

fortyfivedownstairs and The KIN Collective present

TENIELLE THOMPSON
ALLY FOWLER
CHRISTOPHER BUNWORTH
CHRISTIAN TAYLOR
NICK CLARK
KEITH BROCKETT
Directed by
MARCEL DORNEY

"Tim Winton at his very best"
- Theatre Australia

TIM WINTON'S
SHRINE

MAY 24 - JUNE 18, 2017 TUES - SAT 8PM, SUN 5PM

KIN
COLLECTIVE

 **fortyfive
downstairs**

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CONTENTS

SUMMARY.....	Page 3
CAST.....	Page 3
ABOUT THE KIN COLLECTIVE.....	Page 4
ABOUT SHRINE.....	Page 5
ABOUT TIM WINTON.....	Page 5
THE CHARACTERS.....	Page 6
THE STRUCTURE.....	Page 7
SETTING & DESIGN.....	Page 8
FROM THE DIRECTOR.....	Page 9
RELATED LINKS.....	Page 9

Shrine by Tim Winton
Presented by The KIN Collective
fortyfivedownstairs, May 24 – June 18, 2017

SUMMARY

Tim Winton's searing drama about a family torn apart by an incident of teenage drink driving is an otherworldly theatrical event that takes its audience to the farthest corners of what it means to grieve. The deeply personal connection readers have with Australia's sharpest storyteller is thrust into the spotlight.

Shrine considers who has the right to decide how a person is remembered – or *enshrined*. His family? His friends? And can we judge someone for how they die? Or only how they lived? Director Marcel Dorney heads a creative team that uses sound and lighting to tell the story from every character's perspective.

Writer – *Tim Winton*
Director & Sound Designer– *Marcel Dorney*
Lighting Designer – *Kris Chainey*
Set Designer – *Leon Salom*
Costume – *Emily Collette*

CAST



CHRIS BUNWORTH
Adam Mansfield



ALEXANDRA FOWLER
Mary Mansfield



TENIELLE THOMPSON
June Fenton



CHRISTIAN TAYLOR
Jack Mansfield



KEITH BROCKETT
Ben



NICK CLARK
Will

ABOUT THE KIN COLLECTIVE

The KIN Collective formed in 2011 after its members participated in a Masterclass conducted by acclaimed U.S. acting coach, Larry Moss. The ensemble is made up of some of Australia's most well-known and respected actors - Noni Hazlehurst (*A Place to Call Home*), Michala Banas (*Upper Middle Bogan, Winners & Losers*), Marg Downey (*Fast Forward, Kath & Kim*), Ally Fowler (*Neighbours, Wentworth*), Keith Brockett (*The Librarians*), Dylan Watson (MTC and STC's *Jumpy*), and Chris Bunworth (*Dr Blake's Murder Mysteries*), combined with independent theatre greats - Laura Maitland (*The Leenane Trilogy, Yes, Prime Minister*) and Linc Hasler (*Beauty Queen of Leenane*).

The KIN Collective is made up of a diverse group of artists: we are men, women, mature, young graduates, immigrants, Australian-born, gay, straight and from vastly different economic backgrounds in Australia and around the world. In short, we represent a typical cross-section of Australia today. This diversity has been a consistent theme in our work, demonstrated by our previous productions, which have been performed in English, Mandarin and French. Whether we're casting internally or outside the company, we work on a principal of colour-blind casting, which we maintain should be standard practice both in Australia and around the world. In making these decisions, our goal is be part of a movement that redefines what it means to be Australian.

The KIN Collective's first public performance was a self-devised piece, ***Glimpse***, at fortyfivedownstairs in 2012, which garnered rave reviews and critical acclaim. Martin McDonagh's ***The Leenane Trilogy*** followed in 2014 – three plays performed over a sold-out, three-week season, again at fortyfivedownstairs – and earned us our first Green Room Award nomination for Best Ensemble (***The Beauty Queen of Leenane***).

Our third production, a self-devised work, ***Hook Turn***, played as part of the Fringe Hub Program for the 2015 Melbourne Fringe Festival.

Shrine is one of three works being performed as part of The KIN Collective's first full theatrical season, alongside Will Eno's ***Title and Deed (A Monologue for a Slightly Foreign Man)*** for Melbourne Fringe, and ***Lottie in the Late Afternoon***, by Australian playwright Amelia Roper.

