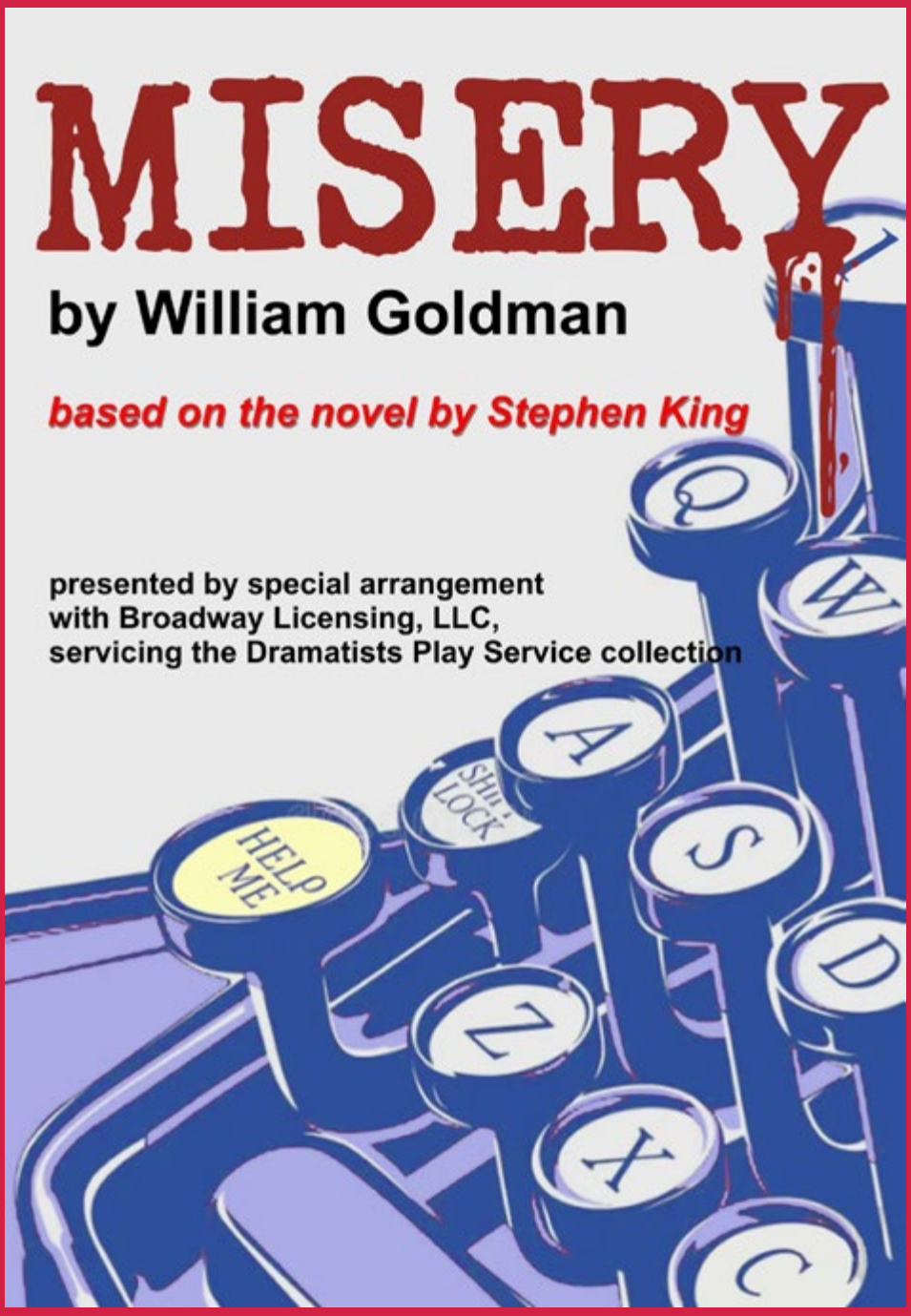
malvern theatre company

is proud to present its 384th major production



19 June – 4 July 2026

Directed by Keith Hutton

Cast

Annie Wilkes ..... Helen Ellis

Paul Sheldon ..... Nick Walter

Buster ..... Nicholas Opolski

About the Play

Misery by William Goldman, based on the novel by Stephen King presented by special arrangement with Broadway Licensing, LLC, servicing the Dramatists Play Service collection.

