

LAMBCO Productions presents

Strangers in between

by TOMMY MURPHY

directed by adam spreadbury-maher



"Sharp and the sweet...
charmingly funny"

PAUL TAYLOR, THE INDEPENDENT



"Funny, touching and nuanced"

DONALD HUTERA, THE TIMES



"Unmissable"

THE REVIEWS HUB



NSW Premier's Literary
Award for Best Play

19th Sept to 7th Oct 2023, 7.30pm
Saturday 3pm matinee
Tickets £15/£18 (Previews £12/£13)
@goosetheatre

goldengoose theatre.co.uk

GOLDEN GOOSE 
THEATRE
146 Camberwell New Road
SE5 0RR

a message from the producer

Hello and welcome to

Strangers in Between

We're thrilled you've come and thank you for supporting live theatre. Without your patronage we could not be here at the Golden Goose Theatre. We hope that you'll enjoy watching this show. Please let your family, friends and colleagues know that we're here and post about us on social media:

Facebook: @lambcoprods

Twitter: @lambco_prods

Lamco Productions

LAMBCO is an independent live entertainment production company based in London.

LAMBCO has also produced *Do You Have A Secret Crush?* (*Sleeping with Straight Men*) (Lost Theatre); five Christmas skating events (Torquay); *Bluebirds* (Above The Stag); *Sincerely Yours* and associate producer for *Bewitchment on Black Ice* (Londor), *Boys in the Buff* and *Skin Deep*, both of which received 5 Star Reviews. *Skin Deep* then went on a National Tour and the Edinburgh Fringe Festival gaining another 5 Star Review and a Fringe Award from "Scots Gay", *The Crumple Zone* and *Margot, Dame, the Most Famous Ballerina in the World* (King's Head Theatre).

At the Drayton Arms Theatre and Ed Fest, LAMBCO produced *Boys in the Buff*, *Tickle*, *Soho Boy*, *Bette Midler and Me*, *Twinkle* and *Love is Blue*. Playbill chose *Boys In The Buff* as their "pick of the fringe" and the Scotsman declared *Tickle* and *Boys In The Buff*, two of the Fringe's four sexiest musicals. LAMBCO is thrilled to be producing *Strangers In Between* at the Golden Goose Theatre.

Further details about LAMBCO are at www.lambcoproductions.co.uk

Cast

Ben/Will. Matthew Mitcham
Peter Stephen Connery-Brown
Shane Alex Ansdell

Creatives

Written by Tommy Murphy
Directed by Adam Spreadbury-Maher
Designed by David Shields
Original composition Aaron Clingham
Lighting by Richard Lambert
Assistant director Meeri Aro
Promotional photos Brittain Photography
Production photography Peter Davies
Graphic design Steve Caplin
Intimacy Lawrence Carmichael
Set construction Daniel Crilly
Dialect coach Elspeth Morrison
Produced by LAMBCO Productions

acknowledgments

Christina Gazelidis at the King's Head Theatre
David King at St Gabriel's Hall
Noreen O'Riordan at Entec Sound and Light
Michael Kingsbury at the Golden G
Peter Davies
James Seabright
Martin Sherman
Uri Roodner

introduction

THIS PLAY IS A PERIOD PIECE, NOW. The suburb in which Shane lands has succumbed to the gentrification that was always pressing against it. It's hard to imagine where Shane could afford a room anywhere in inner Sydney today – let alone scoff free bar snacks.

The Bourbon & Beefsteak, established to cater for US soldiers on R&R from Vietnam, almost certainly with CIA links, is currently being bulldozed for glamorous apartments.

Shane's yearning might be more quickly sated on a hook-up app. Good for Shane, I reckon, but bad for the plot. Shane's naivety would likely be tempered by that interconnectivity too. His innocence is genuine though; I can attest as the country kid who asked many of his questions.

I was determined to be more like Will by the time the play premiered in 2005. These days I have come to understand Peter's loyalty to his cat, and I am gaining pot plants. It would be good if the truest marker of time passed was Shane's internalised homophobia. Noting Australia's

atrocious numbers of queer youth suicide, I regret this oppression persists. Returning to this text reminds me of the most important constant that it celebrates. Our superpower as queer people is community. Sometimes you experience these ties on a dance floor or, crucially, on a Pride march. You experience it most acutely in a time of dire need, as does Shane.

Strangers is Between is a sex comedy in which the characters grapple with who they are to each other. Are they fuck-buddies, lovers, mentors, something more akin to family or a mix of roles? Ultimately, it is a tale about nurture, queer nurture. I understand more and more the gratitude that underpins its writing.

