

## “PLAY OF THE YEAR” COMES TO BRISBANE

Judith Wright Centre presents  
**RED SKY MORNING**  
BY TOM HOLLOWAY  
A RED STITCH THEATRE PRODUCTION  
DIRECTED BY SAM STRONG

“PLAY OF THE YEAR...succeeds on every level... Tom Holloway's script is tight - hilarious and frequently heart-rending - and performances from David Whiteley, Sarah Sutherland and Erin Dewar are pitch-perfect... a complex, urgent production that deserves to live on.” (*Sunday Age*)

“Breathtaking...testament to one of the rising stars of Australian theatre.” (*The Age*)

Hailed as “play of the year” by *The Sunday Age*, Tom Holloway's award winning **Red Sky Morning** will make its Brisbane premiere at the Judith Wright Centre from Tuesday 5 to Saturday 9 October, 2010.

Winning the 2009 Green Room Award for Best New Australian Writing, **Red Sky Morning** is a witty, moving and lyrical account of a day-in-the-life of a conflicted family and examines depression and isolation in regional Australia.

Internationally acclaimed playwright Tom Holloway weaves the characters' inner thoughts, experimenting with a musical overlapping form, and combines a robust Australian vernacular in **Red Sky Morning** to create a “new” theatre experience.

“Time has taught me how amazing the experience of theatre can be; I mean theatre that grabs you in the guts. Theatre that can give you an experience you've never had before and can't get anywhere else,” Holloway said.

“**Red Sky Morning** is a play where I have tried to capture this experience in a new way. I hope it is not so much a play you go and see, as one you go an experience,” he said.

“My hope is that you will sit back and let the words and the rhythm of the work wash over you. Don't worry so much about trying to follow all the little details (unless you want to of course!); instead think of it maybe as one of those ‘Magic Eye’ pictures where you have to ‘look through’ all the squiggly lines and things to see the 3D picture hidden inside,” he said.

**Red Sky Morning** is about a family (mother, father and teenage daughter) who are unable to deal with the mother's alcohol addiction and have stopped communicating with each other.

Playing to critical acclaim in 2008, **Red Sky Morning** was nominated for six Green Room Awards in 2009, winning Best New Writing for the Australian Stage. The show was remounted for the 2009 FULL TILT at the Victorian Arts Centre.

Developed over a year of readings, workshops and rewrites, **Red Sky Morning** was commissioned and produced by Melbourne's renowned Red Stitch Theatre, won the 2007 R E Ross Trust Development Award and was funded by Arts Victoria and the Australia Council during the script development process.

Tom Holloway is a Tasmanian playwright who attended NIDA's playwriting studio and the Royal Court's International Playwriting Studio. Holloway's other plays include *Beyond The Neck*, *Snapshot*, *Revelator*, *The Bus and Stones In My Passway* and *Don't Say The Words*.

**Red Sky Morning** will play at the Judith Wright Centre from Tuesday 5 to Saturday 9 October 2010.

-ENDS-

<b>Date</b>	Tuesday 5 to Saturday 9 October 2010
<b>Time</b>	7.30pm
<b>Venue</b>	Performance Space, Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts
<b>Tickets</b>	Full \$35, Concession \$30
<b>Bookings</b>	07 3872 9000 or <a href="http://judithwrightcentre.com">judithwrightcentre.com</a>

For further information, images and interview opportunities please contact  
Judith Wright Centre Senior Marketing Coordinator Dorothy Farrell  
p 07 3872 9005 f 07 3872 9001 e [dorothy.farrell@jwcoqa.qld.gov.au](mailto:dorothy.farrell@jwcoqa.qld.gov.au)

# JUDITH WRIGHT CENTRE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS

## ABOUT RED STITCH ACTORS THEATRE

Red Stitch Actors Theatre is widely recognised as one of the leading independent theatre companies in Melbourne, presenting local audiences with Australian premieres of exciting work from around the world. The Ensemble is committed to programming the highest standard of international and Australian writing; to applying their collective expertise to the rigorous development of Australian playwriting; and to advancing and promoting the craft of theatre in this country.

