

Cluster Arts Global and BTC Productions Present

BREAKING THE CASTLE

Written & Performed by **Peter Cook**

Directed by **Bridget Boyle**

19th - 22nd March 2025

The Cremorne Theatre QPAC



**BREAKING
THE CASTLE**
PRODUCTIONS





Peter Cook

Writer and Performer

This is now officially the eighth season of *Breaking the Castle*. After the world premiere at The Street Theatre in Canberra in 2020, it has been to The Hothouse Theatre in Albury, Riverside Theatres Parramatta, and in 2023 it played QPAC, Edinburgh and two different venues in London. The return to QPAC is part of a promise I made to Scott Flynn, who funded the tour to the UK and a chance for me to tell my story in my hometown one last time.

The fact the play has had so many seasons and has more to come tells me that the story is important and relevant and that audiences don't always want to see straight comedies and musicals. Brecht famously said that the audience "shouldn't hang their brain up with their coat when they come to the theatre" and that's as relevant a comment now as it was then.

I wrote this play because I am one of a very small percentage who make it out alive of drug addiction. Most people, especially those on the fringes without access to resources will never have that chance, especially under current policy in Australia, and I wanted to give them a voice. I also wrote it to take away some of the stigma that still surrounds addiction and mental health, to humanise people suffering with these issues and to encourage a sense of compassion for those who have fallen between the cracks.

I want to extend a big thank you to Debbie Wilks from Cluster Arts Global, my producer who is making the 2025 seasons of the show possible. Debbie saw the show in Edinburgh and didn't think twice when I asked her to help produce it. Thank you Deb. Also, my Director Bridget Boyle who I've known for nearly thirty years for believing in the work and embracing it wholeheartedly. To my sound designer Kimmo, lighting designer Ben Hughes, production designer Raymond Milner our workhorse of a Production Manager Freddy Komp, and our lovely stage manager Rhiannon Tate – thank you all for all your work. Peace. Peter Cook.



Bridget Boyle

Director

This is a story of hope.

A hard story and sometimes a tough one to tell, but ultimately an uplifting story of our shared humanity and what we all crave – love, security and a safe space to speak our truth, to be heard and to be seen.

When I first encountered this work, Peter's stunningly real text and achingly raw performance explodes everything I thought I knew about addiction, and I hope it will for you, too. He doesn't pull any punches as he takes us from hellish self-destruction to redemptive self-acceptance. Most movingly, the work is framed by his gratitude for being given a chance to heal and rehabilitate. Not everyone is so fortunate – and this is the urgent message that underscores this production.

I'm so proud to have come on board for this iteration of the work as it embarks on a tour across three states. I want to acknowledge the other wonderful directors who have brought this work to life for previous seasons, Caroline Stacey and Leah Purcell, and all the creatives who have shaped the world of *Breaking the Castle*.

Raymond Milner has created a beautiful space that transports us from the mountains of Thailand to the Cross with playful ease, shaped by Ben Hughes' gorgeous lighting design. Kimmo Vennonen's rich and textured sound world is like another character in the work – it lives and breathes with David on his journey.

Huge thanks to Deb Wilks and the whole team at Cluster Arts for their belief and extraordinary support of this work. Thanks also to the team at Queensland Theatre and Backbone Youth Arts for their generous support of the work in rehearsal.

Independent theatre is a vital part of the arts ecology, and it's wonderful to feel a part of such a supportive community here in Queensland.

Special Thanks to



BTC Productions and Peter would like to thank **Scott Flynn** for his support of Breaking the Castle especially the tour to the United Kingdom in 2023.

Breaking the Castle had its world
Premiere at
The Street Theatre in 2020.
Directed by Caroline Stacey.

**If you would like to purchase the script to
Breaking the Castle**

[CLICK HERE](#)

**The Breaking the Castle team thank the whole QT team for donating their rehearsal space.
Much appreciated!**

Help Us Put The Freeze On Ice

Australian Anti Ice Campaign

Andrea Simmons, CEO of the Australian Anti Ice Campaign said “a portion of Breaking the Castle’s box office will be donated to the Australian Anti Ice Campaign (AAIC). The AAIC raises awareness about the dangers of the drug ice and its chief aim is to educate the public, especially young people, about the dangers of Ice. “I watched Peter’s show, and it was absolutely brilliant,” she said. “It really shows the audience how difficult the struggle is in pulling yourself out of addiction. The show should be seen by all senior students across the country.”

