

THE
STREET



PLAYBACK

(OR, A PLAY ABOUT BUT NOT STARRING A FAMOUS POLITICIAN)

BY TOM GLASSEY

23 — 31
MAY '26

Supported by



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WORLD PREMIERE SEASON AT THE STREET THEATRE, CANBERRA
23 – 31 MAY 2026
NGUNNAWAL AND NGAMBRI COUNTRY

PLAYBACK

THE STREET

Only Politicians Get Second Chances

CAST

Andrea Close
Deborah Grant

Tyler Jenkins
Young Man

Caroline O'Brien
Debt Collector

CREATIVE TEAM

Playwright
Tom Glassey

Director
Craig Alexander

Development Consultant
Ross Mueller

Scenic and Lighting Design
Veronique Benett

Costume Design
Leah Ridley

Videography/Editing
Luke Patterson

Voice Coach
Dianna Nixon

PRODUCTION TEAM

Stage Management
Leah Ridley

Lighting Operator
Emma Burrows

Sound
Kimmo Vennonen

Stage Technicians
Emma Burrows
Neil Simpson
Tim Levy

Poster Artwork
Tobi Skerra

Production Photography
Nathan Smith
Photography

Videography
Shelly Higgs
Luke Patterson

SYNOPSIS

“Morrison never really cared for the work of being prime minister. It was a step on his way to something else”

– Angry at Breakfast

8 November, 2016: A young man receives a letter. 12:01pm, 27 February 2024.
A politician rises in the House of Representatives and drafts his legacy. Elsewhere, a former journalist watches on and knows it’s not the whole story.

Deborah, aged out of broadcast television, now hosts the Proper Gander podcast. On the day of Scott Morrison’s valedictory, she realises she may be staring at a last chance. She will interview Scott Morrison – she’s been paying attention, she knows what he did, she will make sure he doesn’t get away with it. Enter an enigmatic young man whose help Deborah must take to find the question that will define one legacy, and end another.

SETTING

February 2024. The podcast studio of Proper Gander, Canberra.

PLAYBACK

THE STREET



WRITER'S NOTE

I started writing *Playback* because I was angry and confused by Scott Morrison.

Angry that he forever changed the standard of Australian politicians, strove for and promised mediocrity, established a precedent in which one's words were somehow different to their culpability, made ambition electorally toxic, led by focus-group instead of by example, and pushed us further into a shallow, transactional, and truthless form of democracy.

Confused that he seemed so unbothered or unaware of this legacy, that to him it seemed appropriate that his valedictory speech included "*a sort of Taylor Swift bingo*".

Writing a play is a bit like entering politics: it requires hubris disguised as altruism.

When I approached *The Street* wanting to write and star in a one-man show about Scott Morrison, I was convinced that—despite the counsel of wise, experienced colleagues—if I read Morrison's book enough times, listened and re-listened to his parliamentary speeches, cross-referenced the impassioned column inches, I would eventually understand him. I alone would succeed where the commentariat had failed, and finally define the form of Australia's most amorphous prime minister. Hubris.

I was offering to undertake this task for the sake of an audience's catharsis. Altruism.

All politicians create characters, yet Morrison's character—ScoMo—is uniquely unsuitable for dramatic representation. As a hero, what was his defiant victory? As a villain, where was his inevitable comeuppance? If he was as ordinary as he claimed to be, he would be a member of the chorus. Yet he demanded centre stage.

I have failed in my attempt to fully comprehend Scott Morrison, to define what in theatrical terms would be called his intent. After two years of researching, building and then interrogating the man, my anger and confusion remain.

Where I have succeeded is starting to understand the damage wrought by grand insignificance. As suffering created by governments goes, my anger and confusion is negligible. Our government has created victims, and as is the case in *Playback*, they remain practically nameless, living in the shadow of 'famous' politicians.

That is what I learned writing this play. I hope that is what you consider as you watch it.

Tom Glassey

Ngunnawal/Ngambri Country May 2026

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Tom Glassey makes me laugh.

A lot.

When I was first pitched *Playback*, I expected that laughter to be at good old Scotty from Marketing, something I was more than happy to do.

Instead I was treated to a surprisingly complex and balanced debate around a certain political figure. A debate that begins to shed some light on politicians when they are not in frame. A debate wrapped in a story of two individuals, desperate for relevance – desperate for truth; in a world of 24 hour news cycles and influencer domination of the media landscape.

It's funny, and rich, and surprisingly touching, and it's been a pleasure to mine for the complexities of Deborah and Young Man as they battle it out on stage – and, in this case, on screens.