ABOUT SHRINE

Shrine is the third in a series of plays written by Australian literary icon Tim Winton, which brilliantly captures that which we all fear the most: the loss of a child. A son dies in a road accident, leaving behind a father paralysed with grief and rage, a mother bereft, a marriage strained to breaking point, and a community left with few answers.

Shrine throws a spotlight on the heartbreaking effects of the family shattered by the event, while also subtly exploring the many economic and societal divisions within Australia today. Tim Winton's soul-stirring text, set within the breathtaking beauty of South West Australia, conjures up a surreal and fragile world in which solace and relief lies in the most unlikely of people and places.

The importance of ***Shrine's*** subject matter cannot be overstated: the role alcohol plays in our culture's experience of youth and masculinity; the way we value women as a culture; and the way we are 'allowed' (or rather, not allowed) to experience emotion and grief. The values of mateship and stoicism have a lot to answer for in Australia: they deny and distance us from each other as often as they claim to unite us. By carefully framing the drama in a way that stimulates our imagination beyond the literal, and that tells the story from so many different angles and perspectives, Director Marcel Dorney asks us to consider the many ways in which grief can find expression.

ABOUT TIM WINTON

The pre-eminent Australian novelist of his generation, Tim Winton was born and lives in Western Australia. He has published 28 books. He is the only author to have won the Miles Franklin Award four times -for *Shallows*, *Cloudstreet*, *Dirt Music*, and *Breath* - and has twice been shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize (*The Riders* and *Dirt Music*). His three plays all premiered at Black Swan Theatre in Perth. *RISING WATER* had a season at MTC and *SIGNS OF LIFE* had a season at STC. This production of *SHRINE* by the Kin Collective is the first revival of this play.

THE CHARACTERS: HOW DO OTHER CHARACTERS DESCRIBE THEM IN THE PLAY?

Adam Mansfield, a retired vigneron and property developer

Adam and Mary grieve for Jack very differently: Adam is silent and withdrawn, Mary is vocal and angry.

- “Adam is silent. A monument to his own dignity... It’s as if they both died, father and son. One taken, the other withdrawing, endlessly, pointlessly, bravely silent.” (Mary.)

Mary Mansfield, a businesswoman

- “*She goes to pieces, poor devil... She’s making this noise... It’s like she’s calving. I think of a cow in a paddock, the way steam comes off her when she’s pushin, steam like a blanket over her...*” (Adam, June)

Jack Mansfield, their dead son

- “[*The wine*] was like Jack. Had a kind of, I dunno, afterglow? Is that the word?” (June)
- “*Jack always stood out... Seemed lonely to me. Different. Apart from that creamy-smooth look private-school city boys have. Used to walk the beach, pick stuff up – coloured glass, sand dollars. He had a thong collection.*” (June)

June Fenton, a local cellarhand

- “*June. Aren’t you a puzzle... You’re young... you’ve made a silk purse out of a sow’s ear.*” (Adam)
- “*‘Wise beyond her years as a result of things witnessed at a tender age’.*” (June, describing the way her lawyer referred to her in court)

Ben & Will,, Jack’s former friends

- “*Wood-ducks, we call ‘em. Fly in, shit all over the joint and flap away again.*” (June)
- “*‘Smarmy Ben, sleazy Will... [Jack] was twice the man they’ll ever be.’*” (Mary and Adam)

STRUCTURE

- *“Winton plays with this [performance style]... in the case of posh private school boy Ben (Nick Clark), pushing him so far down the well-trodden path of privileged baby sociopath that by the time his final tearful monologue came around, it was all I could do not to throw my shoes at his head.” – [Georgia Symons, Artshub](#)*
- *“My reservations about this play arise from Mr Winton’s decision to tell the story in this ‘non-linear’ way. June becomes a narrator of the past and that involves a great deal of telling, but it also necessitates June telling things she can’t know and interspersing her story with scenes of conflict between Jack’s guilty mates Ben and Will. June also tells Adam of an [sic] horrific night when she was swept out to sea but rescued by Jack – and this becomes a ‘flashback’ scene we see.” – [Michael Brindley, Stage Whispers.](#)*

Discuss

- What do these reviews tell us about the structure of the play?
- Why do you think Tim Winton has chosen to tell the story in a ‘non-linear’ way?
- How does the structure of the play affect how the audience feels about each character?
- Do you think the structure of the play serves the story?

