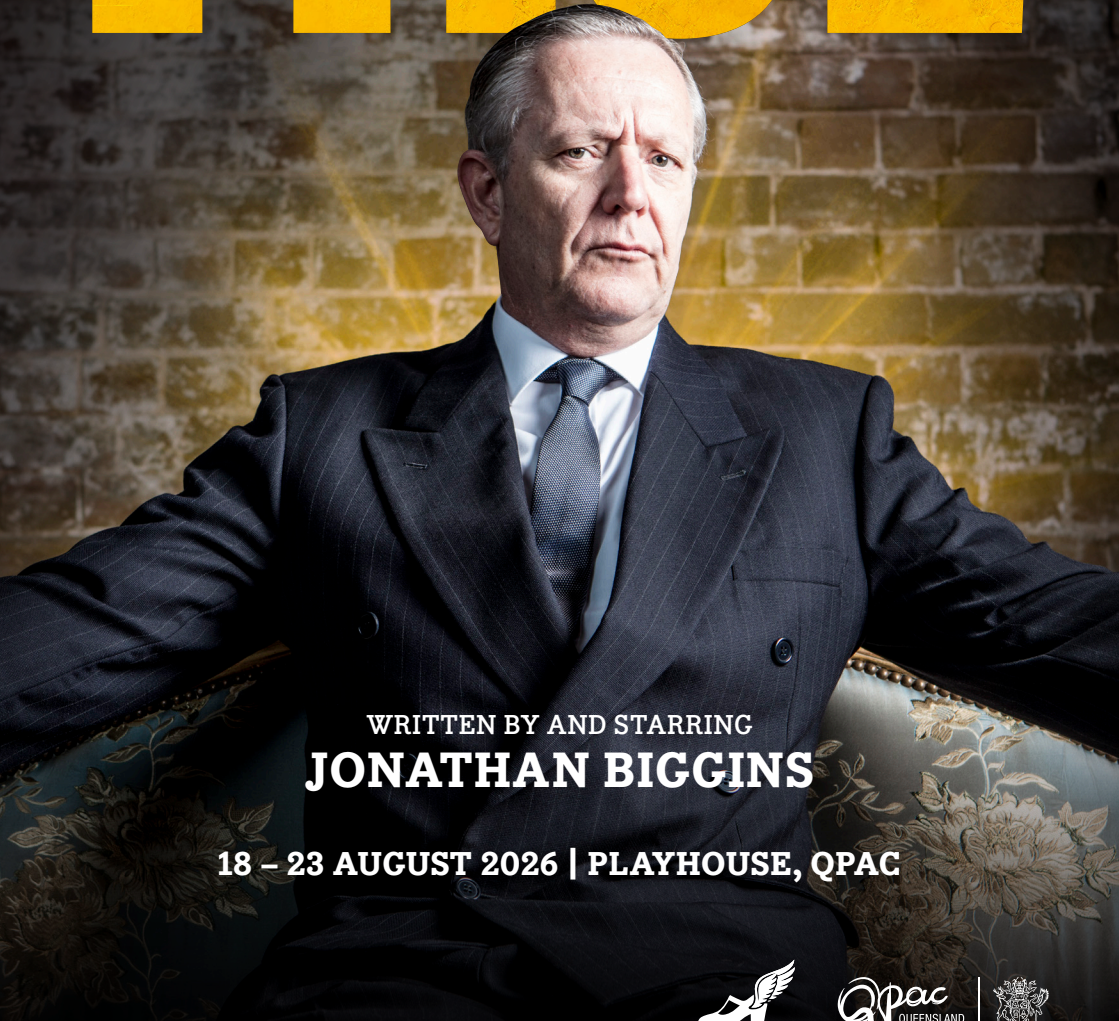


QPAC AND SOFT TREAD PRESENT

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO PAUL



WRITTEN BY AND STARRING
JONATHAN BIGGINS

18 – 23 AUGUST 2026 | PLAYHOUSE, QPAC

IMAGE CREDIT: BRETT BOARDMAN



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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO PAUL

Written and performed by Jonathan Biggins

Running Time: 90 minutes (no interval)

Creative Team

Director	Aarne Neeme
Designer	Mark Thompson
Lighting Designer	Verity Hampson
Sound and Video Designer	David Bergman
Producer	Jo Dyer
Production Manager	Barry Searle
Touring Technician	Sam Read
Company Stage Manager	Tanya Leach
Photographer	Brett Boardman
Marketing Consultant	Pip Sprott, PS Creative

The Producers wish to thank

Arts on Tour NSW, Brother Rory of De La Salle Brothers' Archives,
Janet Wilson, Opera Australia, Glenn A. Baker.

