“From distant climes, o’er wide spread seas we come,
(Though not with much éclat, or beat of drum)
True patriots all; for be it understood,
We left our country for our country’s good.”‡

Our Country’s Good

February 11 - 14, 1999
Mendelssohn Theatre
Our Country's Good

by Timberlake Wertenbaker

based upon the novel The Playmaker by Thomas Keneally

Setting:
Sydney, Australia, 1788-1789

There will be one intermission.

Our Country's Good is produced by special arrangement with

†The quote on the cover is the so-called “Barrington Prologue” recited by Henry Carter, the “celebrated pickpocket,” at the opening of the first Australian theatre in 1796. Allegedly written by a convict, it was in fact commissioned and written in England.

Unauthorized use of cameras or recording devices in this theatre is strictly forbidden.
Please turn off the audible ringer on pagers, cellular phones, or watches.
For everyone's benefit, latecomers will be seated at a suitable break or scene change.

The School of Music acknowledges the generosity of McKinley Associates, Inc.
whose support has helped make this production possible.
Cast of Characters

Officers & Crew
Captain Arthur Phillip, RN .......................................................... Daniel Kahn
Major Robbie Ross, RM .............................................................. Joshua Parrott
Captain David Collins, RM ......................................................... Nick Gabriel
Captain Watkin Tench, RM ......................................................... Markitwia Jackson
Captain Jemmy Campbell, RM ..................................................... Aaron Sherry
Reverend Johnson ..................................................................... Julia Siple
Lieutenant George Johnston, RM ............................................... Angela Lewis
Lieutenant Will Dawes, RM ......................................................... Jennifer Lima
2nd Lieutenant Ralph Clark, RM ................................................. Andrew Bielski
2nd Lieutenant William Faddy, RM ........................................... Dara Seitzman
Midshipman Harry Brewer, RN ................................................ Brendan McMahon

Convicts
John Arscott ................................................................................. Aaron Sherry
Dabby Bryant ................................................................................. Dara Seitzman
Black Caesar ................................................................................ Markitwia Jackson
Ketch Freeman ............................................................................. Joshua Parrott
Liz Morden .................................................................................. Dominique Morisseau
Duckling Smith ........................................................................... Angela Lewis
John Wisshammer ....................................................................... Daniel Kahn
Mary Brenham ........................................................................... Julia Siple
Meg Long .................................................................................... Jennifer Lima
Robert Sideway ............................................................................ Nick Gabriel
Aboriginal Australian ................................................................ Eddie Murray

Scenic Breakdown

Act I

Scene 1 The voyage out
Scene 2 A lone Aboriginal Australian describes the arrival of the First Convict Fleet in Botany Bay on January 20, 1788
Scene 3 Punishment
Scene 4 The loneliness of men
Scene 5 An audition
Scene 6 The authorities discuss the merits of the theatre
Scene 7 Harry and Duckling go rowing
Scene 8 The women learn their lines
Scene 9 Ralph Clark tries to kiss his dear wife’s picture
Scene 10 John Wisshammer and Mary Brenham exchange words
Scene 11 The first rehearsal

Act II

Scene 1 Visiting hours
Scene 2 His Excellency exhorts Ralph
Scene 3 Harry Brewer sees the dead
Scene 4 The second rehearsal
Scene 5 The science of hanging
Scene 6 The meaning of plays
Scene 7 Duckling makes vows
Scene 8 A love scene
Scene 9 The question of Liz
Scene 10 Backstage

Acknowledgments

Special thanks to Broadway Costumes Inc., Chicago, IL.
Dramaturg’s Notes

“Of sloth cometh pleasure, of pleasure cometh ryot, of ryot comes whoring, of whoring comes spending, of spending comes want, of want comes theft, of theft comes hanging.” Eastward Ho (1605), Act IV, sc. ii

“[T]o the end that the realm be not pestered and overcharged with a multitude of such seditious and dangerous people...who having little or no ability to answer or satisfy any competent penalty for their...disobedience...and being committed to prison do live for the most part in better case there than they could do if they were abroad.”

Excerpt from the 1585 “Act against Jesuits and Seminary Priests” which legalized transportation of convicts to the colonies

“It’s the facts about the convicts that are so gripping, Robert Sideway did found Australia’s first professional theatre when he got his ticket of leave. Mary Brenham did have Ralph Clark’s child. Dabby Bryant did escape and Ralph Clark did have nightmares.”

Max Stafford-Clark, director of the first production of Our Country’s Good for the Royal Court Theatre

“I wanted [Ralph Clark] to do the play because I so liked his dreams.”

Thomas Keneally, author of The Playmaker, on which Our Country’s Good was based

“Rehearsing is the only time you’re not in prison.”