Our artistic policy and Ensemble structure mean that Red Stitch is uniquely qualified to research, assess and workshop new work. In 2007, the company launched the Red Stitch Writers program, whereby Australian playwrights are able to workshop new scripts with an experienced dramaturge and members of the Ensemble. The first new work auspiced under this program was the play, *Red Sky Morning*, written by Tom Holloway and developed by resident dramaturge/director, Sam Strong, together with the Ensemble. It premiered to critical acclaim in 2008 and in 2009 was nominated for an incredible six Green Room Awards; importantly, these were Best Ensemble, Best Production, Best Director, Best Design, Best Lighting Design and Best New Writing, which we won.

Such success is not new to the company. Red Stitch received the Fringe Festival Performance Award in 2002 and since 2003 has received many Green Room Awards including 'Significant Contribution to Independent/Fringe Theatre'. Since 2004, Red Stitch Ensemble members have been nominated each year in the Best Male/Female Actor categories. In 2007 The Green Room Awards placed Red Stitch in the 'Companies' category where we competed alongside State Theatre funded companies MTC and Malthouse, and won Best Direction (Denis Moore, *Harvest*) and Best Production (*Harvest*). In 2009, Red Stitch was invited to remount *Red Sky Morning* as part of the FULL TILT season at the Victorian Arts Centre and was the Melbourne company selected for the 'round the world' premier readings of the sequel to *The Laramie Project – Epilogue*, which is soon to be performed at Melbourne's iconic Federation Square.

## COMPANY BIOGRAPHIES

### Tom Holloway: Writer

Described as 'one of the most exciting young playwrights in Australia (Nick Marchand, Artistic Director of Griffin Theatre Company), Tom's plays have been seen across the country as well as overseas. In 2006, he studied in London at the Royal Court Theatre's Invitational Writers' Program and his play 'The Bus' aired on ABC Radio National. In 2007, 'Beyond the Neck', inspired by interviews with those affected by the 1996 Port Arthur massacre, was one of 10 plays chosen to be part of the Royal Court Theatre's International Young Playwrights' Festival in London. The play had a sell-out season in Tasmania in September 2007, and in 2008 the play won the AWGIE award for Best Stage Play and was published by Playlab Press. Tom's play 'Don't Say the Words' was produced in 2008 by the Tasmanian Theatre Company and Griffin Theatre Company and received great critical acclaim. The play has been published by Currency Press.

'Red Sky Morning', commissioned and produced by Red Stitch Theatre in Melbourne, won the 2007 R E Ross Trust Development Award and was funded by Arts Victoria and the Australia Council for development from first draft to performance readiness. It played to great acclaim in 2008, and was described as 'play of the year' by The Sunday Age. Red Sky Morning was nominated for 6 Green Room Awards in 2009 and won Best New Writing for the Australian Stage. In June, it was remounted as part of the 2009 FULL TILT season at the Victorian Arts Centre. Also in 2009, 'Beyond The Neck' enjoyed a critically acclaimed season at Belvoir Street Theatre in Sydney and 'Don't Say the Words' was shortlisted for a 2010 NSW Premier's Literary Award.

### Sam Strong: Director

Sam Strong is an award winning director and one of the country's leading dramaturgs. As a director, Sam's credits include: *Red Sky Morning* by Tom Holloway (Red Stitch 2008 nominated for 6 green room awards including best direction, best production and best ensemble); *Shedding* by Melissa Bubnic (La Mama 2008); *Dogs Barking* by Richard Zadljic (Chapel off Chapel 2007); *Ashes to Ashes* (fortyfivedownstairs 2007); *The Example* (Fairfax Theatre – winner of best director, actor and writing awards at Melbourne Short and Sweet Festival 2005); *Something She had to Tell: Not I/The Stronger* (Pilot Theatre site specific 2005); *Miss Julie* (VCA Original Voices 2004); and *Closer* (the Storeroom 2003).

