



MOTHERLAND

MARKETING KIT



*Kerith Atkinson and Peter Cossar in the 2013 production of Motherland
Photo by Al V Caeiro*

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ABOUT THE SHOW

MOTHERLAND

by Katherine Lyall-Watson

An Ellen Belloo & Critical Stages Production

Director:	Caroline Dunphy
Cast:	Kerith Atkinson, Peter Cossar, Barbara Lowing, Daniel Murphy & Rebecca Riggs
Set Designer:	Penny Challen
Associate Designer:	Annie Robertson
Lighting Designer:	David Walters
Composer & Sound Designer:	Dane Alexander
Dramaturg	Kathryn Kelly
Producers	Chris Bendall (Critical Stages) Danielle Shankey (Ellen Belloo)

WINNER Best Independent Production, Matilda Awards

WINNER Best Overall Production, Groundlings Awards

WINNER Barbara Lowing, Gold Matilda Award AND Groundlings Award

FINALIST Patrick White Playwrights' Award

***Motherland* is passionate, gripping, contemporary theatre, weaving multiple stories of home, belonging, love and loss that span decades, continents and revolutions. Based on true stories, this powerful and intimate drama intertwines the sweeping stories of three very different women from different times, united in the heartache of exile from their homelands.**

"The best plays sweep you up, visually and emotionally, and drop you down amongst the action. They're so engaging you can't escape. They're so spectacular you don't want to. The newest production on my Best Plays list is the phenomenal 'Motherland'. ... High-energy, entertaining and emotionally stirring." [Weekend Notes](#).

"Motherland is the most elegant, most sophisticated theatrical work we've seen in Brisbane in years." *XS Entertainment*

PERFORMANCE SPECIFICS AND KEY MARKETING RESOURCES

DURATION: 90 minutes – no interval

ADVISORIES: *Motherland* contains some loud noises, strong language and adult themes. It is recommended for audiences over the age of 15.

LOGOS: Please include the following logos on all marketing collateral / season brochures / media releases:



JUDITH WRIGHT
CENTRE OF
CONTEMPORARY
ARTS



Dedicated to a better Brisbane

FULL MARKETING MATERIALS CAN BE ACCESSED HERE:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/xq2o6bso8bhxvi7/AAB6_bXCpPAzhOVpBg808ZVXa?dl=0

Includes: High quality production stills, logos, full video, reviews, media coverage, previous season media release, graphic design collateral including title treatment, artist biographies and more.

Critical Stages logo alternatives can be accessed here:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/zlgupbb4ah5h48n/AAD_Kiecazofa0Y8DgWMgvzSa?dl=0

POSTERS / FLYERS: Template posters / flyers will be designed by January 2016. Digital versions will be sent to each presenter to insert own individual booking / venue details.

ONLINE MEDIA RESOURCES:

- Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=7&v=UY3_SoN8yH0
- Interview with Katherine Lyall-Watson: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p7gtDmF7dS0>
- FULL VIDEO (password: mother): <http://vimeo.com/92098500>

TEACHER'S RESOURCES:

Critical Stages & Ellen Belloo are happy to facilitate and compile teacher's resources for venues that require them. *Motherland* is not envisaged for classes younger than grade 10. Please advise if you would like these.

CRITICAL STAGES WEBSITE: <http://www.criticalstages.com.au/motherland.html>

ELLEN BELLOO WEBSITE: <http://ellenbelloo.com/2014/02/15/motherland-photos-and-press/>

AWARDS



Best Independent Production – Matilda Awards 2013

Best Production – Groundlings Awards 2013

Gold Matilda – Barbara Lowing (Matilda Awards 2013)

Outstanding performance by an actor – Barbara Lowing (Groundlings Awards 2013)

Outstanding sound composition – Dane Alexander (Groundlings Awards 2013)

Finalist – **Patrick White Playwrights' Award** 2013

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Motherland's first production was in October 2013 at Metro Arts, Brisbane, where it was co-produced by Metro Arts and Ellen Belloo.



Daniel Murphy and Barbara Lowing in the 2013 Metro Arts Production of Motherland

Photo by Al V Caeiro

MARKETING COPY

One line

A thrilling contemporary work of love in a time of revolution.

