

# BIOGRAPHIES

## CLARE MENDES      Playwright & Producer

Clare's novels include *Drift Street*, *The Curtain Raiser*, *A Race Across Burning Soil* and *The Unvoiced Consonant*. Her radio plays have been produced by ABC Radio National. *The Agreement*, her first full-length stage play, was performed at La Mama Courthouse in October 2015 and her play *Trash Goes Down The River* was performed at Bluestone Church Arts Space in June 2017. *A Flower for Moses* was presented at Gasworks in May 2021. In May 2023 her play *Skating in the Clouds* was further developed with dramaturgy and workshopping through the generous support of the Malcolm Robertson Foundation, and will be presented at Theatre Works from 4th - 14th Dec 2024 as part of their *Season 2024*. *Skating in the Clouds* is the first in a series of three large-scale feminist plays that Clare will write. In August 2024 Clare was excited to complete the second play in this series, a dystopic fantasy called 'Sin Hombres'.

As a producer, Clare has produced MWT's annual *Season of New Work* since 2015. with recent theatrical seasons including *The Melbourne Monologues*, *Six Degrees in Melbourne* and *Stark. Dark. Albert Park (2018)*, *Beachside Stories* and *Daring Dog Monologues (2019)*, the double-bill season *The Metropolis Monologues & The City Park Plays (2020)*, *The Best, The Fairest, The First (2021)*, *Tales from the Jetty*, and *Hostage (2022)*. In May 2023 she produced *The Critical Marriage* and in August 2023 she produced *How to Save a Tree*, both presented at Gasworks Arts Park. From 9th - 17th August 2024 she will produce *JENNIE! Rebel. Radical. Revolutionary* by B. W. Shearer, for Gasworks' Arts Park's *Moving Parts* season.

Clare began her career as an advertising copywriter before working as a storyliner and scriptwriter for the TV soap "Neighbours". She was Executive Director of the Fellowship of Australian Writers for over a decade. Clare has an Honours degree in Literature, is completing a Master of Theatre and Performance and in April 2022 completed a peer mentorship with TNA's 'Creating Out Loud' program. She is the recipient of an Angus & Robertson Fiction Prize, an Asialink Literature Fellowship, an Ian Reed mentorship, a Varuna residency and a Malcolm Robertson Foundation grant.

## EMILY FARRELL      Director

Emily is a member of Melbourne Writers' Theatre. An emerging director, Emily began her theatrical journey with a starring role in Melbourne Theatre Company's *Festen* (Little Girl), directed by Simon Phillips (2006). She expanded her skills work with television roles (*Neighbours*, *Triple Zero Heroes*) before completing formal training with a Bachelor of Acting for Stage and Screen (Federation University), Alexander Technique classes with Sarah Cathcart, and mentoring from Damian Walshe-Howling, Emily Joy, and Rosie Traynor. As an actor, Emily has brought her art to life in *The Cuddle Parlour* (2021), *Sprout* (2021), *The weight of dreams* (2022) and *The Wind and the Willows* (2022 - 2023). In 2022 Emily founded her own collective, Five by Five Theatre, for which she has written and produced two brand new works: *Broken Record* (2022) and *The Charade* (2023), both of which received excellent reviews. Since her directorial debut, *Ohio!* (2022), Emily has further developed her craft through involvement in a range of new play developments, including *The Stage Door Readings*, presented by MWT at Theatre Works in December 2023. She is very excited to return to Theatre Works in December 2024 to direct the new MWT production 'Skating in the Clouds'.

**KATRINA MATHERS**                      **Lead Actor**                      **'Summer'**

Katrina's first key role was playing streetkid 'Mezza', the lead actress in a Channel 7 telemovie called *Economy Class* by Kevin Carlin and Stephen Luby. She was one of the regulars on Channel 10's *The Wedge*, playing Sandra Sultry, the newsreader parody and an inappropriate shopping-centre spruiker. Katrina also co-created, co-wrote and performed alongside the wonderful Curry brothers in the ABC TV comedy series *Flipside*. She appeared as the Nurse in the original 'Saw' short film by Leigh Whannell and James Wan, and has played lead guest roles in a host of Aussie TV shows including *Wilfred*, *City Homicide*, *All Saints*, *Blue Heelers*, *Prank Patrol* and others. A Moosehead Award recipient for the comic two-hander stage play *Footy Chicks* at the Melbourne International Comedy Festival, Katrina is also a regular cast ensemble member for the weekly ABC 774 Melbourne Radio serial *The Breakfast Shift*. In December 2024 she will take to the stage in the lead role of 'Summer' in *Skating in the Clouds*. [katrinamathers.com/actor](http://katrinamathers.com/actor)

**REBECCA MORTON**                      **Lead Actor**                      **'Autumn'**

Rebecca trained in Music Theatre at the WA Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA).. She has worked nationally and internationally in opera, theatre, musical theatre, circus, Shakespeare, theatre in education and in 60s rock 'n' roll. She has toured her own shows, including *The Sparrow and the Showgirl*, *Both Sides Now* and *C'est Si Bon*. In recent years Rebecca has played a great variety of characters of different nationalities with companies including Stage Art, Melbourne Shakespeare Company and the Bloomsday Group, and has been working in the development of new plays and musicals, including *Paper Stars* and *Thread Bare*. Currently completing a Masters of Theatre (Dramaturgy) at VCA, Rebecca is also a trained practitioner of Breathwork.. For Melbourne Writers' Theatre, Rebecca has performed in *Six Degrees at a Hot Melbourne Market* (Gasworks, 2019) and in *The Stage Door Readings* (Theatre Works, 2022). In *Skating in the Clouds* she will play the role of 'Autumn'. [rebeccamorton.net.au/theatre](http://rebeccamorton.net.au/theatre)

**SHAMITA SIVABALAN**                      **Supporting Actor**                      **'Toby' and 'Earth Being #1'**

Shamita is a Melbourne-based creative and model with a wide range of performance skills. An accomplished dancer, she excels in physical/action-based roles. Shamita has appeared in a range of plays presented at Theatre Works, including *Let Men Tremble* (2020), *Ring Ring* (2021), *Citizen Theatre* (2021) and *The Marvellous Life of Carlo Gatti* (2022). In 2023 she performed in *Nosferatu* at Malthouse Theatre. When not choreographing or performing, Shamita spends her time teaching dance to both adults and children. She is excited about the challenge of playing two very different characters in *Skating in the Clouds*. [www.backstage.com/u/shamita-siva/](http://www.backstage.com/u/shamita-siva/)

**EL KILEY**                                      **Supporting Actor**                      **'Earth Being #2'**

El Kiley is an English/ Australian actor based in Naarm. Graduating with a Bachelor of Acting for Stage and Screen from Federation University Arts Academy in 2020, she has performed with the Australian Shakespeare Company as Rosalind in *'As You Like It'* (2022), at Theatreworks in Wildefang Productions' *'The Marvellous Life of Carlo Gatti'* (2022), with Baggage Productions' in their *'Mad Women Monologues'* (2022) and in Five by Five Theatre's *'Ohio!'* (2023). Her screen credits include *'Unpalatable'*, a mini-series created by Isabelle Stoker and GPOY Productions (2023). A tap and jazz dancer and mezzo-soprano, El is looking forward to showcasing her skills in *Skating in the Clouds*.