I feel for all the characters in this play. Yes, even that famous politician who may not be starring in the show, but whose presence is pivotal to the unfolding of the story.

Tom's work asks a lot of questions and not all of them get answered. This is the way of good theatre and I trust audiences will leave entertained, informed and, possibly, a little pissed off.

Do I still laugh at the accidental prime minister?

Often.

But not quite as much as I used to.

Craig Alexander

Ngunnawal/Ngambri Country, May 2026



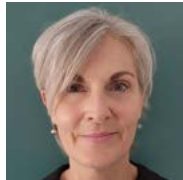
BIOGRAPHIES



TOM GLASSEY

PLAYWRIGHT

Tom Glassey is a Canberra-based playwright. Drawing from his experience as a press gallery journalist, his latest work *Playback* (Or, A Play About But Not Starring A Famous Politician) plots the economy of attention in the selling of modern politics. Tom has previously worked as a creative copywriter, podcast producer, and media adviser. He is currently the Video Lead at Schwartz Media. In 2014, Tom won the Queensland Theatre Company Young Playwright award, and in 2017 was a state finalist in the Raw Comedy Festival. In 2018, Tom participated in the Playlab Incubator program. His inspirations are Mungo MacCallum, Sam Shepard, and John Prine.



ANDREA CLOSE

DEBORAH GRANT

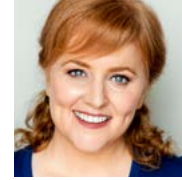
Andrea Close is a Canberra-based actor, presenter and voice-over artist who trained at Actors Centre Australia and Screenwise. She is the recipient of the 2025 Helen Tsongas Award for Excellence in Acting, the ACT MEAA Green Room Performer of the Year and numerous Canberra Critics Circle Awards. On The Street Theatre stages, Andrea has appeared in shows including *MP*, *Without Prejudice*, *Boston Marriage*, *The Red Shoe*, *6 Pack*. Other performances include productions *Enron*, *The Moors*, *The Shoehorn Sonata* and *The Dear Departed* (Mill Theatre). In Melbourne, Andrea featured in the Australian Shakespeare Company's *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *She's Not Performing* and *All My Sleep and Waking* at La Mama. Film and TV credits include *Neighbours*, *The Dinner Party*, and *The Competition*.



TYLER JENKINS

YOUNG MAN

Tyler Jenkins is a Perth-born actor and improviser. His work spans theatre and film across Sydney, Melbourne, and Canberra, as well as internationally in the USA and Italy. His self-written, self-directed solo show *Better* received acclaim from Melbourne audiences in 2023, and he was nominated for best performance in the short film *Jia* (Niu Studios) at the Stellar film festival in 2024. He is a regular performer in the global interactive theatre phenomenon *The Jury Experience* (Fever) in Canberra. Tyler subscribes to the Stella Adler acting model, with influences from Uta Hagen and Sanford Meisner.



CAROLINE O'BRIEN

DEBT COLLECTOR

Caroline Simone O'Brien is an award-winning actor and filmmaker, writer, director, and puppeteer.

A graduate of The Groundlings, Second City, and an accredited acting coach with Ivana Chubbuck, she's worked across Australia, Europe, Papua New Guinea & the USA.

Multiple Tony Winner Rupert Holmes called her "spectacular, powerful & vibrant" in the US West Coast premiere of *A Time to Kill*. The Sydney Morning Herald said her "range of emotions is especially impressive (her yelling is very accomplished)."

Credits include *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, Santa Monica International Film Festival award winning *Puppet Life 1 & 2* (Amazon), *Locks of Love* (Screen Australia), Hollywood International Moving Picture Film Festival award winning *FELT HELP*, and *Prime Possum* (7Network).



CRAIG ALEXANDER

DIRECTOR

Craig Alexander is an award-winning Australian actor, writer and film and theatre maker known for his ability to blend comedy and tragedy alongside his diverse range of creative abilities. Armed with a B.A. (Honours) in Acting and Directing from CSU, Craig has been a prominent figure in the theatre industry for nearly two decades.

However, his recent focus has shifted toward creating captivating screen content, working both in front of and behind the camera. *Snatchers* marked Craig's debut feature as writer/director and premiered at London's *Raindance Film Festival*. Released in Australia through Screen Inc in 2025 it will soon be available worldwide through US based Indican Pictures. *Snatchers* earned Craig an AWP nomination for Best Adapted Feature and has played numerous festivals earning several nominations/awards, including *Debut Feature* at *Raindance* and *Best Feature* at *Liverpool Indie*.

