

AN AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE

NEIL LABUTE

# IF I NEEDED SOMEONE

THE LIVING ROOM  
DECEMBER 3 - 7



BEARTIGER PRODUCTIONS X THE AMERICAS  
A THEATRE COMPANY

# DIRECTOR'S NOTE

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*If I Needed Someone* marks a uniquely personal milestone for me; a return to the stage after a ten-year hiatus, and one made possible through the generosity and brilliance of so many collaborators.

Working with Neil LaBute on this production has been a rare privilege. His trust, insight, and direct involvement – including casting me as Jules – made this process both creatively challenging and deeply rewarding. Neil's writing demands honesty from everyone in the room, and that honesty has been our north star throughout rehearsals.

A special note of gratitude goes to Uncle Gary: a beloved mentor and now collaborator, whose steady guidance and sensitivity have helped shape the integrity and emotional truth of this production.

Self-directing is one of the most demanding and enlightening creative experiences of my career. It requires a kind of radical vulnerability, one that was only made possible by the openness and support of this extraordinary ensemble and crew.

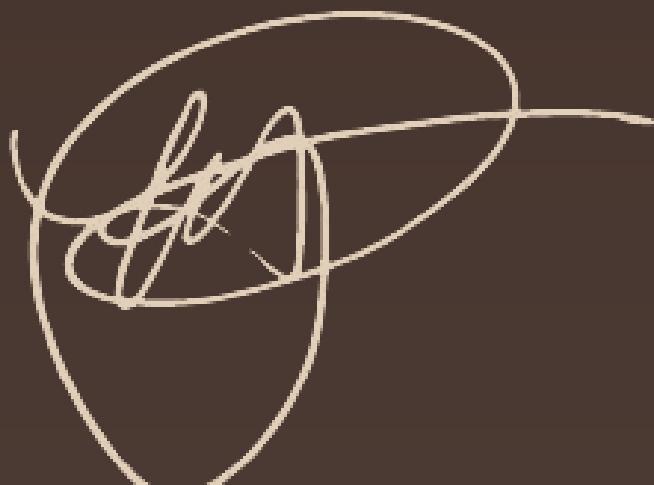
To our alternates, who set the tone for our production, your trust and courage have elevated every moment. And to Josh, thank you for making this return to the stage not just possible, but joyful. Your generosity, humor, and grounding presence have been a gift.

Ultimately, this production is a meditation on connection – fragile, imperfect, and utterly necessary.

Thank you for being with us.

**Kai Paynter**

Director



# IF I NEEDED SOMEONE

The Americas, A Theatre Company is thrilled to present the Australian premiere of our friend, Neil LaBute's, incredible and unpublished two-hander *If I Needed Someone*.

One night, one apartment, and one search for connection in a world full of miscommunication. Two people – recently acquainted, equally hopeful and wary – collapse into a late-evening encounter that quickly turns into a sharp-tongued tour of desire, power plays and modern relational minefields.

In his signature style, LaBute turns intimacy into a tightrope walk: will they say the 'right' thing – or just the least wrong one? A razor-sharp two-hander that reminds us how difficult it can be to know ourselves, let alone someone else.

## Performances

**Kai Paynter & Josh Long:**

Opening Night: 3 December, 7pm

4 December, 7pm

5 December, 6.30pm

6 December, 6.30pm

Closing Night: 7 December, 6:30pm

## Venue

The Living Room

457/459 Elizabeth St,  
Surry Hills NSW 2010

## Duration

1 hour 30 minutes  
without an intermission.

**Holly Thompson & Jacob Lane (Alternates):**

5 December, 8.30pm

6 December, 8.30pm

## Content Warnings

Recommended for mature audiences, 16+. This production contains strong language, alcohol use, moments of sexual intimacy and tension, and simulated vomiting. It also explores themes of consent, loneliness, vulnerability, and emotional conflict. Viewer discretion is advised.

# TEAM

## PLAYWRIGHT

NEIL LABUTE

## JULES

KAI PAYNTER

## DIRECTOR

KAI PAYNTER

## JIM

JOSHUA LONG

## EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

BEARTIGER PRODUCTIONS

## JULES, ALTERNATE

HOLLY WOOD THOMPSON

## PRODUCER

THE AMERICAS, A THEATRE CO.

