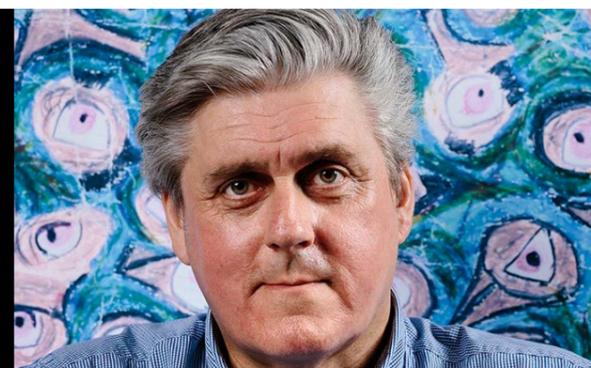


L A M A M A P R E S E N T S
LITTLE BROTHER, BIG SISTER

Coinciding with World Schizophrenia Awareness Day on the 24th of May, writer Michel Paul Tuomy's new play 'Little Brother, Big Sister' will have its premiere at Melbourne's La Mama Courthouse Theatre, directed by Cathy Hunt (What Every Girl Should Know, Brunswick Mechanics, Love/Chamberlain, Theatre Works) featuring Adam Cass and Jane Barry.

Drawn from Tuomy's lived experience of schizophrenia and inspired in part by his real life relationship with his sister, this powerful play explores the relationship between siblings Michel (Cass) and Karen (Barry). It has come about through Michel's arts mentorship through the NDIS, where Michel's mentor Tania Smith encouraged and fostered him to take his writing to a professional level. Smith also applied for the funding to make this production possible. Part of the focus is on Michel being able to have a sustainable career as a playwright (who happens to have schizophrenia).

In the play, Michel is writing his first novel, *Hipflask*, seeking surf in Byron Bay while his older sister Karen experiences Europe as an artist. Michel's letters to Karen take a strange turn when he suddenly believes Joan Miro and Franz Kafka are his companions and that he can speak with them. Diagnosed with schizophrenia, Michel is unable to accept it as Karen rushes home to take on the role of his carer. Michel must rely on his sister, yet Karen has dreams of her own. How long can she push them aside to care for him?

"It's a story of battling with the illness and coming to a point where you can accept it," says Tuomy. It's also about how to get through the trauma of having a family member with schizophrenia."

For Director Cathy Hunt, the play offers multiple complex themes to explore – "What drew me to this piece was the clarity and starkness of the way Michel pulls from some of his most difficult lived experience but grounds it in the comforting affection between an older sister and her younger brother."

"This play has heart, it takes the unusual step of speaking directly about how schizophrenia can impinge on your life, but more than that, it shows how vital the role of a carer is in letting people know they are not alone. The play also shows how complex it can be for hopeful middle class kids aspiring to be Kafka or Miro to eventually embark on an artistic career. So much can get in the way and the sacrifices are high. In the contrast between the sister who puts her career aside to care for her brother and the brother who delves into a new art form (that of painting) we see the murky connection between mental health and creativity."

"What I hope is that the illness will be de-mystified by the play," says Tuomy. "It's all about public perception versus reality. Yes, people with schizophrenia have delusions and fantasies, but with the right support, they can get a helping hand and contribute to society. That's what I want to portray with the play, the real face of schizophrenia."

Written by **Michel Paul Tuomy**
Directed by **Cathy Hunt**
Performed by **Adam Cass & Jane Barry**
Set & costume design: **Kris Bird**
Sound design: **Jess Keeffe**
Lighting design: **Shane Grant**
Production manager: **Hayley Fox**
Directing attachment: **Vaishnavi Ravikrishna**
Dramaturg: **Peter Matheson**
NDIS Arts Mentor: **Tania Smith**
Mad Comrade: **Sandy Jeffs**
Image by **Darren Gill**

SEASON 25 - 30 May

TIMES Tue 6.30pm (preview)
Wed - Thu 7.30pm
Fri 7.30pm  (auslan interpreted)
Sat 2pm  (relaxed)
Sat 7.30pm, Sun 5pm

VENUE La Mama Courthouse,
349 Drummond St, Carlton

LENGTH Approx. 85 minutes

TICKETS \$30 Adult | \$20 Concession

BOOKINGS 03 9347 6948 or www.lamama.com.au

Detailed content information available online and at the theatre:
We have some in-depth information to provide awareness of any possibly confronting material available on request from La Mama box office. And we have a quiet space at the theatre into which to retreat, if you are in need of tranquil space, during or after the play. Michel Paul Tuomy

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