolumla, NSW and is originally from Scotland. Gerry has been Chief Electrician/Lighting Designer at Pitlochry Festival Theatre in the Scottish Highlands and Chief Electrician/Technical Training Tutor (Lighting) for the Royal Scottish Academy of Music Drama in Glasgow, for which he designed over 40 productions ranging from small one-person scenes to full

scale opera. Operating as GCLX: Gerry Corcoran Production Lighting, he offers Lighting Design, Hire, Sales and Consultancy for all types of venues and events. He recently completed the supply and install of an all LED lighting system for Bega High School and is advising on a new 200 seat theatre build in Merimbula. Recent lighting design works include *A Doll's House Part 2* (The Street Theatre); *Ladies in Black* (Spectrum Theatre Group) and local school productions of *Grease the Musical* and *Peter Pan*. Following *Breaking the Castle*, it's straight into rehearsals for *The Little Mermaid* and preproduction work for *Mama Mia!*

**Kitty Malam**  
Stage Manager

Kitty is a Canberra and Melbourne-based theatre practitioner who recently completed her Bachelor of Arts at Monash University. She is the co-creator and director of Left Lane Outreach Theatre, delivering interactive story-times in libraries as well as a range of pop up installation and performance works. Their next work, *Bin Chickens* will be presented at the 2020 Art Not Apart festival. Recently she has assistant directed Fleur Kilpatrick's adaptation of *Slaughterhouse Five* (2019) at Theatre Works, performed in *The Rabble's My Dearworthy Darling* (2019) at The Malthouse, and performed in Barking Spider Visual Theatre's production of *Forgiveness* (2019), which toured to the Wuzhen International Theatre Festival in China.



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## About The Street

The Street is Canberra's leading creative producer dedicated to contemporary performance, and presenting bold work from other places. Inspired by our geography, history and people, we champion creative process alongside finished work; rich dialogue with our community, and in our city of ideas, inquisitive artists who have something to say about the world.

Over 24 years, the company has established itself as an essential part of Canberra's cultural and imaginative life. Our home is The Street Theatre in City West, where cast, creatives, artswriters, and audiences meet in our three performance spaces and café. We are dedicated to bringing distinctive and diverse Australian stories to the stage, with many of the finest and much loved creative talent in the region and beyond, including Canberra's diaspora, on our stages. Original works developed and produced have included: *Breaking The Castle*, *Fragments*, *Flight Memory*, *Epitaph*, *The Weight of Light*, *Tourmaline*, *Cold Light*, *The Iliad Out Loud*, *Pigman's Lament*, *The Faithful Servant*, *The Chain Bridge*, *From a Black Sky*, *M.P.*, *Bartleby*, *Where I End & You Begin*, *How to be (or not to be) Lower*, *Johnny Castellano is Mine*, *In Loco Parentis*, and *Underage House Party Play*.

## The Street — Staff

### ARTISTIC DIRECTOR/CEO

Caroline Stacey

### PRODUCER

Dean Ellis

### EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

Shelly Higgs

### TECHNICAL COORDINATOR

James Tighe

### COMMUNICATIONS

Su Hodge

### CUSTOMER SERVICE & TICKETING SUPERVISOR

Daniel Berthon

### FOH TEAM

Daniel Berthon, Logan Craswell, Pierce Craswell, Christiane Nowak

In collaboration with:

### BRAND + DESIGN

DAMS

### PHOTOGRAPHY

Novel Photographic

## The Street — Board

Susan Blain, Mark Craswell, Kirsty Easdale, Beverley Hart, Jamie Hladky, Henry Kazar, Kate Shepherd

## Dedications and Acknowledgments

This Play is dedicated to my sister Louise, who I think about every day, and to Sam Henderson — who saved my life.

To my sister Virginia, thanks for always encouraging me to write and continue in the arts.

Mum and Dad, thanks for never giving up on me.

Nick – you always were and always will be my brother.

Michael – thanks for always being in my corner.

Special thanks to those who were there:

Jeremy	Ambrum
Kim	Durack
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Samantha	Kelly
Kristian	Kelly
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Erin	Mullan
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Conor	Reid
Marc	Sousley
Bain	Stewart
Helen	Voros
Daniel	

To all my extended family thanks for all your support and love.

Shelly Higgs – thank you for your belief and your passion and your hard work.

Dean — thanks for your hard work and keeping it real brother.

