



### TOP 80

1 February - 25 March

Wed-Sat @ 7.30pm, Sun @ 6.30pm

Tickets \$25\*

### WILDCARDS

Sat @ 3.30pm, Sun @ 2.30pm

Tickets \$20\*

### FINALS

29 March - 14 April

*Wildcards Final, People's Choice Showcase, Gala Final Judging, Gala Finals Awards)*

Tickets \$30\*

Booking fees may apply

## SHORT & SWEET 2018, THEATRE

# SHORT + SWEET: SNEAK PEEK

JANUARY 21, 2018 | JUDITH GREENAWAY | 2 COMMENTS

SHORT + SWEET is the biggest little theatre festival in the world, On Thursday February 1st, it opens at an all-new venue, with the first of the summer's selection of over 120 tasty, ten-minute bites.

SHORT + SWEET has spread the popular 10-minute format in theatre, dance, cabaret & comedy across Australia and the globe - with festivals now as far afield as Hollywood, India, Malaysia, Dubai and NZ. Its Hollywood festival is one of the world's go-to showcases for new talent on stage *and* screen. But the original Sydney theatre festival is now in its 17th year and has a new home in Surry Hills' [Tom Mann Theatre](#).

Festival Director **Pete Malicki** is a SHORT + SWEET legend, having written and directed for the

fest for well over a decade. This year S+S will again feature not only the judges' voting and the People's Choice audience votes, but his director's picks – all heading for the **April Gala Finals**.

**SHORT + SWEET** ([Facebook](#)) opens at the Tom Mann Theatre Theatre, 136 Chalmers St, Surry Hills on 1 Feb and runs through to April with both a Top 80 (Thur-Sat 7.30pm, Sun 6.30pm) and separate Wildcards program (Sat 3.30pm, Sun 2.30pm). The gala finals take place in April.

## Week One – with 10 short plays nightly.

*Reality Check* by *Elizabeth*, an hilarious one-woman play about on-line dating, is a comic tour-de-force by writer, director, actor and filmmaker **Annisa Belonogoff**. "Searching for love, with a little too much wine. What could go wrong?"



*Reality Check*

*Another Dead Body Play* is a debut play for new Sydney company Pumphouse Productions. **Steven Williams** piles cliché upon cliché to make 'a foul play about foul play'!! His cast features **Lucy Tassell**, **Remy Danoy** and **Nigel Malcolm**.

Victorian writer **Katie Lee**'s comedy *I Like Chocolate... is that so Bad?* is a comic vehicle for Short+Sweet veteran **Henrietta Stathopoulos**' Captivate youth theatre company from Western Sydney. A Chocoholics Anonymous meeting goes feral! Starring young actors **Gabrielle Green**, **Guet McAcuek**, **Nicholas Menouhos** and **Connor McInerney**.



*I Like Chocolate... is that so  
Bad?*

In *The Eulogy* by **Kel Vance** and directed by **Brendan Paul**, a teenage boy observes his own funeral. He soon learns how different his life could have been when the girl he loved from afar but never met begins to eulogize him. A moving play about lost chances and overcoming fear, starring **Lola Bond** and **Archit Mahajan**.

## In the Wildcards section (weekend matinees).

**Nisrine Amine** directs **Ange Farrow's** absurdist play *The Perfect Life*, which follows 'Jethro' from birth to death as he tries (but fails!) to script for himself the perfect life. Starring **Charles Upton**, **Abi Rayment**, **Leilani Loau** and **Lisa Robinson**.

*The Perfect Life*

*Psych Nick* by **Scott Lummer** (US) follows a man who claims to be Jesus into a psychiatrist's office on Christmas Eve. Is he or isn't he? And why is he suffering from depression? **Leanne Sampson-Bowden** directs **Firdaws Adelpour**, **Olga Olshansky** and **Jasynda Radanovic**.

*Working Romance* written and directed by **Liam Danaher** is about sex and religion... and bad puns! Starring **Ethan Dale** as the wayward antagonist with **Biddy O'Sullivan**, **Ryan Bates**, **Chloe O'Neill**, **Ashleigh Earley** and **Brianna Porter**.

Finally, *Scripted* by popular US writer **Mark Harvey Levine** sees a couple wake to find a script which outlines exactly what will happen to them that day! **Jack Mitchell** and **Indigo Hallet** – directed by **Isabel Zakharova** – star in this uplifting comedy about the power each person has to alter their story...



