



# MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S QUEEN

AN ORIGINAL MUSICAL BY MICHAEL SHARMON  
DIRECTED BY KYLIE FUAD  
CHOREOGRAPHY BY DANIELLE LINEGAR

**DRILL HALL THEATRE | MULLUMBIMBY**



WRITTEN AND COMPOSED BY MICHAEL SHARMON  
DIRECTED BY KYLIE FUAD  
CHOREOGRAPHY BY DANIELLE LINEGAR

## WRITER AND COMPOSER'S NOTES

This musical brings together two of my greatest passions: Shakespeare and musical theatre. I have always admired how *West Side Story* reimagined *Romeo and Juliet*, transforming it into something immediate, musical, and emotionally compelling. That same inspiration led me to *Much Ado About Nothing*, which I first encountered through the film starring Emma Thompson. Even then, I felt it had the bones of a great musical.

As the work evolved, I became drawn to the idea of characters who are, in many ways, “asleep” – emotionally or psychologically – and in need of awakening. This naturally connected with *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, allowing me to weave elements of both plays into a single story.

The music is deeply personal. Coming out in the 1990s, my world was shaped by artists like Madonna, M People, ABBA, Kylie Minogue, and Whitney Houston. This score is, in many ways, a tribute to that era: bold, heartfelt, and unapologetically melodic.

Setting the show at the Tropical Fruits New Year's Eve Festival was a natural choice. The first time I attended, I experienced an overwhelming sense of belonging. It was joyous, inclusive, and far more than a celebration; it was a community. Even during my years living in Hong Kong, I found myself drawn back time and again to spend New Year's Eve in Lismore. Placing this story within that world felt not only fitting, but essential.

We are living in a time when the LGBTQI+ community remains vulnerable, and progress cannot be taken for granted. It is my hope that this musical resonates not only with that community, but with anyone who believes in family, connection, and, above all, equal love.

MICHAEL SHARMON

## SYNOPSIS

Set during the vibrant chaos of the Tropical Fruits New Year's Eve festival, *A Midsummer Night's Queen* follows a dazzling community of performers as they prepare for opening night under the watchful eye of their fearless leader, Lady Beatrice. Alongside her is Benedick Marvel – her long-time sparring partner – whose razor-sharp banter and unresolved history with Beatrice crackle beneath every exchange.

Backstage rivalries, flirtations, and long-simmering tensions come to a head when a cruel deception tears apart young lovers Claudia and Hero, setting off a chain of heartbreak and public humiliation. As the night spirals, a shocking act of violence shatters the celebration, leaving the community reeling.

In the aftermath, grief, guilt, and truth collide. With the festival under threat and fear closing in, Beatrice must decide whether to retreat or rise – rallying her community to stand together, speak out, and reclaim their space. As love is rediscovered and courage reignited, the story builds to a powerful act of unity, proving that even in the face of darkness, pride, resilience, and chosen family will always endure.

## Cast

*In order of appearance*

Bertie/Beatrice/Lady B **Michael Sharmon**  
Hero **Madeleine Eliza**  
Claudia **Tia Nelson**  
Joe **Anna Podgórczyk**  
Benedick **Sean Campbell**  
Amber **Gabby Le Brun**  
Catty Bitchardson **Kylie Fuad**  
Crystal/Liz More **Vicki Lawrence**  
Aunty Septic **Chris Benaud**  
MC Hammered **Yasir Assam**  
Stage Manager, Reporter **Junia Wulf**  
Osmosis **Ruth Walker**

