

TABLE MANNERS

by Alan Ayckbourn

A comedy

Directed by Barry Park



11 to 26 September 2026

Old Mill Theatre
Cnr Mends Street and Mill Point Road
South Perth



By Arrangement with ORiGiN™ Theatrical on behalf of Samuel French, a Concord Theatricals Company

TABLE MANNERS

by Alan Ayckbourn

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The play takes place over one weekend in 1974 in the dining room of an old vicarage, the home of Annie, Ruth, Reg and their mother.

Act 1 Scene 1: Saturday, 6 p.m.

Act 1 Scene 2: Sunday, 9 a.m.

20-minute interval during which the bar will be open, and coffee and tea served from the kitchen.

Act 2 Scene 1: Sunday 8 p.m.

Act 2 Scene 2: Monday 8 a.m.

Please **switch off or silence your mobile phone** during the performance.

Copyright law **strictly forbids any form of recording** of this production.

In the unlikely event of an emergency, please follow staff instructions.

We thank the City of South Perth for its continued support of our delivery of Community Theatre, and our volunteers and members: without whose support there would be no theatre!

We welcome new members and volunteers. You can find our membership forms on our website: www.oldmilltheatre.com.au

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Old Mill Theatre acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work, the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

CAST

(In order of appearance)

THE CAST

Annie	Emily Howe
Sarah	Alinta Carroll
Tom	Samuel Yeo
Reg	Chris Hill
Norman	Ian Staunton
Ruth	Louise Fishwick

PRODUCTION TEAM

Director	Barry Park
Stage manager	Andre Beidatsch
Assistant stage manager	Charlie Montgomery
Lighting designer	Mark Nicholson
Costumer	Merri Ford
Set designer	George Boyd
Furniture acquisition	George Boyd
Set construction	George Boyd, Barry and Julie Gordin, Mark Nicholson, Charlie Montgomery, Ian Staunton and Barry Park
Set Painting	George Boyd, Barry and Julie Gordin, Charlie Montgomery, Ian Staunton and Sam Yeo
Lighting and sound operator	Elliot Brisden-Rolfe
Graphic designer	Keith Shackleton
Photographers	Cameron Dobie, Thomas Dimmick
Production manager	Matty Padley

Sincere thanks go to: Fr. Peter Manuel, Raffaele Tranzillo, and Sharon Gillon-Grey

Workshop Bop composed by Myles Wright, featuring Sean Little (tenor sax), Blake Phillips (trombone), Benn Hodgkin (trumpet) Glyn MacDonald (piano) and Simon Jeans (guitar)

Permission and Copyright: Myles Wright

THE CAST & CREW

Emily Howe — Annie



Emily is a versatile SAG/MEAA/British Equity actor with extensive film, television and theatre experience. Trained at Mountview Theatre School (London), Ivana Chubbuck Studios (LA), and On Camera Connections (Sydney), she brings over two decades of professional, multicultural performance experience. Her screen work includes lead roles in *The Balance of Power*, *413*, *The Audition* and *Furr*, and supporting roles in films such as *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, *Crown of Flowers*, *Chasing Chance* and most recently in the TV Series, *Run*. On stage, she has performed a wide repertoire from Shakespeare to contemporary works internationally including *Richard III*, *Pericles*, and *The Importance of Being Earnest* on London's West End. She has performed in several Perth productions including *Ladies Who Wait*, *8 Women*, *My Mother Said I Never Should* and most recently in *A Song at Twilight* and statewide in *Hindsight*.

Alinta Carroll — Sarah



A graduate of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London, UK credits include *The Canterbury Tales*, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves* and a national tour of *The Sound of Music*. In Perth, some of Alinta's productions have included *Fleets of Fortune*, *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, *Snoopy*, *Capricornia*, *Hotel Sorrento*, *Twelfth Night*, *A Christmas Carol*, *The Mozart Faction*, *Cis and Barbiche*, *The Ships Pass Quietly*, *Her Holiness* and *When Dad Married Fury*. A twelve-year stint in the Eastern States saw Alinta performing in the original Australian productions of *Buddy*, *Aspects of Love* and Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*, as well as TV, Cabaret and commercials. Other musical roles Alinta has relished include Joanne in *Company*, Madame Giri in *Phantom of the Opera*, and Aunt Eller in *Oklahoma!* Last year, Alinta played the Astronaut in the Blue Room Theatre production of *Bruised* by local playwright, Vivienne Glance.

