



**By** Melanie Tait  
**Directed by** Lee Lewis

## About the show

### World Premiere

The answer was there all along. The world just refused to listen. For centuries, women across cultures knew how to stop smallpox. But science, politics, and prejudice buried their knowledge for 300 years. Melanie Tait's *The Royal Experiment* is a fast-paced, time-travelling comedy that unveils the absurdity of how medical breakthroughs are ignored, dismissed, or stolen.

With 18 characters spanning across multiple centuries, this NIDA-commissioned premiere blends biting satire with real history. Lee Lewis (Queensland Theatre, Griffin Theatre Company) directs this audacious new work, bringing an urgent and comedic lens to one of medicine's most outrageous oversights.

**The past ignored them. Now, it's time to listen.**

### Director's Note

This play is an extraordinary act of celebration of our capacity as humans to solve problems. Across time, continents and cultures we managed to work together to eradicate smallpox. It is a reminder of what we can achieve, in a time when we are facing what seem to be insurmountable, existential crises.

It is a celebration of Australian playwriting. Every time a new Australian play makes it to the stage it's cause for celebration. Our capacity to create stories that speak to the world through our Australian lens is growing play by play. Yes, I love that an Australian playwright has created a story that brings together Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Janet Parker and Barbra Streisand. It is a global story that could only have come from the Australian brain of Melanie Tait. This may not be what you think an Australian play should look or sound like... GOOD! Australian playwrights can and should write for the whole world. Let's celebrate that!

And ultimately this production is a celebration of the young artistic talent coming out of NIDA, ready to create new work for the world. Every day working with these emerging artists has been inspiring. I have no idea which of these young creators will go on to make more new works, design spectacles, light operas, compose symphonies, run companies, become Arts ministers. What I do know is that given the generosity, curiosity, humour and intelligence with which they have tackled all the challenges of making a new play, our theatre future is in good hands.

It is always a privilege to bring a new Australian play to life. This time, with this group of young artists, it has also been a joy. I join with you in celebrating their futures.

— Lee Lewis

## The Company

### Principal Cast

Actor	Anastasia Feneri
Actor	Charlie Chandler
Actor	Claudia Leon
Actor	Minerva Khodabande
Actor	Nyasha Ogden
Actor	Thomas Russell
Ensemble/Understudies (Diploma of Stage and Screen Performance)	Brodie Chong Isabel Stewart Kathleen Thomas Lola Merewether Naomi Gomez Nicholas Chong

Writer:	<b>Melanie Tait*</b>
Director:	<b>Lee Lewis*</b>
Costume Designer:	<b>Bronte Hunt</b>
Lighting Designer:	<b>BROCKMAN*</b>
Set & Props Designer:	<b>Daisy Hughes</b>
Sound & Video Designer:	<b>Chaii Ki Chapman</b>
Movement Choreographer:	<b>Troy Honeysett*</b>
Voice Coach:	<b>Laura Farrell*</b>
Assistant Director:	<b>Emma Johns</b>
Production Stage Manager:	<b>Matthew Phillips</b>
Deputy Stage Manager:	<b>Lilly Green</b>
Construction Manager:	<b>Michael Fisher</b>
Costume Supervisor:	<b>Sophy Simson</b>
Costume Supervisor:	<b>Raphaela Kuhn</b>
Props Supervisor:	<b>Liam Bate</b>
Head Electrician:	<b>Alexandria White</b>
Leading Hand Set:	<b>Emile Stuart</b>
Costume Maker:	<b>Raphaela Kuhn</b>
Assistant Stage Manager:	<b>Harry Deacon</b>
Assistant Stage Manager:	<b>Adelaide Tustian</b>
Costume Design Assistant:	<b>Sophie Weller</b>
Set/Props Design Assistant:	<b>Edward John</b>
Maker & Costume	<b>Grace Miles</b>
Assistant/Dresser:	
Dresser:	<b>Benaiah Brophy*</b>
Properties Assistant:	<b>Lily Burn</b>
Floor Electrician/	
Board Operator:	<b>Aiden Carter</b>
Make-up Artist:	<b>Arielle Robinson</b>

Make-up Artist: **Mabel Masters**  
Technical Crew Coordinator: **Alexandria White**  
Environmental Sustainability Coordinator: **Matthew Phillips**  
Environmental Sustainability Coordinator: **Lilly Green**

**\*Guest Artist**  
**\*\* NIDA Staff**

Contains some strong language, sexual references, depictions of death including suicide, and irreverent humor involving religious figures.

---

**The Royal Experiment**

06 Nov 2025 – 12 Nov 2025

The production of *The Royal Experiment* has been developed and produced with the support of The Frederick J Gibson Bequest.