



The Will To Be

by Mark Salvestro

Cooma Little Theatre

Saturday May 29, 2021



Creator's Note

Throughout my artistic journey, I've developed a craving, an obsession: with history; with long gone eras, cultures and societies. I love to delve into those eras, cultures and societies that shape who we are today, and anticipate how the stories told now, shape who we are in years to come.

Ironically, I hated history at school. But somewhere along the line – in addition to my historical obsession – is my love of the works of Shakespeare. Upon returning from Prague in 2018 where I performed in a production of ‘The Comedy of Errors’, I was determined to learn as much about Shakespeare as possible. The best way? To write a new solo show about him, of course!

This soon proved to be stale. Hollow. And boring. So, I brainstormed – for two months – and began to question why I was so invested in someone else’s words, in someone else’s history. Then, I arrived at another realisation: as a gay man, I knew very little about the history of my community and was somewhat ashamed of that. From there, these two themes, these fascinations amalgamated and became the basis of ‘The Will To Be’. They found refuge in the romanticised ‘60s and a home in the heart of a closeted gay university lecturer on the brink of a breakdown.

‘The Will To Be’, however, is about much more than Shakespeare and LGBTQIA+ history; it’s about forbidden love, it’s about sacrifice, it’s about finding one’s authentic voice, owning it and allowing it to reach its utmost potential.

Mark Salvestro



The Creative Team



Mark Salvestro - Actor | Writer | Producer

Mark Salvestro is an actor, writer and theatre producer, now based in Cooma, following an eight-year stint in Sydney and Melbourne.

His award-winning* solo show ‘The Will To Be’ premiered at Melbourne Fringe in 2019 and has since performed to critical acclaim at Adelaide Fringe in 2020 and at La Mama Theatre in Melbourne earlier this year. Mark also wrote, produced and performed his debut solo work ‘Buried at Sea’, which had seasons in Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane, Forbes and Cooma.

In 2020, Mark was commissioned by Midsumma Festival to create a digital one-man show titled ‘A Covid Coming Out’, which was screened as part of a special exhibition at ACMI, Australia’s national museum of screen culture.

In 2018, he performed in a production of ‘The Comedy of Errors’ with Australian Shakespeare Company at the Athenaeum Theatre in Melbourne and at Prague Fringe Festival in the Czech Republic.

Mark is also a founding member of Melbourne-based theatre company, North of Eight. As part of this collective, he has been a performer, producer, stage manager and marketing manager for productions of ‘Terminus’, ‘Toyer’, ‘Navy Pier’, ‘Philtrum’ and ‘Strata Inc.’.

Mark is a 2014 graduate of the full-time program at the Howard Fine Acting Studio Australia, and is currently studying a Graduate Certificate in Creative Business with the Compton School and University of Canberra.

*Best Theatre Weekly Award at Adelaide Fringe 2020.



Liz Sherlock - Lighting Designer | Tech Operator

Liz Sherlock has been the Technical Officer at Cooma Little Theatre for over 10 years, having lit countless local productions during that time.

She trained in technical theatre at Mountview Theatre School in London, where their curriculum ensured that every technical student, no matter what their area of interest, would experience and learn about all aspects of technical theatre. Liz's passion for lighting was ignited from the first time she was assigned lighting operation.

Giving young people theatrical experiences is one of the main reasons Liz loves to be involved in Cooma Little Theatre. She has watched Mark develop from a young teenage performer to a mature fully-fledged professional actor over the years, having lit his debut theatre performance in 'Burn' in 2009, his debut solo show 'Buried at Sea' in 2017, and now, 'The Will To Be'.



Steve Carnell - Sound Designer

Melbourne based Sound-Designer/Composer, Steve Carnell, strives to support stories with sound.

Working primarily on short films and independent theatre productions, he relishes the opportunity to collaborate with creative folk to deliver engaging audio content.

Steve has recently created sound design and music for the theatre works 'Child's Play' and 'Low level Panic' and won several international short film awards for his original score in the short film 'We Only Know Violence'.

Other sound design credits include 'Buried at Sea' by Mark Salvestro, 'Love Bird' by Georgina Harriss, North of Eight's 'Strata Inc.', 'Semi Charmed' by Sarah Clarke, 'Child's Play' by Jem Nicholas, and international short films 'Out of Awareness' and 'Black Blood'.



Carmody Nicol - Set Designer

Carmody Nicol is a designer originally from Newcastle and a 2019 graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts.

During her time at the VCA, Carmody has been involved in a number of productions including internships with Melbourne Theatre Company in the wardrobe department for ‘A View From The Bridge’ and with Melbourne Opera as a set assistant for Andrew Bailey on ‘The Flying Dutchman’.

Since graduating, Carmody has been the designer for ‘The Will To Be’ (Melbourne Fringe 2019 and Adelaide Fringe 2020), ‘The Great Australian Play’ (Theatreworks, 2020) and ‘Animal Farm’ (New Theatre, 2020).

She hopes to continue working in independent theatre, designing and making sets and props.



Oliver Ross - Costume Designer

Oliver Ross is a designer, dramaturg and writer with work on over 70 projects across theatre, film and advocacy.

He was recently selected for Screen Australia’s Developing the Developer program, and has worked across Arenamedia, La Mama, the MEAA, Union House Theatre, Transgender Victoria, University of Melbourne, the Equity Diversity Committee, tilde film festival, Melbourne Fringe and Melbourne International Comedy Festival.

He is passionate about developing stories with trans and autistic communities, working as a writer in the upcoming queer webseries ‘Wicked Women’ and coordinating support for over 40 community projects at Transgender Victoria and the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

Running the review website Shakespeare Oz, he loves getting to incorporate little details of character and history into his designs.



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