Original Broadway production produced by Warner Bros. Theatre Ventures in association with Castle Rock Entertainment, Liz Glotzer, Mark Kaufman, Martin Shafer, Raymond Wu. World Premiere produced at Bucks County Playhouse, New Hope, PA (Jed Bernstein, Producing Director).

Paul Sheldon, successful romance writer, and creator of the beloved character Misery Chastain, drives off the road during a snowstorm in the Colorado Mountains. He wakens in the home of his "number one fan", Annie, who vows to help him recuperate. Paul slowly realizes that her obsession with his work is far from benign. When Annie learns that Paul intends to kill off Misery, her behaviour becomes increasingly erratic. What ensues is a nail-biting game of cat-and-mouse survival for Paul.

Misery is a tense psychological thriller exploring celebrity and fandom, and the line between obsession and madness. From the chilling novel by Stephen King, adapted by Academy-Award winner William Goldman, this production will keep audiences on the edge of their seats from start to finish.

About the Playwright

William Goldman

William Goldman was born in 1931 and died in 2018. He wrote 16 novels and numerous screenplays in a career spanning seven decades. During this time he won Academy Awards for his screenplays for *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* and *All the President's Men*. In his later years he served as a mentor to a number of writers including Aaron Sorkin, no less! His list of screenplay credits is extensive, however he has written only four stage plays or adaptations, *Misery* is his best-known, with good reason. He has adapted this Stephen King classic novel into a truly thrilling theatrical experience.

Setting

Annie Wilkes' cabin home in the remote mountains of Colorado, USA in 1987.

The performance runs for approximately 2 hours, including a 20 minute interval.

Complimentary tea, coffee and biscuits will be available during the interval. Wine will also be available for purchase.

TRIGGER WARNING

Depictions of extreme violence and death.



Helen Ellis – *Annie Wilkes*

This is Helen's seventh production with Malvern Theatre Company. On stage Helen appeared as 'Myra' in *Deathtrap* in 2023 (directed by Keith Hutton), 'Mrs Muller' in *Doubt* in 2007 and 'Alice' in *Pizza Man* (also with Nick Walter) in 1998. Helen also directed *Last Gas* in 2018, *The Flick* in 2021 and *Appleton Ladies' Potato Race* in 2025 for Malvern Theatre Company. Playing 'Annie Wilkes' has been on her bucket list for some time and she has found the role truly challenging.

Helen has performed with many other theatre groups around Melbourne, most recently as 'Georgie' in *Heisenberg* (opposite Keith Hutton) at The Basin Theatre Company, 'Maude' in *Bakersfield Mist* (opposite Nick Opolski) at Brighton Theatre Company, 'Beth' in *'Til Beth Do Us Part* at 1812 Theatre (also directed by Keith Hutton). Other favourite roles include 'Shirley' in *Shirley Valentine*, 'Rita' in *Educating Rita* (directed by Nick Walter), 'Bella' in *Lost in Yonkers*, 'The Woman' in *The Vandal*, 'Truvy' in *Steel Magnolias*, 'Martha' in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, 'Sadie' in *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice*, 'Olive' in *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*.



Nick Walter – *Paul Sheldon*

Nick is delighted to be returning to Malvern Theatre Company after a 27-year absence. In 1998 he played the title role in *Pizza Man*, also as Helen's captive! In 1999 he played 'Adam' in *Time of My Life*, where he met his wife, Jenn. In the early 2000s, Nick performed with community theatre groups including Peridot Theatre, Heidelberg Theatre Company, Brighton Theatre Company, The 1812 Theatre, Encore Theatre Company, Eltham Little Theatre, Sherbrooke Theatre Company and CPP Community Theatre. More recently he has worked extensively with Nuworks Theatre and performed in award-winning shows at Edinburgh, Adelaide and Auckland Fringe Festivals. Favourite roles include 'Arthur' in *Belfast*, 'Malachy' in *Patrick and the IRA*, and 'Iago' in *FAWK*.

A lover of the classics, in particular Shakespeare, Nick has appeared in *Hamlet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Electra* in Stratford Upon Avon in England and on European tours. He has trained with Shakespeare's Globe, Donmar Warehouse, Frantic Assembly (London) and Sydney Theatre Company. Nick has directed and designed over 70 productions - most recently the inaugural, sell out season of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Heartsleeve Creatives, a company he co-founded.