## JIM, ALTERNATE

JACOB LANE

## INTRIMACY COORDINATOR

DR. DANIEL GARY BUSBY

## DRAMATURG

DR. DANIEL GARY BUSBY

## STAGE CREW

SHARITA SIMPSON

## PRODUCTION MANAGER

RUBY JENSON

## TIANA MEEHAN

AISHA ONIPE

## PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

CLEO VERNON

## MARKETING

EDDIE LANGFORD



# NEIL LABUTE

## PLAYWRIGHT

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Neil LaBute is an acclaimed playwright, screenwriter, and director known for his provocative and uncompromising voice in contemporary theater and film. His stage work includes *In the Company of Men*, *Fat Pig*, *Reasons to Be Pretty*, *The Shape of Things*, and *The Mercy Seat*, among others—productions that have premiered in New York, London, and beyond.

LaBute's work often explores the complexities of human relationships, morality, and modern identity with razor-sharp dialogue and emotional intensity. His screen credits include *In the Company of Men*, *The Wicker Man*, *Your Friends & Neighbors*, and *Possession*. A recipient of numerous awards and fellowships, LaBute continues to be a significant and provocative voice in American storytelling. *If I Needed Someone* is part of his ongoing commitment to exploring the raw, intimate moments that define human connection.



# KAI PAYNTER

## DIRECTOR & JULES

Kai Paynter is a New York artist, now based in Sydney and local to Los Angeles. She is the founder of @theamericastheatreco and co-founder of @beartiger.productions with partner @kirk\_hastings

A graduate of the University of California, Irvine (MFA Acting, summa cum laude) and Purdue University (BA Honors, Political Science), Kai studied under renowned theatre icon, Robert Cohen.

Kai began her career as a featured soloist with PMO, performing on PBS holiday specials and internationally, including at Neil Armstrong's Hall of Fame induction. Her early stage work includes the principal role of Ruby in *Seven Guitars*, Sophie in *Ruined* (dir. Kent Thompson), and Jamie in *The Furies* (World Premiere) by Neil LaBute. On screen, she has appeared on CBS's *Criminal Minds* opposite Joe Mantegna, and was featured in *US Airways Inflight Magazine* for her portrayal of Abigail in *The Crucible*, which recognized UC Irvine as the "#1 training institution for young creative talent."

Commercially, Kai has been featured in brand campaigns like *Apple*, *Honda*, *Boost Mobile*, and others. Known for her dialect mastery, she is especially adept in regional American, British, African, and Islander accents.

As a director / producer her credits include *A Beheading in Spokane*, *All the Ways to Say I Love You*, *Amongst the Living*, *The Money Shot*, *When She Loves Me* (writer), *This is L-O-V-E* (co-writer), *No Direction Home*, *Megan*, *L-O-V-E* (co-writer), *Brave People*, *Suds*, *Hello Dolly*, *Crazy for You*, and *Honk: The Ugly Duckling*. She has also produced actor showcases, sizzle reels, pilots, and music videos.

Kai is the recipient of the 2024 *Sydney Short+Sweet Festival* Awards for Best Director and Best Play. She has coached celebrity talent in Sydney & Los Angeles, and mentored students accepted into programs at Yale School of Drama, Columbia University, and NYU Tisch.

*If I Needed Someone* marks Kai's return to the stage after a 10-year hiatus. More at  
[www.KaiPaynter.com](http://www.KaiPaynter.com)



## KIRK HASTINGS

### CO-OPERATOR | BEARTIGER PRODUCTIONS

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@kirk\_hastings is co-founder of @beartiger.productions (with his wife @kai.paynter) and recently starred as Steve in the Australian Premiere of *The Money Shot*.

His producer credits include *All the Ways to Say I Love You*, *Amongst the Living*, *Megan*, *No Direction Home*, several music videos, and a pilot sizzle reel. Kirk's film and TV credits include *Deadly Women* (Foxtel), *Bite Club* (Channel 9), *Last King of the Cross* (Stan).