I am forever grateful to Adam Spreadbury-Maher for extending the life of this little play, across his several beautiful productions. Thank you to the team on this exciting new incarnation. My sincere 'chookas' from Aus. Liquid or powder? I still never know.

Tommy Murphy, September 2023



cast



Stephen Connery Brown

Stephen was born and raised in Sydney, Australia before joining a theatre-in-education tour and moving to Melbourne, which then became his new home.

Just after the turn of the millennium Stephen moved to London where he undertook a Master's in Acting at East 15 Acting school. Since then he has appeared in numerous plays, short films and commercials. This is Stephen's fourth time playing Peter in *Strangers in Between*: two seasons at the King's Head Theatre, Islington, then a third season at Trafalgar Studios 2 in the West End.

Stephen has also performed with "Above the Stag" Theatre, including playing Dad in *The Sum Of Us*. He played Henry Higgins in an 8-month European tour of *Pygmalion* for TNT Theatre and also Scrooge for another TNT European tour of *A Christmas Carol*.



alex ansdell

Alex is an actor from Oxford who trained at the Italia Conti Academy of Theatre Arts. His roles whilst training include Hamlet in *Hamlet*, Konstantin in *The Seagull*, Robin in *No Quarter* and Federonzi in *A Life of Galileo*.

He is also a playwright whose plays have been highly commended by the Royal Court and National Theatre, and a member of The Writer's Club at Director's Cut Theatre. He wrote and starred in his own short play *Our House is on Fire* earlier this year at The Cockpit, produced by Patch Plays.

Alex is thrilled to be making his professional debut as Shane in *Strangers in Between*.



matthew mitcham

Matthew Mitcham OAM is a retired Australian diver and trampolinist. Born in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, he excelled in the sport of diving.

Matthew is credited with having received the highest single-dive score in Olympic history. At the 2008 Olympic Games, in Beijing, China, Mitcham chose to execute a two-and-one-half somersault with two-and-one-half twists in the pike position for his last dive. The dive had a very high degree of difficulty with 3.8.

Mitcham scored four 10's, giving him not only the highest score on a single dive ever, but the gold medal for the event as well. This made him the first openly gay athlete to win an Olympic gold medal!

Mitcham wrote his autobiography in 2012, *Twists and Turns*. Soon afterward, it was made into a

glossary of australian terms

Big Banana a 13m long statue of a banana in Coffs Harbour

Bogan This word is used for people who are, well let's say, rednecks

Bottle Bottle Shop, basically a place to buy alcohol

Carnies travelling carnival folk

Chookas A uniquely Australian expression loosely translates as break a leg

Festy disgusting

Cadbury Someone who gets drunk easily (on a glass and a half)

G'day Hello

Pash To kiss

Poof gay

Povo like poverty

Root root in Australia is similar to shag in the UK

Smokey Dawson chair a lift assist chair for older people

Sunny Boy A popular Australian brand of flavoured ice block

cabaret show, starring Mitcham, and travelled around the country of Australia (2014-15) getting great reviews. The Australian Stage said: "...a born performer who soon has the audience eating out of his hand ... utterly charming character... innate talent" while the West Australian newspaper described him as "a likable and engaging performer".

Matthew was in the 2019 television series *The Pool*, in the 2021 film *We all lie my darlings* as well as featuring in the podcast streaming series *Move your mind with Nick Bracks*.

Matthew is thrilled to play the dual roles of Ben/Will in *Strangers in Between*.

a note from the director

STRANGERS IN BETWEEN is a play that beautifully delves into the intricate spaces of our lives, those transitional moments that define our journey. It's a narrative that explores the profound impact of change in relationships, careers, age, locations, beliefs, or our perspective on the world. In these transformative phases, we find ourselves accompanied by a parade of strangers, each carrying valuable lessons that shape us through our interactions with them.

Some strangers remain distant figures, fleeting through our lives like shooting stars, forever altering us. Yet, for Shane, our central character, two such strangers become indispensable to his voyage into a new life. Shane's odyssey from the quiet countryside of Goulburn to the dynamic hustle and bustle of metropolitan Sydney is a seismic shift, tearing himself from the comforting familiarity of his family, his mother, father, and brother. In the sprawling urban maze, he seeks solace and belonging within his new surrogate family that many young queer people find in cosmopolitan cities.