"Love looks not with the eyes  
but with the mind."  
William Shakespeare

## Production Team

Writer/Composer **Michael Sharmon**  
Director **Kylie Fuad**  
Producer **Bobbie Field**  
Choreographer **Danielle Linegar**  
Costume Design **Joss Lewis**  
Costume Makers **Liz Milne, Kate Dickson-Battye, Vanessa Sheath, Bianca Sirianni**  
Stage Manager **Dex Tallo**  
Set Design **Junia Wulf**  
Set Decorator: **Bobbie Field**  
Lighting Design **Alex Torney**  
Sound Design **Glenn Ward**  
Vocal Director **Michael Sharmon**  
Set Construction **Mike Russo**  
Videography **Hielrick Fidelio d'Amour**  
Lighting Operator **Hielrick Fidelio d'Amour**  
Technical Adviser **Jake Dix**  
Stage Mechanist **Dane Bodley**  
Marketing **Chris Benaud, Bianca Sirianni, Anna Podgórczyk**  
Program **Warren Kennedy, Bobbie Field**  
Dance Captain **Meg Lester**  
Backstage Crew **Carole McKenna, Brooke Karabache, Karen Ashbury, Sandy Davey, Paula Anthony, Nicole Sullivan, Adrienne Megan**

## Creatives



**DANIELLE LINEGAR**  
Choreographer

Danielle's choreography credits include *Dogfight*, *HMS Pinafore*, *A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum*, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, *Annie* (all with Arcadians Theatre Group); *La Cage Aux Folles*, *Spring Awakening* (both with The Phoenix Theatre), *The Pyjama Game*, *Anything Goes* (both with Smith's Hill High School), *The Tempest*, *Saving Frogton's Home* and *Tilly & The Time Machine* (all with Murwillumbah Theatre Company). A dance teacher for over 25 years, Danielle is the founder and principal of Dance Love Studios – a local dance studio for adults.



**JOSS LEWIS**  
Costume Designer

Joss is a multi-disciplinary artist who thrives on colour, texture, and playful design. She loves collaborating with other creatives, bringing bold ideas to life through shared imagination and craft. Joss won Best Costumes for *Into the Woods* with Bangalow Theatre Company at the 2025 Gold Palm Theatre Awards, and also designed costumes for *The Beast*. For this sparkly production, she has gathered a talented team to help weave magic into every detail. Special mentions: Prawn Costume Design & Maker: Liz Milne. Sean dressed by Kate Dickson-Battye.



**DEX TALLO**  
Stage Manager

Dex Tallo is a Film Casting Director, Television Commercial Production Manager, Event Manager and Entertainment Coordinator, who has worked on Sydney Olympic Games, Gold Coast Commonwealth Games, City of Sydney New Year's Eve, Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras and Nimbin Aquarius Festival. He is Head Stage Manager of Tropical Fruits in Lismore. A Northern Rivers resident for 12 years, Dex now joins Drill Hall Theatre Company on the first step of his journey into musical theatre.



**BOBBIE FIELD**  
Producer

Bobbie works across multiple roles in the Northern Rivers theatre community as a producer, collaborator, and arts facilitator. She has been involved with Bangalow Theatre Company (BTC), NORPA, and youth performing arts projects. Her producing credits with BTC include award-winning productions *HAIR* and *Into the Woods*, alongside youth works such as *A Property of the Clan*, *High School Musical*, and *Fantastic Mr Fox*. This is her debut with The Drill Hall Theatre Company. She also runs pop-up events through Hidden in the Hinterland and works at Byron Theatre, contributing to a vibrant, community-driven theatre culture.

# DIRECTOR'S NOTES

I first heard about *A Midsummer Night's Queen* in early 2025. A queer, musical version of Shakespeare's much loved 'rom-com' *Much Ado About Nothing*, set at the Tropical Fruits NYE festival at the Lismore showground. What's not to love about that!

As a Lismore-based business owner and theatre practitioner, I was excited to head to the Drill Hall to find out more. At the time I was keen to become more involved at the Drill Hall after many years in Lismore, so I booked tickets to the MNQ Fundraiser night in April 2025.

Michael came onto the stage and sang "Common Ground". I was brought to tears. I often witness my queer family and friends being 'othered'. The lyrics in this song say everything that I am not eloquent enough to say when trying to stand up for my friends. I knew I had to be part of his show in some way to support his story being told. It can be extremely difficult to get support to put a new work onto the stage, especially work that is locally written. I wanted to be part of the team who could make it happen.

