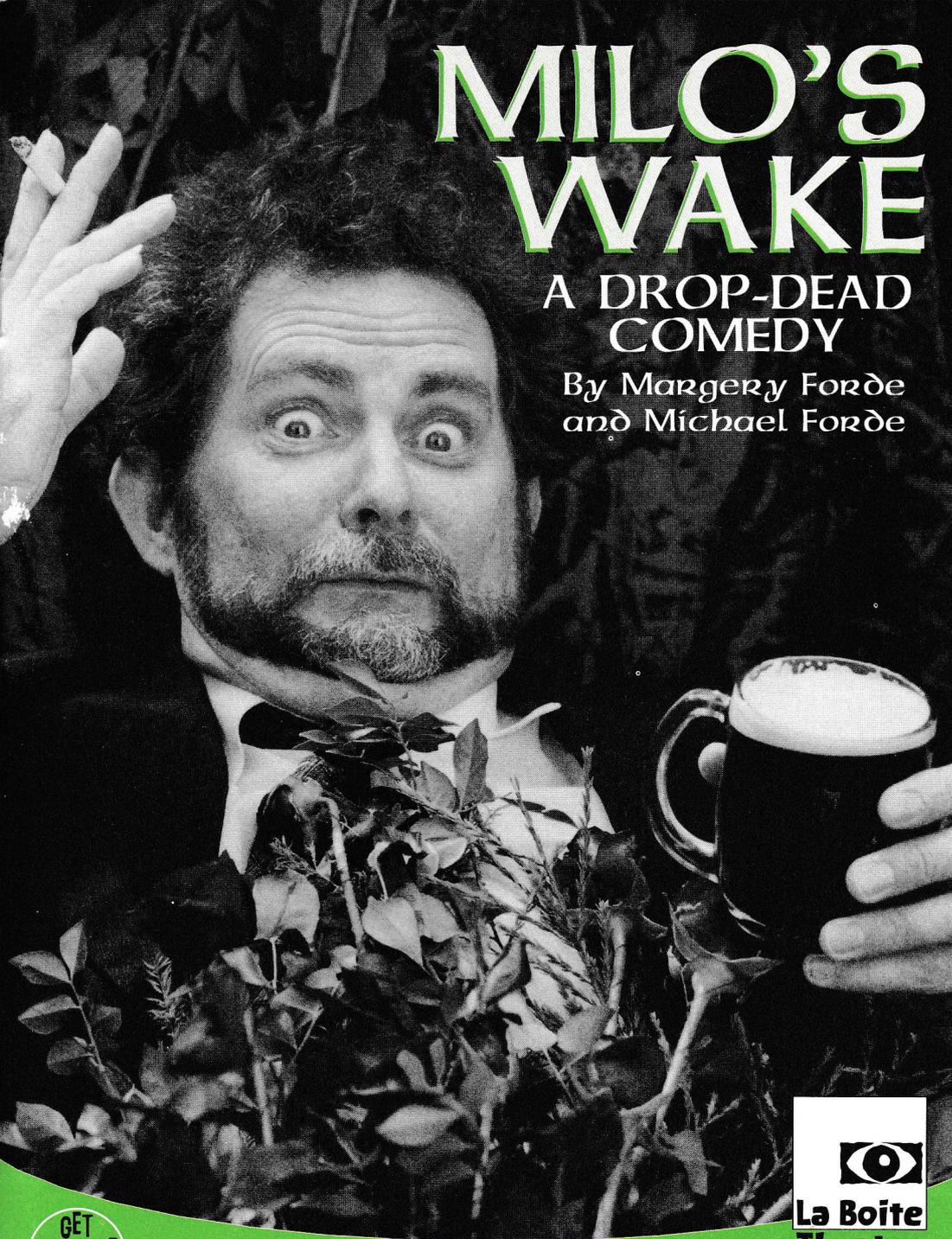


# MILO'S WAKE

A DROP-DEAD  
COMEDY

By Margery Forde  
and Michael Forde



GET  
INTIMATE  
WITH US



La Boite  
Theatre

17 AUGUST – 9 SEPTEMBER 2000

## ***Note from Artistic Director***

*Milo's Wake* is the latest achievement in a proud collection of 15 world premiere plays produced at La Boite Theatre over the past 8 years. 12 of these have been Queensland written, 6 have been published and 3 have gone on to tour interstate. Several have broken box-office records. Margery Forde's *X-Stacy* has been one of the success stories. Produced in 1998, it played an extended season, returned the following year to a record sell-out season, toured regional Queensland and the Northern Territory and travels interstate in October this year. Such success does not happen overnight. *X-Stacy* was more than a year in the making and Margery and I have been in discussion since then about commissioning a play which explored an aspect of the Irish experience in Australia. Many scenarios, drafts and two script development workshops later, *Milo's Wake* by Margery and Michael Forde has emerged as a wonderfully original tale of a man and his family, told with humour, compassion and music to tickle our fancies and stir our souls. *Milo's Wake* is well served by a group of Brisbane's finest creative artists and I take special pleasure in welcoming Sean Mee back to the boards.

*Sue Rider*

## ***Director's Note***

When first invited to direct *Milo's Wake*, I wondered about the idea of a wake as a dramatic device for a play. Who would believe that someone would hold his own wake before he died? Apparently though, it is not an unusual occurrence: one Brisbane man is on his seventh wake while still hale and hearty.

A wake provides rich ingredients for a party...and a play: a bit of 'craic', lots of songs, traditional stories, contemporary jokes, telling home truths and plenty of Guinness. It is from these dynamic elements that Margery and Michael Forde have fused a powerfully funny and poignant examination of a family of Irish migrants in Brisbane.