Short(50 words)

The powerful and intimate **Motherland** intertwines the sweeping true stories of three very different women from different times, united in the heartache of exile from their homelands.

This is passionate, gripping, contemporary theatre, weaving multiple stories of home, belonging, love and loss that span decades, continents and revolutions.

150 word Marketing Copy

Motherland intertwines the sweeping true stories of three very different women from different times, united in the heartache of exile from their homelands. This is passionate, gripping, contemporary theatre, weaving multiple stories of home, belonging, love and loss that span decades, continents and revolutions.

This is a play about three remarkable women. Brisbane socialite, Nelle Tritton, married the Russian Prime Minister and helped him escape from the Nazis during World War II. Feisty writer and academic Nina Berberova quit her native Russia for Paris, but returned in her twilight years. Single mother Alyona is a Russian museum curator whisked away to Brisbane by an Australian businessman, in search of a brighter future that may just collapse before her eyes.

From the chaos of a Russian military coup, through the hell of Nazi-occupied France to a turbulent Brisbane in the throes of the Fitzgerald Inquiry, Brisbane playwright Katherine Lyall-Watson has penned an intricately researched historical drama about how world-changing events can ripple out and take a toll on everyday lives.

Optional / Additional Marketing Copy

Motherland is a play about three remarkable real women based on an incredible true story. One of those women is Nelle Tritton, a Brisbane socialite who married Russia's deposed Prime Minister, Alexander Kerensky, and helped him escape from the Nazis during the Second World War.

This is passionate, gripping, contemporary theatre, weaving multiple stories of home, belonging, love and loss spanning decades, continents and revolutions. It will appeal to a wide audience with its theatrical, contemporary and highly engaging depiction of true stories.

'Motherland' is based on the lives of three real women (one Australian and two Russians) as they seek to find places for themselves in a world that is in turmoil. The play spans the twentieth century, three continents, World War and revolution. It is also the

story of a love between two women that couldn't be named or celebrated because of the era in which they lived.

Time and place collides and interweaves as the actors play multiple characters, switching between them with barely a moment to draw breath. Shortlisted for the Patrick White Playwrights' Award, *Motherland* is a tapestry of friendship, displacement, home, and identity – a finely-crafted story of the casualties of love, ambition, and politics.

Nelle Tritton was born and raised in Brisbane but was obsessed with all things Russian. She moved to Europe where she met, worked for and then married the exiled Russian Prime Minister, Alexander Kerensky.

Nina Berberova was a Russian writer exiled from her homeland and living in Europe at the time of WWII. She was also a woman who described herself as having two sexes: walking the streets of Paris at night, dressed as a man.

Alyona was a Russian historian and museum curator who met an Australian businessman while she was preparing an exhibition on Nina's life. She was a single mother, lured to Australia with the promise of endless Pizza Hut and sunshine, only to discover that the Fitzgerald Inquiry was in full force in Queensland and her husband's business was bankrupt.

Synopsis:

In *Motherland*, three women, exiled from their homelands, find their lives are woven together across continents and decades. Nelle Tritton, the Brisbane wife of a deposed Russian prime minister forms a close friendship with Nina Berberova, who is exiled in Paris. The woman who would tell their story is Alyona, a Russian curator whose dreams of a new Australian paradise are crushed by bankruptcy and the Fitzgerald Inquiry.

Key market segments

Broad appeal - from ages 15+. This contemporary work is particularly suited to patrons who are interested in the historical elements of the narrative, especially those 60+, and equally by Upper Secondary and University students studying contemporary History, English or Drama. A further key market segment will be Arts Lovers aged 35-50, looking for cultural enrichment and a means of creative expression through attending live performing arts. Not suitable for children under 15+

Other Marketing Issues

The contemporary form of the production and the gripping quality of the writing give the work broad appeal and give a new perspective to performing real lives and history. The work stretches the audience's imagination theatrically, due to the jumps back and forward in time and place and character doubling from its small cast.

REVIEW HIGHLIGHTS

"The best plays sweep you up, visually and emotionally, and drop you down amongst the action. They're so engaging you can't escape. They're so spectacular you don't want to. The newest production on my Best Plays list is the phenomenal 'Motherland'. ... High-energy, entertaining and emotionally stirring." Zuzanna Kamusinski, [Weekend Notes](#).

