

Dean Bryant appointed Artistic Director of Malthouse Theatre

Malthouse Theatre

Malthouse, 113 Sturt St, Southbank

Connect

malthousetheatre.com.au

@malthousetheatre

Media Contact

Georgia Fox

georgia@commonstate.co

+61 478 049 809

Media Centre

Dean Bryant imagery available

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Photo credit — Ron Whitfield

Malthouse Theatre has today announced the appointment of Dean Bryant as its next Artistic Director, marking a new era for one of the country's most influential centres of contemporary performance.

Bryant brings to the role a career marked by extraordinary range—from new plays to musicals, opera to cabaret, satire to documentary theatre—with a talent for creating work that's theatrically bold, culturally resonant and emotionally charged. His arrival signals a programming philosophy that values risk, rigour and fun in equal measure.

From the outset, Bryant is clear-eyed and energised: “Malthouse gets to be the naughty one,” he says. “The company that pushes boundaries, invites new audiences in, and throws a party while doing it. That's its legacy and its future. Melbourne needs a Malthouse that's thriving.”

Described by *The Guardian* as “one of Australia's greatest directors,” Bryant steps into the role at a pivotal moment. In a city with just two mainstage companies, Malthouse occupies a vital space—a home for theatrical risk, irreverence and artistic inventiveness. Bryant's appointment affirms the company's belief that expanding audiences doesn't require softening edges, but rather sharpening what makes Malthouse distinct.

“The goal isn't just growth. It's hunger. Risk. Joy,” he says. “You can feel it when a show catches fire, word of mouth surges, a foyer buzzes, and people leave the theatre changed. That's the alchemy I want to chase.”

It's a sensibility forged over decades. Raised on a dairy farm in regional

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Victoria, Bryant moved to Melbourne to study law but found his calling in the rehearsal room. Since then, he has carved out one of the most versatile and decorated careers in the country—five Green Room Awards, three Sydney Theatre Awards, a Helpmann Award, and a CV that spans Melbourne Theatre Company, Sydney Theatre Company, State Theatre Company South Australia, Opera Australia, Victorian Opera, Sydney Festival and New York Musical Theatre Festival.

His recent run—from *Candide* to *Circle Mirror Transformation*, *Dear Evan Hansen* to *The Normal Heart*, *La Bohème*, *Hubris & Humiliation*, and the multi-award-winning *My Brilliant Career*, which he co-wrote with Sheridan Harbridge and Mathew Frank for Melbourne Theatre Company—underscores that Malthouse is appointing a director operating at full creative velocity, with both proven reach and sharp cultural relevance.

And yet, it's his instinct for the new that defines his vision for Malthouse.

"Malthouse has always been the place for work that crackles with now-ness," Bryant says. "Theatre that surprises you, unsettles you, seduces you. I want every show to feel like an event."

With a deep respect for the company's history—from Aubrey Mellor's literary foundation to Michael Kantor's visual flair, Marion Potts' storytelling plurality, and Matt Lutton's imaginative reach—Bryant sees his own vision as evolutionary rather than oppositional.

His programming pillars? "Ideas that electrify. Craft that dazzles. Humanity that moves. Theatre that knows it's theatre and uses that to conjure something our screens never can."

Bryant's appointment follows an extensive recruitment process and arrives at a moment when the company is poised to play a leading role in the transformation of the Melbourne Arts Precinct.

Vivia Hickman, Malthouse Theatre Co-CEO and Executive Producer, said: "Dean's appointment is a defining moment for Malthouse. His energy, intelligence and relentless curiosity are exactly what the company, and our audiences, need as we enter this next chapter. He understands the artform, the industry, and the cultural moment we're in."

Dean Bryant will officially commence as Artistic Director of Malthouse Theatre in October 2025.