*Milo's Wake* works on a number of levels. On one level it takes the micky out of the contemporary 'sure and begorrah' tradition: the stereotyping of what charms us about the Irish. Beyond the stereotypical, however, exist the multi-layered realities of many migrant experiences: the hard yakka, the humiliations and the lack of status, disorientation and the continuous friction between what is often regarded in Australia as easily discarded cultural baggage and the demands of a new life.

Milo's struggle out of the bog – starting afresh in a new country – has consumed him for 20 years. Success has made the hardship endurable; his family has always been the centre of his world. That is until a tragic event shatters Milo's world. It is here that the play takes on a universal significance.

The wake is Milo's last ditch attempt to make sense of what suddenly no longer has any sense. Through the journey of the play Milo accepts that all we have is each other and that that has to be enough. With this acceptance, Milo's humanity gains a concrete and unassailable dignity. He can finally shrug off the 'bog man' who has haunted him all along and simply become a man.

*Jim Vilé*

# Milo's Wake

by Margery Forde and Michael Forde

Queensland Written — World Premiere

Opening night Thursday 17 August 2000

## *Cast (in order of appearance)*

Milo ..... Sean Mee  
Maura ..... Sue Dwyer  
Ned ..... Paul Denny  
Brooke ..... Jacki Mison  
Irish Band ..... The Wren Boys — David Megarrity & Gary Nunn

Director ..... Jim Vilé  
Designer ..... Noelene Hill  
Lighting Designer ..... Matt Scott  
Music Director ..... Erin Murphy  
Stage Manager ..... Patricia Miller  
Assistant to the Director ..... Andrew Miller  
Assistant Stage Manager ..... Anika Vilee  
Lighting Operator ..... Denbi Newton  
Research Assistant ..... Emma Astill (UQ Secondment)  
Teachers' Notes ..... Collette Brennan, Karen Melloy  
Graphics ..... ToadShow  
Printing ..... Viper Graphics  
Paper Supplied by ..... Raleigh Paper  
Photography ..... Grant Heaton

**There will be a 20 minute interval**

“What happens most often is not protracted grief, but a period of levity, of clowning, like Hamlet’s clowning, born of the belief that it’s all pointless, life means nothing, and death is its random end, and we either laugh darkly or go under.”