When Michael approached me to come on as director I was thrilled. Michael is a mirror ball reincarnated as a human. He is full of sparkle, joy and warmth. When Danielle agreed to be choreographer I literally jumped for joy. She, too, is a being full of creativity and delight. Working with them has been a highlight of my past 18 years working in the Northern Rivers theatre community.

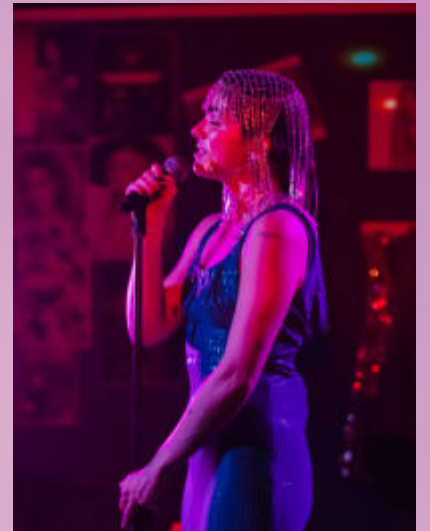
As a passionate ally of the queer community, this is more than just another show. The message of this fabulously, fun musical is more important in 2026 than I could have imagined. Queer and trans rights are being eroded around the world, and much of the progress we have made has been broken down.

*A Midsummer Night's Queen* not only celebrates living life as our true selves, finding love and community

(all with a healthy amount of jazz hands) but it also recognises those who came before, their sacrifices, and how we need to remember our past so we can all enjoy a brighter future together.

Our show is a safe space for all! It is a place to laugh, to dance, to sing, to celebrate inclusion, and hopefully bring some more love out into the world. Let's all find a place to meet, on common ground!

**KYLIE RUAD**



Through the lens of Kate Holmes during our dress rehearsal, these images reveal the heart of what happens before the show begins. Behind the curtain, there's laughter, quiet focus, and a rhythm of beautifully controlled chaos. From quick costume changes to final lighting checks, every moment builds the energy that carries us onto the stage. Before the curtain rises, this is where the real magic happens—and where the show truly begins.

# CAST



## **MICHAEL SHARMON** **Bertie/Beatrice/Lady B**

Michael Sharmon is an Australian playwright, performer and director whose work has toured Australia, the UK and Hong Kong. Trained at the Northern Rivers Conservatorium, LAMDA and the University of East Anglia, he has worked across theatre, television and cabaret. Performance credits include *Hamlet*, *Javert*, *Algernon* and *Johann Sebastian Bach* on television. His original works include *10 Minutes of Fame*, *Lions*, *Typhoons* and *Judy*, *Auditions*, *Arabian Dreams* and *The Greatest Storyteller*. Michael is relishing the chance to bring *A Midsummer Night's Queen* to Sydney – and to inhabit a few larger-than-life characters along the way.



## **MADELEINE ELIZA** **Hero**

Madeleine Eliza returns to the stage as Hero after a nine-year hiatus, and couldn't be happier to be back in the mix. Madeleine's previous credits include Audrey in *Little Shop of Horrors* with Bangalow Theatre Company and Rosalind in *As You Like It* with Shakespeare Live UK. She has also performed with Drill Hall Theatre Company, Murwillumbah Theatre Company and Bath Drama, and undertaken training with leading Australian institutions. Madeleine also appeared in the Flickerfest-selected film *The Divorce Case*, rounding out a love of both stage and screen.



## **TIA NELSON** **Claudia**

Tia Nelson's love of performance began in Japan, watching her father busk on the streets. After early training in dance and music, she moved to Australia at 11 and continued to build her craft. Tia has appeared in Bangalow Theatre Company productions including *RENT*, *Little Shop of Horrors* and *Chicago*, and has worked across the Northern Rivers theatre scene. She also assistant directed the award-winning *Into the Woods* alongside Amy Skene, and thrives in collaborative, creative environments.