Nicholas Opolski – *Buster*

Nicholas has a long association with Malvern Theatre Company, appearing in such plays as *33 Variations*, *Julius Caesar*, *The Man who Came to Dinner*, *The Mystery of Irma Vep*, *Our Town*, *Witness for the Prosecution*, and most recently, as the doomed 'Anton' in *The Visit*. Other appearances in theatres across Melbourne and interstate include *Good People* (Mordialloc Theatre Company), *Bakersfield Mist* (Brighton Theatre Company) *The Winter's Tale* (Nimrod Theatre Company), *Macbeth* (Riverina Theatre Company), *A Night of Grand Guignol* (Carlton Courthouse) and *The Jewels of Edith Sitwell* (Belvoir St Theatre Company).

As Director, his credits with Malvern Theatre Company include *Dracula*, *Never the Sinner*, *And Then There Were None*, *The Lady in the Van*, *Educating Rita*, and last year's *A Happy and Holy Occasion.* He has also directed for Brighton Theatre Company (*Dinner with Friends*, *Chilling and Killing My Annabel Lee*), La Mama Theatre (*Virginia*), and Avid Theatre Company (*Hamlet*). Television includes episodes of *G.P.*, *Blue Heelers*, *A Country Practice*, *Satisfaction*, *Neighbours*, *Bananas in Pyjamas*, and *Playschool.* Nicholas is Artistic Director of Malvern Theatre Company.



Keith Hutton
Director

Keith's 58-year love affair with the stage began way back in 1968 when he performed in a production of *Oliver*. Some 130 theatre productions later in both Australia and the UK, he's still dressing up and playing 'make-believe'. However, over the past 15 years he has also directed a number of productions, most recently at Williamstown Little Theatre with *Jeeves and Wooster* in 2025. This is Keith's second directorial venture at Malvern Theatre Company, having directed *Deathtrap* in 2023. Keith has also performed in four previous productions on the Malvern Theatre Company stage namely, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, *The Subject was Roses*, *The Farnsworth Invention* and *Witness for the Prosecution*.

Director's Notes

Misery presents a rather uncommon aspect for a Director, in that it is so well-known and therefore audiences of this adaptation of the classic Stephen King novel, will arrive with expectations, already knowing the plot lines. Stephen King published *Misery* in 1987 becoming an international best-seller. There followed a movie starring Kathy Bates and James Caan in 1990, plus two stage adaptations by Simon Moore in 1992 and William Goldman in 2015. It is the latter adaptation we present to you tonight.

Mr Goldman's adaptation was written with a stage revolve in mind, as there are five different scene settings. Very few community theatre companies have such a facility, therefore much creative thinking was required of our excellent set designer, Andrew McMillan. Added to this, are a number of special effects which have required much thought and collaboration.

Misery is a dark tale containing themes of extreme violence, manipulation and uncontrolled fanaticism. My hope is that this production will stir much discussion among our audiences on their way home!

Thanks to our Sponsors

L'Olivo is a small, family-owned restaurant located at 171 Waverley Rd in Malvern East. Show your ticket for a 10% discount off your total bill. Visit **lolivo.com.au**.

Fletchers is a proud, fourth-generation family-based real estate agency, with a 100+ year history.
Visit **fletchers.net.au**.

Menzies Malvern is a contemporary retirement village, providing an exceptional lifestyle in the heart of cosmopolitan Melbourne. Further details at **menziesmalvern.com.au.**

Via Fratelli is a traditional Italian restaurant located at 151 Waverley Rd, Malvern East. Mention the show at the time of booking for a 10% discount off your total bill.
Visit **viafratelli.com.au.**

Community Bank Malvern East is a local bank with 23 years history dedicated to servicing the community. Further details at **bendigobank.com.au/branch/vic/community-bank-malvern-east**.

Production Team

Director ..... Keith Hutton
Stage Manager ..... Linda Corrin
Set Designer ..... Andrew McMillan
Lighting Designers ..... Michael Birkett, Caitlyn Sorensen
Set Electrics ..... Michael Birkett
Sound Designer ..... Tim Long
Costume Designers ..... Bev Atkinson, Barbara Murray
Scenic Painting ..... Janine Evans
Lighting and Sound Operator ..... Alex Kormas
Rehearsal Prompt ..... Nicholas Opolski
Technical Director ..... Michael Birkett
Set Construction ..... David Allen, Noel Ellis, Peter Erlanger, Andrew McMillan, Graeme Munro, Max Murray, Toula Psevodikonomou
Production Coordinator ..... Nicholas Opolski
Programme Designer ..... Janine Evans
Programme Coordinator ..... Jade Colletti
Photography ..... Lorraine Bell
Publicity ..... Blake Stringer
FOH Manager ..... Judy Clues
Ticketbox Manager ..... David Gordon
Ticket Secretary ..... Kerry Carr



