



## Q&A with Noni Hazlehurst on upcoming production of *Mother* by Daniel Keene

---

### How did your collaboration with Matt Scholten begin?

I have known Matt for almost a decade and we have a close personal and professional friendship. I have admired Matt's productions for many years and recommended him to the MTC who subsequently hired him. I was directed by Matt in the MTC's production of *The Heretic* in 2014, and we are keen to work together again. Matt and I have been keen to collaborate on this beautiful play, which was written for me, since Daniel first presented it to us. Like me, Matt understands that we are all there to serve the writer, who writes to serve humanity. Matt's calling as a director is truly a vocation. He loves the theatre and understands its potential power to effect change and to evoke powerful feelings. He is utterly committed to the idea that the arts should hold up a mirror to society, and allow the audience to reflect. His view, like mine, is that the audience doesn't come to see the actors. Rather, they come to see themselves.

### What do you hope the touring production will be like?

We are keen for the play to reach as wide an audience as possible, as its themes are universal. It has a distinctly Australian voice, but the story could happen anywhere, to anyone. It's a seemingly simple piece, yet it touches anyone who reads it to their core. On the road, we hope to engage with local community groups which deal with the kinds of issues the play tackles - post-natal depression, alcohol abuse, parenting, relationship choices - there are many options to discuss the play's messages. Because Australian audiences know me so well, I know that any community interaction will be very satisfying. Having been on *Play School* for 24 years, and *Better Homes and Gardens* for 10 years, I know that people feel quite relaxed with me.

### What attracted you to the role in *Mother*?

Matt and I share a deep commitment to relevant theatre that is thought-provoking, moving and deeply satisfying, and we relish the chance to bring *Mother* to life. *Mother* also honours the life and work of Dorothy Hewett, one of Australia's finest writers, and since I performed in the inaugural production of her play *The Man From Muckinupin*, commissioned for the WA Sesquicentenary in 1979, I have loved Dorothy's work, and was pleased to discover that Daniel and Matt feel the same.