



PLAYHOUSE MELBOURNE ARTS CENTRE
Thursday January 21– Sunday February 14

Bookings: www.artscentremelbourne.com.au or www.ticketmaster.com.au

On Sale Friday August 7

Five years after the runaway success of SONGS FOR NOBODIES, Joanna Murray-Smith, Bernadette Robinson and Simon Phillips team up once again with PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE a brilliant one woman musical theatre piece returning to Melbourne on Thursday January 21, 2016 for a limited season at the Playhouse, Arts Centre.

Bernadette Robinson's renowned power of transformation in evoking the great divas of our time is the stuff of legend. Her sell out one woman shows include You Might As Well Live, Calling All Angels and Patsy Cline: Her Songs, Her Story. In PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, audiences are treated to a new collection of iconic singers whose relationships with the White House spanned concert recitals to friendships, Presidential endorsements to tabloid speculation.

With Bernadette Robinson's unique talent in mind, Joanna Murray-Smith has created a seamless narrative entwined with music that blends show business with political history. Pennsylvania Avenue channels the voices of Barbra Streisand, Eartha Kitt, Sarah Vaughan, Diana Ross and more, as a White House aide reminisces on 40 years in the halls of power.

The final box is packed and the door is open, but Harper is not quite ready to leave. Having worked in the East Wing since the first weeks of the Kennedy presidency there are just too many memories holding her back. For 40 years, she watched history being made. And listened to it being made too – all those singers who sang for the President, defining the times while creating their own unforgettable moment.

Joanna Murray-Smith has achieved international success as an Australian

*playwright. Her work has been nominated for many awards including the Olivier Award for Best Comedy for *The Female of the Species*. Her other plays include *Switzerland* (for which she has been nominated for a 2015 Helpmann Award), *Fury*, *True Minds*, *Day One - A Hotel Evening*, *The Gift*, *Rockabye*, *Ninety*, *Bombshells*, *Honour*, *Redemption*, *Love Child* and the smash hit *Songs For Nobodies*. She has been awarded three Premier's Literary Awards for Drama, the Braille Book of the year Award, Edinburgh Fringe First Award 2004, and the London Theatregoers Choice Award. She was also nominated for the 2008 Miles Franklin Award and was nominated for the 2004 International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award.*

*"After the success of *Songs for Nobodies*, I was thrilled to have the chance to revisit working with this fantastic team of people and to once again have the chance to write a piece of theatre for the extraordinary talents of Bernadette. Her voice expands to fulfill every ambition my pen sets for her. It was a joy to see the audience rise to their feet night after night with Penn Ave as they did for *Songs*" said Joanna Murray-Smith*

Simon Phillips was Artistic Director of the Melbourne Theatre Company from 2000-11. His directing credits range from contemporary and Shakespearean classics to musicals to opera. He has directed works by most of the great contemporary writers: Albee, Beckett, Brecht, Churchill, Hare, McDonagh, Orton, Shepherd, and Stoppard. He has also directed the premieres of many new works by leading Australian writers, including David Williamson, Hannie Rayson, Matt Cameron, Stephen Sewell and of course, Joanna Murray-Smith.

Among his many musical credits, his production of *Priscilla Queen of the Desert*, the Musical had seasons on the West End and Broadway and is still touring internationally, while his Australian production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Love Never Dies* was released internationally on DVD. He has received seven Green Room awards and four Helpmann Awards.

"These are two women I just love being in the room with. The poetic, poignant and witty prose of Joanna Murray-Smith and the astonishing vocal virtuosity of Bernadette Robinson those kind of treats don't come along all that often. And then of course there are all the other women you end up having in the room as well: Marilyn Munroe, Maria Callas, Eartha Kitt, Peggy Lee, Aretha Franklin...it's just a blast."

PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE is a Melbourne Theatre Company production. The Australian tour is produced by Harley Medcalf of Duet Productions. His recent productions and tours include: *Songs for Nobodies*, *Billy Connolly-High Horse Tour*, *Suzi Quatro the Final Tour*, *John Waters in Lennon Through A Glass Onion*, and upcoming *Diego El Cigala*, *The Mentalist-Lior Suchard* and *Burn the Floor-World Tour*.

Medcalf says -"I was so moved by Bernadette Robinson in "*Songs for Nobodies*" I simply could not resist **PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE**"

"Brings the crowd to its feet" Herald Sun
"A remarkable performance by Robinson" Adelaidenow.com.au
"One of the great sequels of the stage" aussietheatre.com.au

Download production photos

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/9cqu9cijmgxtpb/AACItROCxGGrwKBsM2YOAlrPa?dl=0>

For further information, interviews etc please contact

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