

Finding the Boy Beyond the Rainbow

Rod Anderson



Rod Anderson is back and this time it's all about him! After years of directing and creating shows for others this youthful 79-year-old performer is taking centre stage with his new work *Finding the Boy Beyond the Rainbow*.

As a seventeen-year-old, Rod's life was changed by his attendance at Judy Garland's famously ill-fated Melbourne concert. As a closeted gay boy, he worshipped the troubled star. Her disastrous performance that night, a victim of alcohol and pills and an unforgiving audience, caused him to retreat into a shocked denial of who he was and how he should live his life.

This new one-man show is the story of growing up in the 50s and 60s and negotiating a hostile society and its limitations. He claims to this day that it was the "Magic of Musicals" that kept him sane and able to carry on, so this memoir is filled with the songs that typified the era and inspired him ultimately to be himself.

Part nostalgia, part camp and deeply felt it is a show about the search for self and identity and how they were enacted by a young theatre performer.

Writer and performer | Rod Anderson

Director | John O'Hara

Director | Annette Downs

Dramaturg | Ben Winspear

Musical Director | Amanda Hodder

Sound & Lighting | GK Productions

Rod Anderson | Writer and Performer



Rod has worked extensively throughout his life as a theatre and television performer, writer, director and producer. He toured nationally in many musicals through the 60s and 70s as well as spending several years performing with The Melbourne Theatre Company.

As a director he was a founding member of the Victorian State Opera directing both traditional and new operas. He created original works for Melbourne's Malthouse Theatre and a number of shows which toured Australia and to the Edinburgh and Adelaide Fringes. His rewrite of *On Our Selection*, also directed by him, won five awards at the Theatre Council of Tasmania Awards including Best Play.

Rod has been in demand as a performer in the recent Australian Musical Theatre Festivals and was featured in the plays *Frida and Derek* for the Ten Days on the Island Festival and *Do Not Go Gentle* for the Back in Business Festival

Since settling in Tasmania 15 years ago, his passionate enthusiasm for the arts led him to a number of Tasmanian Arts Board appointments including the Theatre Royal, Terrapin and Contemporary Art Tasmania.

John O'Hara | Director



John O'Hara has become a well-known and popular Tasmanian identity. One of Australia's most versatile and in demand performers, he currently plays Annas in the Australian anniversary production of *Jesus Christ Superstar*. He is known for his work on radio as a regular presenter for ABC including as a popular ABC Hobart presenter.

Hailing from Perth and a graduate of WAAPA, John earned critical acclaim for his portrayal of Dr Frank N. Furter in *The Rocky Horror Show* at the Theatre Royal. Most recently he played Phil Spector/Terry Britten Australia wide in the original Australian company of *Tina - The Tina Turner Musical*.

John is an established and sought after cabaret artist receiving critical acclaim for his self-penned solo works. #VAL - *A Campfire Kiki With Mother* consistently earns 5 star reviews and continues to play sellout seasons and festivals nationwide.

His wide experience makes him an ideal Director for Rod Anderson's "much more than a cabaret" vision for this production of *Finding The Boy Beyond the Rainbow*. On top of everything, John is a popular celebrant of marriages and married Rod and his late partner Craig at MONA in 2023!

Annette Downs | Director



Annette Downs started life as a dancer, became Artistic Director of Terrapin, General Manager of Is Theatre, and has just ended 17 years as Senior Producer at Performing Lines Tasmania. In these roles she has created a legacy of new Tasmanian performance as a director, dramaturg, producer and mentor. Few single people have had the kind of influence she has on the creation of boundary defying new Tasmanian performance works.

She has inspired and directed countless theatre works in Tasmania and recently was honoured for her contribution to Theatre Australia-wide by receiving the prestigious Creative Australia Award for Theatre.

Significantly, she convened and ran the development workshop where Rod first, tentatively, put forward his idea to write *Finding the Boy Beyond the Rainbow*. Her inspiration and constant support has been a crucial element in the development of this work.

Dramaturg | Ben Winspear



A native Tasmanian, Ben has recently returned to Tasmania where he has founded Archipelago Productions, based in Hobart.

For them he has directed *Venus and Adonis*, *The Masque of the Red Death*, *The Bleeding Tree*, and *The Maids*, as well as translating and directing Schubert's *Winterreise*. Most recently he directed a blockbuster production of *Women of Troy* to universal acclaim.

Previously, he has been a resident Director for Sydney Theatre Company where he steered and co-directed new productions. Ben has tirelessly supported and contributed to the development of *Finding the Boy Beyond the Rainbow*. It would not exist without him.

Amanda Hodder | Musical Director & Accompanist



Amanda has worked as accompanist, vocal coach, pianist and music director with Opera Australia, OzOpera, VCA, Opera Queensland, Adelaide Cabaret Festival, Australian Musical Theatre Festival, Ten Days on the Island, Mona Foma and the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra.

In 2021 Amanda collaborated with countertenor Nicholas Tolputt, director Benjamin Winspear and cinematographer Martin McGrath to create an immersive experience/performance of Schubert's *Winterreise*, which resulted in a sell-out season and the Musical Theatre Judges' Award from the Tasmanian Theatre Awards in 2022.

Amanda was the Musical Director for Rod Anderson's sell-out Festival of Voices' Cabaret, *Let's Hear it for the Ladies* in 2024.

She is currently developing, *Rumpel* a much-anticipated new Australian opera with Nicholas Tolputt.

THEATRE ROYAL

RAWspace

Finding the Boy Beyond the Rainbow was developed with the generous support of the RAWspace initiative of the Theatre Royal. This program with its offering of theatre space and workshop support has become a vital step in the creation of many new works by local writers, producers and performers. Rod and the creative team are immensely grateful for both this opportunity and other ongoing ways in which the Theatre Royal has made this production possible.

theatreroyal.com.au/rawspace
