

A NEW PLAY BY RON ELISHA

ROOTLESS COSMOPOLITANS

A DANGEROUS COMEDY ABOUT NOT GOING QUIETLY



MONSTROUS THEATRE

WORLD PREMIERE

15 MAY - 2 JUNE 2024

CHAPEL OFF CHAPEL

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge and pay respects to the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung, Wathaurung and Boonwurrung people of the Kulin Nation, to their elders, past and present, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live and work. We extend our respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's spirit, imagination and rich history of storytelling and humour that is an inspiration for all Australians.

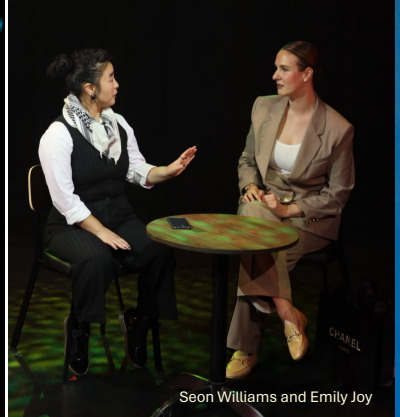


CONTENT WARNING

This play includes references to war and conflict, terrorism, genocide, and includes scenes depicting smoking, strong language, and adult themes.



Seon Williams, Anton Berezin and Babs McMillan



Seon Williams and Emily Joy



Emily Joy, Babs McMillan and Anton Berezin



Babs McMillan



Emily Joy



Anton Berezin

AUTHOR'S NOTE

‘Most of us, when we think of anti-Semitism – if we do at all – have in our minds an image of grainy, black-and-white newsreel footage of wasted corpses being bulldozed into ditches.’

This is a paragraph I wrote by way of introduction to ‘Rootless Cosmopolitans’ prior to October 7, 2023. The horrific attack of that date, together with its aftermath, have since completely altered the landscape for Jews throughout the world, compelling me to rework the text of the play. Further along in my introduction, I went on to state that, ‘statistically, per capita, a Jew living in the US, for example – when compared with a Black – has 2.6 times the chance of being the victim of a hate crime. ‘In Australia, the figures are considerably more impressive: 14 to 1 in relation to Muslims, and 17 to 1 in relation to Asians. (In the case of the Jewish community, these figures did *not* include online hate crimes, which were too numerous to mention.)’

In the wake of October 7 and the Gaza War, this figure has increased by more than 700% (and rising). This rise began within 36 hours of the initial Hamas attack, well before Israel had mounted any kind of retaliation. The question for all of us is this: How is it that the ancient scab of anti-Semitism was so easily lifted in a nation that prides itself on its multiculturalism?

Ron Elisha



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Ron Elisha first sent me this script in 2022 and it spoke to me immediately. Since then, the play has gone through several drafts and these characters have been in my life for so long that they feel like an uninvited family - with all their infuriating complications and contradictions. In its first incarnation it explored “submarine” antisemitism - present but not immediately visible. And then October 7th happened, and the world was turned upside down. In my naivete I thought that there would be such support for Israel after the attacks that the play may lose its relevance. I need not have worried. Before Israel had fired a shot in retaliation, the projection of the Israeli flag onto the sails of the Opera House was being described as “provocative”.

As a practitioner I have always believed theatre to be the place where ideas should be investigated and so in this climate of increasingly polarised opinions, I think this play is especially relevant. As a convert to Judaism, I bring a particular perspective to the ideas and the characters in this play, and it is my belief that we can gain insight into complex issues through the exploration of an individual story. I invite you to accompany Ira on his journey.

I want to thank Ron Elisha for entrusting me with *Rootless Cosmopolitans*, our fourth collaboration. I believe this play to be one of his most personal and as such I am most grateful for the faith he has placed in me to bring it to the stage. I want to thank our wonderful cast for their talent and their unfailing generosity in the rehearsal room and our brilliant creative team whose skill has made this play into a theatrical experience. A special thank you to our stage manager Lucy Anderson - a gun!