*Scripted*



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# Short + Sweet Week One Review

The opening night of Short+Sweet was spent in laughter, sadness and heartbreak, from the talent of actors young and old. The concept is simple. Eight, ten-minute short plays, shown at the Tom Mann Theatre in Strawberry Hills. The audience and judges vote for their two favourites in each half of the night, to proceed to finales come the end of the festival.

Upon entry, a still, silent body sat under the spotlight, covered in a white sheet, for the aptly titled opener, "Another Dead Body Play", directed by Steven Williams. Two caricature-like police detectives burst on stage – the weathered, bitter professional, and the rookie junior. In a hilarious, pun filled conquest, the over-imaginative cops go off on every tangent possible to try and solve the case. Prime suspects include Hitler and the Amish. It's a play on every bad cop movie you've ever seen.



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In swift transition from hilarity to mourning, a weathered Victoria Hopkins emerges in a ragged wedding dress for the self-directed **“The Dusty Hour”**. It was a powerful soliloquy filled with Shakespearean language, taking sectors of Lady Macbeth’s most famous lines into a modern setting. Hopkins is commanding and strong in her actions, yet her speech and expression showed a character falling apart. To say the least, it was heartbreaking and incredibly moving.



**“I Like Chocolate, is That So Bad?”**, directed by Henrietta Stathopoulos, is a lighthearted take on when addiction becomes too much. To sugary treats, that is. A reluctant court-ordered cocoa addict opens up on her rock bottom to a small group of similar folks.

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## El' Circo

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The undeniable highlight of the night was “**The Eulogy**”. A young boy appears in a wheelchair, and we soon realise he has passed away, and is observing his funeral. He watches as a girl he admired from a mirror whilst bed-locked, comes up to the alter to eulogise him, based on a diary his mother gave to her after he passed away. Detailing his hidden love, she shuns his idealized imaginings of what she was like, and they both mourn a friendship that could have been.

After a short intermission, a cycle of cheating rolls through multiple couples in “**The Pacific Solution**”. Each believing their hidden lover is their soul mate, the irony was stronger than ever.



In **The Problem With Philosophy**, Socrates and his wife have a final moment in prison on the night before his self-appointed death.



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La Belle Rose Cabaret Dinner  
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The second highlight was in **Reality Check**, a one woman play by Annisa Belonogoff, who drunkenly muses through the hardships of searching for love in the modern world, alongside Uber Eats, some white wine, and Tinder. Breaking the fourth wall, she spoke to the audience as her sub-conscious, effortlessly flowing through the hilarious monologue.

Finishing off the night was a play written by the Short and Sweet festival staff, titled **How to Write a 10 Minute Play – The 10 Minute Play**. In an 80's fitness instructor video style, an acting trainer dressed in active wear and her two actor puppets showed what not to do in a short play.

All in all, a fantastic night of entertainment from actors of all ages. If this standard is kept up across the weeks, the gala finale will be incredible to see.

**Reviewed by Emilie Carmona**

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**SHORT & SWEET 2018, THEATRE**

# SHORT+SWEET THEATRE TOP 80 WEEK ONE

FEBRUARY 2, 2018 | LYNN BELVEDERE | [LEAVE A COMMENT](#)

*(All photos: Chris Lundie)*

*This image: THE DUSTY HOUR*

*Banner image: THE EULOGY*

There are eight simply superb plays being performed live on stage this week, at Short and Sweet. Top 80 Week One, Thursday 1st February 2018 until Sunday. Captivating drama, strange circumstances, unique outlooks, and laugh-out-loud entertainment galore.

This year, a big new venue for S+S, and comfortably seating a maximum of 171.

*THE PROBLEM WITH PHILOSOPHY*

The S+S festival has new shows every week for eight weeks, and runs through to April with both a

Top 80 program (Thursdays-Fridays-Saturdays at 7.30pm and Sundays at 6.30pm) together with a separate Wildcards program (Saturdays at 3.30pm and Sundays at 2.30pm). *The S+S gala finals take place in April 2018.*

(1) **Another Dead Body Play** is a debut play for new Sydney company Pumphouse Productions. Comedy Playwright Steven Williams provides us with two incompetent police detectives, with juicy red-herrings, obligatory MacGuffins and multiple clever clichés, giving the audience many reams of laughter opportunities. Starring Lucy Tassell, Remy Danoy and Nigel Malcolm.

