

ABOUT CHAMBER MADE

Chamber Made operates at the nexus of contemporary performance, music and sound to make intimate works that grapple with the resonant themes of our times. The company is renowned for redefining artform boundaries and producing works that emerge from a deep collaborative dialogue across artform disciplines. Bringing contemporary composition and performance dramaturgy together in ever-shifting forms, our works have been presented in theatres, recital halls, lounge-rooms, galleries, and online. Chamber Made's artistic team is led by Artistic Director Tamara Saulwick, working in collaboration with a range of individual artists, organisations and communities. Chamber Made has presented over 90 performance seasons in Australia, NZ, Asia, Europe, USA and South America, and has extensive experience working on international tours, co-productions and residencies. The company has commissioned over 40 new Australian works and engaged countless artists since it was founded in 1988. Chamber Made has multi-year, re-current funding from the Victorian Government and City of Melbourne and has an enduring support base from patrons, our 'Navigators', audiences and philanthropic foundations.

To learn more about how to become a donor as part of our Navigator program visit:
www.chambermade.org/support/

ABOUT THEATRE WORKS

Theatre Works plays a vital role in the independent theatre ecology of Melbourne. Our audiences come from our local neighbourhood and from across the wider metropolitan area. Over 10,000 people attended works at Theatre Works in the past twelve months. Numerous works that have been produced and supported by Theatre Works have transferred to other festivals and theatre, and have received numerous Green Room and Helpmann awards.

Our vision is to inspire more people to discover, create and love theatre. Our mission is to enable new work, foster and develop new voices, be a vital support for established voices, and welcome and engage new audiences.

This project has been made possible with support from Chamber Made's Navigators, Gandel Philanthropy and the Besen Family Foundation. Dybbuks is supported by Creative Partnerships Australia through Plus1. The creative development of this project was assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body. Significant development support was also provided by the Kadimah Jewish Cultural Centre and National Library, Malthouse Theatre, Sidney Myer Fund and Arts Centre Melbourne.

CHAMBER
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performance + sound + music

THEATRE
WORKS

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THEATRE WORKS AND CHAMBER MADE PRESENT

DYBBUKS

— A CHAMBER MADE WORK —
CONCEIVED AND DIRECTED BY SAMARA HERSCH



In Yiddish mythology dybbuks are the unresolved souls who seek to find form through living bodies. Dybbuks is a new work from Chamber Made, conceived and directed by Samara Hersch, that evokes the many ways that the dead inhabit female bodies through language, voice, memory and desire.

— WORLD PREMIERE —
14 - 26 AUGUST

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THEATRE
WORKS

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Manger's Lullaby

In memory of Esther, my mother

*Now only the dead can sing
a Yiddish lullaby that once cradled you
in the shadow of Itsik's naked tree.
Between this world and the next
you fell asleep to the circadian rhythm
of a pallid moon, and when you awoke
in dawn's pinkish light,
you gathered the folds of your periwinkle gown
and climbed on the wings of a golden peacock,
who carried you off in search of yesteryear.*

- Marcia Jacobs (choir member)

When I encountered *The Dybbuk* by S. Ansky an unrelenting possession began.

I became captivated by the Yiddish community in Melbourne and its cultural legacy that continues to inspire this city. I began to research other portrayals of Leah the protagonist. I drank tea with Helen Jacobs and looked through photographs of her 1957 production at the original Kadimah in Carlton and met Yoni Prior who showed me videos of the legendary Gilgul theatre company led by Barrie Kosky in the 1990s.

When thinking about my own dybbuks, the dybbuks of 2018, I began to consider what I need to give voice to.

What always struck me about Ansky's *The Dybbuk* was the female body as a site of negotiation. Surrounded by men, Chonnen, Leah's dead soul mate, speaks through her and the Rabbi and his minyan of men, speak back through her to him. Leah is therefore silenced, her body a landscape for others to project upon and communicate through. But where is her voice? And what does Leah desire?

This new work, *Dybbuks*, is centred on a community of intergenerational female bodies and female voices as they attempt to enact different types of 'possession'. Through these enactments many questions have arisen.

How do we give form to desire despite the shame it so often imbues?

How do we reclaim ancient rituals (such as the Jewish monthly bathing ritual of the Mikveh) that assert an inherent 'impurity'?

And how do we co-exist with the dead and by doing so ensure that the future is enriched with history, with vitality and with resilience?

Those who are familiar with Ansky's *The Dybbuk* might know that it has a second title: *Between Two Worlds*. I have always found this provocation, of being between two worlds, deeply resonant. To be in between, caught amidst, implies that boundaries have been reimagined. Whether it involves the boundaries and borders of a nation, a body, a mystical plane of reality; being in between permits a kind of permeableness, a kind of confusion, a kind of freedom ...

- Director, Samara Hersch

CREDITS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Concept & Direction Samara Hersch

Composition & Sound Design Max Lyandvert

Sound Dramaturgy Tamara Saulwick

Lighting and Set Design & Project Dramaturgy
Paul Jackson

Costume Design Shio Otani

Costume Assistant Anna Pontelandolfo

Artistic Associate/Choir Liaison Cathy Hunt

Performers Yoni Prior and Lauren Langlois

Voice Artists Johnny Carr and Katherine Tonkin

Musicians Jenny Barnes (vocals), Carolyn Schofield (electronics), Lizzy Welsh (violin) and Aviva Edean (clarinet)

Choir Leader Tomi Kalinski,

Choir Mary Appel, Sandra Chester, Anna Epstein, Marcia Jacobs, Romi Kupfer, Kathy Laster, Rachel Petchesky, Ruth Wein, Fran Feldman, Marsha Tauber

Text Karen Sibbing, Johnny Carr, Ira Brand and Samara Hersch

Production Manager John Byrne

Stage Manager Vivienne Poznanski

Assistant Stage Manager Elizabeth Everett (Deakin University intern)

Sound Operator Steph O'Hara

Image Pier Carthew

For more information about this project and the artists involved please visit: chambermade.org/works/dybbuks/

Samara Hersch wishes to thank:

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Kylie McRae, Executive Producer

Emilie Collyer, Communications Manager

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