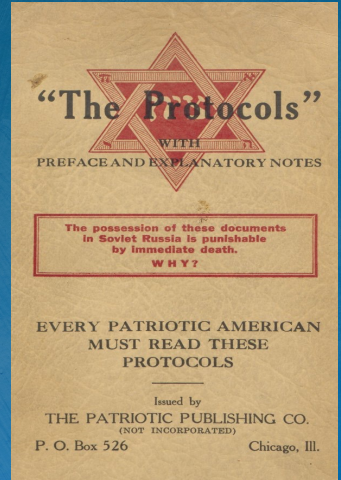
Suzanne Heywood

HISTORICAL NOTES

The Protocols of the Elders of Zion is the most notorious and widely distributed antisemitic publication of modern times. Its lies about Jews, which have been repeatedly discredited, continue to circulate today, especially on the Internet. The individuals and groups who have used the *Protocols* are all linked by a common purpose: to spread hatred of Jews. The *Protocols* is entirely a work of fiction, intentionally written to blame Jews for a variety of ills. Those who distribute it claim that it documents a Jewish conspiracy to dominate the world. The conspiracy and its alleged leaders, the so-called Elders of Zion, never existed.

In 1903, portions of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* were serialized in a Russian newspaper, *Znamya* (The Banner). The version of the *Protocols* that has endured and has been translated into dozens of languages, however, was first published in Russia in 1905 as an appendix to *The Great in the Small: The Coming of the Anti-Christ and the Rule of Satan on Earth*, by Russian writer and mystic Sergei Nilus.

Source: Author(s): United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC



The term '**Rootless Cosmopolitans**' was coined by early 19th century Russian literary critic, Vissarion Belinsky, who used it to describe writers who lacked Russian national character. In the post-war Stalinist Soviet Union, however, it was weaponised to mean 'those who falsify and misrepresent the worldwide historical role of the Russian people in the construction of socialist society and the victory over the enemies of humanity'.

This proclamation was accompanied by a wave of purges and executions in response to what was viewed as an international cosmopolitan conspiracy. Its target was one particular group: The Jews.

As recently as March 2022, retired US Army Colonel Douglas Macgregor (a frequent guest on Tucker Carlson at the time) ascribed all of America's problems to 'an elite class of what the Russians used to call rootless cosmopolitans'. Say no more.



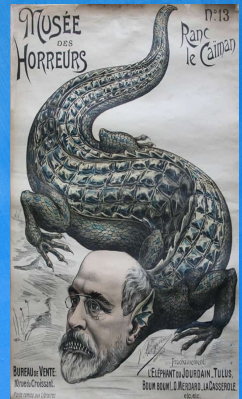
The **Dreyfus Affair** was a political scandal which took place between 1894 and 1906. The Affair is an example of the growing antisemitism across Europe in the modern period.

In 1894, a document offering military secrets to the Germans was found in a bin and sent to the French Secret Service. This document was known as the 'Bordereau'. The investigation focused around Alfred Dreyfus, an officer in the French artillery who was of Jewish descent. Dreyfus was a suspect for three reasons:

- 1.He was in the artillery (which was what the secrets had been about)
- 2.He was an officer (so he would have access to this information)
- 3.He was a Jew

Despite a lack of evidence, Dreyfus was arrested in October 1894 and found guilty in December of the same year. The affair became a cause celebre, as a result of which the author, Emile Zola, penned his famous polemic, 'J'Accuse'.

Source: <https://www.theholocaustexplained.org/anti-semitism/modern-anti-semitism/the-dreyfus-affair/>



A NEW PLAY BY RON ELISHA

ROOTLESS COSMOPOLITANS

The Loft

Chapel Off Chapel

12 Little Chapel Street
Pahran

May 15 - June 2, 2024

Creative Team

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Writer | Ron Elisha |
| Director | Suzanne Heywood |
| Lighting Designer | Jason Bovaird |
| Costume Designer | Kim Bishop |
| Scenic Design Consultant | Jacob Battista |
| Sound Designer | Sandro Falce |

Cast

| | |
|----------------------------|---------------|
| Freda Brot | Babs McMillan |
| Glenda Brot/Viola Lansbury | Emily Joy |
| Georgia Park | Seon Williams |
| Ira Brot | Anton Berezin |

For Monstrous Theatre

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| Producer | Anton Berezin |
| Creative Director | Theresa Borg |
| Production/Stage Manager | Lucy Anderson |

Marketing

| | |
|----------------|----------------------------|
| Social Media | Laura Cooney |
| Publicity | Michael J. Wilkie – MAD PR |
| Graphic Design | Zoy Frangos Design |
| Photography | Gavin D Andrew |

