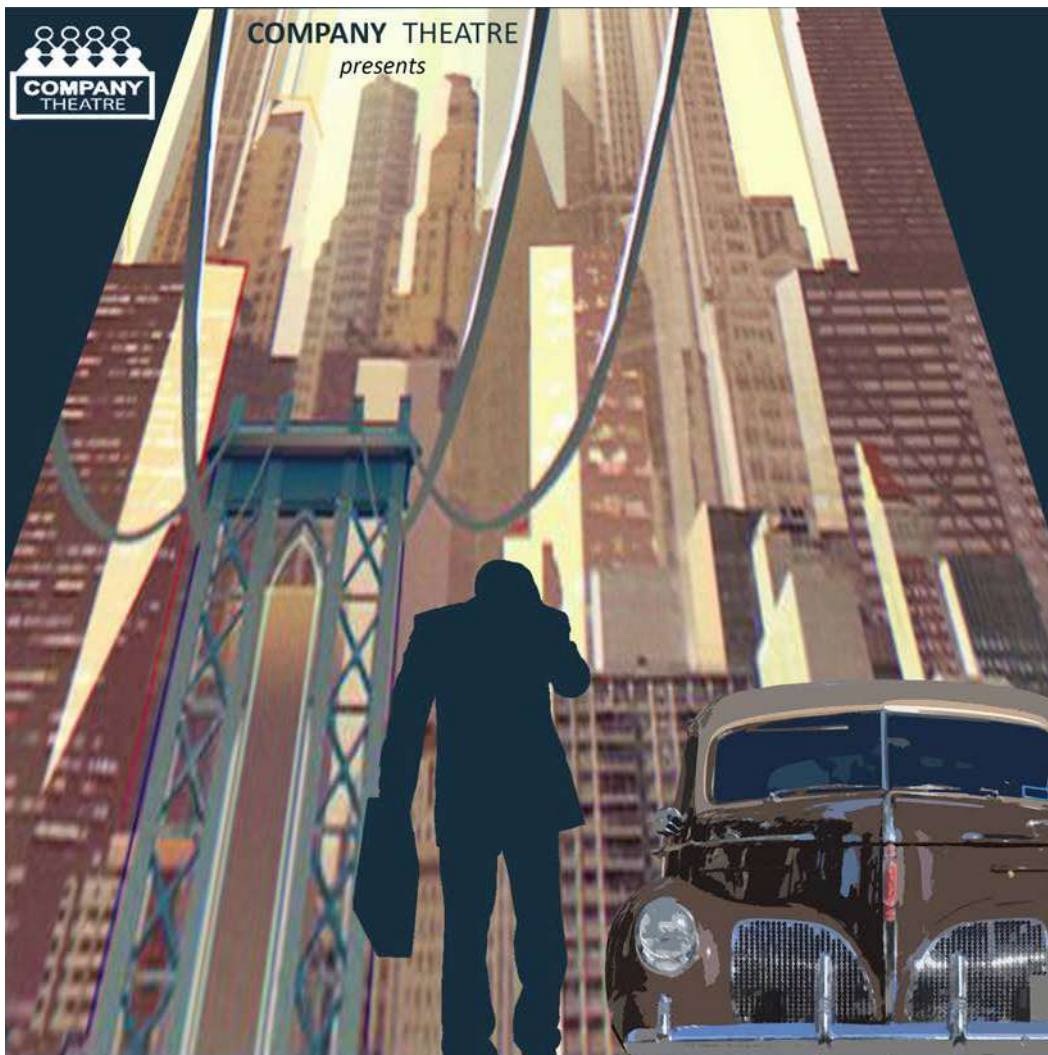




COMPANY THEATRE
presents



Death of a Salesman

BY ARTHUR MILLER

DIRECTED BY
SIAN DAVIS

THE
ROSE
CENTRE

12 - 26 AUGUST 2023

Curtains Open: 7:30pm





WELCOME

from Stephen Hood

PRESIDENT OF **COMPANY** THEATRE

Company Theatre welcomes you to our winter play of 2023, matching these colder months with the tragedy of Arthur Miller's Pulitzer and Tony Award winning ***Death of a Salesman***. Sian Davis returns to direct this play after 2021's ***Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*** - winner of 3 NAPTA awards - and many many Company Theatre productions before then. The depth and topicality of what ***Death of a Salesman*** has to offer inspires a masterful cast, supported by a great crew - ranging from high schoolers to retirees. This November, director Kate Birch will be returning - after last year's ***God of Carnage*** - with Neil Simon's frenetic farce ***Rumours***. It would be great to see you there!

