

A

THEATRE REPUBLIC PRODUCTION  
PRESENTED IN ASSOCIATION WITH ADELAIDE FESTIVAL CENTRE

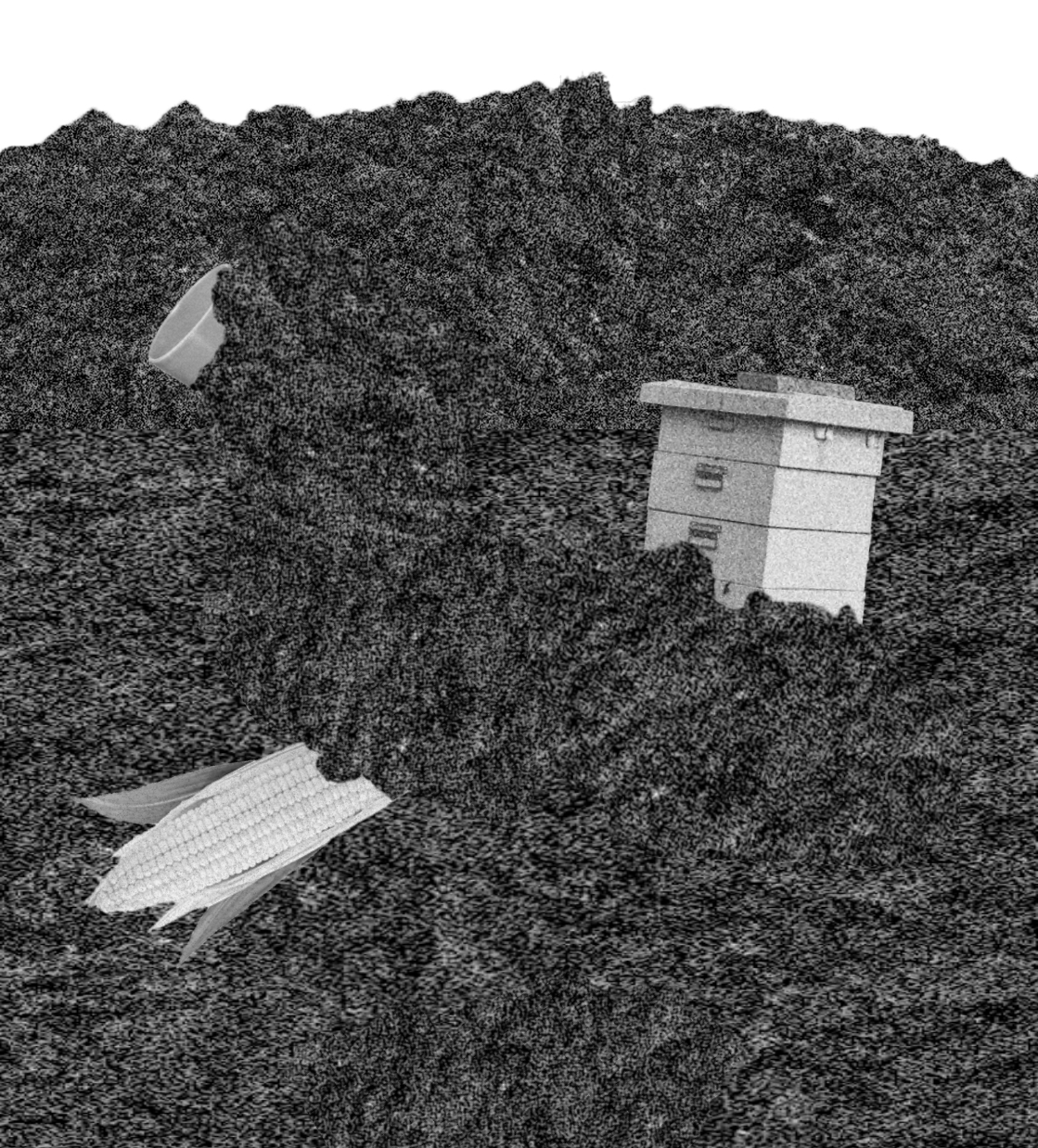


# THE GARDEN

A NEW PLAY BY EMILY STEEL  
DIRECTED BY COREY MCMAHON



11 - 14 OCTOBER  
SPACE THEATRE, ADELAIDE FESTIVAL CENTRE



Theatre Republic is a new writing theatre company working on Kaurna Land. We pay respects to the Kaurna people, the traditional custodians of the land on which we live, create and share our stories.

Always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

# THE GARDEN

Writer:	Emily Steel
Director:	Corey McMahon
Designer:	Meg Wilson
Lighting Designer:	Chris Petridis
Composer:	Jason Sweeney
Sound Designer/ Operator:	James Oborn
Production Manager:	Isabella Strada
Cast:	Rashidi Edward & Elizabeth Hay
Stage Manager:	Nam Nguyen
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Company Manager:	Manda Flett
Incoming Producer:	Annabelle Matheson



Theatre Republic would like to thank Arts South Australia, The FWH Foundation, John Irving, Diané Ranck, Lesley Forwood, the team at Adelaide Festival Centre, Windmill Theatre Company, The Mill, our board, Zoë Barry, Anthony Nocera, our generous donors, our audiences and our community of artists and supporters for helping us make *The Garden*.