This liminal space, poised between what was and is yet to be, can be bewildering, even frightening, often prompting us to seek refuge in escapism. Shane, caught in the crosscurrents of brotherly love and romantic entanglement, fatherly care and daddy-seeking, fumbles through the tumultuous waters of his transition. His journey is marked by the imperfect and endearing love and guidance of two older, nurturing men.

As you immerse yourselves in this play, I invite you to ponder your moments of transition and the strangers who have left their indelible marks on your path. *Strangers in Between* beckons us to embrace the transformative power of human connection and the profound beauty that emerges when we dare to traverse the spaces between the old and the new.

Thank you for joining us on this journey of self-discovery, connection, and the enduring bonds that defy societal norms. Enjoy the performance!

Adam Spreadbury-Maher, September 2023





Tommy Murphy Writer



Tommy Murphy is a screenwriter and playwright based in Sydney, where his new stage adaptation of Nevil Shute's *On The Beach* premiered in August at

Sydney Theatre Company to five-star reviews. His earlier adaptation of Tim Conigrave's memoir *Holding The Man* plays regularly around the world, having transferred to the West End in 2010. It will see a revival next February at Belvoir Theatre, Sydney. The film, for which Tommy was Associate Producer and screenwriter, won multiple awards and is available on all streamers in the UK. Tommy won the National Theatre Award from the Australia Council in 2020 for his play *Packer & Sons* depicting the Murdochs' rival media dynasty. He is also known for his play *Mark Colvin's Kidney*, a phone hacking love story, for which he has received a grant to develop for screen. His screen credits include *Significant Others*, a six-part series Tommy created in 2022, and episodes of *The Devil's Playground*, *Fighting Season*, and *The Twelve* for Warner Bros. He won an Australian Writers Guild Award last year for his radio play *Call Me Back* and is currently developing a musical based on the song catalogue of John Farnham.

Adam Spreadbury-Maher Director



Adam Spreadbury-Maher is an international opera and theatre director. He trained as an operatic tenor in Australia before training as a director at the Royal Central

School of Speech and Drama in London. Before leaving to London he won the Canberra Critics Circle Award (*Jonathan Harvey's Beautiful Thing*) and the Gold Award at the Canberra Area Theatre Awards for excellence.

Once in London, Adam established himself as a freelance director, working at the Liverpool Everyman and Arcola Theatre in London. As Associate Director of the White Bear Theatre (London) he directed the UK premiere of Louis Nowra's *Così* and the world premieres of Duncan Ley's *The Ides of March* and Daniel Reitz's *Studies for a Portrait*, which later transferred to the Oval House Theatre and then to the King's Head Theatre (London).

Adam founded the Cock Tavern Theatre (London) in 2008; it was here that he produced premieres by Tennessee Williams, Hannie Rayson, Jack Hibberd, Edward Bond (as part of a six-decade retrospective include a production directed by Bond), the landmark Olivier award-winning 2009 *La Bohème* (currently the UK's longest running opera) and won the Peter Brook Empty Space Award, and, Best Artistic Director at the Fringe Report Awards. He founded the multi-award winning mid-scale touring opera company OperaUpClose in 2009.

In 2010 he became the Artistic Director of the King's Head Theatre (a position he held for a decade), directing operas such as Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* and *La Bohème*, and plays such as Tommy Murphy's *Strangers in Between*, Kevin Elyot's *Coming Clean*. In 2013 he founded the Hope Theatre. Adam has directed seven West End productions including Puccini's *Tosca* (Soho Theatre) and *La Bohème* (Trafalgar Studios) as well as transfers of *Strangers in Between* and two seasons of *Coming Clean*. For the Riverside Studios (London) Adam directed Peter Gill's *Sleepers Den* and the first revival of *The York Realist* marking the playwright's 70th birthday and the first script written by Gill at the venue he founded in the 1970s. His opera work

has toured extensively across the UK, Europe and Australia.