Andrew McMillan
Set Designer

Andrew has designed sets for Malvern Theatre Company's productions of *The Humans*, *The Lady in the Van*, *Twentieth Century*, *Dead Man's Cell Phone* and *Life Goes On*. Other productions include *Bloody Murder*, *Red*, *Echoes*, *Three Days of Rain*, *Morning Sacrifice*, *Dinkum Assorted*, *The Mystery of Irma Vep*, *Act a Lady*, *Camberwell House*, *Losing Your Marbles*, *Sure Thing*, *Popscars*, *The Gun in History*, *Away*, and *Measure for Measure*.

Calling All Volunteers

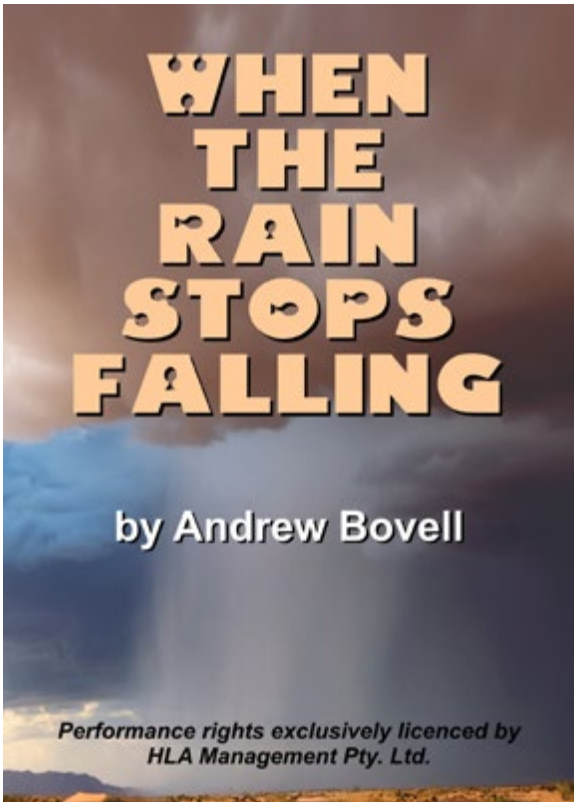
Would you like to volunteer at Malvern Theatre? There are many opportunities to be involved. Please visit our website and click on the 'Volunteer' tab to express your interest.

Proud member of
2026
THE VICTORIAN DRAMA LEAGUE

Next at Malvern Theatre Company

When the Rain Stops Falling

By Andrew Bovell



Alice Springs in the year 2039. A fish falls from the sky and lands at the feet of Gabriel Lord. It's been raining for days, and Gabriel knows that something is wrong. Eighty years earlier, his grandfather had predicted that fish would fall from the sky, heralding calamity.

Written by award-winning Andrew Bovell ('Lantana'), the action takes place between the worlds of these two men, spanning continents and generations. Interweaving human stories and environmental concerns, the play asks how can we face the future, without understanding the past? This epic play, of family legacies, betrayals and forgiveness, will be a production not to be missed.

Directed by Peter Newling

21 August – 5 September 2026

To book tickets, visit our website at malverntheatre.com.au/book-tickets or phone 1300 131 552.

Acknowledgements

Malvern Theatre Company acknowledges that we are performing on the traditional land of the Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri People and offer our respects to their elders past, present and emerging.

Malvern Theatre Company is very grateful for the support provided by the City of Stonnington.

We would like to thank the following people for their additional support of this production, without whom the show would not be what it is: Janine Evans (scenic painting), Neil Barnett (construction and loan of props), Bob Bramble, Geelong Repertory Theatre Company, Greg Shawcross, Belle Shawcross. and Margaret Baxter.

As an organisation, we take pride in supporting the local volunteer network in the community and the charitable organisations that underpin this important work. As such, we have donated all benefits of the Charity Night performance to the following organisations:

- Lions Ashwood/Mt Waverley
- Lions Carnegie
- Compassionate Friends Victoria.

If you are a member of a volunteer group or a charitable organisation and would like to raise funds by arranging a group to attend our Charity Night Preview Performance, please contact us at malverntheatrecompany@gmail.com.