Samuel Yeo — Tom



Samuel has been acting since he was seven. Recent roles include Albert in *Bye Bye Birdie* (Stirling Players), Walter in *Marjorie Prime* (Roxy Lane) and Captain Fitzbattleaxe in *Utopia Limited* (Gilbert & Sullivan Society of WA). Previously based in Melbourne, past highlights include Sebastian (*Twelfth Night*), Dennis (*Habeas Corpus*), Edward (*Skylight*), Treplev (*The Seagull*), Christopher Robin (*Winnie the Pooh*), Jamie (*The Last Five Years*), Tiresias (*Antigone*), Antony (*Sweeney Todd*), Lewis (*Cosi*), Billy (*The Goat, or Who is Sylvia?*), Schroeder (*You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*) and, most enjoyably, the Dead Body in *The Real Inspector Hound*. Samuel studied acting at ANU and served as Artistic Director of the National University Theatre Society. On those dark days when he is not performing, he collects Australian literature and watches too much opera.

Christopher Hill — Reg



Christopher is excited to return to the Old Mill Theatre this September for *Table Manners*, directed by Barry Park. This marks Christopher's second production at Old Mill, returning after directing and starring in the 2022 Fringe Festival production of *Rabbit Hole* — a powerful queer adaptation that resonated deeply with local audiences. Christopher studied performance at Curtin's Hayman Theatre and has built an extensive career across theatre and screen in both Victoria and Western Australia. His recent stage credits include roles in *Chalkface* and *Sweet Road* at Melville Theatre. On screen, he has recently appeared in Zak Hilditch's feature film *We Bury the Dead*, Ben Young's Perth crime drama *Run on Binge*, *Reckless* on SBS, and *Ghosts Australia* for the BBC. Christopher is thrilled to collaborate with Barry Park and this talented cast on *Table Manners*. He is represented by PADWA talent agency.

Ian Staunton — Norman



Liverpool-born and Perth-based, Ian is delighted to be appearing in *Table Manners* at The Old Mill Theatre. In his younger years, he appeared in regional productions including *Oliver!* (Artful Dodger), *Totally Over You* (Rik) and *Road* (Scullery). After returning to the stage in 2026 following a long break, he has appeared as Lennox in *Macbeth* and Shawn Keogh in *The Playboy of the Western World*. Alongside acting, Ian is developing original stage and screen projects, including comedy musicals and short films. A lifelong admirer of Alan Ayckbourn, he has loved exploring Norman's blend of awkwardness, emotional chaos and surprising charm. Ian is especially grateful to director Barry Park and the talented cast for making this production such a rewarding experience. He hopes audiences enjoy the humour, heart and gloriously dysfunctional family at the centre of the play — and perhaps leave craving Puffa Puffa Rice.

Louise Fishwick — Ruth



Award-winning actor and playwright Louise Fishwick is delighted to be playing Ruth in *Table Manners*. Most recently, Louise appeared as Sandra in Melville Theatre's production of *Brassed Off*, following performances in *Chalkface*, *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, *The York Realist*, *Ring Ring*, *A Pot to Peace In* and *Me Too The Musical*. Known for finding humour, heart and humanity in her characters, Louise enjoys roles that explore the beautifully messy realities of life and relationships. Whether in comedy or drama, she brings warmth, honesty and a healthy dose of lived experience to every performance. Louise is especially pleased to be working once again under the direction of the brilliant Barry Park, whose insight and unwavering support of his cast make every rehearsal process a joy. Ruth's combination of intelligence, wit and determination makes her a particularly rewarding character to play, and Louise is thrilled to be part of bringing Ayckbourn's classic comedy to life for local audiences.