Adam's 2015 production of Irvine Welsh's *Trainspotting* has played five London and seven Edinburgh seasons, multiple UK tours, New York, Australia, and continues to tour internationally, with over 1,500 performances to date. In 2017 he directed Amanda Muggleton in a new production of Terrence McNally's *Masterclass* in an extensive Australian tour including the Sydney Opera House. In 2019 he won the Best Theatre Award for the King's Head Theatre at the London Pub Theatre Awards. Adam commenced training to become a veterinary surgeon at the University of Bristol in 2021, and continues to work as a freelance director in the UK, Europe and Australia.

aaron clingham

original composition



Musical Director credits

include: *Tickle and Boys In The Buff* (Drayton Arms Theatre and Ed Fest 2023); *Soho Boy* (Drayton Arms Theatre and Ed Fest 2022);

Romance/Romance, *Fanny and Stella*, *Grindr: The Opera* (Above The Stag Theatre); *Metropolis*, *The Kissing Dance*, *Wonderful Town* (Ye Olde Rose and Crown Theatre); *Into the Woods* (Cockpit Theatre); *It's a Bird...It's A Plane...It's Superman* (Leicester Square Theatre); *The Rippers Five* (Theatro Technis); *Naked Boys Singing* (King's Head Theatre and Garden Theatre); *Sondheim by Sondheim* (Camden Roundhouse). He was nominated for a Broadway World Award for *The Apple Tree* (Ye Olde Rose and Crown Theatre) and composed incidental music for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Blue Elephant Theatre).

Cabaret includes: *Mountains – A Musical Journey* (St James Studio & Jermyn Street Theatre); *An Evening of Sondheim* (Lauderdale

House); *Don't Ask the Lady!* (Crazy Coqs); *Sondheim Divas* and *Tim McArthur and Friends* (Hippodrome Creatives Casino).

Aaron's work as musical director and orchestrator can be heard on the original cast album of *Grindr: The Opera* and *The Pleasure Garden* (Jay Records).

Other info: Aaron has received ten Off West End Award Nominations for Best Musical Director.

David Shields

set and costume designer

David has designed the sets and costumes for plays, musicals and other spectacles at venues of every scale from International arena tours to studio theatres via prominent international and regional producing houses and the West End. Some of his many credits include *Strictly Come Dancing The Professionals* (UK Tour), *Ant and Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway on Tour*, (UK Arena tour), *The Last five Years*, Associate designer, *The Other Palace*, (directed by Jason Robert Brown).

National Touring productions of *End of the Rainbow*, *Little Shop of Horrors* and *Our House*. *Hair in Concert* (London Palladium), *Pippin* (Charing Cross Theatre), *Heathers The Musical*, (Theatre Royal Haymarket, National tours and The Other Palace), *The Pleasure Garden* (Offie 2021 Award winner, best set design), *The Night Larry Kramer Kissed Me* (Wimbledon Studio Theatre), *But I'm A Cheerleader* (Turbine Theatre), *Oh, And Another Thing*, an evening with Su Pollard (Tour), *Rose* starring Dame Maureen Lipman (Ambassadors Theatre).

Lawrence Carmichael movement/fight/intimacy



Lawrence is an Actor, Director, Movement Specialist & Fully Certified Fight and Intimacy Director with over 25 years experience in movement,

direction and a wide range of performance spreading throughout Australia, Asia, The Middle East, Canada, Europe and the UK.

Lawrence has worked with Adam Spreadbury-Maher on several projects, including *Holding The Man*, the *Edward Bond Season*, *La Boheme*, *Tosca*, *Trainspotting Live*, and the original London productions of *Strangers In Between*.

At the Golden Goose, Lawrence previously directed *Dinner With Friends* (Frontfoot Theatre) and has just finished performing as 'Rick' in the award nominated *Violence & Son* (Fricative Theatre).

As a movement specialist with a focus on Fight, Intimacy, Commedia and Character work, Lawrence is qualified by SAFDi, BADC & IOSS with over 25 years of experience, covering professional Live Theatre, Opera, Film, & Mainstream TV. He currently lectures in movement at East 15 Acting School, Meisner Approach for BodyMindVoice & Acting, Voice & Movement at Identity School of Acting.

www.lawrencecarmichael.com
www.instagram.com/lozcarmichael/
www.facebook.com/Lozcarmichael/
www.spotlight.com/9558-1274-8445



meeri aro

assistant director



Meeri is in her third year on the BA Acting and Contemporary Theatre course at East 15 Acting School. She is a Finnish creative with a jazz dance

training (Kerava Dance Institute) and a background in physical theatre.

Professional credits include: Performer and puppeteer in *Think Me in Circles* (Vault Festival 2023); Ada in *Adrift* (Camden Fringe 2023).

Theatre credits while training include: Lady Anne in *Richard III* (Trilby James & Jess Tucker Green - East 15); Mary Warren in *The Crucible* (John Gillett - East 15).