Other directorial credits include: For Screen - *Under the Bed*, AKA *Harvey Norman*, *The Photographer*, *The Children* (The Horse Media); For Stage - *Stop Means Go* (Jigsaw), *Home* (CYT), *Sweet Phoebe*, *The Dumb Waiter* (Gearstick Theatre) and numerous student productions for Perform Australia.

Recent screen performance credits include: *The Killings: Parish Station* (Stan), *Home & Away* (7), *The Silent Service* (Amazon), *Murder In The Outback* (7/Beyond) and *SNATCHERS* (The Horse Media). Stage performance credits include: *The Story of The Oars*, *The Chosen Vessel*, *Waiting for Godot*, *Art*, *St Nicholas*, *Venus in Fur* (The Street Theatre); *Unprecedented* (Hothouse Theatre); *Just Hearing* (REBUS Theatre).



ROSS MUELLER

DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANT

Mueller holds an MA in Writing for Performance from the Victorian College of the Arts and is founder and director of Australian Writers Theatre. His plays have been performed at Malthouse, Melbourne Theatre Company, Sydney Theatre Company, Griffin, La Mama, Red Stitch and Australian Theatre for Young People.

In 2026, *The Intervention* was shortlisted for the Griffin Award. In 2025, he was shortlisted for the Suzie Miller Award. In 2024, *The God Algorithm* was shortlisted for Best New Play at the Australian Theatre Festival, New York City. In 2022, he was nominated for Most Outstanding New Writing in the Green Room Awards.

In 2020, he won the Georgi Markov Award, BBC International Audio Drama Prize. In 2008, *Concussion* won the New York New Dramatists residency award. In 2007, *The Glory* won the Wal Cherry Award. He has been a writer in residence at NYC New Dramatists and The Royal Court Theatre, London.

He has two television series in development with Princess Pictures and Archipelago Productions. Mueller has tutored and mentored new writers at ATYP, The Street Theatre, University of Ballarat, Swinburne University and the VCA.



VERONIQUE BENETT

SCENIC AND LIGHTING DESIGN

Véronique Benett is a lighting, set, and costume designer. Véronique completed a Master of Fine Art (Design for Performance) majoring in lighting. She also holds a Bachelor of Fine Art (Technical Theatre and Stage Management) from NIDA. Credits include: *Waiting for Godot* (The Street Theatre) *Ulster American*; *Switzerland*; set and costumes for *The Memory of Water*; *Rhinestone Rex* and *Miss Monica*; *A Broadcast Coup*, *The Caretaker*; and, *A Doll's House* (Ensemble); costumes for *Museum of Modern Love* (Seymour Centre/ Sydney Festival); set and lighting for *Exit the King* (Red Line Productions); set and lighting for *A Case for the Existence Of God*; *Ulster American* (Outhouse Theatre Co); costume design for *As You Like It* (Sport for Jove); set and costume design for *Our Blood Runs in the Street* (Red Line Productions); lighting for *The Jungle and The Sea* (Belvoir); and, lighting for *Banging Denmark* (Sydney Theatre Company). She has received four Sydney Theatre Award nominations for: *Exit The King*; *Ulster American*; *Happy Days*; and *John*.



LEAH RIDLEY

COSTUME DESIGNER

Leah Ridley is a costume designer and textile artist based in Canberra. Costume design and credits include: *The Chosen Vessel* (The Street Theatre) *Utopiate* (Rebus Theatre); and *Eurydice* (Mill Theatre). In 2023 she designed and created the robot costume for the roving performer 'Wheely Wonky'. Completing a Diploma of Fashion Design and a Diploma of Costume for Performance at Wollongbar TAFE in 2022, she returned to Canberra after her studies.



LUKE PATTERSON

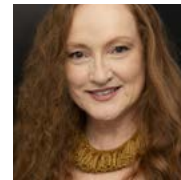
VIDEOGRAPHER/EDITOR

Luke Patterson is a Cinematographer/ Editor based in Canberra.

Starting work as a freelance camera operator/ editor in 2015, Luke has developed his skills working in news, documentary, commercial, corporate and drama all around metro and remote Australia.

Since graduating University of Canberra in 2019 with Bachelor of Media Arts & Production and Bachelor of Arts, Luke has worked across many production companies and broadcast networks around Canberra and has been awarded for his skills in Cinematography and editing, including Gold awards for his work on *Becoming Emma Braintree* and *Snatchers* from the Australian Cinematography Society and Best Editing for his work on *Becoming Emma Braintree* from Santa Monica shorts.

Luke has a passion for creating aesthetic imagery and visual storytelling and hopes to continue developing his skills to help bring impactful stories to life on screen.