THOUGHTS ON THE PLAY

from Sian Davis

DIRECTOR

"Selling is a fine profession with limitless spiritual compensations, as well as financial ones" seems to be an integral part of the American Dream and one that Willy has entirely embraced. But is it a valid 'dream'?



The play covers some 24 hours as Willy returns in the late evening from his last selling trip and apparently in a low state. By morning he has accepted his wife, Linda's advice that he should seek a lower status transfer to the office. Their two sons are also in the house; Happy, more or less happily employed, with his own flat in the city, Biff from a drifter's life out West. Biff has arrived with the expressed intention of finding a regular job. There is a celebratory meal in town. An apparently reunited family, but it takes little time for the old animosity between Biff and his father to rekindle.

The well-disguised source of that animosity surfaces in the second Act and the play concludes in a suitably Greek tragic fashion, for the play does seem to observe the 3 unities of time, place, and action. Perhaps not totally in the Sophoclean mode, as Gods contend to thwart uppity humans, and each other.... Mammon is no Greek God; but is tragedy any less because it is of small people?

The play's real interest lies in the explication of Willy's interior world as the 'unity of time' is overthrown by Willy's constant 'flashbacks' to past events but they occur persistently in the present (1949). And I've maintained the 'unity of place' in siting all the events in and around the Loman house, where, in Willy's troubled mind, the boys' bedroom becomes Charley's office, where his own bedroom is also a suite in a seedy hotel in Boston, the kitchen becomes a restaurant, a garden bench deputises as 'bleachers', Howard's office, and ultimately a cemetery. Miller also introduces the very useful device of 'Uncle Ben', a very unreliable commentator and 'guru', who might have had a reality (shakily recalled), and is otherwise, probably, a figment of Willy's fevered imagination. I rather feel that the whole play may be similarly seen as a product of the same mind, and only the 'Requiem' is 'really' real.

It has been a 'real', and challenging, pleasure to have worked with this justly famous script. Thank you, Mr. Miller! And thank you patient actors for contributing to the exploration.

About the Director

Sian's involvement with theatre, amateur and professional, long predates her history with Company Theatre. It starts in NZ in the 60s in the Taihape Town Hall, performing in some Whitehall farce she'd probably like to forget (fun at the time, but!). A seminal period was her involvement with Theatre Corporate in 1974, which meant, eventually, actually getting paid to 'get up there and do it'. And eventually, that mutated into 'Hey, let's get others to get up there and tell them what to do.... it's easier!' (No it's not!).

COMPANY THEATRE was the first theatre game enough to give her a 'shot' at directing with its production of *Hedda Gabler* 1998. Subsequently eleven other shows have followed at The Rose Centre. "My preference has always been for plays that are NZ or 'classic'. '*Death of a Salesman*' makes it a round dozen, I think, and might just be the US's best known classic".

The Cast

Willy Loman	<i>Reg Williams</i>
Linda Loman	<i>Lynn Webster</i>
Biff Loman	<i>Matt Smith</i>
Happy Loman	<i>Aidan Allen</i>
Charley	<i>Dion Hunt</i>
Bernard	<i>Grant Zent</i>
Uncle Ben	<i>Geoff Allen</i>
The Woman	<i>Rebecca Wright</i>
Howard Wagner	<i>Martin Rhodes</i>
Leta / Jenny	<i>Chlöe Smith</i>
Stanley	<i>Max Pirotais Wilton</i>
Miss Forsythe	<i>Jessica Silva</i>

Setting the Scene

ACT 1

Loman's home

INTERMISSION

ACT 2

Loman's home and office, Charley's office, Local Restaurant, Hotel Room



There will be ONE INTERMISSION of 15 minutes
Refreshments, Ice Cream, and a variety of drinks will be
available