*ANOTHER DEAD BODY*

(2) **“The Dusty Hour”** starring actor, writer, director, Victoria Hopkins. Shakespeare drama monologues, with on-stage inspired costume changes matching each new character, easily delivering the best of Shakespeare.

(3) **I Like Chocolate, is that So Bad?** by Victorian writer Katie Lee, is a comic vehicle for Short+Sweet veteran Henrietta Stathopoulos’ Captivate youth theatre company, that hails from Western Sydney. “Chocoholics Anonymous” meeting goes completely off course because of a new arrival, equally funny and sad. Starring young actors Gabrielle Green, Guet McAcuek, Nicholas Menouhos and Connor McInerney.

*I LIKE CHOCOLATE IS THAT SO BAD*

(4) **The Eulogy** by Kel Vance and directed by Brendan Paul. Important and moving message piece. Teenage boy in a wheelchair, observes his own funeral, and reacts to the eulogy from the girl next door, but all is not what it seems.

Her abuse from constantly changing foster families, his stalking, his unrequited love, his/her opportunities lost and her reading of his diary as part of the eulogy, leading to an unexpected conclusion. Starring Lola Bond and Archit Mahajan.

(5) **The Pacific Solution** written by Bill Jordan and expertly directed by Deanne Gibbs. No degrees of separation, drama from an engagement ending and then he uses the honeymoon cruise tickets. Searching for love, murder/suicide resulting from an almost perfect parter swap on that cruise ship. Wonderfully theatrical. Starring Owen Power, Mel Day, Cassandra Law, Ingtid Lenert, Blake Beattie.

*THE PACIFIC SOLUTION*

(6) **The Problem With Philosophy** by Dr Wendy J. Dunn and directed by Jordan King-LaCroix. Entertaining Socrates historical drama with his wife Xanthippe, and set on the night before his or-

dained death. Starring Paul Byrne, Cristiane Bocchi and Chris Lee.

(7) **Reality Check by Elizabeth**, on-line dating disasters of epic proportions, very clever comedy monologue expertly performed by actor, writer, director, film-maker Annisa Belonogoff. This is a very lonely woman, a teacher, that no man should willingly ask out for a date. Humorous audience participation together with her as-if huge supply of unanswerable questions, provided endless laughter from an ever appreciative audience.

*REALITY CHECK BY ELIZABETH*

(8) **How to Write a Ten Minute Play – The Ten Minute Play** by Pete Malicki and directed by Bretton Reis. Comedy masterpiece, should be performed at all writing workshops, to remind all writers exactly what should never ever be written, and never ever performed on stage. Absolutely Brilliant Satire, theatrical with a dash of irony too. Starring Chloe Baldacchino, Sean Foster, Ally Foy.

*THE 10 MINUTE PLAY*

**All photos by Chris Lundie.**

Short+Sweet Theatre

Tom Mann Theatre- 136 Chalmers Street Surry Hills.

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**After two months and over 120 plays in almost 70 performances, Short+Sweet 2018 reaches its climax with the Gala Finals and awards.**

**40 plays - audience vote favourites, the 'Crew Cut', Wildcards and this week's final heats - are still battling it out for the remaining 5 spots but the seven of the eight weekly judges' winners are already confirmed! Finalists will compete for a range of prizes and awards for writing, directing & acting.**

*The Eulogy* by Kel Vance and directed by Brendan Paul, a teenage boy observes his own funeral. He soon learns how different his life could have been when the girl he loved from afar but never met begins to eulogize him. A moving play about lost chances and overcoming fear, starring Lola Bond and Archit Mahajan.

*The Last Radio Show* by John Longhurst sees a third-rate radio station present a second-rate murder mystery and spells mayhem and hilarity! Steven Tait directs Mark Longhurst, Gina Cohen, Dudley Levell and Jack Douglas.

*Lucy and Me* is Jennifer Anne Laycock's beautiful one-hander for Nicolas Angelosanto and his bike Lucy. Spenn loves Lucy more than Apple Strudel, his favourite tee-shirt and his mum!

*Quality of Life* by Sevgi Murphy is an inspiring story about a young woman's recovery from depression. Luke Berman directs Sophie Bentley, Natalie McConchie and Beth Fuller.