His theatre work includes 2024 Short+Sweet Festival, Sydney winner – Best Play for *Brave People*, *L-O-V-E*, and *THIS IS L-O-V-E*. Kirk has trained in the Meisner Technique at Actor's Pulse Studio, Sydney.



## RUBY JENSON

### BEARTIGER PRODUCTIONS | CHIEF OF STAFF

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Ruby is excited to be collaborating for the eighth time with Kai & Kirk to bring *If I Needed Someone* to life. Her production credits include *A Behanding In Spokane*, *All the Ways to Say I Love You*, *Amongst the Living* (Playwright), *The Money Shot* (Intimacy Co-ordinator), *This is L-O-V-E*, *No Direction Home* (Intimacy Co-ordinator) and *L-O-V-E*.

Ruby has an extensive background as a corporate project manager and has always been passionate about the arts, ensuring creative voices have the opportunity to be heard.

She has completed training with Sydney Actors Association, AFTRS, NIDA and Actors Centre Australia.



## DR. DANIEL GARY BUSBY

### BOARD OF DIR, INTIMACY COORDINATOR & DRAMATURG

Dr Busby is a veteran conductor, pianist, singing teacher and producer. He had conducted everything from Stravinsky's *The Rakes Progress* to Stephen Schwartz's *Godspell*, equally comfortable in operatic, music theater, and cabaret genres.

As conductor, Busby has toured Europe and South America, conducting in Berlin, Leipzig, Budapest, Vienna, Florence, Rome, Venice and Bogotá. He most recently was music director/conductor for the production of *Fun Home* with the Perseverance Theatre of Alaska, the state's largest arts organization. He was a regular music director with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, helming award winning productions of *Oklahoma!*, *Pirates of Penzance*, *She Loves Me*, *La Cage aux Folles*, *Falsettoland*, and *The Music Man*.

Busby was Principal Conductor for the Los Angeles Civic Light Opera (Civic Light Opera of South Bay Cities) from 2009 to 2011. With Artistic Director Stephanie Coltrin he collaborated on CLOSBC productions of *Seussical, the Musical*, *Bark! The Musical*, *1940s Radio Hour*, and *She Loves Me*. Other Los Angeles credits include musically directing and co-producing *Oh My Goodness! It's Paul Lynde*, and *The Big Show with Ester Goldberg*, starring Michael Airington.

Before joining the faculty of UC Irvine in 2003, Dr. Busby was the Associate Director of the Ray Bolger Program in Musical Theater in the School of Theater, Film and Television at UCLA.

Busby served as Chair of the Department of Drama at UC Irvine from January 2013 to June 2019.



## JOSHUA LONG

### JIM

Born and raised in the northern beaches of Perth, Western Australia, Joshua Long began his acting career at The Actors' Hub in 2020. During his 4 year tenure he performed in 20 theatre shows, with roles of note being Mark Anthony (*Julius Caesar* 2020), Antipholus of Syracuse (*Comedy of Errors* 2021), Knox (*One Off*, 2023), Katurian Katurian (*The Pillowman*, 2023) and as Eddie (*Hurlyburly*, 2021) as well as the playing John in the feature film *In Sect* (dir. Amanda Crewes, 2024).

Since his recent move to Sydney, Joshua has continued working in film in roles such as Dan in the short-film 'Chat' (dir Zain Ayub 2024), Damien in the upcoming feature 'Olivia' (dir. Genna Channelle Hayes) and Beau in the upcoming short film 'We're not Here to F\*\*\* Turtles' (dir. Clarence Lin Thein).



## HOLLY WOOD THOMPSON

### JULES, ALTERNATE

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Holly Wood Thompson is a Sydney-based actor with dual Australian and US citizenship. Trained primarily in Meisner and PEM, she has studied at various institutions including Acting Mastery, PEM Studios, AMAW and Sydney Acting Studio. With a background in filmmaking, Holly brings a unique perspective to her performances.