CREDITS



RON ELISHA – PLAYWRIGHT

Ron Elisha is a Melbourne-based playwright whose plays, over the last 40-odd years, have been produced throughout Australia and the world, with translations into several languages. He has won multiple awards, including four Australian Writers' Guild Awards, and is best known, originally, for his plays 'In Duty Bound', 'Einstein' and 'Two' and, more recently, for 'The Soul Of Wittgenstein' (London), 'Unsolicited Male' and 'Anne Being Frank', the last enjoying a very successful off-Broadway world premiere in September 2023.



SUZANNE HEYWOOD - DIRECTOR

Beginning her professional career as a child actor in both theatre and television has worked in many facets of the profession. She has been on faculty of the VCA and a guest lecturer at NIDA and other major Drama schools. Her voice and acting coaching includes over 20 major musicals (highlights being *Sunset Boulevard* and *Dirty Dancing*), 7 productions for the MTC and 11 for The Malthouse. Her work across has afforded her the privilege of working with many Australian stars including Hugh Jackman, Jackie Weaver and Delta Goodrem and international legends Gabriel Byrne and Charlotte Rampling .



JASON BOVAIRD – LIGHTING DESIGNER

Jason is an award-winning lighting designer and graduated from Melbourne University in 1995 and in 2012 from New York University's Broadway Masterclass in Lighting Design & Projection. Jason most recently lit the Green Room Award winning production of *KINKY BOOTS* (James Terry Collective) which earned him a 2023 Green Room Award nomination. National tours of *The 39 Steps*, *Motherhood – The Musical*, *One Day of The Year*, *Love Letters*. Other work includes *Titanic – The Musical* starring Anthony Warlow, *Peter Pan Goes Wrong* (Australia / NZ / Broadway), *In The Heights*, *Barassi – The Stage Show*, *Priscilla – Queen Of The Desert*, *Dream Girls*, *The Colour Purple*, *Around The World In Eighty Days*, *Busting Out* (NY, Los Angeles, Aust).



KIM BISHOP – COSTUME DESIGNER

Kim received a Green Room Award for *The Wedding Singer* (David Venn Enterprises) and was nominated for *Kinky Boots* (James Terry Collective) and *The Light In The Piazza* (Life Like Company). Other work includes *Sweeney Todd with Anthony Warlow* and Gina Riley and *City Of Angels* (Life Like), *Rent* (James Terry), *Driftwood* and *Cross Roads*, *Doubt: A Parable* (RL Productions), *The 39 Steps* and *They're Playing Our Song* (HIT Productions), *Barassi - The Stage Show* (Athenaeum Theatre), *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Singin' In The Rain*, *The Producers*, *Kismet*, *The King & I*, *The Boyfriend*, *Crazy For You*, *Mame*, *Damn Yankees*, *42nd Street*, *Sweet Charity* and *The Boy From Oz* with Todd McKenney (The Production Company).

CREATIVE TEAM



JACOB BATTISTA – SCENIC DESIGN CONSULTANT

Jacob completed a Bachelor of Production at the Victorian College of the Arts. Design credits include *The Almighty Sometimes*, *A Very Jewish Christmas Carol*, *Admissions*, *Flake*, *A Simple Act of Kindness*, *Grace*, *Iphigenia in Splott*, *Love, Love, Love*, *Jumpers for Goalposts*, *Belleville* and *Out Of The Water* (Red Stitch Actors' Theatre); *Driftwood*, the Musical (Umbrella Productions); Jacob was a recipient of the 2016 Besen Family Scholarship at Malthouse Theatre, working with Marg Horwell on *Edward II* and is also a recipient of an Australia Council ArtStart Grant.



SANDRO FALCE – SOUND DESIGNER

Sandro Falce is a comedian, podcaster, radio presenter and show technician from Melbourne. He's worked both on-stage and behind the scenes at comedy and theatre shows for almost a decade now, including performing in the comedy group 'Paul Noodle PhD Candidate', sound-designing shows like 'Shakespeare Aliens' and 'Shakespeare Ghostbusters', and teching multiple award-winning shows at the Melbourne International Comedy Festival and the Melbourne Fringe Festival. Sandro has also worked as a presenter and producer at many radio stations, including Triple J, and can currently be heard on his podcast 'Oldie But A Goodie'.



