



LA MAMA PRESENTS

TOTO'S SONG

OCT 7 - 11

 **LA MAMA**

MELBOURNE
FRINGE
FESTIVAL

TOTO'S SONG

Cast:

Toto: Felicity Steel

Phillip: Alex Duncan

Yvonne: Michelle Myers

Solomon: Indra Liyanaarachchi

Creatives:

Playwright: Emma Fawcett

Director: Kate Fryer

Set & Costume Design: Sam Diamond

Sound Design: Sidney Millar

Lighting Design: Shane Grant

The team would like to thank:

The Catron Trio for letting us use their music; Susan Bamford-Caleo for writing the gorgeous song for Phillip to sing: Toto's Song!; Tiernan Maclaren, the welding opera singer and set designer, for coming out at 10pm on the night before preview and fixing our set; Susie Dee for her mentorship; VCA for support and rehearsal space; and La Mama for being a champion of new Australian writing and giving us this chance to share this work with audiences.

WRITER'S NOTE EMMA FAWCETT

I started writing this play four years ago, so it's had the gestation period of just over two elephant pregnancies.

When I began writing it I was a year off turning forty, with aging parents and no children and I thought I'd try to write about that void that I anticipated that absence of close family would create in my life.

Then, when I was writing it, I watched my father deteriorate and die and death moved from the abstract to the concrete. I thought I'd make it a play about the way the dying can form a centrifugal force that draws people and moments of aliveness in towards them.

Now that I've finished it, I think it's actually a play about matriarchs. It's a tribute to the women who pay fierce attention to the world and the people around them and also create their own kind of centrifuge by living their lives according to their logic. I'm lucky to have been raised by two such women and to have many more in my life. We lost one while this show was in rehearsals: a dear friend, Christine Park, a great lover of life and caller of bullshit. I dedicate this season to her. Rest in peace, Ajumma.

So many people I have contributed to the development of the script- workshopping scenes and giving notes, ideas, advice and encouragement. Primary amongst these collaborators are Kate, the director, and many of the people who are in the cast - Felicity, Alex, Michelle as well as Nathan Leemon- during a creative development last year. They are my dramaturgs and co-writers . Emma Gibson and Raimondo Cortese offered many rounds of dramaturgical notes during the Masters of Theatre at VCA, and Sybil Kempson guided an early draft. Moving this show onto the stage has been a dream because of the incredible passion and dedication of the whole team involved - what a group of legends.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE KATE FRYER

Humans are fallible, death is messy and how we deal with it matters. I was drawn to this play because it is a beautifully unsentimental, often hilarious look at what it means to live, while facing death. Toto's Song places the ordinary alongside the extraordinary. For me, that makes the play feel genuinely theatrical and human, people can be devastated, furious, horny, ridiculous, loving and selfish within the same five minutes. That complexity has been a dream to explore in the rehearsal room.



FELICITY STEEL

TOTO

Felicity Steel has worked as an actor and fight director for decades. She began her career in the British Dance Drama Theatre Company and then toured the London West End Production of Franco Zeffirelli's *Filumena* at the Lyric Theatre. She was a member of cult feminist punk rock group The Sadista Sisters for 6 years. Recent film credits include: *It's All Going Very Well -No Trouble at all* (Tilda Cobham-Hervy, Adelaide Film Festival 2026), *StakeOut* (China Twins, 2026 release).



ALEX DUNCAN

PHILLIP

Alex started acting at the Huon Valley Theatre Company in Tasmania. Since graduating VCA in 2011, Alex has starred in Iris Prize winning short film Gorilla (2012), been nominated for Best Supporting Actor in the Sydney Theatre awards in 2014 (The Legend of King O'Malley), toured in an award-winning adaptation of The 52 Storey Treehouse (2016) and appeared in recent TV series' The Newsreader (ABC), The Survivors (Netflix) and audio drama Hovering (Realm Media), among others. In 2025, Alex appeared onstage in Control (Theatreworks). He's also a playwright, was a Malthouse theatre Artist in Development in 2024, and has adapted and dubbed the voices for over 40 different Netflix shows from around the world.



MICHELLE MYERS

YVONNE

Michelle Myers is a performer and theatre maker based in Naarm/Melbourne. She trained at the National Theatre Drama School and the William Esper Studio in New York, before spending five years in Berlin developing and practicing her own approach to theatre-making. Her work draws on autobiography and ritual, holding the body — both crude and tender — as archive. Recent performance credits include THIS (RISING Festival) and Gluttony (Red Stitch Actors' Theatre).



