

The Lady in the Van

CAST

Suzannah Churchman - Miss Mary Shepherd



Suzannah trained at the Oxford school of Drama in the UK. She spent many years touring in theatres nationally and in the West End. She also has periodically enjoyed working in film, television, and radio. Suzannah moved to Perth in 2008 and began being involved in community theatre here in 2017. Suzannah has been fortunate to receive three Finley awards for Best Actress: in 2019 for Thelma in *Night Mother*, 2022 for Patricia in *Incognito*, and 2023 for Imez in *No Exit*. She feels remarkably privileged to be playing Miss Shepherd in Alan Bennett's bittersweet comedy. It is a gift of a role and the whole rehearsal process has been a joy to work with such talented, creative humans. Suzannah hopes the audience enjoys this beautiful play and her interpretation of Miss Shepherd whilst simultaneously forgiving her for not being Maggie.

Peter Neaves – Alan Bennett



Peter is very happy to be back at the Old Mill Theatre, having previously appeared as David Bliss in *Hay Fever* (2021), Trevor in *Theft* (2022), and most recently as Will Gruber in *The Man From Earth* (2023). Peter was proud to have been nominated as Best Actor for the most recent Finley Awards for his role of Garcin in *No Exit* in 2023 which was performed at KADS Theatre. Peter is excited to be directed by Barry Park again, having been directed by him in *Hay Fever*. He is also delighted to bring the role of Alan Bennett to life with an amazing cast, some of whom he has performed with before. Peter thinks that *The Lady in the Van* is a wonderful production that audiences will love.

David Cotgreave - Alan Bennett 2



David is a versatile and experienced performer, having graduated from Curtin University (Theatre and Film) and WAAPA (Performance.) He has performed in forty-three productions totalling sixty-three roles. Some of his favourite roles are Jake in *Jake's Women* for the Old Mill Theatre, Uncle Charles in *August: Osage* and Uncle Louis in *Lost in Yonkers* for Playlovers, Alfieri in *A from the Bridge*, Malcolm in *Macbeth*, Bassanio in *Merchant of Venice*, for GRADS, Presley Stray in *The Pitchfork Disney*, Tom Hackford in *The Accrington Pals* at WAAPA and Derek in Edwards Bonds's *Derek* for the Hayman Theatre company. David also recently appeared in season two of the reality TV series *The Summit*, for Channel 9. David is thrilled to be returning to the Old Mill Theatre to bring Alan Bennett 2 to life for *The Lady in the Van* and is looking forward to working with such a talented ensemble.

Nigel Goodwin – Rufus



Since moving from the UK to Perth in 2018, Nigel has performed in a wide range of productions including *Of Mice and Men* with Stirling Players; *The Full Monty* at Limelight Theatre; *Six Dance Lessons in Six Weeks* at KADS; Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* with GRADS Theatre Company; and Yasmina Reza's *Art* with Company O. This is the second time Nigel has been directed by Barry Park at the Old Mill Theatre, the first being in Noel Coward's *Present Laughter* in 2019. Nigel also sings and plays the guitar, most recently as Captain von Trapp in *The Sound of Music* at Melville Theatre. As a film maker, Nigel has participated in numerous Western Australian film projects as actor, director, editor and crew. Nigel is excited to be playing another "home game" in this beautifully written British play by one of his favourite writers.



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Sharon Menzies – *Pauline*



Sharon has loved theatre since drama classes at school in Sydney. After a year of Theatre Arts at Kelvin Grove TAFE in Brisbane, she did a work stint in Papua New Guinea, where she formed the Tabubil Theatre Troupe and performed with the Madang Amateur Drama Society. Sharon trained with Wilson McKaskill at KAFF followed by an Arts Degree majoring in Theatre Arts and Film and Television at Curtin University. With this under her belt she produced a documentary in India, (*Orphans on Wall Street*) and taught drama at JYTS and privately. She has performed in many plays over the past 45 years, both professional and amateur, in London, PNG, Sydney, Brisbane and Perth. For the last 10 years Sharon has loved her

involvement with the thriving Perth community theatre scene where she has performed across the city with several lead roles and 3 Finley nominations.