MEET THE CAST



REG WILLIAMS

Willy Loman

Reg first appeared with Company Theatre in Sian Davis' thrilling production of **All My Sons** playing Joe Keller. Other productions for Company Theatre include **Deathtrap** as Sydney and directing Shaw's **Arms and the Man**. Recent work as a director includes **The Crucible**, **12 Angry Men**, **Evita** and **A Streetcar Named Desire**, all for Centrestage Theatre. Favourite roles include Frank in **Educating Rita**, Kipps in **A Woman in Black**, George in **Same Time Next Year** and Freddie in **Noises Off**. Classical roles for Cliveden Festival Company include Petruccio and Mercutio, he toured with Ubiquitous Theatre Company appearing in **Jeffrey Bernard is Unwell** and **The Killing Game**. He teaches drama preparing students for Trinity College (London) qualifications to diploma level.

LYNN WEBSTER

Linda Loman

Lynn is delighted to return to Company Theatre having played Big Mama in Tennessee Williams' **Cat on a Hot Tin Roof** in 2021 for which she won a NAPTA award, also directed by Sian Davis. Last year she appeared in the musical version of **Little Women** at Auckland Musical Theatre and the Katy Brand play **3 Women** at Dolphin Theatre. Pre-Covid she had other outings at Company, another Arthur Miller play, **All My Sons** (again the "dream team" of Sian as director and playing opposite Reg Williams) and at the other end of the tragic/comic scale Roger Hall's **Last Legs!** Lynn has found the character of Linda a familiar one having grown up in post WW II USA in a family living "the American dream".



MATT SMITH

Biff Loman (*Lomans' older son*)

Matthew J Smith is happy to be back, with Company Theatre, at the Rose Centre playing BIFF. He was previously with Company, in **Arms and The Man** for which he won an Award. He has appeared on Shortland Street and played Stanley in **A Streetcar Named Desire** at Centrestage. He now brings his talent and experience to this complex role.



AIDAN ALLEN

Happy Loman (*Lomans' younger son*)

Aidan started acting not long after learning to walk and talk; at 3 years old... he was cute, but a silly fool to be frank. He hopes to have learned something about acting since then, and you may compare his ability tonight to a random toddler of your choosing to rank his improvement so far. His background in choral singing gives him a strong affinity for musical theatre, which he lauds as a “cool and fun time”. Aidan has appreciated developing such a new and challenging character for him, and has described the experience as a “symbiotic mind-melding of sorts”.

DION HUNT

Charley (*Neighbour*)

Dion returned to the NZ stage in 2022 as Michael Novak in **God of Carnage** (Dir: Kate Birch, Company Theatre) and later as Wesley in **Jerusalem** (Dir: Kristoff Haines, Company Theatre) for which he was nominated for a NAFTA. He has since played various roles in the sold-out musical **Catch Me If You Can** with DeBase Theatre. His return came after a hiatus from the theatre world having spent time on stage in Sydney and throughout Australia, in the UK (where he studied at LAMDA, Pineapple Studios and various other institutions), after performing as a youth and then a young man in Auckland where he grew up. **Death of a Salesman** was his favourite non-Shakespeare play that he studied at highschool, so to be a part of this production is a bit of a bucket-list moment.



GRANT ZENT

Bernard (*Charley's son*)

A recent acting graduate from South Seas Film and Television School, Grant has starred in numerous stage and screen productions including the lead in the short film **Trolley**, directed by Danny Mulheron, and Puck in Shakespeare's **A Midsummer Night's Dream**, directed by Nick Brown, for which he won the critic's choice award at The Sheilah Winn Shakespeare Festival. Grant is also a New Zealand representative in karate, having competed at the World Championships and winning gold at Oceania. Grant is excited for his debut with Company Theatre and has thoroughly enjoyed working with the cast and crew.



GEOFF ALLEN

Uncle Ben *(Willy's older brother)*

Geoff left art school in 1984 to pursue a life in the performing arts. He's worked on films, both here and overseas, many NZ TV shows, and dozens of stage shows with **Oscar Wilde**, in 2016, being one of his favourites. Over the last 15 years he had become known more as a writer / director with Galatea Theatre. He said yes to Uncle Ben, to share the stage with his son, Aidan, before taking a break from the performing arts to focus more on his novel writing.