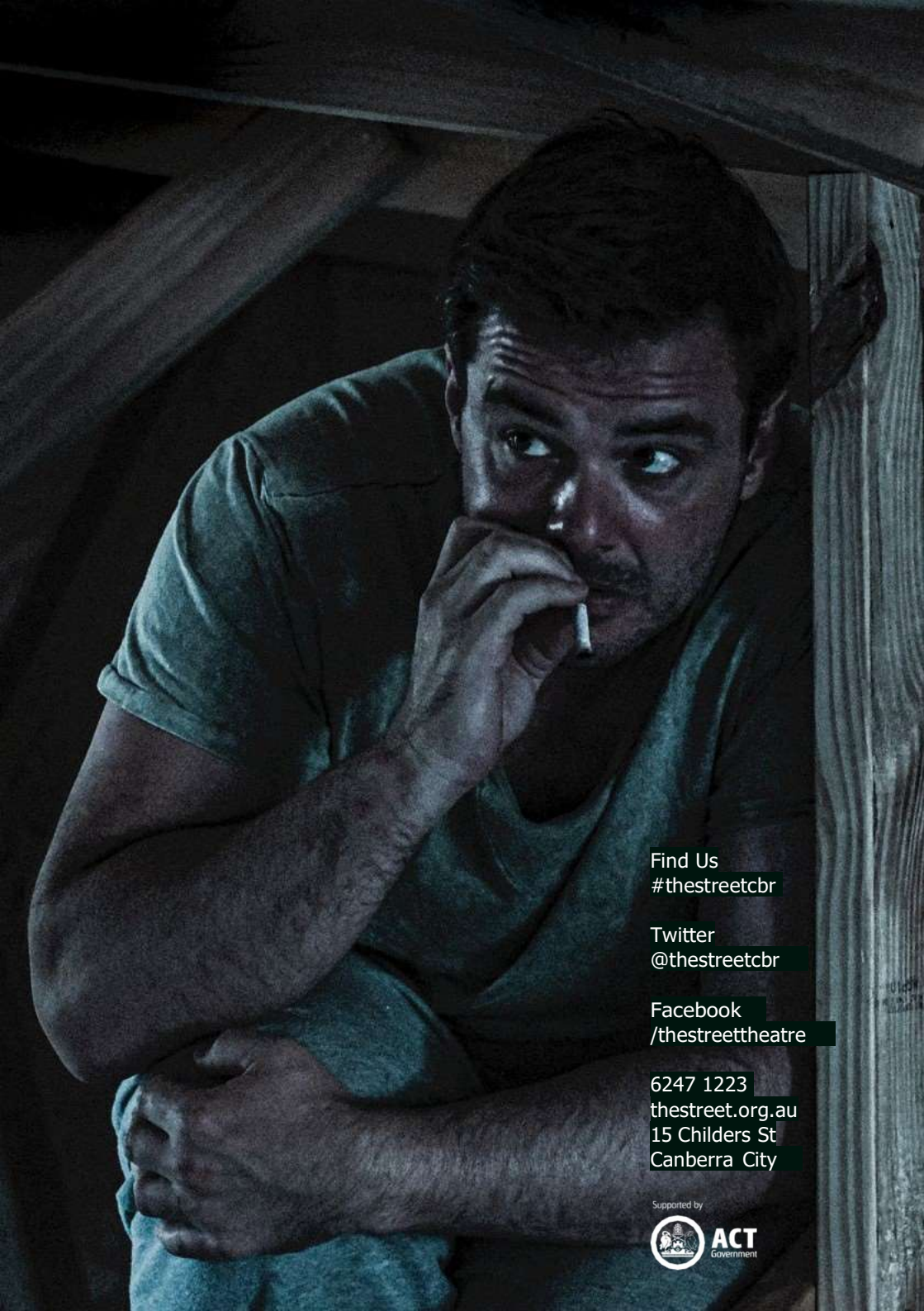
Caroline Stacey, thank you for believing in me, thanks for believing in the work, thanks for always being on the other end of the phone whenever I need you, thanks for always pushing me as a writer and as an actor.

Thanks for creating this with me and making it live.



The Street Theatre acknowledges the Ngunnawal peoples, the First Peoples of Country on which The Street Theatre stands, and we pay our respects to their ancestors and Elders, and to our shared future.

The Street is an ACTarts facility managed by The Stagemaster Inc, a not-for-profit organisation, supported by the ACT Government through artsACT.



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