LUCY ANDERSON – PRODUCTION/STAGE MANAGER

Lucy is an emerging arts manager and recent graduate from the Victorian College of the Arts with a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Production). Lucy has focused on dance stage management with interests in all areas of the performing arts sector across a variety of company, production and stage management roles. Whilst in her final year the VCA, Lucy completed Production Stage Management roles on *Little Women* directed by Theresa Borg and *before, between, beyond* choreographed by Alleyne Dance, Joel Bray and Nicole Corea. Since graduating, Lucy stage managed the 41st Green Room Association Awards.



LAURA COONEY – SOCIAL MEDIA

Laura Cooney has been involved in theatre for as long as she can remember. Having been a director, actor, dancer, producer, tour coordinator, arts administrator, script writer and company manager, she now loves to support theatre shows with social media and marketing. With a Bachelor of Performing Arts and Digital Marketing Certificate (Monash University) and a Musical Theatre Diploma (The National Theatre), Laura has focused mostly on programming theatre for children in Australia (Hawthorn Arts Centre), New Zealand (Fortune Theatre) and the UK (The Nuffield Theatre and the Unicorn Theatre).



BABS MCMILLAN – FREDA BROTH

After obtaining a post-graduate Diploma of Directing (Honours) at the Drama Studio London, Babs McMillan's career as an actor, director, judging panellist, board/committee member and teacher has spanned over 45 years. Theatre: Doctor in the House (Crawford Productions Australian NZ Tour) Godspell; MTC - In duty Bound, Top Girls, Gulls, Amadeus, London Cuckolds. A Cuckoo in the Nest, The Elephant Man; QTC - Three Sisters; SATC - The time is not yet Ripe.

UK - Dracula, Romeo & Juliet, No Exit, The Last Theatre Show, Toad of Toad Hall. Television: Prisoner, City Homicide, Young Doctors, Division Film: My Brilliant Career, Oscar And Lucinda, Charlie And Boots, Babe, Pig In The City, Hating Alison Ashley, Cliffy.



EMILY JOY – GLENDA BROTH/VIOLA LANSBURY

Emily Joy (she/her) is a South African-born Australian actor. She recently appeared in the hit comedy television show Fisk opposite Kitty Flanagan for ABC and Netflix. On stage, Emily originated the role of Jared in the play Trophy Boys which enjoyed a sold out season and five star reviews. Emily will next be seen as Detective Constable Maia Kirsner in Human Error, a new drama series for Channel Nine. Other television credits include Metro Sexual and Neighbours. Previous stage work includes Transwoman Kills Influencer and Medea: Out of the Mouths of Babes.



SEON WILLIAMS – GEORGIA PARK

Seon Williams (she/her) is a Naarm based actor with over 20 years of experience in the industry. She has appeared in over 40 stage shows including Artefact Theatre's "The Real Inspector Hound", sell-out Midsumma Festival show "A Year of Dating", and the Ghostlight League's production of "Shakespeare Aliens". In 2023, Seon was an actor, writer and director for Baggage Production's "Madwomen Monologues" and performed in Innes Lloyd's Melbourne Comedy Festival production of "A Bond Among Us". Seon has also featured in the web series "The Happiness Curve" and award-winning short film "Autocarrot". Seon appeared as Alistair in ABC's "White Fever".



ANTON BEREZIN – IRA BROTH

Anton Berezin is an Australian actor, singer, multi-instrumentalist and producer. Berezin is best known for his roles in major commercial musical theatre productions such as Phantom of the Opera (2021-2023), The Bridges of Madison County (2020), Evita (2018-2019), Once (2014-2015), Doctor Zhivago (2010-2011), Wicked (2008-2009), The Producers (2004-2005), Cabaret (2002-2003), Cats (1999-2000) and Fiddler on the Roof (1998). His film and Television work has included roles in Newton's Law (2017), The Divorce (2015), Jack Irish: Black Tide (2012) and Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries (2012). He has been a prolific producer of Musical Theatre and Family Theatre through Life Like Company, a production house he established in 1998 with his wife, actress, writer and director, Theresa Borg.

PRODUCTION PARTNERS



CHAPEL OFF CHAPEL

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