<https://www.australianantiicecampaign.org.au/>

The Creative Team



**Freddy Kromp -
Production &
Technical Manager**

Freddy Kromp works in theatre and event production and loves delving into multi-disciplinary forays across AV, Set, and Lighting Design and in AV Visual Arts Installations (including Living Rocks: A Fragment of the Universe at Venice Biennale 2019 and ZKM Karlsruhe's "The Beauty of Early Life" 2022, as well as the Video Systems Designer for the Australian Pavilion at the Venice Arcitectoral Biennale 2023), and in stage/production management. He is the recipient of the 2022 and 2023 Matilda Awards for Video Design, and has been nominated for 2 Groundling and 4 Matilda Awards. He loves a good challenge that demands a variety of skills as well as creative problem solving, recently in Edinburgh with Leah Shelton's multi-Award winning Show "BATSH*T".

Freddy has worked with accomplished directors including Bridget Boyle, Margi Brown-Ash, Shaun Charles, Wesley Enoch, Daniel Evans, David Fenton, Michael Futcher, Eugene Gilfedder, Nasim Khosravi, Benjamin Knapton, Andy Packer, Benjamin Schostakowski, Leah Shelton, Garry Stewart, and Genevieve Trace.



**Rhiannon Tate
Stage Manager**

Rhiannon Tate is a Meanjin/Brisbane based stage manager and creative. Having recently graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Technical Production) from QUT, Rhiannon is eager to continue to expand her specialised skillset and take on opportunities in Brisbane and beyond. Community and educational engagement have a special place in Rhiannon's heart, and she actively seeks out roles that align with this passion. She is extremely honoured to be involved with this production of Breaking the Castle and share this story of hope and humanity.





Ben Hughes Lighting Designer

Ben Hughes' lighting design spans theatre, dance, opera, concerts and events. Selected design credits include: *Black is the New White*, *Noises Off* (Melbourne Theatre Company/Queensland Theatre) *Let The Sunshine* (Melbourne Theatre Company); Other credits include: *Round The Twist* (Queensland Theatre), *Peter and the Starcatcher* (Dead Puppet Society), *Othello*, *The Almighty Sometimes*, *The Sunshine Club*, *Return To The Dirt*, *Boy Swallows Universe*, *Triple X* (Queensland Theatre/Sydney Theatre Company), *Mouthpiece*, *Antigone*, *L'appartement*, *Twelfth Night*, *Good Muslim Boy* (Queensland Theatre/Malthouse), *Scenes From A Marriage*, *An Octoroon* (Queensland Theatre); *Poison Of Polygamy* (Sydney Theatre Company/La Boite Theatre), *Black Is The New White*, *The Effect* (Sydney Theatre Company/Queensland Theatre); *Singing In The Rain* (Queensland Performing Arts Centre/Prospero Arts), *Breaking The Castle* (Queensland Performing Arts Centre/Oombarra Productions); *Love Stories*, *Bananaland*, *Salamander* (Brisbane Festival); *IRL*, *The Last Five Years*, *Away*, *The Time Is Now*, *Naked & Screaming*, *The Neighbourhood*, *From Darknes* (La Boite Theatre); *Celebrating Li*, *Strictly Gershwin*, *The Little Mermaid* (Queensland Ballet). Ben lectures in lighting design at Queensland university of technology.