## **ANNA PODGÓRCZYK** **Joe**

Anna Podgórczyk is a multi-disciplinary artist working across dance, choreography, live media, events, modelling and screen. Anna founded Kadina Dance Troupe at 15 while completing her Performing Arts and Production studies, later launching Amped Dance Company, which she ran for three years alongside competing as a NSW aerobic gymnast. After being diagnosed with Crohn's disease and facing significant health challenges, she was told she may never dance again – yet continues to forge her own path, performing in film, music videos and a wide range of dance projects.



## **SEAN CAMPBELL** **Benedick**

Sean Campbell works as Artist Liaison and Project Support for Arts Northern Rivers, and as Projects and Communications Manager and Costume Designer for Dance Integrated Australia. Sean is also a project manager and dancer with MOVE IT – Dance Fitness Fun, delivering community classes across the region. Alongside this, he leads cabaret ensemble Sean Campbell & Co., where storytelling, movement and a playful sense of performance come together.



## **GABBY LE BRUN** **Amber**

Gabby Le Brun is a performer, writer and emerging director who began theatre at age eight to help her "come out of her shell" – and stayed for the joy of it. Gabby has since worked across theatre, festivals and television, including an appearance in Kylie Mole's *I Go I Go*. She holds a Masters in Creative Industries (Drama), and her recent work includes *Grow Up* (BYT, 2025), Hoppers ensemble at Woodford Folk Festival (2026), and Assistant Director on *The Almighty Sometimes* (Drill Hall, 2023).

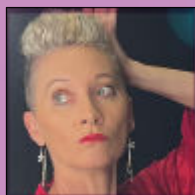


*"It would be lovely if by being who I am, that gives others permission to be themselves."*

**Reben Kaye**

"The course of true love never did run smooth."

William Shakespeare



**KYLIE FUAD**

**Catty Bitchardson**

Kylie Fuad is a Northern Rivers-based director and performer with a Bachelor of Arts (Theatre Studies).

Kylie has been part of the community theatre scene for over 18 years, directing productions for Lismore Theatre Company including *Five Lesbians Eating a Quiche* and *Cosi*. As a performer, her credits include *Birthrights*, *Breast Wishes*, and Bangalow Theatre Company productions such as *Chicago*, *RENT* and *Hair*. She brings both experience and a sharp sense of humour to this production.

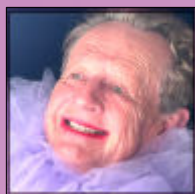


**VICKI LAWRENCE**

**Crystal / Liz More**

Vicki Lawrence discovered her love of theatre early, first appearing as a dancing soap bubble in a pantomime. Since then, Vicki has worked across

acting, dance, directing and choreography. Recent work includes teaching and performing with The Cassettes Dance Company at festivals and events, and choreographing for WAVE at Shearwater Steiner School. Drill Hall credits include a *Hot Shorts* season and directing *TLC: The Loneliness Connection*. Vicki is thoroughly enjoying being back in the musical theatre space.

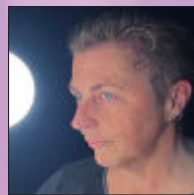


**CHRIS BENAUD**

**Aunty Septic**

Chris Benaud trained at UNSW, the Ensemble Theatre and the Actors' Conservatory. Chris's career spans stage and screen, including

international success in *The Lost Islands*, performances on London's West End, and numerous television roles. Theatre credits include work with the Hunter Valley Theatre Company and the Ensemble, along with stand-up comedy. For Drill Hall Theatre Company he has appeared in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Mark Colvin's Kidney*, *When the Rain Stops Falling* and *10 Minutes of Fame*.