PRODUCTION TEAM

Barry Park — Director

Barry has been teaching, acting, and directing since the 1980s and has received numerous awards for his work. In Perth, he has directed a wide range of productions, including *A Song at Twilight*, *The Lady in the Van*, *Private Lives*, *Beautiful Thing*, *Hay Fever*, *Present Laughter*, and *Design for Living* (Old Mill Theatre); *Hansard*, *The Lisbon Traviata* and *The York Realist* (Garrick Theatre); *Breaking the Code* and *The Deep Blue Sea* (Melville Theatre); *Arcadia* (Harbour Theatre); *The Normal Heart*, *French Without Tears*, *The Boys in the Band*, *A View from the Bridge*, *The Real Thing*, *Broken Glass*, *M. Butterfly*, *All My Sons*, and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (GRADS Theatre Company); and *August: Osage County* and *Other Desert Cities* (Playlovers). Barry has also directed numerous plays and musicals internationally and has performed professionally at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, the Grahamstown Festival, and in London, South Africa, and Zimbabwe, in theatre, film, radio, television, and commercials.

Andre Beidatsch — Stage manager

Andre made his stage debut with the Wembley Theatre Company in the pantomime *Sleeping Beauty*, followed by performances in various community theatre pantomimes. He has also performed with GRADS Theatre Company, participating in the chorus of *Aladdin* and appearing as Lord Heybrook in *French Without Tears* under the direction of Barry Park. More recently, he has been increasingly involved backstage, starting as assistant stage manager in *The Lady in the Van* and *Hansard*, and subsequently as stage manager for Barry's productions of *A Song at Twilight* and *Breaking the Code*. Andre has enjoyed this continuing collaboration with Barry, with *Table Manners* now being their fifth consecutive production together and he appreciates his continued trust in him.

Charlie Montgomery — Assistant stage manager

Charlie Montgomery has a decade of experience in community theatre, working across sound, lighting and backstage operations. He has worked backstage on productions at Marloo and Melville Theatres and has operated sound for GRADS Theatre Company productions including *The Normal Heart* and *Dick Whittington*. Charlie has also operated lights and sound on numerous Old Mill Theatre productions, including *Rabbit Hole*, *Private Lives*, *Hay Fever*, *Beautiful Thing*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *The Lady in the Van* and *A Song at Twilight*. Alongside his technical and backstage work, Charlie has a keen interest in performance. His acting experience includes high school productions, and a one-act play at Hamilton Hill Theatre in 2016. For this production, Charlie joins the backstage team as assistant stage manager.

Merri Ford — Costumier

Merri has been an active costumier in Perth since 2003, with 39 years of experience designing and creating costumes for stage plays, musicals, operas, dance competitions, film, and music clips. She has designed over 100 productions for many theatre groups and has been recognised with awards in both Perth and Melbourne. Costumes she has designed for Barry Park's productions include *Breaking the Code*, *A Song at Twilight*, *Hansard*, *The Lady in the Van*, *The Deep Blue Sea*, *The Lisbon Traviata*, *The Normal Heart*, *Private Lives*, *French Without Tears*, *Arcadia*, and *Hay Fever*. She has recently designed costumes for *Titanic*, *Dogfight*, and *The Master and Margarita*, and is currently creating costumes for *Julius Caesar* and *Black Adder*, continuing her long-standing commitment to high-quality stage costuming.

Mark Nicholson — Lighting designer, set construction

Mark is a veteran of Perth's community theatre, with extensive experience as a lighting designer, stage manager, set designer and constructor, and sound designer/operator. He has held senior management roles across multiple theatre companies. His recent lighting designs include Barry Park's productions of *Breaking the Code*, *A Song at Twilight*, *Hansard*, *The Lady in the Van*, *The Deep Blue Sea*, *The Lisbon Traviata*, *The Normal Heart*, *The York Realist*, *Private Lives*, *French Without Tears*, *Beautiful Thing*, *Hay Fever*, *Arcadia*, *The Boys in the Band*, *Present Laughter*, *A View from the Bridge*, and *August: Osage County*. He has also constructed sets for *The Lady in the Van*, *The Deep Blue Sea*, *French Without Tears*, *Arcadia*, and *Present Laughter*. Recently, Mark designed lighting for *Hansard*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Cursed* and *Musical Melody* at the Garrick Theatre.