CREATOR'S NOTE

I've been playing Paul Keating for many years now – when he saw me appearing as him in *The Wharf Revue*, his first comment was: "I'd have been wearing a better suit." Sadly, we didn't have the budget for a Zegna then and to be perfectly honest we still don't. But in 2019, when I first attempted to explore one of Australia's most enduring political figures in something more complex than the sketch or short monologue format, little did I think that seven years later I'd still be doing it! Such is the appeal of the man whose influence is felt – and heard – to this day.

I like to think of this play as the first three-dimensional, unauthorised autobiography written by someone else. I'm pretty sure most of it is true and the bits that may not be, I certainly wish they were. Keating is such a great character to write for and perform – he was funny, sharp, emotional and flamboyant; the bovver-boy from Bankstown who was as comfortable writing an essay on neo-classicism and the architecture of Berlin as he was staring down the Head of Treasury to float the dollar. No government has tackled as much difficult reform as the Hawke-Keating ministries and while some of the long-term results have unsettled many, they certainly changed Australia's perception of itself and where it might find a place and a role in the world.

I'd like to acknowledge the three authors who I leant on most for the research: Troy Bramston, Kerry O'Brien and Don Watson. And of course, the words of PJK himself. This is "his" view of himself and his significance in the national discourse, so naturally, some may think it leans a little heavily in his favour. But let's face it, he was never the shrinking violet; public self-criticism was never his long suit. Yet the private man wore a very different face, and although this is a study of his public service and no intrusion on his personal life, I hope we shed the occasional light on the contradictions and complexities of a great leader whose vision, courage and determination are sadly missing in what passes for our contemporary political class. Do better, ya mugs!

Jonathan Biggins, 2026

Jonathan Biggins

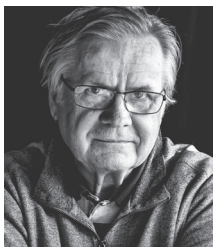


Jonathan Biggins is an award-winning writer, director and performer, perhaps best known as one of the creators and performers of Sydney Theatre Company's long-running and much loved annual political satire, *The Wharf Revue*, that

concluded its astonishing 25-year run in April 2025. As an actor Jonathan has also worked with all of the major theatre companies, including Sydney Theatre Company, Melbourne Theatre Company and the State Theatre Company of SA, and has appeared on multiple comedy shows on the ABC. He is the winner of two Australian Writers' Guild awards for *The Republic of Myopia* (with Drew Forsythe and Phil Scott) and for a new libretto for *Orpheus in the Underworld* (with Phil Scott), and a Helpmann Award for Best Director for *Avenue Q*. His two full-length plays, *Australia Day* (2012) and *Talk* (2017) both premiered at Sydney Theatre Company before touring nationally.

Jonathan's debut novel – *Near Death in Venice* – will be published by Simon & Schuster in October 2026.

Aarne Neeme



Aarne has worked in the theatre and television profession since the early 1960s, primarily as a director and teacher. He has held the position of Resident Director at the Octagon Theatre, and Nimrod Street Theatre, and that of Artistic Director at the National Theatre, Perth,

the Hunter Valley Theatre, where he first worked with Jonathan, and the Hole in the Wall Theatre. He was Head of the Theatre Department at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, and Senior Fellow at the National University of Singapore. His television directing credits include *Blue Heelers*, *Neighbours* and *MDA*. Most recent productions have been *When Icebergs Burn* (The Wolves Theatre Company), *Extremities* (Intercultural Theatre Institute, Singapore) and *A Doll's House* (Canberra Repertory Theatre). A recipient of various awards in Sydney, Perth, Newcastle and Canberra, he was most notably conferred the Order of Australia (AM) in 2013.

David Bergman



David is an award-winning composer, video and sound designer for theatre, dance, opera, installation and film. David's theatre designs include his ground-breaking video designs for *The Picture Of Dorian Gray* and *The Strange Case Of Dr Jekyll And Mr Hyde* for Sydney Theatre Company