As an assistant director, Sam's credits include: *Ruben Guthrie* (Company B 2009); *Old Times* (Sydney Theatre Company 2005); *Enlightenment* (Melbourne Theatre Company 2007) and *Hard lines Play Development* (Melbourne Theatre Company 2004). As a dramaturg, Sam has been the Literary Associate at Company B in Sydney since early 2008. He also continues to be the Dramaturg at Red Stitch Writers in Melbourne which he co-founded in 2006 and through which he developed and directed Tom Holloway's *Red Sky Morning* (winner of Green Room award for Best New Australian Writing in 2008). As a dramaturg and script assessor, Sam has also worked for PlayWriting Australia, Sydney Theatre Company, Melbourne Theatre Company, Griffin Theatre, ATYP, La Mama and the Soho and Hampstead theatres in the UK. Sam has worked with established and emerging writers including: Alana Valentine, Ben Ellis, Brendan Cowell, Duncan Graham, Elise Hearst, Ian Wilding, Lally Katz, Nicki Bloom, Patricia Cornelius, Reg Cribb, Tom Holloway and Wesley Enoch. Sam recently received funding from the Australia Council to spend time in the literary departments of leading new writing theatres in London and New York. Sam is a graduate of the University of Melbourne (BA(hons)LLB(hons)) and the Victorian College of the Arts (Grad Dip Dramatic Art – Directing), both with first class honours. He has previously been admitted to practice as a Barrister and Solicitor in the Supreme Court of Victoria, the Federal Court and the High Court.

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## **Peter Mumford: Designer**

Peter Mumford holds a BA (Hons) from Flinders University and a Diploma in Graphic Design from RMIT. With over 25 years experience as a stage, costume and graphic designer, Peter has produced designs for drama, opera and dance companies across Australia. Peter joined Red Stitch as an ensemble member in 2005 and as the company's resident set designer has produced designs for 18 productions including *Iron*, *The Country*, *Tejas Verdes*, *Fewer Emergencies*, the award winning *Harvest*, *448 Psychosis*, *Wild East*, *Motortown*, *The Mercy Seat*, *The Winterling*, *Love Lies Bleeding*, the highly acclaimed *Pool (No Water)*, *Marie Antoinette – The Colour of Flesh*, *The Work Of Wonder*, *Yellow Moon* and *Leaves Of Glass*. His design for the critically acclaimed *Red Sky Morning* was nominated for a Green Room Award.

## **Danny Pettingill: Lighting Designer**

Danny Pettingill is a lighting designer based in Melbourne, he is a graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts, Bachelor of Production (2006), and was the recipient of the 2006 Orloff Family Trust Scholarship Award on completion of his degree, and also has a Diploma of Small Companies and Community theatre (2003). In 2008 Danny was awarded the Besen Family Scholarship (Lighting Design) with Malthouse theatre as an observing artist on *Kitten* and *Woyzeck*. He has received two greenroom nominations for his work in 2008, awarded for most outstanding lighting design in independent theatre for his work on the Hayloft Projects *Platonov*. Danny's work in 2009 designs include *Lobby Hero* with Red Stitch Actors Theatre, *Red Sky Morning* for Red Stitch Actors Theatre and Full Tilt, *3xSisters* with the Hayloft Project, *I am my Own Wife* with Tasmania Theatre Company *Jerker* with Milky Way for the 2009 MidSumma festival, *In The Dark* with Round Angle productions for the Art of Difference Festival. Danny's other design credits include, premieres of *Pool (No Water)* and *Red Sky Morning* with Red Stitch Actors Theatre, *Ashes to Ashes* with 45 downstairs, the Australian Premier of *Mercury Fur* in Melbourne and Sydney with little death productions, *Chekhov RE – CUT:Platonov*, with The Hayloft Project, *The Zombie State* for Melbourne Workers Theatre and Union House Theatre, *Helena Bugosi and the Journey of the Hello* with Terrapin Puppet Theatre, Hobart and *Care Instructions* with Aphids and La Mama at the Carlton Courthouse. Away from theatre Danny's credits include Production Designer for *Blood Ballad* (2006) written and directed by Mathew Rich and an entrant into MIFF 2007 shorts. He was a participating artist in the InHouse installation (2007) at Platform 2, Flinders street curated by Christina Hayes. Danny is currently working on a production design for a film clip with independent Melbourne rockers The Bakelite Age, *Care Instructions* with Aphids and the Malthouse Theatre, a new commission with Indigenous Melbourne company Ilbijerri and shows in Sydney and Hobart.

