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PURSUED BY BEAR presents

# JOHN & JEN

chapel off chapel : september 18-27

## HELLO

*From the Producers*

In early 2014 an enthusiastic Mark Taylor approached Pursued By Bear with a musical he had fallen head-over-heels in love with – John & Jen. It wasn't long before our 2015 program was shuffled in order to produce this beautiful work.

John & Jen has been an opportunity for Pursued By Bear to veer a little from the larger rock-musicals we have been working on and delve into something more intimate. The subject matter and overall themes are so omnipresent and the delicate score explores what it is to be family, a topic made all the more personal by having siblings within the production team.

We have been incredibly fortunate to garner a cast and crew who have each brought unrivalled enthusiasm and dedication to this undertaking, and we can honestly say that every person involved in this production has earned a special place in our collective heart. Our unending thanks go out to everyone involved; from those who have been with us since day one to those who jumped in last minute when crew fell through.

In 2016 Pursued By Bear is extremely excited to announce they will be presenting *First Date* by Austin Winsberg and music and lyrics by Alan Zachary and Michael Weiner. Playing in August at Chapel Off Chapel. If you're interested in knowing more about Pursued By Bear then please don't hesitate to #sayhello.

## WELCOME TO THE WORLD

*Mark Taylor : Director*

The relationship between brother and sister is a path well-trodden in art and literature. Be it Grimm's Hansel and Gretel, Shakespeare's Viola and Sebastian, Harper Lee's Scout and Jem or even Ron and Ginny in Harry Potter, that unique connection between brothers and sisters has and continues to compel writers to explore and pick apart the muddy pieces of this fascinating sibling dynamic. Andrew Lippa and Tom Greenwald have carried on this tradition with John and Jen and have brought their observations, inquisitiveness and intrigue into the enchanting world of musical theatre.

I'm so, very gracious to Pursued by Bear for staging such a special and rarely performed piece of theatre and so in awe of the passion and talent of our incredible cast and production team. It's somewhat of an anomaly to sit down at a first rehearsal and realise that you're all working towards the same common goal, and it has been such a pleasure to see that vision come to life.

This show has been particularly special for me as I have been lucky enough to work with my little sister as producer. Natasha and I know all too well that no two families look the same and each is fraught with their own wheelbarrow-full of chaos, mess and jubilation. It's this 'mess' (the good and the bad kind) that has been so exciting to explore throughout this rehearsal process with the incendiary talents of Brenton Cosier and Jaclyn DeVincentis. This story-which spans the course of forty years-seeks to celebrate the peculiar and remarkable relationship of a brother and sister who have been dealt an unfortunate yet eerily familiar hand in life.

Our rehearsal room for John and Jen has been brimming with those universally baffling questions like... 'Why do we hurt those we love', 'Is it possible to break free of the identity endowed on us as children' and 'when did iced vowels get so, darn small' (for the uninitiated, biscuit selection plays a very integral part of any rehearsal process). One question that continued to rear its confuddling head throughout this process is this one which I'll leave you with as you enter our little world of John and Jen.

How much of who you are as an adult relates to who you were raised to be as a child?



KYLE SMITH  
*producer*

Kyle Smith is the resident Producer and Technical Director for Pursued by Bear (PBB) and is no stranger to the Australian Theatre scene.

PBB provides a unique opportunity for Kyle to work closely with so many amazing creative and ambitious people with a common and shared vision of challenging the theatre industry - It is an incredible experience to be part of and he hopes that you all enjoy the result.



NATASHA MILTON-TAYLOR  
*producer*

With a background in stage and production management, Natasha has worked across a range of theatrical performance and events. She has worked extensively across all levels of the industry, from student theatre to world-premiere productions, and has been lucky to work alongside a number of companies. A founding member of Pursued By Bear, Natasha is immensely proud of the hardworking and ambitious theatre collaboration they have established and the outcomes they have achieved.



SARAH TULLOCH  
*artistic director &  
production designer*

With a Bachelor of Interior Architecture (Hons.) under her belt Sarah moved into the colourful world of production design quickly after university. Within a year of working on set and in studio she had met Kyle and Natasha and was working alongside Pursued By Bear.

As Artistic Director Sarah is resident Production and Graphic Designer. For John & Jen, she has worked as Set and Costume designer, produced all graphic and media content.

Redefining the boundaries of theatre, the team of young creators hopes to challenge and inspire audiences through inventive and thought provoking theatre. Pursued By Bear aim to stage productions with social significance that highlight and share important stories



MARK TAYLOR  
*director*

Mark Taylor is a mostly Melbourne, occasionally Sydney based actor and director. As an actor, Mark has appeared onscreen in *Neighbours*, *Underbelly* and *The Pacific*. He also starred in the Australian feature film *Damned By Dawn*. His on-stage credits include *Playing Rock Hudson*, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, *Cheek to Cheek - A ballroom Fantasia*, *The Crucible*, *Blackrock*, *The Choir*, *Time and the Conways* and Alex Broun's acclaimed one-man show *Half a Person - My Life as told by The Smiths*. A graduate of Swinburne's Theatre Arts Degree, Mark's directing credits include *The History Boys (PPP)* and *Next to Normal* for Pursued by Bear. He also co-directed and appeared in Laura Lethlean's *Plastic Pacific* for the Melbourne Fringe. Mark spends his days assisting in developing and implementing marketing campaigns for productions such as *Les Miserables* and *The Illusionists 1903* with AKA Australia.