DIANNA NIXON

VOICE COACH (TYLER JENKINS)

Dianna Nixon is a genre-diverse pianist, singer, actor, director and creative producer whose work spans major festivals, touring musicals, state opera and theatre companies, independent productions, and community-based projects. A Churchill Fellow recognised for her work with the developing voice, Dianna runs a voice and piano studio alongside her freelance practice.

Her voice and accent coaching credits include new Australian works at The Street, choir and opera chorus preparation, and screen dialect coaching — most recently on *Austin* series 2 and 3. She also works with corporate and government clients. As accompanist, Dianna has a particular love of working with singers and playing for ballet.

With over 75 directing credits and over 40 years performance experience spanning film, television, concert, theatre and cabaret, Dianna brings considerable breadth to her creative work. In 2019 she founded Music Theatre Projects, a not-for-profit production company whose slate includes the reclaimed plays of Millicent Armstrong — a largely forgotten early 20th century playwright from the region — alongside musicals and films in development.

Music Theatre Projects is also home to PATH (Performing After Training Hard!!), a youth music theatre program delivering industry-standard workshops and masterclasses. PATH presented its debut production, *Newsies Jnr*, at The Street in 2025.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Supported by



This project is made possible with the support of the ACT Government.

FROM THE STREET

The Street Company thanks the following people for their generous creative contribution to the development of *Playback (Or, A Play About But Not Starring A Famous Politician)*: actors Kate Blackhurst, Andrea Close, Kristian Jenkins, Tyler Jenkins, Andre Le, directors and dramaturgs Craig Alexander, Ross Mueller, and Ylaria Rogers. And all those who attended the various showings and provided feedback.

FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

It goes without saying (and yet) that this work would have been impossible if not for the support of The Street Theatre and everyone who goes above and beyond in their work here. In particular, thank you to Caroline Stacey OAM for taking the risk incubating *Playback*, and her truly tireless contribution to the growth of the work and the growth of Canberra's creative community.

Thank you to the cast & creative team—Craig Alexander, Andrea Close, Tyler Jenkins, Veronique Benett, and Leah Ridley. Thank you for sharing your exceptional talent, and for the individual ways in which you pushed the work to be better than I'd ever envisioned.

Thank you to dramaturg & development consultant Ross Mueller for teaching me how to write a play and for being my friend. Countless Australian plays thank Ross for his invaluable contribution and now I understand why. It is an honour to further that tradition.

Thank you to my partner Emeirely Nucifora—Ryan for her endless patience, and the myriad ways she has supported me over the course of the project, including repairing the neon sign outside the theatre in time for opening night.

Thank you to my Mum and Dad, for everything, and to my sister Molly Glassey who reads what I write, and is the smartest person I know.

ABOUT THE STREET

Live Ideas, Shared Stories.

The Street Theatre is Canberra's creative powerhouse of inquiry, innovation and imagination, currently led by acclaimed stage director Caroline Stacey OAM. An award-winning home of live performance in the ACT and a major investor in new theatre, music work and artists in Canberra over the last decade.

The Street commissions, develops, produces and presents live performance that help us talk to who we are and the world around us.

Just as Canberra is considered a petri-dish for new policies, ideas and cultural products within the broader national landscape, The Street serves a vital role as a key creative generator of new work and regenerator of place and community within the nation's political heart.

The Street believes in the remarkable capacity of Canberra artists to speak to our time, and the need for them to be given creative space to make work of vision, ambition, and courage that talks to diverse audiences across Australia.

The Street was the recipient of a 2020 Sidney Myer Performing Arts Award for outstanding achievement and is an essential contributor to the well-being of residents in the ACT and artistic vibrancy in the region.

www.thestreet.org.au

THE STREET COMPANY

| | |
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| CEO and Artistic Director | Caroline Stacey OAM |
| Executive Producer | Dean Ellis |
| Technical Manager | Neil Simpson |
| Front of House Manager | Pierce Craswell |
| Theatre Technician | Emma Burrows |
| Front of House | Lauren Crean, Eloise Kenny, Elio Robertson |

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Brand, Design and Artwork | Tobi Skerra |
| Video | Craig Alexander, Shelly Higgs |
| Photography | Novel Photographic Nathan Smith Photography |

THE STREET BOARD

Susan Blain (Chair), Christina Graves (Deputy Chair), Joanna Hall, Igor Kochovski, Megan Malcom, Adam Stankevicius

We acknowledge the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples as the Traditional Owners of the unceded lands on which The Street Theatre stands and where we live and create. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters, knowledge and culture, and pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

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