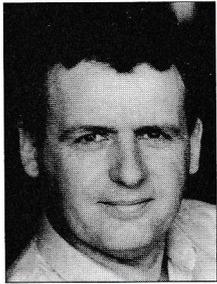
— *Bob Ellis*



### **Margery Forde – Playwright**

Margery has written numerous productions for mainhouse theatre, community theatre and theatre for young people. In 1996 she received an AWGIE award for *Snapshots from Home*, commissioned for QPAT's Prime of Life Arts. (Cremorne Theatre, return season, inaugural Brisbane Festival, Queensland tour). *Snapshots from Home* was published by Playlab Press. Margery also received an Award of Commendation in the Lord Mayor's Australia Day Cultural

Awards. In 1998 Margery received her second AWGIE Award for *What Next?!* a joint production for QPAT and the Ethnic Communities Council. Margery also worked with Linsey Pollak as dramaturg for his production of *Playpen* for QPAT's Out of the Box Festival. Other writing credits include *Ghosts of Something Irish*, *1901*, *Knock 'em Dead*, *My Life is Love*, and *Late Bloomers*. She was commissioned to write *X-Stacy* in 1997 for La Boite Theatre (Brisbane season, return season and national tour in 2000). *X-Stacy* was published by Currency Press, and recently by Dramatic Lines in London. The play also received a special commendation in the 1998 Matilda Awards. *X-Stacy* was short-listed in the Australia 2000 Awards for Excellence in Educational Publishing. Margery's most recent production *Professor Burton's Travelling Federation Show*, co-written with Michael Forde commissioned by the Centenary of Federation, Queensland, is currently touring the State with the Queensland Arts Council.

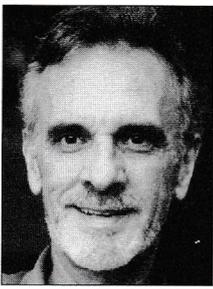


### **Michael Forde – Playwright**

Michael is an actor, director, writer and producer. He is a founding member of KITE, being involved in over forty productions including the joint KITE/QPAT productions *Whose Beach is it Anyway?* and *Solomon and the Big Cat* (ASEA Award for Excellence). Other theatre credits include: *This Old Man Comes Rolling Home*, *Away*, *The Taming of the Shrew* (La Boite); *Philadelphia Here I Come*, *Julius Caesar*, *Sweet Panic* and *Navigating* (QTC); *After Dinner*, *The Popular Mechanicals* (TN!);

*Jerusalem* (green); *Hamlet* (Matrix). For QPAT Michael directed *John Brown Rose* and *The Midnight Cat*, *Motor Bill* and *The Lovely Carolyn* and wrote *Shango*, *A Journey Through Rhythm*. He has toured *Ghosts of Something Irish*, *Knock 'em Dead* and *1901* for the Queensland Arts Council. With Margery Forde he co-wrote and appeared in *Professor Burton's Travelling Federation Show* for Centenary of Federation, Queensland (currently touring with Queensland Arts Council). For the Out of the Box Festival Michael directed Linsey Pollak's *Playpen* (national and international tour) and this year will direct *Wide Awake* for Out of the Box 2000. He is currently appearing in QTC's production of *Killing and Chilling My Annabel Lee*.

## Milo's Wake



### **Jim Vilé – Director**

Jim has worked with every major performing arts company in Brisbane, including La Boite Theatre, Queensland Theatre Company, Opera Queensland, Queensland Ballet, Queensland Philharmonic, Expressions Dance Company, Queensland Conservatorium of Music and the Queensland Performing Arts Trust. Such work has involved directing *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Medea*, *Three Sisters*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Trojan Women*, *The Precious Woman*, *Charley's Circus* (Out of the Box Festival), *Bumpy Angels*, *Evita*, *The Rain Dancers*, *Surf's Up*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Kafka Dances*, *Hildegard* (which received a Matilda Award in 1999) and *Emma Celebrazione!*. He is the inaugural artistic director of Brisbane's unique Cathedrals Week and has already started work on the third festival to be held in 2002. Jim also received a Matilda Award for Service to the community. Over the last 5 years, Jim has developed a special relationship with writers Margery and Michael Forde directing their plays *1901*, *Snapshots from Home* for the Brisbane Festival which toured Queensland, and most recently *Professor Burton's Travelling Federation Show* which is in its second year of touring. *Milo's Wake* marks the latest in this fruitful collaboration.