INDRA LIYANAARACHCHI

SOLOMON

Raised in Naarm/Melbourne, Indra Liyanaarachchi (he/him) is a proud Australian-Sri Lankan actor and writer. In 2025 Indra (VCA). Indra was exposed to the performing arts at a young age through his cultural practice with the Sri Lankan Theatre Group Melbourne. He continued his education at Beaconsfield College with a Theatre and Drama Scholarship and completed his BFA in Acting at the Victorian College of the Arts. During his time at VCA, Indra was the recipient of the Lionel Gell and Irene Mitchell Scholarships. Indra's recent theatre credits include Jamie in 'Cut Chilli' (Darebin Arts dir. Isabella Vadiveloo w. Chenturan Aran). Indra is passionate about pushing boundaries and being a part of the change he wants to see in theatre and screen.



EMMA FAWCETT

PLAYWRIGHT

Emma Fawcett is a playwright and theatre-maker based in Naarm/Melbourne creating across text, clown and physical theatre. Emma is a Dramaturgy Graduate at Red Stitch, was a playwright-in-residence through the She Writes program at Theatreworks, and holds a Master of Dramaturgy & Writing for Performance from the Victorian College of the Arts. She co-devised and dramaturged the multi-award winning show CVNT and was runner up in UMSU Union Theatre playwriting award. Toto's Song is her first play.



KATE FRYER

DIRECTOR

Kate has been a performer, director, teacher and writer of circus and physical theatre for nearly 30 years. She is the Artistic Director of Dislocate and the Circus Director for the State Schools Spectacular. Kate has also directed works for Circus Oz, NICA, The MSO, The Women's Circus, The Sydney and London Olympics, The Melbourne Commonwealth Games, The Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Sydney Valladolid, and Mas Nou Festivals. She worked as an assistant director with The Victorian Opera and Legs on the Wall.



EMMA GIBSON

DRAMATURG

Emma Gibson is a playwright and dramaturg and holds a Master of Theatre (Writing) from the Victorian College of the Arts. Her writing has been described as smart, stimulating and vital. Recent credits include: 'After Rebecca' (La Mama Theatre 2024), 'The Cuddle Parlour' (The Knack/Butterfly Club, 2021) and 'Alternative Futures' (Bullet Heart Club/Theatre Works 2021). Emma was one of Melbourne Theatre Company's 2020 Women in Theatre, and dramaturg for its 2021 Cybec Electric season. She was a She Writes writer in residence at Theatre Works.



SAM DIAMOND

SET & COSTUME DESIGN

Sam is a Naarm based set and costume designer and graduate of the Master of Design for Performance from the Victorian College of the Arts. In 2025 he was nominated for Outstanding Stage Design at the Performing Arts WA Awards for his work on Logue Lake. In 2022 Sam was the Graduate Designer for Red Stitch Actors' Theatre and in 2019 received the Orloff Family Charitable Trust Scholarship for excellence from the VCA.



SIDNEY MILLAR

SOUND DESIGN

Sidney is an award-winning composer and sound designer for theatre, dance, music theatre and installations. Sidney studied a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Production) degree at the Victorian College of the Arts. Design highlights include *WILD*, *Girls & Boys*, *Never Have I Ever* (Melbourne Theatre Company); *The Fence* (Darebin Speakeasy), *The Exact Dimensions of Hell* (fortyfivedownstairs), and *Lou Wall's Drag Race* (Melbourne Fringe). Sidney was the Associate Sound Designer to Russell Goldsmith for *Angels In America* (dir. Gary Abrahams).



SHANE GRANT

LIGHTING DESIGN

Shane is an accomplished lighting designer having worked extensively with companies such as Keene Taylor theatre project, Not Yet it's Difficult, Melbourne Chorale, Ranters Theatre, Playbox Theatre, Yumi Umiumare and Strange Fruit. He has been acknowledged as an 'absolute genius' (Theatre People) for his lighting design of Sarah Kane's 4:48 Psychosis. He has a Bachelor of Arts (Production) VCA from 1994. Shane sat on the Green Room Awards Association Theatre Companies panel 2014 -2017. Shane is currently an artistic director of Metanoia Theatre.



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Office Hours: Mon–Sun 11am–6pm

Box Office is open 1 hour before show time.

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La Mama Theatre is on the traditional lands of the peoples of the Kulin nation, and we give our respect to the Elders and to all First Nations people past, present and future. We acknowledge all events take place on stolen lands and that sovereignty was never ceded.

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