4 STARS "A new and daring way of constructing a play... It triumphs, mainly because of the talented cast, who know how to portray these strong (women) characters and flawed (male) protagonists with the insight they deserve." [Alison Cotes, Crikey's The Daily Review](#).

"Kathryn Lyall-Watson's intelligent, cleverly constructed play, *Motherland*, deserves its accolades. Inventive and concise, it compresses huge complexities of time, history, plot and character, but renders them intelligible and intriguing." [James Harper, The Courier-Mail](#)

"*Motherland* is the most elegant, most sophisticated theatrical work we've seen in Brisbane in years" Caroline Dunphy's direction is "faultless". [Xanthe Coward, XS Entertainment](#).

"Caroline Dunphy's directorial touch is marvellously deft... a very fine production (with) an ensemble whose members are at the top of their game." [Kate Foy, Actor's Greenroom](#).

"Very, very well-written ... wonderful acting, the women who are so strong, passionate and fiery... A terrific play" [Doug Kennedy, 612abc](#)

AUDIENCE REVIEWS

Jessica Loudon: Every now and then, you see a show and you realise that it was so momentous, so important to our theatre community that, in the future, people will ask if you saw it and you will be able to say "I was there".

Patrick B: We were blown away... Flawless! A great piece of theatre that I hope goes on to receive the exposure and acclaim it truly deserves. Don't miss it!

Kerry-Anne Farrer: Thank you *Motherland* for the reminder of why I love good theatre - Bravo!

Karen Anderson: This show needs to be seen around the country, at major theatres.

COLLEAGUE RECOMMENDATIONS

Lewis Jones: "*Motherland* is living proof that the best theatre is not about bells, whistles or big name stars. This is simply the best drama I have seen all year."

Brian Lucas: "An amazing piece of work, full to the brim with heart, brains and guts."

Christen O'Leary: "This is a cast who stand together and commit from the first breath to the last. Dunphy's subtle shift from the epic to the intimate is masterful. This is a director with a delicate and detailed touch. The playwright and cast are in very safe hands here...and they know it."

Baz Mcallister:

"Peopled by compelling characters brought to life by a skilled cast, *Motherland* is a gripping, intricate tale that delicately teases its fascinating interwoven stories out of Brisbane's hidden history."

COMPANY PROFILES

ABOUT ELLEN BELLOO

Ellen Belloo was formed in 2013 to create new Australian work that combines text and contemporary performance. Their philosophy is to bring people, stories and talent 'out of the shadows'. Ellen Belloo aims to find new ways of exploring text and space via the medium of the human body and to create contemporary performance with heart and muscle. The company comprises four women with decades of experience in theatre, film, and writing: Caroline Dunphy (director and performer); Katherine Lyall-Watson (writer); Kathryn Kelly (dramaturg); and Danielle Shankey (producer). Ellen Belloo's first work, *Motherland*, premiered at Metro Arts in 2013 and is touring Australia in 2016, starting off with a season at Queensland Theatre Company. Their new work *Hanako* premieres at the Brisbane Powerhouse in March 2016. Two further works, *The Gloaming*, and *The Blue Boat*, are currently in development.

<http://ellenbelloo.com>

ABOUT CRITICAL STAGES

Since its formation in 2005, Critical Stages has grown to become one of Australia's leading producers of touring theatre from the independent sector. Critical Stages brief is to make outstanding theatre accessible to audiences around the country. To achieve this we have been successfully touring independent theatre to regional, remote, urban and rural audiences in every state and territory around the country for the past ten years. We champion independent theatre artists and companies around the country and assist them in extending the life of their work, and we support regional communities giving them access to high quality theatre that they would otherwise not be able to access. The company's goal is to make exceptional theatre accessible to audiences everywhere, extending the life of outstanding productions. Scores of artists are engaged on Critical Stages touring productions every year, traveling to perform in hundreds of towns from Darwin to Launceston, and Karratha to Lightning Ridge to tens of thousands of audience members every year.

www.criticalstages.com.au

Audience Engagement & Development

OVERVIEW

Motherland is based on real events and real people, and audiences are often fascinated to find out where fact ends and fiction begins. During the 2013 season audience members regularly chose to stay behind after the show to talk to the actors and find out more. This demonstrated a clear hunger for engagement post show and as a result Ellen Belloo has developed an audience engagement and development program that venues are welcome to offer to their loyal audience.

