

TEN  
DAYS  
ON THE ISLAND



Jane Longhurst in association with Mudlark Theatre  
presents The Black Bag Trilogy 03:

# LIFE / CYCLE

By Jane Longhurst



Community partners

DETACHED

AUSPICIOUS  
ARTS  
PROJECTS



THEATRE  
ROYAL

creative  
partnerships  
australia

PERFORMING  
LINES TAS



MADE  
NATURE ARTISTS DANCE EXPERIENCE

Mudlark  
LIVE THEATRE

TasNetworks  
Powering a  
Bright Future

# LIFE / CYCLE

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## CAST

Woman	<b>Carrie McLean</b>
Foley Man	<b>Guy Hooper</b>
Young Man	<b>Finley Gorringe</b>
Girl	<b>Luka Duncanson</b>
Boy	<b>Patrick Moloney</b>

And featuring members of Mature Artists  
Dance Experience (MADE):

**Christine Bell**  
**Belinda Bradley**  
**Penny Carey-Wells**  
**Mary Eckhardt**  
**Gabe Gartrell**  
**Shirley Gibson**  
**Annie Greenhill**  
**Christine Keele**  
**Melinda Mills-Hope**  
**Margaret Perversi**  
**Leigh Tesch**

## TEAM

Concept and Direction	<b>Jane Longhurst</b>
Production Manager	<b>Matt Woodham</b>
Dramaturg	<b>Deborah Pollard</b>
Rehearsal Dramaturg	<b>Guy Hooper</b>
Set Design	<b>Jill Munro</b>
Sound Design	<b>Jacky Collyer</b>
Lighting Design	<b>Nicholas Higgins</b>
Digital Artist	<b>Matt Daniels</b>
Choreography	<b>Felicity Bott</b>
Publicist	<b>Jen Murnaghan</b>
Armourer	<b>Matt Andrewartha</b>
Intimacy Coordinator	<b>Alison Stanton-Cook</b>
Stage Manager	<b>Elise Bagorski</b>
Front of House Manager	<b>Meredith Wilson</b>
Front of House Volunteers	<b>Jack Lark</b> <b>Chrissie Best</b> <b>Griffin Hooper</b> <b>+ other volunteers</b>

## THANKS TO

- **Penny Clive** and **Dean Ware**, Detached Cultural Organisation
- **Christiane Carr**, Auspicious Arts Projects Inc.
- **Jane Johnson**, **Corey Ackerley** and the **Board of Mudlark Theatre**
- **Ten Days on the Island team**
- **Robert Jarman**
- **Kath Melbourne**
- **Lucinda Toynbee Wilson**, Executive Producer, Blue Cow Theatre
- **Kiah** and **Kathi Davey**, Round Earth Company
- **Justy Philips** and **Margaret Woodward**
- **Judy Tierney** and **Phil Capon**
- **Rod Anderson** and the late, great **Dr Craig White**
- **Elvio Brianese**, **Peta Heffernan** and the Liminal Studios for early Trilogy support
- **Danielle Wood**
- **Wendy Morrow**
- **Guy Hooper**, **Griffin Hooper** and **Al Hooper**
- **Judith Longhurst**
- **Lenny Maher**
- **Mike** and **Ruth Shegog**
- **Jordy Gregg**
- **Max Ford**
- **Charles Parkinson** and **Tasmanian Theatre Company**
- 2018 performance mentors – **Halcyon McLeod** (Hobart), **Elevator Repair Service** (New York City) and **Dr Deborah Pollard** (Sydney)
- **Brian Ritchie**, Artistic Director and **Shelley McCuaig**, Senior Producer (2021 **Mona Foma Launceston and Hobart**)
- **Dr Margo Adler**, Creative Director and **Rosie Pidd**, Senior Producer: Beaker Street Festival
- **Stuart Loone**, Program Manager, Theatre North, Launceston for support of Request Programme tour to Earl Arts Centre 2023