**JUNIA WULF**

**Stage Manager / Reporter**

Junia has always had a passion for theatre and happily wears many hats, including directing, acting, set design, and stage management. Last year, she directed *The Female of the*

*Species* by Joanna Murray-Smith with the Lismore Theatre Company. Her most recent role there was playing the butler in *The Importance of Being Earnest*. This marks Junia's first time performing at the Drill Hall. In *Midsummer*, her role cleverly blurs the lines of performance, as she portrays a stage manager onstage. Alongside performing, she has also designed the set for the production.



**RUTH WALKER**

**Osmosis**

Ruth Walker brings over three decades of experience across dance, physical theatre and acting. Ruth has performed in music videos, fashion shows, festivals and a *Dance for Camera* series, and has presented work at the Edinburgh Festival. More recently, she has taught and performed with The Cassettes Dance Company, and collaborated on *The Loneliness Connection*, a devised dance-theatre work supported by the Arts Council.



**YASIR ASSAM**

**MC Hammered**

Yasir Assam began acting in the Northern Rivers in 2014 as a way to meet new people, and quickly discovered a love for the stage along

the way. Since then, he has appeared in *The Tempest*, *Water's Edge*, *Cosi*, *Macbeth* and *The House by the Lake*, embracing every opportunity to perform. Yasir enjoys the shared energy of live theatre and is always up for a chat, so don't be shy if you spot him after the show.





## Acknowledgements

Our grateful thanks to those who have generously supported this production:

Foxy Brown-Eye (Drag Queen Makeup Masterclass)  
 Jill Campbell  
 Nick Fuad  
 Ollie Heathwood  
 Brooke Karabache  
 Cathy McDouall  
 Melia Naughton (Vocal Masterclass)  
 Baker and Daughters  
 Byron Theatre  
 Kate Holmes Photography  
 Mullum Clayworkers  
 Syd Geary of Mullum Printworks  
 Kate Stroud of Stroud-de-Signs  
 Wandana Brewery

## CAN YOU HELP US FLY OVER THE RAINBOW?

We have been invited to take the show to Sydney Pride Festival. Keep the glitter going – every donation helps us shine in Sydney!



Dance Love Studios is for adults who dance for the love of it. All classes combine technique and skill with fun, support, and community.

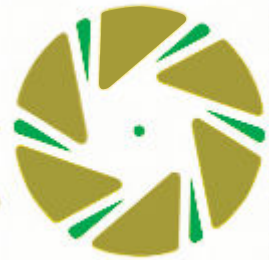
## DANCE LOVE STUDIOS

TWEED HEADS • BYRON BAY  
 Join at any time.

dancelovestudios.com • @dancelovestudios

Hielrick

info@onceuponatime.au



photography • video • drone

0424819278



HIDDEN IN THE HINTERLAND...

Fearless. Fleeting. Seductive. Unexpected.  
 Dreamed up by local creatives.  
 It appears. It fills. It disappears.  
 Listen for the sound of something beating just beneath the surface.  
 That's all for now.  
 Follow to find out more.



"A kind overflow of kindness."

William Shakespeare

Generously Sponsored by



Drill Hall Manager **Bianca Sirianni**  
 Bar Manager **Mike Russo**  
 FOH Manager **Warren Kennedy**  
 FOH Team **Lorrie Cruickshank, Izzy Durbin**

Cover photograph and photographs on pages 5, 7 and 8 by Kate Holmes

### DURATION

Approximately two hours including interval

### WARNINGS

This show contains occasional strong language, sexual references, gunshots, flashing lights, an excess of glitter and prompts an urge to bust vibrantly out of social norms and debut your dazzling authentic self. Be prepared.

Appropriate for ages 16+



Lismore's perfect laid-back wine bar

Great wine list, quality cocktails and fab cheese and deli platters. It's a beautiful space to catch up with friends after work or for a night out.

88 Magellan St Lismore, NSW

## HOTSHORTS SHORT-PLAY FESTIVAL

September 17-27 2026

THE HIT SHOW OF 2024 IS BACK AGAIN IN 2026

Eleven 10-minute plays in competition. Local playwrights, actors and directors competing for glory and cash prizes.

DRILL HALL THEATRE COMPANY