REBECCA WRIGHT

The Woman

Rebecca is excited to be back at Company Theatre acting alongside a talented cast on one of the great American classics. Recently, Rebecca was on stage with Theatreworks' production of **Sham** playing Meryl. Last year Rebecca performed in Company Theatre's **God of Carnage** as Annette.



MARTIN RHODES

Howard Wagner *(Willy's boss)*

This will be Martin's debut performance with Company theatre and he is excited to be involved with such a talented cast and production team. Martin has performed for many years in musical theatre both in London and Auckland with favourite roles including Jesus in **Jesus Christ Superstar**, Curly in **Oklahoma**, The Russian in **Chess the Musical**, and more recently Caractacus Potts in Centrestage Theatre's production of **Chitty Chitty Bang Bang**. Martin has only recently discovered the magic of non-musical plays, having performed the roles of Juror Number 4 in **12 Angry Men** and Judge Hathorne in **The Crucible**, both at Centrestage Theatre and directed by Reg Williams.



CHLÖE SMITH

Leta / Jenny (*Charley's secretary*)

Chlöe is a Performing Arts teacher for an Intermediate School in Auckland. Prior to this, she worked behind the scenes at TVNZ for the **Breakfast Show**. Her passion for drama has seen her land roles in shows at The Rose Centre and Centre Stage. Some of the shows she has performed in include, **All My Sons**, **Deathtrap**, **A Streetcar Named Desire** and most recently **The History Boys**. She also directs an annual performance on stage at the Aotea Centre for NZ's biggest student drama show called **Showquest**. Chlöe is thrilled to be a part of **Death of A Salesman** and take on the roles of Leta and Jenny.

MAX PIROTAIS WILTON

Stanley (*A waiter*)

Max studied drama at Takapuna Grammar School, where he performed in the 2016 Sheilah Winn Shakespeare competition. He also performed in two school musical productions: **Oliver** in 2015 and as Eugene in **Grease** in 2017. At university, he produced several short films as part of a Cinematic Arts major.



JESSICA SILVA

Miss Forsythe

Jessica Silva plays Miss Forsythe in **Death of a Salesman**. This is her first performance with Company Theatre. Jessica is originally from Brazil where she studied theatre at university and kickstarted her career, ten years ago. Now, she hopes to pursue her acting career, here in New Zealand, both on stage and film.



Behind the Scenes...



THE CREW

Director	Sian Davis
Director's Assistants	Stephen Hood / Janet Lyons
Company Theatre's Production Manager	Stephen Hood
Set Design	Sian Davis / Scott Thomas
Lighting Design	Scott Thomas
Sound Design & Tech Operation	Stephen Hood
Properties	Vettinia Ross / Sarah Dettwiler
Set Painting	Sian Davis, Tricia Hollingum, Caroline Parker, Sarah Dettwiler
Set Construction & Dressing	Scott Thomas, Stephen Hood, Sherry Berg, Alastair Fletcher, Max Wilton, Caroline Parker, Kathy Gent, Aidan Allen, Geoff Allen, Edith Lane, Raine Gilchrist, John Hyde
Stage Managers	Edith Lane, Lucus Laurent, Janet Lyons
Costumes	Kathy Gent, Cathie Sandie, Gail Carran
Dresser	confirm
Programme, Poster & Billboard Design	Sherry Berg
Facebook/Instagram/Newsletter	Stephen Hood
Website	Sherry Ede
Advertising	Kathy Gent
Box Office	Kathy Gent, Sarah Dettwiler, Marissa Willson
Bar Manager	Alastair Fletcher
Front of House Manager	Lesley Hawkey
Rehearsal Photos	Sherry Ede

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COMPANY THEATRE

presents



NEIL SIMON'S

RUMOURS

AN HILARIOUS FARCE
DIRECTED BY
KATE BIRCH

THE
ROSE
CENTRE
Belmont

11 - 25 NOVEMBER 2023

