

# q theatre: ANGELS IN AMERICA

## UNDERGROUND ANGELS

For the first time in 23 years, Melbourne audiences will have the chance to experience the full magnitude of Tony Kushner's ground-breaking masterpiece *Angels in America*.

Marking Melbourne's first independent presentation of both Part One – *Millennium Approaches* and Part Two – *Perestroika*, this daring, stripped back production is sure to be one of the theatrical events of the year, set against the raw backdrop of fortyfivedownstairs' basement theatre.

Gary Abrahams directs both parts, the first openly queer Jewish Director in Australia to do so, collaborating with Producer Cameron Lukey (following their successful partnership on last years *Resident Alien*, featuring Paul Capsis as Quentin Crisp) and a cast and creative team that have amassed a remarkable 38 Green Room Award nominations and 10 wins.

The cast includes Helen Morse (John, MTC), playing five roles that range for an aged Rabbi to Ethel Rosenberg; Brian Lipson (Anti Hamlet, Theatreworks) as Roy Cohn, his bucket list role; Emily Goddard as Harper Pitt, fresh off the success of *This is Eden* at fortyfivedownstairs; Grant Cartwright as Prior Walter (Mill on the Floss, Theatre Works; also appearing as Peter Allen in the upcoming Olivia Newton John telemovie), Simon Corfield as Louis Ironson (The Homosexuals, Malthouse and Griffin Theatre), Caleb Alloway (Home and Away and The History Boys, Opera House) as Joe Pitt, and Dushan Philips (Conviction, Darebin Arts) as Belize. In a second coming that reflects the "history repeating" relevance of play, Margaret Mills also joins the cast as The Angel, having played the role in the 1994 MTC premiere.

*"I think it's a testament to the power of the play that we have assembled such an extraordinary group of actors, all wanting to give themselves over to this mammoth project", says Abrahams. "We have also made an effort to cast several openly queer and/or Jewish actors to re-claim these characters."*

*"I'm very conscious of the place Angels holds in the zeitgeist at present, following recent productions at Belvoir in Sydney and Black Swan in Perth, and of course, the current production at The National Theatre in London. It's definitely Melbourne's turn, but I want to do it on our terms. We have such a vibrant and interesting independent scene, and this is a chance to take it in another direction. Raw bodies in space, raw performances, a very physical re-telling of the story. My vision is a bit darker."*

For Lukey, there was no better venue for this vision, "fortyfivedownstairs has a character all of it's own. A darkness and a broken down beauty that is ideal for *Angels*. It's been a fantasy for several years to see it staged at fortyfive, and reading a recent article about the mentorship Roy Cohn gave his young protégé Donald Trump, pushed it over the line into reality."

*"It's a very political play", says Abrahams. "It grapples with huge ideas and questions. Over the past two decades, we have seen a more inclusive, progressive way of life emerge. Now, suddenly we've come full circle. Conservative governments are in power, the real threat of nuclear war is back, gay men and women in parts of the world are literally being eradicated, the environmental movement is being shunted. The world is in a very dark place and Angels In America speaks to that. What strikes me now when reading it, and what is desperately needed, is its message of hope."*

*"We are all itching to begin. To borrow a phrase from the play, "The Great Work Begins!"* Director Gary Abrahams



Cameron Lukey & Dirty Pretty Theatre present  
ANGELS IN AMERICA  
Part One – *Millennium Approaches* & Part Two – *Perestroika*  
[www.angelsinamerica.com.au](http://www.angelsinamerica.com.au)  
fortyfivedownstairs – 45 Flinders Lane, Melbourne  
Tickets from \$35 / Bookings: [www.fortyfivedownstairs.com](http://www.fortyfivedownstairs.com)  
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