### **Noelene Hill – Designer**

Noelene's designs for La Boite Theatre include: *First Asylum*, *Wallflowering*, *She of the Electrolux*, *There goes the Neighbourhood*, *Mr Melancholy* and the company's school production *My Shoes are too Big*. She also designed costumes for *Fortune*, *An Ordinary Bloke with a Difference* and *Move Write Along*. Her other design work includes *The Oresteia* and *Coriolanus* (Fractal Theatre 1993); *Scratch 'n' Scrap Opera* (Out of the Box Festival 1994); *Gloss and Double Take* (QUT Academy of the Arts); costume design for *The Golden Age* (USQ) and 2000 production of *Professor Burton's Travelling Federation Show* (Centenary of Federation). Noelene also tutors theatrecraft at QUT and has worked as costumier for La Boite Theatre, Queensland Ballet, Opera Queensland, QUT and Kooemba Jdarra.



### **Matt Scott – Lighting Designer**

La Boite audiences will remember Matt's lighting from the past productions of *Georgia*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *Speaking in Tongues*, *A Beautiful Life*, *Blackrock*, *Supermarket Pavane*, *Long Gone Lonesome Cowgirls*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Hamlet* and *Low*. More recent work includes *Così fan tutte* (Opera Queensland); *Mrs Warren's Profession* (QTC); *Stolen* (national and international tour - Playbox/Ilbjerri); *A Beautiful Life*

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(national tour - Matrix/Performing Lines); *Unleashed* (Zen Zen Zo at the Adelaide Fringe 2000); *The Sunshine Club* (STC). Other past highlights include: *The Sunshine Club*, *Antigone*, *Sweet Panic*, *Radiance*, *Love Child* and *Simpatico* (QTC); *The 7 Stages of Grieving*, *The Dreamers*, *Radiance*, *Murri Love* (Kooemba Jdarra); *The Sick Room*, *Stolen* (which earned him a 1998 Green Room award nomination) and *Thieving Boy/Like Stars in my Hands* (Playbox); *The Woman in the Window* (MTC); *Sweet Meats* and *The Dark* (Rock and Roll Circus). Matt received a Matilda Award Commendation for his lighting designs in 1996. In 1997 Matt was Production Manager for Kooemba Jdarra.

### ***Erin Murphy – Music Director***

Erin started piano lessons when she was 6 years old. After leaving school, she continued her studies at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music. There followed a few years of experimenting with acting, beginning with touring shows for primary schools. She has worked with TN! Theatre, Sugar and Spite, Grin and Tonic, La Boite Theatre, QTC and Toadshow, as either an actor, musician or both, then finishing with several more years of touring *Ghosts of Something Irish* by Margery Forde. During this time, Erin also worked with various bands, and learned to play several more instruments, including the Celtic harp, from which she makes a living: almost! In 1996, after some time off to have a baby, Erin formed her own choir, QWIRED, now fifty voices strong and with a CD to their credit. Erin is most pleased to be working once again with Margery Forde and Jim Vilé.



### ***Paul Denny***

*Milo's Wake* will be Paul's tenth production at La Boite Theatre having appeared in *First Asylum*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *The John Wayne Principle*, *Rio Saki and Other Falling Debris*, *Hamlet*, *Blackrock* and *Scar*, (for which he won a 1997 Matilda Award) and CITY Theatre's production of *Third World Blues*. His most recent appearance at La Boite was in someone's highly successful production of *He Died with a Felafel in His Hand*. Other theatre credits include: *Mrs Warren's Profession* (QTC);

*Bouncers* (someone); *Java Jive* (Strut and Fret); *Abigail's Party* (Backstreet Productions); *1347* (Matrix Theatre); *Hamlet* (Climb Axe); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Woodward Theatre); *Asylum* (Yintfish); *Cyrano* (ACRONYN); *Woyzeck* (Metro Arts) and two seasons of his one person show *The Fall and Fall of Jeromy Hawthorn*. Film and television credits include: *The Love of Lionel's Life*, *Day of the Roses*, *Joey*, *Medivac*, *Waste*, *Last Laugh* and *Eat in or Takeaway*.

