



Front row centre

Sophie Hensser

On her first theatrical experience: "I was a toddler. My mum was doing a production of [Neil Dunn's] *Steaming* in Adelaide. All the cast have to strip naked. It's quite a confronting play. I used to sleep in the dressing room, and one night I woke up and heard people in distress. I walked out on stage in the middle of the performance and had to be pulled off by the assistant director."

Silent Disco SBW Stables Theatre (Griffin). (02 8019 0292 www.griffintheatre.com.au). Until 4 Jun. \$28-\$47

I Only Came to Use the Phone

A chilling tragedy of errors comes to Darlinghurst Theatre

Maria's car breaks down in the middle of Spain's Monegros Desert. She's picked up by a bus driver, falls asleep on the bus – and comes to in a mental institution for female patients. By some sort of bureaucratic accident, Maria is locked up.

I Only Came to Use the Phone, a short story by magic realist writer Gabriel Garcia Marquez, will be retold at the Darlinghurst Theatre this month. It's not your typical adaptation though: rather than transforming the original text into a play script, director Netta Yashchin is taking the story from the page to the stage word-for-word. "I got fed up with dramatic texts of plays," Yashchin says. "I always felt they were missing out on the richness of literature. I didn't want to change a word in the story – I wanted to show the audience everything that happens in the same detail Marquez uses. It's like a piece of embroidery, very interweaved and interconnected."

All the performers, including Annabelle Stephenson as Maria, will narrate the action one second, then physically embody their characters the next – 36 characters in all. "This

form of theatre is extremely emotionally taxing and tiring and requires a lot of technical work," Stephenson says. "I have to sort of disassociate myself with the character and see it from a bird's eye perspective."

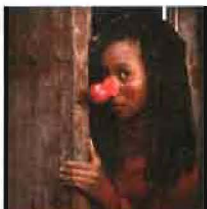
It's also an incredibly dark story – made all the more powerful, Yashchin says, because it's not graphic or explicit. "Moments are symbolised and sublimated," she says. "The audience will be left to linger and figure it out on their own, in their gut and stomach."

Stephenson agrees. "We're trying to leave the audience thinking, 'Wow, this can happen to anyone.'" *Daryn King*

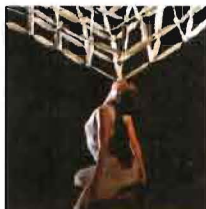
I Only Came to Use the Phone Darlinghurst Theatre, 19 Greenknowe Ave, Potts Point 2011. (02 8356 9987 www.darlinghursttheatre.com). 28 Apr–29 May, Tue–Sat 8pm; Sun 5pm; Sat 14, 21 & 28 May 3pm. \$27–\$37

May shows

For more plays, musicals, opera and dance performances, head to timeout.com/sydney/theatre



As You Like It
CarriageWorks
Kate Gaul directs Shakespeare: four weddings, a forest and a girl pretending to be a guy pretending to be a girl. 245 Wilson St, Eveleigh 2015. (www.carriageworks.com.au). Until 7 May, Wed–Sat 10.30am & 7.30pm. \$25–\$33.



Connected
Sydney Theatre
Dancers construct and interact with a kinetic sculpture in Chunky Move's ambitious new work. 22 Hickson Rd, Walsh Bay 2000. (www.sydneytheatre.org.au). 10–14 May, Wed–Fri 8pm; Sat 2pm & 8pm. \$30–\$60.



Capture the Flag
Riverside Theatres
Hitler Youth drama written and directed by Toby Schmitz. Church St, Parramatta 2150. (www.riversideparramatta.com.au). 24–28 May, Tue & Wed 7.30pm; Thu 6.30pm; Fri & Sat 7.30pm; Sat 2.15pm. \$33–\$45.



The Kiss
Belvoir Downstairs
Short stories by Peter Goldsworthy, Anton Chekhov, Guy de Maupassant and Kate Chopin, all called 'The Kiss', staged word-for-word. 25 Belvoir St, Surry Hills 2010. (www.belvoir.com.au). 12 May–5 Jun, Various times. \$32–\$42.



Pictures of Bright Lights
Old Fitzroy Theatre
Fresh from her turn in *Speaking in Tongues*, Caroline Craig stars in a tender story of mother and child. 129 Dowling St, Woolloomooloo 2011. (www.rocksurfers.org). 4–28 May, Tue–Sat 8pm; Sat 2pm. \$21–\$33.



Smoke & Mirrors
Seymour Centre
Last chance to catch the Sydney Festival favourite. Cnr Cleveland St & City Rd, Chippendale 2050. (www.sydnev.edu.au/seymour). 4–14 May, Wed & Thu 8pm; Fri & Sat 7pm & 9.30pm; Sun 6pm & 8.30pm. \$65–\$70.