

# CASTLEMAINE STATE FESTIVAL

## 2021



19 MARCH-4 APRIL



## Cafe Cantata

### Mark Penzak: Playwright's notes

Cafe Cantata began as something quite different - a one man performance over a cup of coffee. I asked Andrée Cozens if she'd compose the music and she mentioned that J.S.Bach wrote a comic operetta, Coffee Cantata, that'd also been performed in a coffee shop. That comment shifted the performance into an unexpected direction and ultimately took us to where we are now.

In Bach's work, Herr Schlendrian advises his daughter Lieschen to give up her three-cup-a-day coffee habit. When she refuses, he threatens to take away her meals, clothes, and finally prevent her from marrying. At that Lieschen has a change of heart and complies - except that she outsmarts him by ensuring that her suitors agree she can drink coffee before she'll consider them. Thus Lieschen obtains her husband and keeps her habit. Andrée and I wondered though what might've happened if Lieschen had acquiesced? Giving up coffee by itself isn't such a big deal but could that have marked the point where her father would have, bit by bit, taken control of her life and ended her independence?

On the 'road of life' it's easy to spot cross-roads where life changing decisions are made. Harder to spot are the side paths we can step on, often without realizing, that carry us gradually but irresistibly from our intentions. In our play, this is exactly what's happened to Lieschen. A decision she made casually in her youth diverted her from her dreams. Now at the time of her retirement, she's given the opportunity to go back and try again. However, is a road selected in our youth the best road for someone who's past their youth? Is it foolish to clutch to old dreams, or more foolish to let them go?

### Andrée Cozens: Composer's Notes

There's an alchemy that exists when spoken words and music are combined. Words have their own cadence, rise and fall of inflection, tone, and phrasing, which music can transform, support, enhance, or even interrupt.

The question that intrigues me, both as a singer and composer is 'What is the function of music in a play?' What does music add, when the script is already there and the story is already told? After giving years of consideration to this curly question, my only answer now is: "I feel a song coming on!"

I used to play a game with myself, while at the kitchen sink, watching my children in the garden. Merely by changing the music I was hearing, I could change my perception of the mood, just as in a movie. What was happening out there in the garden? Innocent games? A moody reminiscence? A sinister mystery thriller? A dystopian sci-fi?!

Writing Cafe Cantata with Mark has coincided with the fallow time of Covid. Loss and longing have been a conscious part of our lives. Choice, regrets and priorities have become somewhat clearer, even if they are no more achievable than before. In a sense, Cafe Cantata reflects some aspects of my life as a musician and a mother, but in another, it is nothing like my own life. Reality, and poetry alike, lie somewhere in the spaces between these two truths, and in that space between those truths, we find the music.

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### **Mark Penzak Co-creator/playwright/director**

Mark has been creating theatre for over thirty years, working across genres and for children and adults. He enjoys stories that lend themselves to non-naturalistic forms. His plays often feature devices such as puppetry, interactive sets or for Coffee Cantata, music. The attraction isn't an escape into fantasy but rather that fantasy becomes a viewing platform to survey reality. Equally, Mark also likes performances that are just plain old fun. He's a great believer that an audience laughing together is inherently healing and a reminder of our shared humanity. Mark works with sculptor Eliza-Jane Gilchrist under the company Such As They Are to create events where the focus is shared between the spoken word and symbolic elements. Our most recent production, Once and For All, occurs inside cemeteries where we collaborate with the community to explore their relationship to the dead, and through that, the acknowledgment of our mortality.

[www.markpenzak.com](http://www.markpenzak.com)    [www.suchastheyare.com](http://www.suchastheyare.com)



### **Andrée Cozens – Co-creator, Performer, Composer:**

Andrée is a singer and composer of music and sound design for theatre, animation and voice. Her composition work has been featured in the Castlemaine State Festival: Spookmaster written by Mark Penzak, and Maia Takes Flight, Signal Screens Commissions Melbourne, and touring productions for children's and community theatre: Rendezvous, Baby It's Cold Outside and The Feast of Fools. In 2017 Andrée performed at the Hooyong Arts Festival South Korea: I Am Desert featuring her compositions derived from the birdsong of the Diamantina River in Queensland. In 2020 Andrée collaborated with Mark Penzak to create Cafe Cantata, a reimagining of Bach's Coffee Cantata.

<https://soundcloud.com/ony3>



### **Clare Shamier - Actor:**

Clare is a Castlemaine based actor who has worked film, television and stage. She has worked in several independent productions including Zen Zen Zo (Brisbane) and Perth based company Hunted Interactive. Clare has most recently been in the Castlemaine Theatre Company such as Deborah Oswald's 'Peach Season' (2016), William Shakespeare's 'As You Like It' (2018) and most recently, David Carlin's 'Frankenstein's Children' (2019). She has also performed with the Red Room Theatre in their 2018 production of 'Abattoir Noir' and with theatre company Such As They Are in 'Cultural Pharmacy' as part of the Artlands conference and cultural program in 2018.



### **Kiara Nickson – Actor, Dancer:**

Kiara has trained and performed in the theatrical arts for 15 years. She has attended institutions including the Ministry of Dance and Transit Dance. She has a great love and passion for telling stories with the body and specialises in contemporary dance, as well as physical theatre. Kiara has performed with the Victorian State Ballet in 2017 and obtained her Cert IV in Dance, and Dance Teaching and Management. As an actor, Kiara has completed the foundation course at The Howard Fine Acting Studio and has trained in the Suzuki method. She has performed roles including Iphengia in 'Iphengia in Aulis' directed by Robert Meldrum and Brutus in 'Julius Caesar' directed by Harry Haynes. During the lockdown, Kiara performed in the zoom-adapted play, 'The Space Between Raindrops' written and directed by Joachim Matschoss. Kiara is presently studying at the National Theatre Drama School, where she received the W.P Carr award in 2020. She will graduate with an Advanced Diploma in Acting in November 2021.

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### Zoey Schmitt - Choreography

Zoey has a lifelong relationship with movement of the body. From a dance background, she studied at the Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School, the Australian Ballet School, then progressing to a full time position as a dancer with the Australian Ballet Company. During her ballet career, as a dancer Zoey was part of some wonderful choreographic pieces. Namely the creation of Graeme Murphy's Swan Lake. Also working with other prominent Australian choreographers such as Stanton Welch and Stephen Baynes. After a while, a chronic injury curbed her abilities and her interests were pulled in other directions. One being Pilates Instruction and rehabilitation of the body. Zoey then moved to Castlemaine, where she then started teaching dance at Over the Moon Yoga and Dance Studios. Zoey has also conducted dance classes for people with a disability for members of Windarring in Kyneton and Castlemaine.



### Scott Sanders - Sound Engineer:

A classically-trained composer, rock/pop/electronic producer, contemporary performer, choral conductor and audio engineer, Scott has a rich and eclectic background reflecting his wide range of tastes and interests. Parallel to this, Scott has combined his flair for administration and his education in music technology to become a successful music event manager and arts administrator, applying his extensive education and experience to support and facilitate other artists and musicians in the expression of their own arts practice. Scott currently hosts Open Mic Castlemaine's weekly livestream programme showcasing local performers (Monday 7pm on Facebook). He rediscovers Australia's long-lost music culture on local radio station MAIN fm with his show My 12 Inch Disc (Wednesday 10pm, 94.9 FM), and curates a programme of artistic music at the Northern Arts Hotel (359 Barker St, Castlemaine). You can see the full range of projects - and listen to his compositions - at his website [thehouseofandersen.com](http://thehouseofandersen.com)

### Thanks & Acknowledgements:

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