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## DONORS

Thank you to the following donors and the Australian Cultural Fund for their support throughout The Black Bag Trilogy:

Adie Delaney	Emilie Collyer	Justy Phillips	Penny McDonald
Alan Andrews	Emma Porteus	Kate Gross	Peter Curtis
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Ben Winspear	Geraldine Donnelly	Kitty Taylor	Rosemary Amos
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Brett & Janet Rutherford	Harry Newman	Leigh Tesch	Simon Wellington
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## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

### What does it take to keep the lights on?

LIFE/CYCLE is the third part of a trilogy of performances I conceived in late 2018. The Trilogy began with Samuel Beckett's *Happy Days*. Directed by Tasmanian theatre legend Robert Jarman and featuring Iain Lang as Willie, set design by Jill Munro, sound design by Jacky Collyer staged for Mona Foma 2021 and in association with Blue Cow Theatre, our free, pop-up production was performed in parks, public spaces, courtyards, in a cathedral and an art gallery.

How to follow the loquacious character of Winnie in *Happy Days* was already set in my mind: the one woman play *Request Programme*. This portrait of loneliness reveals an ordinary post-work evening in the life of a middle-aged woman who returns to her apartment, prepares a simple meal, turns on the radio for the company of her favourite program, 'Request Programme', performs her nightly ablutions and throughout the play, does not utter a single word. Supported again by Blue Cow Theatre, *Request Programme* by Franz Xaver Kroetz, the second of the Trilogy plays, directed again by Robert Jarman took place in the front gallery of The Old Mercury Building as part of Beaker Street Festival in 2022 to capacity houses and toured to Launceston in 2023 as part of Theatre North's programme.

What drew me to both those plays was the fact a middle-aged woman is the primary protagonist. Having not long turned 50 myself at the beginning of the Trilogy, the lack of substantial roles in theatre for mature actresses is stark. The other attraction pairing *Happy Days* and then *Request Programme* is that the two plays depict, in wildly contrasting ways, urgent universal themes: our search for connection to combat social isolation, our shared vulnerability, our aloneness.

So now to the third, culminating performance in the Trilogy: LIFE/CYCLE and some changes have taken place to how we realise this work. Instead of performing, I'm stepping off stage and directing. Instead of a one person play, it's a cast of 15 working on an original, devised performance. For audience members who may have seen one or both of the previous Trilogy performances, there will be tangible and intangible references to the previous two productions - the presence of a black bag, a hair brush, preparing a simple meal for example. These references to the previous two works are deliberate, to unify the experience of the Trilogy.

There is also the subtle influence of Tasmanian domestic goddess Marjorie Bligh and her recycling and repurposing advocacy. Given the first two works of the Trilogy are

preoccupied with the rhythm of domestic rituals, Marjorie Bligh is an intriguing real-life character to draw inspiration from. Her resourcefulness is legendary especially for older generations of Tasmanians. LIFE/CYCLE pays tribute to her industriousness through the recycling of themes, recycling of set elements from previous productions, repurposing the old Print Hall of the Mercury Building and even the presence of bicycles, a gesture towards how we can self-sufficiently capture the energy required to generate sufficient power to illuminate a light bulb. Largely devoid of spoken dialogue, this performance seeks to examine what does it take to keep the lights on?

While Marjorie Bligh has been a constant intrigue during the Trilogy lifespan, more recent political and social events have exerted a deeper influence on LIFE/CYCLE's conceptual evolution. The political climate over the last six months in much of the world has become undeniably dark. From the ongoing death and destruction in Ukraine and Gaza, the ascendancy of anti-democratic forces in the world's advanced democracies, the cauldron of the 'manosphere', there is a palpable unease with the new, shifting world order. Who do we trust? What is truth? Why should we care? The Financial Times columnist Gillian Tett recently reminded us that "Ideas change over time. They go in fashions or cycles" – yet the giddy upending of previous accepted global alliances, attacks discrediting previously understood maxims we held to be true, has, I believe, resulted in a fear-stricken society holding fast to our mobile phones and its addictive technologies. It's easier to be distracted than it is to take action.