1. Artist Talks

- Post show Q&A with the artists;
- Sessions can be tailored to specific themes from the play or relate to professional development topics (for example, Playwriting from Katherine Lyall-Watson or Directing from Caroline Dunphy or Dramaturgy from Kathryn Kelly) .

2. Education Program

Upon request the following audience engagement and development resources and/or activities can be provided by Ellen Belloo:

- *Motherland* teachers' notes for secondary school or university groups;
- Professional Development workshops for local teachers and educators;
- Upper Secondary performance / movement workshop;
- Artists Q&A sessions at local education institutions.

3. Foyer Activation

Ellen Belloo in partnership with the Museum of Brisbane is developing a foyer display that will tour with *Motherland*. The display will provide audiences with access to additional show information and historical material that provides the context and framework for this contemporary work. The foyer display will be a portable installation that includes various elements that venues can chose to use if their facility permits:

- *Motherland* plays for sale;
- Historical and contextual information (portable displays / banners). Interested venues could also choose to engage their communities to bring in items of their own from the era (WWII) and display these alongside the *Motherland* display;
- Video content that includes interviews with key members of the Ellen Belloo creative team describing the process of writing and creating the production. (See drop box links page 4);
- A pop up installation that offers the audience the opportunity to explore the themes of home and identity and reflect on what this means to them. The pop up installation will invite audiences to engage with one another, gain a greater understanding of the themes underpinning *Motherland*, reflect on the contributions of other patrons and share their own stories of home and identity through the contemporary phenomenon of the “selfie” as well as various “low-tech” and tactile opportunities where the audience can leave their mark on the touring pop up installation. Further information and specifications for the pop up installation will be released early 2016.

BIOGRAPHIES



KATHERINE LYALL-WATSON Writer

Katherine was shortlisted for the 2013 Patrick White Playwrights' Award for Motherland. She was a finalist in the 2008/09 Queensland Premier's Drama Award for her first play *Tinder*, which was also selected for a Playlab/Varuna Fellowship. Her second play, *Rosie Little's Cautionary Tales for Girls* (an adaptation of the novel by Danielle Wood), was read at the National Play Festival, 2010. Katherine has a long history in theatre having worked as an actor, director and theatre reviewer before starting playwriting. She has a doctorate in philosophy from the University of Queensland.



CAROLINE DUNPHY Director

Caroline has worked over the past 18 years as an actor, director and teacher, working with theatre companies nationally, international screen experience, and as an acclaimed performance maker – including with the *Brides of Frank* (which she co-founded). Caroline is dedicated to developing innovative performance, having studied in training methodology and philosophical practice with Frank Theatre. She's also trained with Ellen Lauren, Tadashi Suzuki, and Anne Bogart. 2013 has seen Caroline working on several projects as actor, director and co-creator with Metro Arts and she's come to Motherland straight from *The Wizard of Oz* for Brisbane Festival and La Boite.



KERITH ATKINSON Actor: Nelle

Kerith has performed in ten productions with Queensland Theatre Company and has also performed for La Boite Theatre Company, Kooemba Jdarra, Three Sisters Productions, Theatre Activ8, and 4MBS Classic Productions, among others. Her film and television credits include *Reef Doctors*, *Terra Nova*, *All Saints*, *Water Rats*, *Farscape* and the feature films, *Girl Clock* and *The Last Man on Earth*. Films include *Mako: Island of Secrets* (channel 10). Kerith is also a popular voice over artist and proud Equity member, currently serving on the Qld Branch Council & National Performers Committee.



PETER COSSAR Actor: Chris and Kerensky

In 2013, Peter has appeared in *Motherland* (Ellen Belloo), *Medea* (Zen Zen Zo), *Fly In Fly Out* (Debase Theatre Company) and in the film *Parer's War*. Peter has performed with Queensland Theatre Company, La Boite, Opera Queensland, Zen Zen Zo, *Out of the Box*, Theatre UpNorth, the Philharmonic Orchestra, Street Arts and Access Arts. Peter trained as an actor at QUT Academy of the Arts and, since graduating, the bulk of his work has been in physical theatre and developing new plays. Peter has been a proud Equity member since 1992 and is currently serving on the Qld Branch Council.



