

10 MINUTES OF FAME

BY MICHAEL SHARMON



DRILL HALL THEATRE COMPANY



10 MINUTES OF FAME

A PLAY BY MICHAEL SHARMON
DIRECTED BY MICHAEL SHARMON

WRITER'S NOTES

As a child, I dreamed of being famous. I practised my interview techniques and speeches in my bedroom, performing for my toys. As an adult, I am relieved that this childish dream never became a reality. However, I remain fascinated by the idea of fame—what it means and, more importantly, what artists can achieve with it.

I began writing *10 Minutes of Fame* in 2020 while living in Hong Kong and grappling with the pandemic. At the time, an election was taking place in America, and the possibility of Trump serving another term as President felt like a very real and frightening prospect. Flash forward to 2024, and Trump is now about to serve a second term. As I write this, I see several celebrities using their platforms to urge President Biden to take drastic measures by invoking his powers of immunity. I pray that their influence is strong enough to change the course of history.

As I delved into this play, the story began to take on a life of its own, fuelled by questions I felt compelled to explore and understand on a deeper level.

Mental health is a subject that must be normalised and discussed openly with our friends and family. This inspired Susan's story in the play. At the same time, abuse remains as pervasive today as it was when the #MeToo movement began gaining momentum, which led me to write Margo's story. As a writer and performing artist, I am acutely aware that without stages and platforms to create and share our work, artists risk becoming extinct. This reality informed Tim's character, who represents the struggle of artists during the pandemic—a challenge that continues to grow worldwide.

I would very much like to thank Maribeth Cole who believed in the play and offered to support me as a dramaturg. Her feedback only made the play better.

Ultimately, I hope this play accomplishes what all great art should: to inspire, challenge, and entertain its audience. I also hope it encourages you to continue supporting the arts and the artists who bring them to life.

Michael Sharmon

CAST

Margo Talbot
Susan Carter
Linda Slater, Kathryn Roberts
Allison Parker
Tina, Roberta, Security Guard
Tim Armstrong
Hal Talbot, Larry Cameraman
Fraser, Andrew
Miki, Porter

Maribeth Cole
Jules Allen
Veronica Lovejoy
Brooke Karabache
Zoe Valenstein
Michael Sharmon
Chris Benaud
Rees Laird
Jack Linklater



Maribeth Cole

Maribeth has returned to the boards after a few decades hiatus. Trained in Performance Theory and Dramaturgy, Mb has spent the intervening years putting those skills to use as a professional chef and artisanal baker. She dabbles a bit.

Jules Allen

Jules is a seasoned actress and multi-award winning playwright. Her acting career has spanned for over 30 years. Professionally trained for both screen and stage, much of her career has been spent in theatre as she truly believes that's where the magic lies. Between 2016 and 2021 she worked professionally as a full-time actress in Melbourne. In 2022, Jules performed in another of her plays, *Betty*, directed by renowned director, Iain Sinclair. Betty caught the attention of esteemed playwright Hannie Rayson, who commented on Jules's serious potential as a playwright.



Veronica Lovejoy

Veronica is a mum of three and a musician who dreams of busking solo around the world. She appeared in the award winning play *The Beast* and earlier this year she starred in *Secret Bridesmaids Business*.



Brooke Karabache

Brooke studied at New York Film Academy and has since worked on numerous award-winning Aussie shorts, including *Ravish Blue* and *Gunpowder*. She moved to the Northern Rivers in 2021 and joined Bangalow Theatre Company's cast for *Rent* as Joanne. Since, Brooke has been connected to the Drill Hall in a range of production roles, notably, stage manager for *The Almighty Sometimes* and lighting operation for the *Too Young to be Angels* festival season. Finally returning to the stage in "Hot Shorts" last month, she portrayed Alexa in *Artificial Intelligence*.



Zoe Valenstein

Zoe is diving headfirst into the world of theatre with her first-ever adult stage performance! Though new to the stage, she's no stranger to storytelling—whether through crafting local articles, building fantasy worlds over a steaming cup of coffee, or exploring the art of voice-over work. Zoe is thrilled to join this amazing cast and hopes you enjoy the show as much as she loves bringing her characters to life!



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Michael Sharmon

Michael Sharmon has performed the roles of Hamlet, Javert in *Les Misérables*, and Jacob Marley in *A Christmas Carol*. On television, he starred as Johann Sebastian Bach in a film about the composer. With 15 years in Hong Kong as a writer, director, and performing artist, he composed two musicals: *Auditions*, presented at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, and *Arabian Dreams*. He recently returned to Hong Kong to perform in *Shark Symphony*, produced by The City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong, and

was honored with a show of his original songs, *Music We Make*. Next, he will appear at *Tropical Fruits Galore 24* and is developing a new musical, *A Midsummer Night's Queen*, set to premiere in 2025 at the Drill Hall. Additionally, he's been commissioned to write *The Greatest Storyteller*, which will debut overseas in 2025.

Chris Benaud

Chris trained at UNSW, Ensemble Studios and Actors' Conservatory. He starred in the international series, *The Lost Islands* and in many other TV roles. He has performed stand-up, on London's West End and for the Hunter Valley Theatre Company, and Ensemble. His DHTC productions include *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Mark Colvin's Kidney* and *When the Rain Stops Falling*. He has masters and undergraduate degrees from UTS.



Rees Laird

With 14 years' experience in the performing arts, training in Sydney as a dancer and actor, Rees has competed twice internationally for hip hop dance, as well as dancing for Jessica Mauboy in TV series "The Secret Daughter". He was the lead in feature film *Tabernacle 101*, as well as playing Jared in Byron Casting's production of *Property of the Clan*, Farmer Bean in BTC's *Fantastic Mr. Fox* and Oliver in DHTC's *The Almightly Sometimes*.



Jack Linklater

Jack has garnered praise for his creative vision and contributions to the arts. Now based in the Northern Rivers, he is committed to his craft, and contributing to the local artistic community.



Director Michael Sharmon
Production Manager Chris Benaud
Stage Manager Cathy McDouall
Dance Choreographer Rees Laird
Fight Choreographer Philip Channells
Dialect Coach Liz Chance
Set Designer Michael Sharmon
Lighting Designer Jake Dix
Lighting Operator Dane Bodley
Sound Operator Max Foggon
Playwright Michael Sharmon
Dramaturg Maribeth Cole
Costumes Rebecca and Tiehj DeCarlo,
Sewing Warriors/Repair Cafe
Marketing Bianca Wildwood
Program Warren Kennedy

Bar Manager Mike Russo
FOH Manager Warren Kennedy

CREDITS

Special thanks to SAE staff: Ben Funnell, Bridget Watkins, Hunter Panui from SAE University College, Byron Bay.
Thanks to Syd Geary of Mullum Printworks and to Mike Russo, Kerry Valensteen, Chris Benaud, Jill Campbell, Cathy McDouall, Bianca Wildwood and Warren Kennedy.
Thanks to Grace Cockburn and Isabella A Capella for the song *Meet Me In the Middle Of The Air*.
Chair Rap, Max Foggon.
See You, Music and Lyrics by Michael Sharmon.