And thus, two states of being have proven especially relevant in the dramaturgical creation of LIFE/CYCLE: 1) precarity – of resources, of the stability of our domestic lives and our political structures, and 2) threat – evident within the scourge of domestic violence in this country and beyond our home bases to our very environment and its decimation, neglect and depletion. With the waning of political determination to address human-induced climate change, it is getting harder to keep despair at bay.

Yet given the Black Bag Trilogy began with a Beckett work, this prose of Beckett feels timely:

**"Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail better."**

In LIFE/CYCLE we have tried and endeavoured to build an onstage world, a world which is a metaphor not only for women's struggle against the oppression of domestic violence and patriarchal gender definitions, but also for our collective search for security, purpose and action, where and when we can, to protect both ourselves and our increasingly fragile world.



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LIFE/CYCLE has been devised with many of the artists with whom I have had the distinct pleasure of working with on the previous two Trilogy performances: set designer Jill Munro, sound designer Jacky Collyer, lighting designer Nicholas Higgins and production manager Matt Woodham. As with *Happy Days*, as with *Request Programme*, all have worked tirelessly on LIFE/CYCLE affirming their outstanding artistic visions, resourcefulness, adaptability and experience.

Joining the team for this work has been choreographer Felicity Bott. Her deep experience as a dancer/maker combined with her intimate knowledge of the performers who comprise Mature Artists Dance Experience (MADE), made her ideally positioned to lead LIFE/CYCLE's choreography.

Also rounding the circle is digital artist Matt Daniels whose theatrical work I have long admired. I also happen to have known Matt longer than I have known his work: in that classic Tasmanian way, we both attended Hobart Matriculation College in the late 1980's. I still marvel that paths can cross again decades later.

Equally marvellous is working with the next generation of theatre makers based in Nipaluna/Hobart. I am exceedingly grateful for Stage Manager Elise Bagowski who has adapted to the rigours of working in an unconventional stage setting, whilst wrangling a diverse cast of 16, always with upmost optimism.

These artists play such critical roles in the contemporary cultural life of Lutruwita/Tasmania and especially within our extremely lean Tasmanian theatre-making biosphere. They deserve all the plaudits.

I extend my heartfelt thanks as well to the following people who have been integral to reaching this stage of LIFE/CYCLE:

- To Deborah Pollard, Halcyon McLeod and members of the Elevator Repair Service ensemble for twelve months for generously allowing me to interview them about their performance making methodologies;
- To theatre director Robert Jarman for decades of performance making together and providing me with some of my most cherished on-stage roles;
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- To Lucinda Toynbee Wilson, former Executive Producer with Blue Cow Theatre for offering practical support from budget management to supplying her own van and various bump in crews for Black Bag Trilogy 01 and 02;
- To Deborah Pollard, my generous dramaturg and keen provocateur who steered this final work of the Trilogy into exceptionally bold directions I could never have imagined;
- To Marnie Karmelita who is a wonderful listener as well as brilliant Artistic Director of Ten Days on the Island 2025;
- The support of Artistic Director Jane Johnson, General Manager Corey Ackerley and the Board of Mudlark Theatre has been critical as my presenting partner for LIFE/CYCLE. Their collective vision for Mudlark is essential to the entire theatre sector across Lutruwita/Tasmania;
- Thank you to all the local, state and federal arts funding agencies, their peer assessment panels and their associated staff who have been engaged, patient and generous with practical advice;
- To the donors who kindly supported the two online fundraising campaigns plus private fundraising event held during the Black Bag Trilogy;
- My penultimate heartfelt thanks are to the LIFE/CYCLE team of committed cast and the tireless dedication of the creative designers. Each and every one of them has contributed so profoundly to the overall vision of this performance;
- My final thanks are to you, the audience, for attending. You chose to invest your time and money attending the premiere season of LIFE/CYCLE and on behalf of the team, we thank you for your curiosity and support.