George Boyd — Set design, construction and painting

George learned the art of set construction whilst involved in Whitehorse Musical Theatre in Melbourne several years ago. Since moving to Perth, he has designed and built innumerable sets for various theatres and has worked frequently on lights and sound.

Barry and Julie Gordin — Set construction and painting

Barry and Julie have assisted with the set construction and painting of many productions at the Old Mill Theatre since 2024.

Elliot Brisden-Rolfe — Sound and lighting operator

Elliot is a sound and lighting operator at the Old Mill Theatre. Since joining the Theatre in mid 2025, he has worked on productions including *Keep on Laughing* (dir. Dale James) and *A Song at Twilight* (dir. Barry Park). Earlier this year, he ventured into lighting design for the first time for the 2026 Fringe season. Elliot's interest in the technical aspects of theatre started in high school, when he had the opportunity to operate the lighting for Shenton College's production of *The Jungle Book*. Since then, he has been pursuing this interest and expanding his skill-set in between work and study.

Myles Wright — Music composer

Myles studied jazz composition and arranging at WAAPA where he explored his love of jazz and big band music. He completed a master's degree in Studio Jazz Writing at the University of Miami. After spending time as a writing participant at the Henry Mancini Institute in Los Angeles, he taught composition and arranging at the International College of Music in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, followed by music classes at the University of Notre Dame (Fremantle). Myles has composed music and sound design for the GRADS' productions of *The Glass Menagerie*, *The Boys in the Band* and *The Normal Heart*, the Playlover's production of *August: Osage County*, the Irish Theatre Players' production of *By the Bog of Cats*, and the Melville Theatre production of *The Deep Blue Sea*. In 2023, Myles released his first full-length jazz album *Gamer*, a collection of retro video game soundtracks arranged for large jazz ensemble.





SIR ALAN AYCKBOURN



Photo credit: John Thaxter

A playwright and theatre director, Alan Ayckbourn has written numerous plays - his 92nd, *The Trial of Romeo Oscar* — will premiere in 2026 at his home venue, the Stephen Joseph Theatre in Scarborough.

His plays have been regularly revived around the world over the past six decades and won numerous awards. Major success include *Relatively Speaking*, *The Norman Conquests*, *Season's Greetings*, *Absurd Person Singular*, *Way Upstream*, *A Chorus of Disapproval*, *House & Garden* and *How The Other Half Loves*; the latter to be revived in-the-round this summer at The Old Vic.

As a director, he had directed almost 400 professional productions including the vast majority of world and West End premieres of his work. He has notably directed for the National Theatre — where he was also resident for several years — and the Royal Shakespeare Company.

He has been associated with the Stephen Joseph Theatre since 1957 where, under the guidance of Stephen Joseph, he made his writing and directing debuts. In 1972, he was appointed the company's Artistic Director and held the role for 37 years. In 2018 he was appointed Director Emeritus of the company.

His work has been frequently adapted for film, television and radio - most notably by the late French cinema auteur, Alain Resnais.

More than 75 of his plays have been published and are currently in print alongside his best-selling guide to writing and directing, *The Crafty Art of Playmaking*, first published in 2002. His first novel, *The Divide*, was published in 2019.

The recipient of more than 40 awards recognising his plays and career, he was the first British playwright to receive both Olivier and Tony Special Lifetime Achievement Awards and has notably been inducted into the American Theatre's Hall of Fame and is a recipient of the Critics' Circle Award for Services to the Arts.

He was knighted in 1997 for 'Services to Theatre'.

Source: Alan Ayckbourn's official website www.alanayckbourn.net

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Few comedies have enjoyed the enduring acclaim of Alan Ayckbourn's *The Norman Conquests*, yet this landmark of modern theatre came perilously close to never being written at all. The trilogy originated in an apparently casual remark made to a local journalist in 1972. Suddenly faced with a public commitment to an idea he had scarcely begun to explore, Ayckbourn embarked upon one of the most ambitious theatrical experiments of his early career. The result was not simply one play, but three intricately interconnected dramas, each capable of standing entirely on its own while simultaneously forming part of a larger dramatic mosaic.