## **Kelly Ryall: Sound Designer**

Kelly Ryall is an award winning composer, sound artist and deviser, working in the realm of theatre, film and dance. Whilst working predominately as a composer he has been a key collaborator and deviser in most of the works he has been involved with. His primary interest in music and sound is creating work that is immersive and visceral with the aim of taking listeners on a journey through their own internal and external landscapes. As a composer he also prefers to perform his music live allowing the performer /audience relationship to enhance the compositions. In 2009 he received 2 Green Room awards for *Love Monkey* and *Coop*, in 2007 he received the Melbourne International Arts Festival Award and in 2005 received a Green Room Award and Fringe Festival Award for outstanding composition and sound design. His recent works include: *Chocolate Monkey*, *Space Monkey* and *Love Monkey* (The Amazing Business), *Chapters from the Pandemic and Detest* (Angus Cerini's Doubletap), *Mercury Fur* (little death), *The Meat Show* (The Town Bikes) and *Coop* (Black Hole Theatre co), *Tenderness* (Platform Youth Theatre) and *The Glory* (Hothouse Theatre co), *Attempts on her life* (UHT), *Don't Say The Words* (Griffin Theatre Co), *One Night* (a short film by Alexandra Schepisi), *Pieces for Small Spaces* (Lucy Guerin Inc), *Mr Freezy* (Arena Theatre Co) and *Wretch* (Angus Cerini) He is co-founder of the Amazing Business, an Artistic Associate of the Storeroom Theatre Workshop and a musician with his band High Pass Filter.

## **Victoria Larielle: Stage Manager/ Operator**

Victoria Larielle is a Melbourne-based stage manager and theatre technician. The award winning photographic artist studied live theatre production at Holmesglen Institute. Victoria has worked on new Australian plays including *Call Girl the Musical* at Chapel off Chapel, *The Real Thing* for Hoy Polloy Theatre and the Full Tilt remount of Tom Holloway's *Red Sky Morning* with Red Stitch. Victoria's previous productions include Melbourne International Comedy Festival 2008 and 2009, Hoy Polloy Theatre's *How to Disappear Completely and Never Be Found*, La Mama's *Discrit Zimbabwe* and *.Com/Unity*. Her production photography credits include *Les Miserables* for Loyola Musical Society, *The Park* for Grainfed Theatre and *Discrit Zimbabwe* for Skinny Twin Productions. Victoria regularly stage manages live music events across Melbourne.

## **Erin Dewar: Actor**

Erin graduated from Ballarat Arts Academy (BAPA) in 2004. Her theatre credits include *Women of Troy* (Helen), *Julius Caesar* (Brutus), *The Girl Who Wanted to be God* (Dancing With Strangers, Theatreworks), *A Walk Through the Life of William Shakespeare and Miguel de Cervantes* (Melbourne Writers Festival and Women of Asia, CUB Malthouse) and *Macbeth* (Blue Rose). Erin joined Red Stitch as an ensemble member in 2006 and has appeared in *Harvest*, *Crestfall*, *Rabbit Hole*, *The Pain and the Itch*, *Red Sky Morning*, *Marie Antoinette - The Colour of Flesh* and *Yellow Moon*. In 2009, Erin received a Green Room nomination for her body of work in theatre. Erin's film and TV credits include *Blue Heelers*, *Holly's Heroes*, *Wicked Science*, *The Floating Brothel* (ABC/BBC), *Underbelly* and *Neighbours* (as Tanya Tasker).

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## **Sarah Sutherland: Actor**

Sarah Sutherland graduated from the National Theatre Drama School in 2000. Since then she has appeared in *Little Time Bombs*, *The Dam*, *The Mary Project*, *Dirty Angels* and *The Opportunity Shop* (all at La Mama) and a solo show, *Can't Help Myself* (45 Downstairs). Television and film credits include *The Director*, *In Your Dreams*, *The Academy*, *Stingers*, *Blue Heelers* and *Neighbours*. Sarah appeared as a guest actor at Red Stitch in *Fewer Emergencies* and joined the company as a new ensemble member in 2007. Her other Red Stitch credits include *After Miss Julie*, *Motortown*, *The Pain and the Itch* and *Red Sky Morning*.