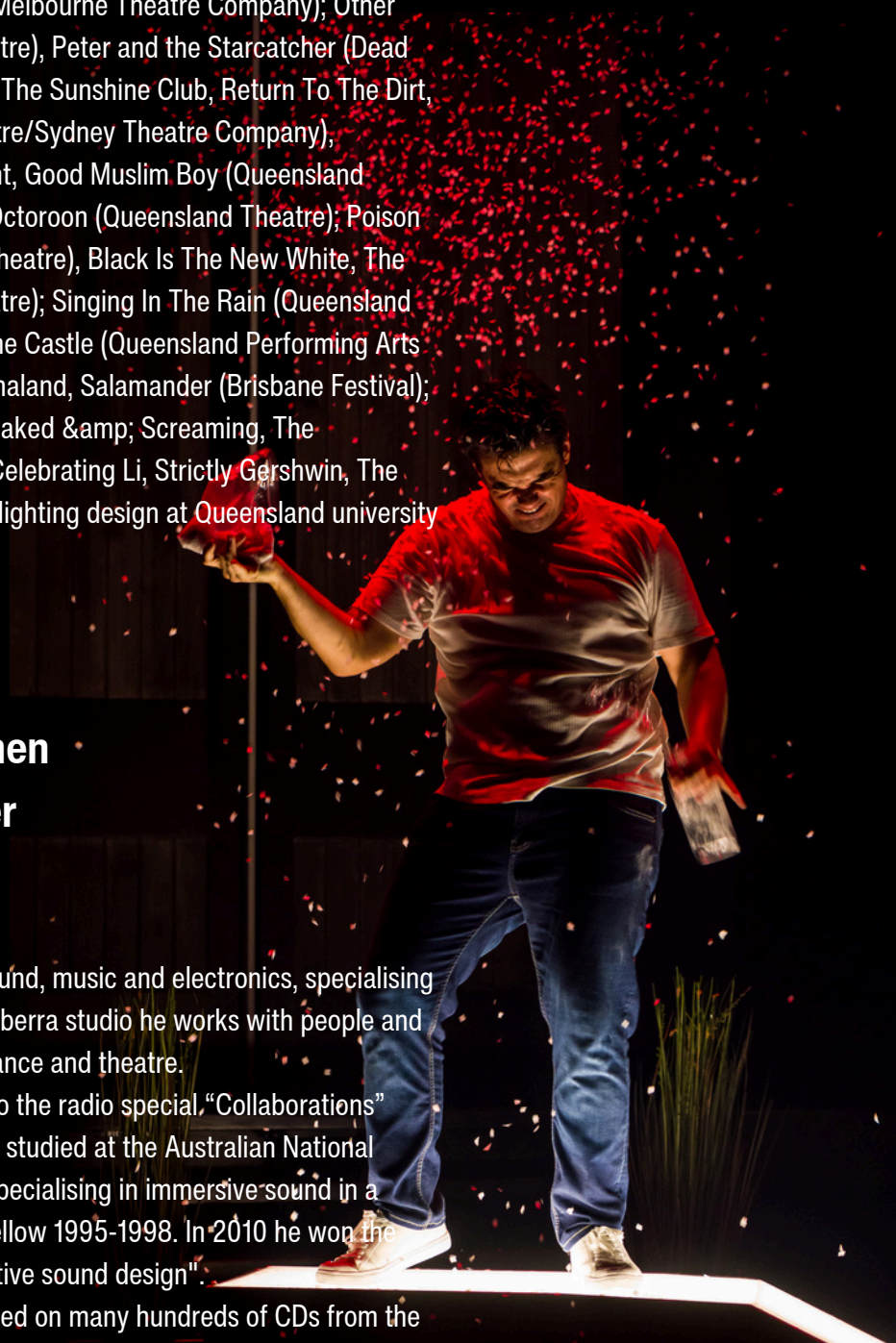
Kimmo Vennonen Sound Designer

Kimmo Vennonen is a creative artist combining sound, music and electronics, specialising in sound design and music mastering. From his Canberra studio he works with people and companies around Australia, frequently in music, dance and theatre.

In 1991 he contributed as an improvising musician to the radio special "Collaborations" that won the Prix Italia for the ABC. In the 1990s he studied at the Australian National University with Greg Schiemer and David Worrall, specialising in immersive sound in a geodesic dome, leading to being an ANU Visiting Fellow 1995-1998. In 2010 he won the MEAA Green Room Award for "creative and innovative sound design".

As Canberra's only mastering engineer he has worked on many hundreds of CDs from the ACT region since 1996 and now has regular customers interstate and overseas. As a recording engineer he works for festivals, national institutions and prominent local musicians.

His mission is to take part in collaborative projects with maximum quality and integrity. As an individual he strives to keep his creative ground fertile.