Known for her quirky sense of humour and sharp comedic instincts, she has a flair for portraying delusional and unconventional characters. She is honing her improvisation skills and recently completed Level 1 training at Improv Theatre Sydney, further expanding her comedic range and spontaneity on screen and stage.



## JACOB LANE

### JIM, ALTERNATE

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Jacob Lane is thrilled to be joining The Americas Theatre Co as the alternate for "Jim" in *If I Needed Someone*. Having performed extensively in Perth, Jacob has appeared in a wide range of productions including *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, *Shrine, Dinner*, and *The Man From Earth*, for which he received the Robert Finley Award for Best Actor in a Play.

His experience spans both contemporary drama and classic stage works, and he is passionate about exploring complex, emotionally rich characters that connect deeply with audiences. Having relocated to New South Wales last year, *If I Needed Someone* marks Jacob's Sydney theatre debut.



## EDDIE LANGFORD

### MARKETING

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Eddie Langford is a Sydney-based singer/actor who graduated from The Australian Institute of Music in 2022. He is a member of the acapella group 'The Spare Keys', whom have their yearly concert coming up in December, called 'Pitchcraft'.

He loves theatre and has been a part of many University and Community productions, including playing Paul in *Company* (Regals Musical Society, 2025), Adam in *Freaky Friday* (Hills Musical Theatre Co., 2025), Officer Lockstock in *Urinetown* (MUSE, 2024), Ensemble/Nicky's Right Hand in *Avenue Q* (Blackout Theatre Co., 2024), Anthony the Squirrel in *Nutz!: A New Musical* (MUSE, 2023), and most notably, his favourite role, Leo Bloom in *The Producers* (Holroyd Musical & Dramatic Society, 2023). He is @eddiejlangford on Instagram.



## CLEO VERNON

### PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

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Originally from New Zealand, Cleo Vernon is a creative at heart with a background in project management and a love for all things theatre.

Having recently relocated to Sydney, she's thrilled to dive into her first production in the city. Known for her enthusiasm, organisation, and flair for collaboration, Cleo is passionate about helping make a little backstage magic happen!



# SHARITA SIMPSON

## STAGE CREW

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Sharita Simpson is a passionate creative from New York who finds purpose in authenticity, growth, and human connection. Now based in Sydney for love, she continues to explore her voice and artistry through storytelling and collaboration.

Sharita is inspired by the emotional honesty that theatre brings to life the moments that make people feel seen, heard, and understood. Her journey is rooted in resilience, creativity, and the belief that every story, no matter how small, holds power and meaning.



# TIANA MEEHAN

## STAGE CREW

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Tiana Meehan is a proud Wiradjuri woman, actor and performer with a love for theatre and film.

Her credits include performances with The Americas, playing Dr. Martha Livingston in Agnes of God / Amongst The Living, the Logie Awards with Todd McKenney, on The Voice for Guy Sebastian, and in commercials for I'm A Celebrity S8 and David Jones, as well as music videos for The Veronicas and Amy Shark.

In Australia, Tiana has completed her Diploma in Performing Arts and trained at Screenwise and TAFTA. She has also studied and performed internationally at the Broadway Dance Center, Joffrey Ballet School, and Alvin Ailey in New York City, as well as in cities like Beijing, Los Angeles, and Las Vegas. Additionally, she has had the opportunity to learn from legends such as Ann Reinking, Chryssie Whitehead, and Alexis Carra.



# AISHA ONIPE

## STAGE CREW

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Aisha is a passionate nursing and nail tech student dedicated to making a positive impact. With a heart for service, she loves to fill her time on projects that benefit her community, always looking for ways to give back and lend a helping hand. Whether it's providing care through nursing or bringing confidence and self-expression through nail artistry, she is driven by a deep desire to help others and make a difference in their lives.

In her free time, Aisha enjoys expanding her skills, learning new techniques, and exploring opportunities to volunteer, believing that every small act of kindness can lead to a larger impact.

3 - 7 DECEMBER, 2025

## TICKETS AVAILABLE AT

<https://events.humanitix.com/the-americas-a-theatre-company-presents-if-i-needed-someone>

THE  
**AMERICAS**  
A THEATRE COMPANY



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