which toured extensively including a smash hit season at London's West End (winning 2 Olivier Awards) and Broadway, New York starring Sarah Snook. David was nominated for a Tony Award with Marg Horwell for Best Scenic Design of a Play for the Broadway production of *Dorian*, and won a Sydney Theatre Award for Best Stage Design of a Mainstage Production for *Dorian*. Video design credits include: *Idomeneo* (Opera Australia and Victorian Opera); *Rusalka* (The Opera Conference: West Australian Opera, Opera Australia, State Opera of South Australia, and Opera Queensland); *Oscar* (The Australian Ballet); *Dear Evan Hansen* (Michael Cassell Group and Sydney Theatre Company); *Kulka*, *Sandsong*, *Spirit*, *Knowledge Ground* (Bangarra Dance Theatre); *Breaking Glass* (Sydney Chamber Opera); *Winter's Journey* (Musica Viva). Other credits include: sound design *Playing Beatie Bow*, video and sound design *A Cheery Soul*, *The Wharf Revue* (from 2009-2018) (Sydney Theatre Company); *Green Park* for which he won a Sydney Theatre Award for Best Sound Design of a Mainstage Production, composer and sound designer *Superheroes*; composer, sound and video designer *First Love Is The Revolution* (Griffin Theatre Company); sound designer *Twelfth Night*, *The Lovers* (Bell Shakespeare); composer and sound designer for *Scenes From The Climate Era*, video designer *Blue*, sound designer *Into The Woods*, *At What Cost?* (Belvoir); video and sound design *The Gospel According To Paul* (Soft Tread).

Mark Thompson



Darwin born Mark Thompson has an extensive career as a theatre production designer and as a painter and ceramic sculptor.

Mark is also a successful sculptor with his work collected, published and represented in 25 State and public Art

Museums including the National Gallery, Canberra and the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney.

In 1984 he began designing for theatre and has worked across all art forms; opera, music theatre, circus, dance and theatre for the Adelaide Festival Centre, State Theatre Company of South Australia, State Opera of South Australia, National Institute of Circus Arts, The Hole in the Wall Theatre Company, Sydney Theatre Company, Ensemble Theatre Company, Bell Shakespeare, Monkey Baa Theatre Company,

Spare Parts Theatre Company and Christine Dunstan Productions.

His theatrical productions include: *Talk* (Sydney Theatre Company), the national tours of *13, 26, 52, 78* and *91 Storey Treehouse* (CDP), *By the Light of the Moon* and *Metamorphosis* (Opera Australia).

Mark continues to exhibit both painting and ceramic sculptor with regular solo exhibitions with Robin Gibson Gallery in Sydney.

Verity Hampson



Verity Hampson is an award-winning lighting and projection designer for theatre, dance, opera, film and television. Verity has worked with many of Australia's leading directors and choreographers including Sarah Goodes, Imara Savage, Judy Davis, Leticia Caceres, Lee Lewis, Gale

Edwards, Kate Champion, Meryl Tankard, Anne-Louise Sarkis, Stuart Maunder, Sam Strong, Declan Greene and Eamon Flack.

Verity's designs include: for Sydney Theatre Company, *Blackie Blackie Brown* (with Malthouse), *After Dinner*, *Machinal*, *Battle of Waterloo*, *Hamlet: Prince Of Skidmark*, *Little Mercy*, *Hamlet*; For La Boite, *One The Bear*, *Blackrock*, *La Voix Humane*; For Belvoir, *An Enemy Of The People*, *Sami In Paradise*, *The Drover's Wife*, *Faith Healer*, *Ruby's Wish*, *The Blind Giant Is Dancing*, *Ivanov*, *Is This Thing On?*, *Small And Tired*; For Griffin, *The Bleeding Tree*, *A Strategic Plan*, *The Turquoise Elephant*, *The Boys*, *The Floating World*; for Sydney Chamber Opera, *Fly Away Peter*, *In The Penal Colony*; for Sydney Dance Company, *New Breed* and *PPY17*; for Bell Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, *Literati*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; for Malthouse, *Fiery Maze*; for State Theatre Company of South Australia, Melbourne Theatre Company and Belvoir, *Faith Healer*.

For television, Verity was lighting director for ABC's *Live At The Basement* and *The Roast*; and *The Crown Prince Awards* for SBS. Verity's projection designs include: for Belvoir, Mark Colvin's *Kidney*, *The Blind Giant Is Dancing*; for Sydney Theatre Company, *Little Mercy*, *Before/After*, *Leviathan*, *Like A Fishbone*; for Griffin, *The Turquoise Elephant*, *Beached*; for Ensemble, *Liberty*, *Equality*, *Fraternity* (co-design) and *Great Falls*.

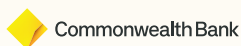
Verity won two Sydney Theatre Awards for Best Mainstage Lighting Design for her work on *Blackie Blackie Brown* and *Machinal* with Sydney Theatre Company and was co-nominated for Best Set Design. She was awarded the Mike Walsh Fellowship which took her to Broadway to work with projection designers 59 Productions.

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