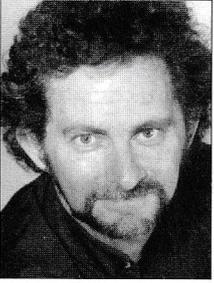
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## Sue Dwyer

Sue recently returned to Brisbane after 6 years in Melbourne. Her theatre credits include: *Furious*, *Matilda Women* (La Boite); *A Cheery Soul*, *One Woman's Song*, *A Month of Sundays*, *Seasons Greetings*, *Hard Times*, *Arms and the Man*, *Chorus of Disapproval*, *Fuente Ovejuna*, *A Spring Song*, *Camille*, *Benefactors*, *Pride & Prejudice*, *Cheapside*, *Passion*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Galileo* (QTC); *The Old Selection*, *Too Young for Ghosts* (TN! Theatre); *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* (New Moon); *A*

*Christmas Carol*, *Best Christmas Pageant Ever* (QPAT); *The Adman* (Metaluna/QPAT); *Maestro*, *Snakes & Ladders* (La Mama). Sue most recently played Mrs Kendal in *The Elephant Man* (Harvest Rain) and was MC for *Women in Voice 9*. She has appeared on *Blue Heelers* and *Neighbours*, narrated documentaries for SBS and is enjoying being home in Brisbane again and working in-the-round.



## Sean Mee

Sean began his professional career at La Boite Theatre in 1976 as a teacher/actor in the Early Childhood Drama Project, a Theatre-in-Education Team for infants. He was a member of the TN! Theatre ensemble through the 80's, appearing in some 20 productions for that organisation and writing/directing another 15. He was a founding member of Toadshow, co-writing and directing several large satirical musicals, most recently *Glamalot* at the Lyric Theatre, QPAT

in 1996. From 1990-1998, Sean was an Associate Lecturer in Theatre Practice in the Academy of the Arts, QUT. He was President of Playlab, Queensland's peak organisation for the support of playwriting from 1993-1996. Recent productions for La Boite Theatre include the direction of premiere productions *Rio Saki and Other Falling Debris* by Shaun Charles (1999), *Scar* by Maryanne Lynch and Stephen Davis (1997), *Long Gone Lonesome Cowgirls* by Philip Dean (1995) which toured nationally in 1996 and *Low* by Daniel Keene (1994). Sean was the director/dramaturg for Leah Purcell's one-person play *Box the Pony* (Leah Purcell, Scott Rankin) which has toured nationally since 1997, included sellout seasons at Belvoir Street Theatre (Sydney), and was awarded Best Play in the NSW Premier's Awards 1999. The play recently completed a successful season at the Barbican Centre, London as part of BITE:00 (Barbican International Theatre Event 2000). Sean was awarded a special Matilda Award for his sustained contribution to Queensland Theatre in 1995.

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## ***Special Thanks***

Accent Coach James Donegan, Rowan Steer (Cannon & Cripps), Guinness (CUB), P.J. O'Brien's, Spoon Teacher Suzy Fish.

Carol Burns, Donna Cameron, David Megarritty, Hayden Spencer for their contribution to script development.

## ***La Boite Staff***

*Artistic Director* ..... Sue Rider  
*General Manager* ..... Craig Whitehead  
*Public Relations Manager* ..... Rosemary Herbert  
*Production Manager* ..... Mark Lloyd Hunt  
*Production Assistant* ..... Campbell Misfeld  
*Office Co-ordinator* ..... Cheryl Freeman  
*Artistic Associate* ..... Fraser Corfield  
*Theatre Administrative Officer* ..... Loretta Freeman  
*Springboards Artistic Co-ordinator* ..... Angela Betzien  
*Play Advisory Co-ordinator* ..... Linda Hassall  
*Front of House Managers* ..... Tracey Egan, Nicole Lauder, Steve Schwartz  
*Box Office Attendants* ..... Joon-Yee Kwok, Jennifer Laing  
*Cleaner* ..... Ron Tillett

## ***La Boite Theatre Board***

Athol Young (Chair), Kent Maddock (Deputy Chair), Mij Bricknell, Donna Campbell, Stephen Clark, Dominic McGann, Karen Mitchell, Kaye Stevenson

## ***Caution & Advice***

Remember, in case of emergency, the greatest danger lies in being crushed. Therefore, be calm, quietly walk to and leave from the nearest escape door. Do not push any person in front of you. Escape doors are all unlocked and the whole audience can quietly walk out in less than five minutes.

# Milo's Wake

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La Boite Theatre receives assistance from the Queensland Government, through Arts Queensland, and the Commonwealth Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.



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