Jennifer van den Hoek – *Social worker*



Jennifer has a broad and extensive theatre background, with experience in both singing and acting. She has been a soprano with the University of Western Australia Choral Society (UWACS) since July 2020. Notable acting roles include Mrs. Higgins in *My Fair Lady* at the Regal Theatre (2022) and Ruth in multiple productions with The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of WA, including *The Gondoliers* and *Kiss Me Kate* (2024), *HMS Pinafore* and *Ruddigore* (2023), and *The Pirates of Penzance* and *The Sorcerer* (2021). Jennifer also performed in productions such as *Yeomen of the Guard* (2019)

and *Patience* (2018) with the Society. She has been involved in various other projects, including the 2015 Fringe Festival drama *A Flat Circle* and annual pantomimes with the Wembley Theatre Company (2008-2014). Additionally, she performed with The Graduate Dramatic Society in several plays from 1992 to 2014 and has been a Toastmaster since 2002.

Julie Holmshaw – *Mam, Interviewer, Priest*



Julie trained and worked as a professional actor in Sydney in her 20s and early 30s until moving to Perth where she changed direction and became a teacher. Since her retirement, she has returned to treading the boards in Community Theatre productions and has been fortunate to have acted in many theatres including Stirling, Old Mill, Garrick, Melville, Marloo, Limelight, GRADS, Roxy Lane and KADS. Recent performances have included *Alzheimers the Musical*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Dead Man's Cell Phone* and *The Heist*. Julie first worked with Barry

Park at the Old Mill in his production of Noel Coward's *Design for Living* and is thrilled to be working with him again in *The Lady in the Van*.

Neale Paterson – *Lout, Underwood, Assistant Stage Manager*



Neale worked extensively in university theatre throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, mostly for GRADS, then took an extended break from the stage. He returned to performance with GRADS' production of *Dr. Faustus* at the New Fortune Theatre and went from playing juvenile roles to playing old men in what seemed like the blink of an eye. He played Hamm in the recent KADS production of *Endgame*, Sir William Collyer in *The Deep Blue Sea* (Melville Theatre Company), Ernest Friedman in *Design for Living* (Old Mill Theatre), Lennox in *Macbeth* and Old Gobbo/Duke in *The Merchant of Venice* (GRADS). He has stage-managed *A View from the Bridge*, *The Glass Menagerie* and *The Boys in the Band* (GRADS), *No Exit* (KADS) and *The Man from Earth* (Old Mill Theatre).



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Phillip Steele-Young - *Doctor, Leo Fairchild, Council man*



Phillip Steele-Young has indulged his love for the theatre for most of his life, from high school productions to huge professional endeavours. Phillip appeared onstage in several productions of the San Diego (California) Opera and the Los Angeles Opera, and since arriving in Perth, he has appeared in local community theatre productions of *The Producers* (Alexandra Theatre at the Regal Theatre), *The Taming of the Shrew* and *The Tempest* (Roleystone Theatre) and *The Normal Heart* (GRADS Theatre Company). He has also worked in Europe doing voiceover work and has appeared on the U.S. game show *Jeopardy* alongside the late, great Alex Trebek.

Andre Beidatsch – *Assistant stage manager, Workman, Ambulance Driver, Council man*



Andre comes from a theatre-loving family, attending the theatre since his pre-school days. He has performed in a few productions, making his debut in a pantomime production of *Sleeping Beauty* by the Wembley Theatre Company as one of a pair of "Yellow Pages" in 2012. He later performed in several other community theatre pantomimes and made his first involvement with GRADS Theatre Company in the chorus of *Aladdin*, directed by Stephen Lee in 2014. Most recently he played Lord Heybrook in Barry Park's production of *French without Tears* for GRADS Theatre Company in 2022.