SETTING AND DESIGN

From beachside bonfires to sterile morgues; from swimming in the ocean surrounded by stars, to alcohol-fueled car collisions and a lonely grave; creating a space that can represent many different settings is a challenge for any director.

Designer, Leon Salom, uses the full width of fortyfivedownstairs' performance space to communicate the evolution of each character's experience: sometimes their memories of Jack appear in sudden, sharp focus, only to be distorted again by someone else's version of the same memory. Sometimes their inability to communicate their grief makes them feel a thousand miles away; sometimes the intensity of their pain means they exist in the moment in a way we're rarely able to as human beings. Lighting Designer, Kris Chainey, uses lighting both to isolate important moments in the story, and to communicate the isolation from each other that each character feels so keenly.

- *"Leon Salom's uncompromising set calls to mind a brutalist fortress as much as a great fissure in a sea wall. Kris Chainey's lighting design is brilliant, giving everything a grainy texture, as if we are seeing the characters through the mists thrown up by the crashing nearby surf."* – [Tim Byrne, Australian Book Review](#)
- *"Leon Salom's set is highly suggestive: at once a long, strong, weather marked wall, but with a horrible scar where Jack's car smashed into that tree; in the centre, a rectangle of bricks that is by turns a beach fire, a table and a grave....and the collaboration between set and Kris Chainey's lighting works beautifully."* – [Michael Brindley, Stage Whispers](#).
- *"Dorney's staging greatly added to the allure of the play, with the brick shrine centre stage functioning poignantly as prop, emotional barrier, or transitional object. This, with the heavy proscenium border and ambient soundtrack made the performance space reminiscent of a live cinema, with characters stepping from screen into the audience, beautifully capturing the theme within the play of moving between life and fiction."* – [Tania Herbert, Theatre Press](#)

Discuss

- How have the show's designers collaborated to create different scenes and spaces?
- Tim Winton's poetic text describes each setting very specifically. Do you still think the show's sound and lighting design were important in helping the audience imagine each space?

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Tim Winton is among the most successful and beloved Australian novelists of his generation. By his own reckoning, this puts him in a strange position as a playwright. *Shrine* is, unmistakably, a play by a writer with extraordinary sensitivity to our inner lives. Tim's script does place the emphasis of this story firmly upon the *internal* experience of people caught up in and connected by grief. But making this story *public* - not just 'out there', but something we watch together - displays a remarkable sense of what we need from drama; to see and hear in public what we would, under most other circumstances, prefer to ignore, or at least to hide.

Grief, particularly in Anglo-Australian culture, is among the greatest of these. Our culture carries a deep mistrust of emotional display, or even articulation; and this mistrust is bound up - like much of our culture - with unacknowledged guilt, and its accompanying rage. This story, and the way Tim's script tells it, brings these things into focus through the characters' struggle not simply with each other, but with their own reluctance to acknowledge where their agony comes from, and what sustains it.

LINKS

Project fundraising video with Director's notes, cast commentary, and performance excerpts: <https://vimeo.com/183254763>

Sydney Morning Herald Article on the challenge of playwrighting for novelist, Tim Winton: <http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/stage/melbourne-stage/tim-wintons-play-shrine-tests-writers-nerve-and-shines-a-light-on-road-trauma-20170518-gw7upg.html>

Interview with Tim Winton about the meaning of the 'Shrine': <http://www.limelightmagazine.com.au/features/tim-winton-behind-every-shrine-violent-and-tragic-event>

Richard Watts' interviews playwright, Tim Winton (interview starts 46m30s): <http://www.rrr.org.au/whats-going-on/news/tim-winton-s-shine-on-smart-arts/>

Review, Stage Whispers: <http://www.stagewhispers.com.au/reviews/shrine-0>

Review, The Age: <http://www.theage.com.au/entertainment/stage/melbourne-stage/shrine-review-tim-wintons-third-play-plunges-into-an-ocean-of-grief-20170526-gwe1ta.html>

Review, Artshub: <http://performing.artshub.com.au/news-article/reviews/performing-arts/georgia-symons/shrine-253814>

Review, Theatre Press: <https://theatrepress.com.au/2017/05/29/kin-collective-presents-shrine/>