The achievement remains one of the crowning accomplishments of contemporary British theatre.

More than fifty years after its premiere, *The Norman Conquests* retains an astonishing freshness and vitality. Its premise appears deceptively simple: a family gathering over a single weekend in a Sussex country house. Yet Ayckbourn's genius lies in revealing how every family occasion is made up of overlapping narratives, competing perspectives and private dramas unfolding simultaneously. Each play observes the same events from a different room, allowing audiences to witness not only what happens but also what is missed, misunderstood or misinterpreted elsewhere.

That such a sophisticated dramatic structure works so effortlessly is all the more remarkable when one considers that Ayckbourn conceived and wrote all three plays simultaneously in May 1973, working "crosswise" through the trilogy to ensure that every entrance, exit, revelation and misunderstanding aligned perfectly across the three narratives.

In *Table Manners*, we enter the dining room, where simmering resentments, long-nursed disappointments and ill-starred romantic ambitions are served alongside tea, toast and a succession of gloriously disastrous meals. Ayckbourn himself considered *Table Manners* the funniest of the trilogy, and it is easy to see why. Its comedy stems not from jokes or clever one-liners, but from the acute and often painfully recognisable truths of human behaviour. Conversations unfold at cross-purposes, awkward realities are skilfully sidestepped, cherished illusions fiercely defended, and minor misunderstandings allowed to spiral into comic chaos.

At the centre of it all stands Norman, one of modern theatre's most memorable comic creations: charming, exasperating, impulsive and yet somehow impossible to dislike entirely. Like so many of Ayckbourn's finest characters, Norman never sees himself as the architect of the turmoil around him. He simply follows his heart, his instincts and his appetites, leaving everyone else to navigate the consequences.

My own affection for *Table Manners* dates back to my university days in the 1970s, when I saw a professional production of *The Norman Conquests* performed in repertory. The experience made an immediate and lasting impression on me,

revealing both the brilliance of Ayckbourn's writing and the extraordinary ingenuity of the trilogy's structure. Geoffrey Atkins, who would later employ me at the 7 Arts Theatre and become a cherished friend, was outstanding as Tom and it remains one of my most vivid and treasured memories of those productions.

What gives *Table Manners* its enduring appeal is the extraordinary balance it strikes between comedy and compassion. We laugh at these characters, yet we also recognise something of ourselves in each of them. Beneath the farce lies a penetrating understanding of loneliness, frustrated aspirations and the quiet compromises that sustain family relationships. Ayckbourn exposes the fault lines beneath ordinary domestic life with wit and insight, demonstrating how quickly civility can fracture when emotions remain unspoken and grievances are allowed to accumulate.

As we bring *Table Manners* to the stage today, it is a pleasure to revisit a play that reminds us that families have always been gloriously, and sometimes exasperatingly, complicated. Although rooted in the early 1970s, the anxieties, misunderstandings and emotional entanglements at its heart remain instantly recognisable. Whether it is Norman's restless pursuit of happiness, Annie's longing for companionship, Sarah's determination to impose order, Reg's childishness, Ruth's yearning for something more, or Tom's inability to express what he truly feels, these are characters whose hopes, fears and disappointments transcend both period and place.

I am deeply grateful to the Old Mill Theatre Board for entrusting me with the opportunity to direct this comedy classic. Working with such a gifted cast and creative team has been one of the great pleasures of the theatrical process. Their talent, dedication and generosity have brought this play vividly to life, and I thank them for the countless hours of creativity, energy and commitment they have devoted to this production.

Thank you for joining us and becoming part of this extraordinary weekend. Whether this is your first encounter with *The Norman Conquests* or a welcome return to one of the great masterpieces of modern comedy, I hope you will savour Ayckbourn's incomparable blend of wit, warmth and insight into the complexities of human relationships. Above all, I hope you enjoy spending time with a family whose mishaps, misunderstandings and eccentricities continue to delight audiences more than half a century after they first appeared on stage.

Barry Park





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