Richard Lambert

Lighting Designer



Boys in the Buff (Best lighting design OFFIE Nomination); *Twinkle, Tickle, Boys in the Buff*, *Love is Blue* (Drayton Arms Theatre and Ed Fringe 2023); *Soho Boy* (Drayton

Arms Theatre and Ed Fest 2022); *Bette Midler & Me* (Garden Theatre, Ed Fest 2022, Town and Gown, Drayton Arms Theatre); *Frostbite*, *Next Thing You Know*, *Pippin*, *Fanny & Stella* (Garden Theatre); *Undetectable* (Best lighting design OFFIE Nomination); *The Crumple Zone* (King's Head Theatre); *Skin Deep* (Ed Fest 2018 and UK Tour); *Marry Me A Little*, *Muscles the Musical*, *Alvaro's Balcony*, *Discoativity*, *Stand Tall*, *Vincent River*, *The Hot Mikado*, *Get Aladdin*, *A Class Act*, *Next Thing You Know*, *Nunsense*, *Bakewell Bakeoff*, *Meet Me in St. Louis*, *No Way to Treat a Lady*, *The Man Inside*, *Damn Yankees* (OFFIE award nomination), *She Loves Me*, *In the Dead of*

Night, *The Clockmaker's Daughter*, *Sincerely Yours*, *Personals*, *Romance Romance*, *Devilish the musical* (Landor Theatre); *Margot*, *Dame*, *the Most Famous Ballerina in the World* and *Boys in the Buff*, both at the King's Head Theatre.

Other credits: Luseil Stadium (FIFA World Cup 2022); Erasmus Bridge (Rotterdam); *Disney on Ice* (7 continents, Tokyo Budokan, New Orleans Super Dome, Toronto Sky Dome, NYC Radio City Music Hall), Royal Wedding Dress Exhibition (Kensington Palace), *#Hashtag Lightie* (Arcola Theatre), *Cirque Enchantment* (UK Tour) and Jazz Dance Company UK Tour (8th year). *Do you Have a Secret Crush (Sleeping with Straight Men)?* (LOST Theatre).

Website: lambcolighting.co.uk

elspeth morrison

Dialect Coach

Theatre includes: *Watch on the Rhine* (Donmar), *Mumsie* (Hull Truck), *Blonde Bombshells* (Octagon), *Amelie* (Criterion), *When the Long Trick's Over* (New Wolsey), *Billy Elliot* (Curve), *Our Man in Havana* (Watermill), *My Cousin Rachel* (Theatre Royal Bath), *Rose* (Hope Mill Theatre), *Little Voice* (Theatre by the Lake), *Ink* (Almeida), *Hogarth's Success* (Rose Theatre), *My Mother Said* (Crucible).

TV includes: *Horrible Histories*, *Endeavour*, *Gangs of London*, *Life after Life*, *Vera*, *Documentary Now*, *Pennyworth*, *Eric*, *Ernie and Me*, *The Loudest Voice*.

Radio includes: *X Files: Cold Cases*, *My Name is Why*, *The Testaments*.

Film includes: *The Railway Children Return*, *The Legend of Ochi*, *The Wasp*, *Salisbury*. Elspeth regularly makes contributions on programmes such as Melvyn Bragg's *Matter of the North* (BBC), *An Immigrant's Guide to Britain* (Ch 4) and *The Royals* (Netflix).



THE GOLDEN GOOSE is a fully air-conditioned, 85-seat theatre and is near Oval Tube close to the heart of Camberwell. The theatre was founded by Michael Kingsbury in 2020 and exists as a creative hub for artists to make all kinds of theatrical experiences. Since opening, we have hosted multi-Offie-winning company Out Of The Forest Theatre, Fringe-First winner Chris Lerner, and a new horror company featuring new work by Olivier award-winning Morgan Lloyd Malcolm and Abi Zakarian. Chewboy Productions' *DJ Buzzer's Year 6 Disco* won an Offie for its run at the Golden Goose in 2021. Founder Michael Kingsbury was awarded *Outstanding Contribution To Pub Theatre* by London Pub Theatres.

We have so far supported R&Ds from Althea Theatre & Clout Theatre and created new work and development opportunities for several emerging artists including Frumpish Theatre's all-female new writing festival and the development run of *The Life of Olu* by Temi Majekodunmi (which transferred to Theatre Peckham in 2021). Our inaugural in-house production of *A Rat, A Rat* by Chloe Yates (shortlisted for the Women's Prize for Playwriting from Paines Plough & Ellie Keel) won a Standing Ovation Award from London Pub Theatres.

We are currently hosting the award-winning People show's latest production *The Diviners* and a revival of the critically acclaimed *Strangers in Between* by Tommy Murphy.

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