TYSON LEGG  
*musical director*

Tyson is a multi-instrumentalist, specialising in voice and music theory, and has been musically directing last ten years. Some highlights include *Man of La Mancha (CLOC)*, *Next To Normal* and the Australian Premier of *Frankenstein - The Musical (WMTC)* and *Dreamgirls (StageArt)*. Tyson was honoured with a Green Room nomination for his musical direction of the cabaret *Showfolk* performed at the Butterfly Club in 2013 and has three nominations from the MTGV in Musical Direction. As a performer Tyson has featured in many productions including originating the role of Marky in *Sugartown* for StageArt Xposed, and the title role in *Floyd Collins*, performed at Chapel Off Chapel in 2011.

By day Tyson is a private singing teacher and choral director at Billanook College and is currently completing his Bachelor of Music.



MELISSA MCSHANE  
*assistant director*

Melissa is a performer and director, hailing from Bowral NSW. There she studied piano, voice and dance, achieving AMEB grade 8 and diploma qualifications. Her theatre credits include Dorothy in *Wizard of Oz* and Patty in *Grease* and after studying musical theatre at NIDA in 2011 she appeared in *Boeing Boeing* and as Amy in *Company* for MUSE.

Melissa made her directing debut with *Sweeney Todd* for the Interool Musical in 2013 along with *Noises Off* for St Andrew's College Drama Society. She has also directed Patrick Marber's *Closer*, and *Private View* by Vaclav Havel for SUDS as well as *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* by Dario Fo. Melissa moved to Melbourne in 2015 to pursue postgraduate study, and is really excited to be a part of the Pursued By Bear team for her first Melbourne show.



BRYN CULLEN  
*lighting designer*

Bryn Cullen is a graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts (Bachelor of Fine Art) majoring in Performance Technology. Bryn's recent lighting credits include *Lil Abner* Directed by Martin, 'On Y Va' Choreographed by Phillip Adams, Mariaa Randall, and Rochelle Carmichael, and *Un/Clean* Directed by Noel Jordan. This is his first production with Pursued by Bear.  
[www.bryncullen.com](http://www.bryncullen.com)



NATALIE BREAKWELL  
*stage manager*

Natalie studied Live Production Theatre and Events at NMIT in 2012-2013. Her recent shows for 2015 include *Cutsnake* by Authur Productions and *The Fastest Clock In The Universe* produced by Four Letter Word for the Mid Summer Festival in Melbourne. She has also worked on various Music Festivals and Gala events.

ORCHESTRA

Stephen McMahon : Piano

Dave George : Percussion

Sophie Anderson : Cello







BRENTON COSIER

*john*

Brenton is a graduate of The Arts Academy, University of Ballarat (Music Theatre). Since graduating his theatre credits include *The Big Gay Cruise* (Midsumma Festival), *Rent* (Chapel Off Chapel) and lead vocalist in the Universal Studios Singapore shows *The Daddy-O's* and *The Cruisers*. He also performs in the 50's variety show *At The Hop*. Brenton has also just made his Feature Film debut playing Elder Kimball in *Mormon Yankees: The Spirit of The Game*. A passionate sports man and all round fitness guru Brenton is a personal trainer at PITFIT. The first fitness studio dedicated to the performing arts industry. He hopes you enjoy this very special little show.

JACLYN DEVINCINTIS

*jen*

Jaclyn holds a Bachelor of Arts in English, Drama & Media and a Bachelor of Education from La Trobe University. Jaclyn has enjoyed great success with performance credits including such coveted roles as: Dolly Levi in *Hello, Dolly!*, Miss Adelaide in *Guys & Dolls*, Mary Flynn in *Merrily We Roll Along* & Lucille Frank in *Parade* (MTGV nominations for Best Performance by a Leading Female) and Mama Rose in *Gypsy*, for which she won the award for Best Performance by a Leading Female from the Music Theatre Guild of Victoria. Earlier this year she portrayed her favourite role to date, Fanny Brice in *Funny Girl* to great critical acclaim. Jaclyn recently made her cabaret debut in *JB Hi-Life* as part of the Cabaret Showcases at Chapel Off Chapel and in 2015 returned to premiere her full length show *Jaclyn Nose Best*.



Originally Produced by Goodspeed Opera House : Michael O. Price, Executive Producer  
Originally Produced in New York by Lamb's Theatre Company Ltd.  
Carolyn Rossi Copeland, Producing Director

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