## **David Whiteley: Actor**

David Whiteley is the Artistic Director of Red Stitch Actors Theatre and has been a part of the company since its inception. He has appeared in many of its shows, including the award-winning *Howie the Rookie* by Mark O'Rowe (Red Stitch Season, Sydney Tour and Victorian Regional Tour), *Some Voices* by Joe Penhall (Red Stitch Season and Victorian Tour), *The Night Season* by Rebecca Lenkiewicz (Red Stitch Season and Melbourne International Festival Arts Centre Season), the Green Room Award winning production of *Harvest* by Richard Bean, *Pool (No Water)* by Mark Ravenhill and *Red Sky Morning* by Tom Holloway. Numerous film and TV credits include appearances on *City Homicide* ('Serious Men'), the US *Beastmaster* series, *Ponderosa*, *The Man From Snowy River*, *Stingers*, as well as *Neighbours*, *Blue Heelers*, *Good Guys Bad Guys* and *The Hollowmen*. Other credits include the feature film *Em 4 Jay*.

## **ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF RED SKY MORNING**

*Red Sky Morning* is the result of the first extended script development work undertaken by 'Red Stitch Writers', an initiative of Red Stitch Actors Theatre, commenced in early 2007. The first step of this initiative was to appoint a company dramaturg (on a voluntary basis initially) who would set about sourcing two playwrights willing to develop their work with actors from the company over an extended period. *Red Sky Morning* was conceived by writer, Tom Holloway, as an 'experiential' piece inspired by a production he had seen staged in a London warehouse where the audience interacted with a number of performance locations occurring simultaneously. The initial draft was fascinating and comprised three completely overlapping monologues (telling the story of a father, mother and their teenage daughter over the course of a single day). An early reading demonstrated how much information was actually discernable amidst the chaos of voices, but also how the interplay of ordinary language – combined sometimes in an almost 'musical' score – created a larger, lyrical dimension to the piece.

Over the course of 2007 and 2008, three separate workshops of about four to five days each took place with three actors from the Red Stitch company, including the Artistic Director, working on the script with the writer and dramaturg, Sam Strong. Between sessions, a number of drafts appeared as a result of conversations between author and dramaturg, and a final draft was produced in late April, 2008. The individual stories of the three characters were the first main area of investigation. Great strides were made in fleshing out individual journeys through the piece and dramatic moments – particularly in an early section where an episode of lovemaking is dreamed of but never acted upon. The 'choral' quality of the piece, and the wordplay between characters was a major priority as the workshop company investigated ways to exploit moments of interplay and enhance dramatic points with aural emphasis using synchronisation, syncopation, 'duologue', and what became known as 'cacophony': those moments (used only very sparingly in the final draft) where all three characters spoke simultaneously.

The next area of development was giving the piece a theatrical and physical language to underscore the aural landscape. The group felt it important to resist the 'three actors on stools' convention and find a way to create another layer of physicality (this later work was perfected in the rehearsal period). After the second major workshop an in-house reading was performed for Red Stitch company members and invited guests. Feedback from that session provided critical ideas for future drafts including a major change to the play's conclusion. The final draft was approved by Red Stitch for production in 2008, directed by Sam Strong. The rehearsal period in July 2008 saw even greater enhancements of the script with the writer closely involved in early rehearsals, and a major evolution with the involvement of the design team, Peter Mumford (Set Design) and Danny Pettingill (Lighting Design). The first production was a major critical and box office success. The show was invited to present a remount season at the Fairfax Theatre in the Victorian Arts Centre in June 2009.

## **WHAT THE PRESS SAYS**

"Brilliant...Red Sky Morning is the product of a year of readings, workshops and rewrites. And it shows. It hits the stage sprinting. It's fully formed, impressively set and finely tuned" (Chris Boyd, *Herald Sun*)

"Outstanding...exceptional...an extraordinary work that needs to be seen" (Travis De Jonk, *samesame.com.au*)

"Not only do you need to see Red Sky Morning to see what the fuss is about but to be privy to a seminal moment in Australian theatre...The writing takes my breath away...The technical feat that Holloway and director Sam Strong have achieved sent shivers down my spine" (Martin White, *Long Sentence No Suggestions*)

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