In *Dummy* by Jude Bridge, Guy and Jinx (Samantha Zinner and Callum Mooney) are two 'friends' with very different personalities... although basically they are the same person... After a trip to Bali, things change dramatically. Katharine Babatzanis directs a comedy that explores what it is to be human.

*The Golden Years* by Joe Starzyk (US) sees Felicity Burke and Duncan Armitage as a couple who have been together so long, they know everything there is to know about each other. Or do they?

The winner from Week 7 is *The Dancing Lessons* by Connie Schindewolf (US). Craig Simms directs Ingrid Lenert, Matt Oxley, Melissa Saxton and Teresa Spencer-Plane in this powerful piece where a woman desperately tries to connect with her mother, a dementia patient, using memories...

SHORT & SWEET 2018

# SHORT + SWEET FINALS WEEK

APRIL 6, 2018 | JUDITH GREENAWAY | LEAVE A COMMENT



*The Eulogy*

*The Eulogy* by **Kel Vance** and directed by **Brendan Paul**, centres on a teenage boy, Sam (**Archit Mahajan**), as he arrives at his own funeral. However, he soon learns how different his life could have been when the girl (**Lola Bond**) he never met, but loved from afar, begins to eulogise him.

Touching and delicate with very moving performances, this piece rolls out its story and themes with slow precision. The differences between them is foregrounded and his frustration and her confusion combine to develop the powerful, emotional story. And there is a fantastic feminist joke that the audience loved when it took them by surprise.



*The Last Radio Show* by **John Longhurst**. Take a third-rate radio station, a second-rate murder mystery and a first rate show wrecker ... that spells mayhem and hilarity! **Steven Tait** directs **Mark Longhurst**, **Gina Cohen**, **Dudley Levell** and **Jack Douglas**.

This was a classic piece of vindictive overacting to superb effect. The Foley was funny, the physical comedy hilarious and the chaos clever. Impressively rehearsed, the mayhem ran sweet and smooth. Kudos to the audio operator who got those flourishes and upbeat swing music beautifully timed.



*Lucy and Me*

*Lucy and Me*: Sphenn loves Lucy, he loves Lucy a lot, he loves Lucy more than apple strudel, his favourite t-shirt and his mum combined. Written and directed by **Jennifer Anne Laycock** with **Nicolas Angelosanto** as Sphenn, supported by Lucy the bike.

What a delight. Using a mimetic, fluid, Cleeseian physicality Angelosanto rules the stage here. The world building is so impressive, the comedy so well thrown and his use of vocal variation, the outrageous accent aside, makes this piece pelt along like no-hands down a hill.

So effective is his creation that most of the audience gave a little whimper at the bathos of the finale.



*Quality of Life*

*Quality of Life* by **Sevgi Murphy** is a snapshot of Alice's road to recovery from a major depressive episode. Where there is life, there is hope. **Luke Berman** directing **Sophie Bentley, Natalie Mc-Conchie** and **Beth Fuller**.

There is insight and empathy in this piece which is education as much as art. A look into the mind of the girl is well moderated by an external eye on her behaviours and the personification of the illness. The coat device was clever as was the choice to have the doctor half in shadow. The climax of piece, all that friendly advice, and the final tableau was very moving.





In *Dummy* by **Jude Bridge**, Guy and Jinx (**Samantha Zinner** and **Callum Mooney**) have two very different personalities... although basically they are the same person. **Katharine Babatzanis** directs.

Technically difficult to never speak at the same time, the two characters really popped off the page and their interactions were very physically clever. She with a limited range of movement, her hands and face particularly good, and he limited in his travel around her. The audience were well amused by her acerbic tone and his frustration at having to explain his creation. Great sound effects in playground and chatter and the spooky music for the end.



*The Golden Years*

*The Golden Years* by **Joe Starzyk** (US) with **Felicity Burke** (who also directed) and **Duncan Armitage**. Mable and Norman have been together so long, they know everything there is to know about each other. Or do they?

The witty dialogue, comic accents and stylised movement are delivered with deadpan precision. This offering is replete with repressed emotion and yet tells a complete story with sunny side up dignity and aplomb.

*The Dancing Lessons* by **Connie Schindewolf** (US). **Craig Simms** directs **Ingrid Lenert, Matt Oxley, Melissa Saxton** and **Teresa Spencer-Plane**. Catherine is desperate to connect with her mother, Miriam, a dementia patient. as a last resort she brings some things from her mother's past to spur a reaction.