BARBARA LOWING Actor: Nina

Barbara has performed in many productions for Queensland Theatre Company, including *The China Incident*, *Toy Symphony*, *Prisoner of 2nd Ave*, *Hamlet* (a co-production with South Australian Theatre Company), *Away* (a co-production with Griffin Theatre Company), *The Memory of Water and Navigating* (a co-production with Melbourne Theatre Company). She has also performed with Dead Puppet Society, Empire Theatre, South Australian Theatre Company, and La Boite Theatre Company. She received a Matilda Award for Best Actress for *Away* (2006),

a Goldie for Best Commercial Voiceover Artist – Female (2005/6). She was also a Montana International Documentary Film Festival Voiceover Winner in 2010 and 2005.



DANIEL MURPHY Actor: Khodasevich and Sasha

Daniel's acting credits include Taming of the Shrew and Amadeus for 4MBS; Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, Hamlet, Away, Hitchcock Blonde, Taming of the Shrew and Three Sisters (Queensland Theatre Company); Red Cap, The Dance of Jeremiah, and There Goes the Neighbourhood (La Boite); Blackbird (23rd Productions); The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee (Oscar); and more collecting two Matilda awards. His film and TV credits include Singularity, Reef Doctors, Mabo, K9, Cool, Paperback Hero, Flipper, Pacific Drive, Fire II, Time Trax and the voice of The Real Macaw. He has also written plays, screenplays, TV scripts, and the award-winning comic Platinum Grit.



REBECCA RIGGS Actor: Alyona

Rebecca has decades of experience as a stage performer for Bell Shakespeare Company, Queensland Theatre Company, Darwin Theatre Company, Kooemba Jdarra, La Boite and TN! She has played Juliet, Viola and Lady Macbeth and has appeared in many modern Australian plays including the musicals Summer Rain and Boy from Oz, Sex Diary of an Infidel, Man from Mukinupin and Luck of the Draw. Fans of science fiction know her as the irrepressible Commandant Mele-on Grayza in the Saturn Award winning Farscape and she has appeared in many Australian television series including Backberner, All Saints, Day of the Roses, Medivac and Fire.

DAVID WALTERS Lighting Design

For the past 35 years David has worked as a professional Lighting Designer in Iceland and Australia. His work experience spans lighting designs for opera, theatre, children's theatre, ballet, dance, puppetry, circus, son et lumières, exhibitions, major events and architectural and landscape installations. In recent years he has designed for the Queensland Theatre Company, Melbourne Theatre Company, Sydney Theatre Company, State Theatre Company of South Australia, La Boite, Company B, Opera Queensland, The Powerhouse, QUT, QPAC, Zen Zen Zo and Bell Shakespeare Company.

DANE ALEXANDER Composer & Sound Designer

Dane has been producing, composing and performing music with the acclaimed DeepBlue Orchestra since 2006 (winner of the 2009 APACA award for 'Excellent Audience Response'). Dane's career has seen him compose and perform shows at theatres and festivals nationally and internationally, including: Oz Fest 2012, Delhi and Mumbai; 2012 QPAC Out Of The Box Festival (The Flying Orchestra); 2012 Taiwan Lantern Festival, Lugang; 2010 World Expo in Shanghai, China; as well as multiple headlining national tours. Recently, Dane composed for the La Boite, The Danger Ensemble co-production of The Wizard Of Oz. He is currently undertaking a PhD at QUT.

KATHRYN KELLY Dramaturg

Kathryn is a freelance dramaturg who works in text-based theatre, dance and contemporary performance. Credits include productions with the Queensland Theatre Company, La Boite Theatre Company, QPAC, Gold Coast Arts Centre, JUTE (Cairns), Crossroads Theatre (Mackay), Cahoots Theatre Projects (Toronto) and Theatreworks (Melbourne) as well as many independent companies. Kathryn has dramaturged for the National Play Festival, the Regional Theatre-makers Festival, the Australian Script Centre, StagesWA and Darwin Writers Centre and for former organizations Playworks and ANPC. She was the Executive Director of Playlab from 2004-2008, publishing 24 new Australian plays.

PENNY CHALLEN Set Designer - TBA

CONTACTS

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*Rebecca Riggs and Peter Cossar in the 2013 production
Photo by Al V Caeiro*