# FROM THE WRITER

## EMILY STEEL

Where did *The Garden* come from? A few different places. I'd written a short piece for Theatre Republic's first *FUTURE:PRESENT*, about a middle-class, environmentally conscious character tying himself in knots trying to be seen to do the right thing.

One of the things he did was grow organic vegetables in a community garden. And then Corey and I got talking about climate change and inequality, and whether there was a way of looking at these big issues, theatrically, in a more human way. What if, we thought, we used that community garden idea, and put a couple of very different people in that idealised space?

Lizzie and Rashidi were cast in the show before their characters were created and before I had any real idea of what the plot was going to be, and in late 2022 the four of us spent a week in development, talking about racism and sexism and class and community, discussing our own backgrounds and experiences. It wasn't comfortable. This play has never been comfortable. It was uncomfortable to write and if I've done it properly it will be uncomfortable to watch.

I'm enormously grateful to Corey and everyone at Theatre Republic for being courageous and supportive and staging a play that looks at some of the stuff we'd often rather not look at. I'm grateful to Rashidi and Lizzie for taking on these flawed characters, for talking through the tricky things when they came up, for reading early drafts and encouraging me to go further.

And I'm grateful to you, for coming to see it.

Hopefully it will make you laugh, and sometimes gasp, and leave the theatre thinking about it. Maybe you will disagree with the person next to you about what you've just seen. I wish we all felt more able to disagree with each other without putting up walls. Thank you to the creative and production teams for making *The Garden* happen (especially the next-to-impossible parts), and thanks to Chris and Frank and Ivor, as ever, for putting up with me.

**Emily Steel**  
Writer

# FROM THE DIRECTOR

## COREY MCMAHON

This is the second play Theatre Republic has developed with Emily Steel. Our first outing, *How Not To Make It In America* was such a great experience that we immediately started talking about the next one! As we often do – over a cup of tea and a baked item (the baked item is usually for me) - we started talking about big ideas, big themes. Climate change, global inequality, colonisation, racism, sexism, privilege. I was taken (if you can put it that way) by COP 27, the world climate change conference, and how the world's biggest emitters were essentially blocking smaller, so-called 3rd world countries (countries that will be disproportionately impacted by the changing climate), from actively participating in talks about their own future. Emily was interested in global inequality, racism and sexism and how these themes intersect.

It was very exciting. But surely, Emily couldn't fit it all into a one-hour play?

She did and the result is *The Garden*. A big little play.

Using the metaphor of a community garden, Emily explores all of these big ideas, but does so by creating a world we recognise and populating it with characters we know.

Good playwrights do more with less. And that is certainly the case with Emily's writing. It is sparse, but like the iceberg floating in the ocean, there is a huge chunk of complex thoughts and feelings underneath. Emily's characters often say and do things that, in the moment, make no sense. They are, after all, human. Her writing is acutely observed, witty and complex. *The Garden* written with a wry sense of humour and an unquestionable truth. We recognise the people in her plays because, very likely, we are those people.

Thank you to everyone who has made this production possible. The work of Theatre Republic relies on a committed group of artists and creatives, all going above and beyond to make it happen. Big love to our cast, Rashidi Edward and Elizabeth Hay who have created two wonderful, deeply flawed, complex and very human characters. I would also like to thank our principal donors, Roger and Helen Salkeld, Lesley Forwood, John Irving and Diané Ranck, who played a big role in helping us bring this big little play to the stage.

**Corey McMahon**  
Artistic Director



**EMILY STEEL**  
Writer



**COREY MCMAHON**  
Director



**RASHIDI EDWARD**  
Actor - Adam



**ELIZABETH HAY**  
Actor - Evelyn



**MEG WILSON**  
Designer



**CHRIS PETRIDIS**  
Lighting Designer





**JASON SWEENEY**  
Composer



**JAMES OBORN**  
Sound Designer/  
Operator



**NAM NGUYEN**  
Stage Manager



**ISABELLA STRADA**  
Production Manager







We would like to thank our community of donors who helped us grow *The Garden*:

Chris Drummond and Suzannah Sweeney, Margo Hill-Smith, Joanne Clements, Catherine Bauer, Connor Reidy, Phillip Kavanagh, FWH Foundation, John Wells, Emma and Stephen Beech Sheehan, Sonia Laidlaw, Alex Hayley, Marlene Ower, Rob Brookman, Greg Mackie, Riana Chakravarti, John Edge, Jean Matthews, Katrina Falkner, Kate Prescott, Tom Bastians, Carol Young, Wendy Edwards, Shelley Lush, Matthew Briggs, Ash Baghurst, Jacqui Yelland, Diané Ranck, Helen Salkeld, Sam Harvey, Kym Mackenzie, Samantha Jersmann, Peter McMahon and Anonymous x4

We would also like to thank our board for their ongoing support of ambitious South Australian theatre:

Terence Crawford (Chair), John Wells (Deputy Chair), Catherine Bauer, Staten Evans, Liz Gogler and Daniel Stirling-Brown



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