This production was heartwarming and affecting and it made effective use of music, piano and strings in music box style, to develop the audience engagement and support the emotional impact. The vignettes are well chosen and the play does not overdo the nostalgic elements at the cost of the present. And the focused, well directed performances kept the piece out of the maudlin. A personal note of appreciation for the beautifully created blue and pink dress with the stunning lined petticoat, when she twirled it was just lovely!



*HMS Headwind*

*HMS Headwind* is a musical comedy that follows Abigail Pirate Queen and Captain Abernathy as they battle it out over whose crew is ship shape. **Alicia Badger, Jarrod Kitto, Alex Fenner, Laura Bailey, Sean Bermingham** and **Nathan Bolton** are the cast. Directed by **Amelia Gilday** and written by Michael Shapiro.

This offering fit neatly into the 10 minute format. We get just enough character to enjoy them and there is enough story to provide context and

a surprise conclusion. The music is enjoyable, especially 'Perilous Heart' and the choreo is well created for non-dancers on a small stage, the 'Cat Stalk particularly clever. The voices do very well against the backing track, always difficult, and they are obviously having an highly infectious fun time.



*Butterfly Wings*

*Butterfly Wings* by **Adam Szudrich** and directed by **Georgia Drinan** has **Richard Littlehales** as a young boy with the genetic skin condition epidermolysis bullosa. He is making decisions about growing up when faced with an uncertain future.

The warmth of the actor is evident from the first time he speaks directly to the audience and our engagement with him doesn't falter. His optimism and perky, upbeat delivery is delightful as he creates a picture of want and this has a lovely build up in the writing. He wants not for material things but for experience. A delightfully written conclusion to this piece.



*To End Where You Began*

*To End Where You Began*: We have nothing but the threat of memory to connect us to our past. The thread of memory and the beat of our heart. **Valentina Buay** performs her self devised and directed piece.

A coherent creation, well written for the short format, this piece was a gentle and reflective interpretive offering which put the performer's considerable dance and movement skills on display. The limited use of the colourful, reflective tape was a very effective throughline for the work as was the use of the metronome. The recap at the end was clever scripting to tie together the clearly delineated stages inside the piece.



*Vietnam Zippos* is written by **J. Weintraub** (Chicago USA). The trajectory of the Vietnam War from beginning to end, as told by the inscriptions the soldiers engraved on Zippo lighters they carried. Directed by **Erika Lydrama** with **David Neill, Chloe Byrd, Matthew Taylor** and **Sean Foster**.

This piece is becoming a bit of a favourite in schools and short form theatre comps. It is reliant on voice and performance and has a resonant and powerful story to tell. This production made effective use of sound effects, choppers over and echoey rumble under. The matter of fact uninvolved narrators in stark contrast to the soldiers living through it and sharing it was neatly directed. The cast all gave powerful performances. Deceptively simple, an incendiary indictment.



*Wake the Dead*

*Enough To Wake The Dead* where three sisters reunite after their mother's death is directed by **Michael Harris** and written by **Catherine McKernan Doris**. The cast: **Maria Karambelas, Vanessa Moltzen, Stephen Penn, Celia Kelly, Jessica Loudon and Elouise Eftos**.

Having 'Danny Boy' on the audio really helped set the scene here and the accents were well maintained throughout. The interjections from the dead granny were very comical, neatly placed and fitted easily into the fracas that was going on around her. The cast worked very well as an ensemble and the characters all made an immediate impact, keeping the hysteria high and the avarice entertaining.



Balls Alive is about a passionate air band who must decide whether they have what it takes to make it to the top, or if they are trying to hold onto something that really isn't there. Written by **Brian Wallace** and directed by **Zoe Tomaras** with **Suriya Ticehurst, Tyler Cross** and **Anton Smilek**.

These guys were having a whale of a time and their delight was infectious and engaging. The mime was great, plugging and unplugging and packing up and the air guitar, award worthy. The very,very clever use of pause before the puns and invisible illusions was carried off expertly so that the audience got there first! Great fun.

**The winners of SHORT + SWEET THEATRE, 2018 will be announced on Saturday 7th March.**

All photos by Chris Lundie.

Tom Mann Theatre- 136 Chalmers Street Surry Hills.

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