Raymond Milner

Original Set Designer

Raymond Milner is an award-nominated exhibition and scenic designer based in Brisbane. Raymond works across theatre, dance, circus, musicals, festivals and museum exhibitions with over 30 credits to his name. He graduated from the University of Southern Queensland with a Bachelor of Theatre Arts in 2019, and in 2021 achieved a Master of Museum Studies from The University of Queensland where he researched the role of scenography in contemporary museums and galleries.

Recent productions include: Anatomy of a Suicide (BC Productions); Season Of Contemporary American Plays 2019, The Ladies and Sons of the Prophet (QUT); Six Hundred Ways to Filter a Sunset (Queensland Theatre); Bare (Understudy Productions); and Poison (EG Productions).

Selected Credits include: Breaking the Code (QUT); The New Black (Follies Productions); Boys of Sondheim, A Very Naughty Christmas The Second Coming (Understudy Productions); Così (Beenleigh Theatre Group); Two Weeks With The Queen (THAT Production Company); Les Misérables (Savoyards Musical Theatre).



The Breaking the Castle team are grateful to be working and creating on the ancient lands of the Yuggera and Turrbal peoples. Always was and Always will be!



Cluster Arts Global

Producer - words by Deb Wilks

Breaking the Castle – A Story That Needs to Be Told



It's funny how the world works. In 2023, while producing three shows at the Edinburgh Fringe, I received a message from Brisbane-based artist Melissa Western. She told me about an Australian actor in Edinburgh for the first time, performing his deeply personal show—and struggling. She asked if I could drop by for a coffee, just to be a friendly face.

Of course, I agreed. I planned to catch his show, *Breaking the Castle*, and meet him afterward. What I didn't expect was to be completely blown away. The performance was raw, powerful, and profoundly moving. It wasn't just theatre—it was an urgent and necessary conversation about addiction, recovery, and the human experience. I knew immediately that this show had the power to change perspectives in a way that felt truly unique and deeply important.

Cluster Arts was founded in 2015 to support circus and physical theatre artists, helping them build sustainable careers by securing touring opportunities, managing logistics, and navigating the complexities of the arts industry. While we've always been passionate advocates for storytelling in all its forms, *Breaking the Castle* marked our first venture into theatre—a leap we knew was worth taking.

Working alongside Pete, we reached out to dozens of venues across Australia, determined to bring this story to audiences who needed to hear it. Yet, only four venues were willing to take the show. This resistance baffled us, especially considering the growing urgency of the issue. Methamphetamine use has surged across Australia, with wastewater sampling revealing an increase of up to 480% in some regions (AAIC). Addiction isn't an abstract issue—it's affecting communities everywhere.

Theatre has always been a powerful vehicle for storytelling, and *Breaking the Castle* is a testament to that. Every night, Pete steps on stage and relives his past, embodying 18 different characters in a brutally honest portrayal of addiction and survival. It's a performance of immense courage—one that doesn't just entertain but challenges, educates, and ultimately, offers hope.

At Cluster Arts, we are proud to stand behind this show and Pete's story. Because stories like his don't just deserve to be told—they need to be heard.



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The Honourable John-Paul Langbroek MP
Minister for Education and the Arts

Sharon Schimming
Acting Director-General, Department of Education

QPAC rests on the lands of the Jagera and Turrbal people. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this country and recognise their rich cultural heritage and enduring connection to the land, waters and skies. Aboriginal Torres Islander people are this country's original storytellers, and it is our privilege to continue to share stories and be a place of gathering on this land that has been a meeting place for millennia.

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

QPAC warmly thanks our key donors who help us engage broadly across the state and continue enriching lives through performing arts.

Tim Fairfax AC and Gina Fairfax AC, Dr Lee and Professor Peter Coaldrake AO, Leigh Tabrett PSM, Susan Rix AM, Julian Myers, Dr Sally Pitkin AO, Dare Power, Dr Cathryn Mittelheuser AM, Sandi Hoskins, Lance and Suzanne Hockridge, Leigh Wheeler, Judith Musgrave Family Foundation, Queensland Community Foundation, de Groot's Charitable Fund, Joachim and Paula Erpf, Dr Colin and Mrs Noela Kratzing, Barbara Snelling, Frank and Karen Alpert, Dr Ailbhe and Dr Frank Cunningham, Jenny Morton, Klaus Beckmann and several donors who wish to remain anonymous.

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