Convicts from a play at Wormwood Scrubs Prison, c. 1986. They were visited by the first cast of Our Country’s Good.
About the Cast

ANDREW BIELSKI (2nd Lieutenant Ralph Clark) sophomore, BTA Theatre, Okemos, MI

NICK GABRIEL (Captain David Collins/Robert Sideway) freshman, BFA Performance, Albany, NY

MARKITWIA JACKSON (Captain Watkin Trench/Black Caesar) junior, BFA Performance, Lansing, MI

DANIEL KAHN (Captain Arthur Phillip/John Wishehammer) sophomore, BFA Performance, Farmington Hills, MI

ANGELA LEWIS (Lieutenant George Johnston/Duckling Smith) junior, BFA Performance, Detroit, MI

JENNIFER LIMA (Lieutenant Will Dawes/Meg Long) sophomore, BFA Performance, Ann Arbor, MI

BRENDAN MCMAHON (Midshipman Harry Brewer) sophomore, BFA Performance, Ann Arbor, MI

DOMINIQUE MORISSEAU (Liz Morden) junior, BFA Performance, Detroit, MI

EDDIE MURRAY (Aboriginal Australian) sophomore, BFA Performance, Lansing, MI

JOSHUA PARROTT (Major Robbie Ross/Ketch Freeman) senior, BFA Performance, Murrieta, CA

BRENDAN MCMAHON (Midshipman Harry Brewer) sophomore, BFA Performance, Ann Arbor, MI

DOMINIQUE MORISSEAU (Liz Morden) junior, BFA Performance, Detroit, MI

EDDIE MURRAY (Aboriginal Australian) sophomore, BFA Performance, Lansing, MI

JOSHUA PARROTT (Major Robbie Ross/Ketch Freeman) senior, BFA Performance, Murrieta, CA

DOMINIQUE MORISSEAU (Liz Morden) junior, BFA Performance, Detroit, MI

The actors in this production are composed of undergraduate students in the School of Music. The designers are composed of faculty and undergraduate students in the Department of Theatre and Drama. Scenery, costumes, properties, sound, and lighting were realized by students and the staff of University Productions, the producing unit of the School of Music.

About the Artists

DARRYL V. JONES (Director) is an asst. professor in the Dept. of Theatre and Drama. UM: Ladyhouse Blues, choreography for Antigone. Regional Theatre: Avenue X, Performance Network; directing asst. at Arena Stage: The Mad Dancers, Candida, PlayQuest 96; We Are Your Sisters, Blue Heron Theatre Co.; A View From the Bridge, Source Theatre Co. Awards: Washington Theatre Lobby Mary Goldwater Award for Outstanding Directing, Joseph P. Hardy Directing Fellowship; Allen Lee Hughes Directing Fellowship. Other: BM in vocal performance, Catholic Univ.; MFA, Boston Univ.

KEVIN JUDGE (Scenic Design) is a BFA candidate in the Dept. of Theatre and Drama. UM: Ladyhouse Blues, choreography for Antigone. Regional Theatre: Avenue X, Performance Network; directing asst. at Arena Stage: The Mad Dancers, Candida, PlayQuest 96; We Are Your Sisters, Blue Heron Theatre Co.; A View From the Bridge, Source Theatre Co. Awards: Washington Theatre Lobby Mary Goldwater Award for Outstanding Directing, Joseph P. Hardy Directing Fellowship; Allen Lee Hughes Directing Fellowship. Other: BM in vocal performance, Catholic Univ.; MFA, Boston Univ.


HENRY REYNOLDS (Sound Designer) is an asst. professor in the Department of Theatre and Drama. UM: Sound designer: I Am A Man, Born in the R.S.A. Other: Sound engineer and computer administrator for University Productions.

LEAH M. RICHARDSON (Stage Manager) is a BFA candidate in theatre design and production. UM: Stage manager: Anything Goes, Antigone; assistant stage manager: Henry V, The M arriage of Bette and Boo, The M arriage of Figaro; Basement Arts: stage manager - Fat M en in Skirts, lighting designer - Unidentified Human Remains, costume designer - Baby with the Bathwater; MUSKET: scenic painter: The Wiz, Pippin. Tour: Stage management intern for Rent; Radio City Music Hall Christmas Spectacular.

DOMINICK VELDMAN (Costume Designer) is a BFA candidate in theatre design and production. UM: Costume design: The Wiz; assistant costume design: La Traviata (Olga Dimitrov), The Best People (Jessica Hahn), Pilates Wife (Rebecca Valentino). Community Theatre: Costume coordinator, Ring of Steel.
Staff for Our Country’s Good

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Scenery .................. Justin Goble, Caroline Gregoire
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