

The HARP *in* *the SOUTH* *TRILOGY:* *The PLAY*

Adapted by **KATE MULVANY**
From the novels by **RUTH PARK**



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The Harp in the South Trilogy: The Play was first produced by Sydney Theatre Company at the Roslyn Packer Theatre, Sydney, on 16 August 2018, with the following cast:

THADY DARCY	Joel Bishop
FAIRGROUND ANNOUNCER / KIDGER /	
DOCTOR EVANS / GUS MACINTOSH	Luke Carroll
FATHER DRISCOLL / PATRICK DIAMOND /	
BRETT'S DAD / HOTDOG SELLER	Tony Cogan
MARTIN DARCY / ADULT HUGH DARCY	Jack Finsterer
NOEL CAPPER / PUBLICAN / BARFLY /	
TOMMY MENDEL / SAILOR / BILL BRIGGS /	
BUMPER REILLY / FRANKY	Benedict Hardie
BERTIE / MAUREEN / THIRSTY WOMAN /	
LOLLY MOLLY / LYNETTE / BERNICE /	
NURSE WATKINS / SUSE / MINNIE	Emma Harvie
ELSPETH / ADULT MARGARET DARCY	Anita Hegh
FAIRGROUND NUN / BETSY / CLOTHES	
SELLER / SISTER THEOPHILUS / PHYLLIS /	
MRS SICILIANO / LYNDALL / FLORRIE	Lucia Mastrantone
ENY KILKER / MRS WILEY	Heather Mitchell
ALF / FLO / MISS SHEILY / MRS X /	
SISTER BEATRIX / MRS KILROY / SHIRLEY	Tara Morice
YOUNG HUGH DARCY / BARFLY /	
POLICE OFFICER / LOLLY'S MAN / STEVIE /	
SAILOR / DOCTOR / BRETT / TUG	Ben O'Toole
YOUNG MARGARET / ROIE DARCY	Rose Riley
HERB LENNON / JOHNNY SHEILY /	
HARRY DRUMMY / SAILOR / ERNEST	
BLAINEY / REPORTER / DOCTOR	Rahel Romahn
THADY DARCY	Jack Ruwald
JER / SOLDIER / BOOKSELLER /	
POLICE OFFICER / PHOTOGRAPHER /	
CHARLIE ROTHE	Guy Simon

JOHN KILKER/BARFLY/FATHER COOLEY/
 MR KILROY/JOSEPH MENDEL/MR GUNNARSON/
 EYE DOCTOR Bruce Spence
 FRANCES DARCY/ENID/DELIE STOCK/DENISE/
 BRETT'S MUM Helen Thomson
 JOSIE/DOLOUR DARCY Contessa Treffone
 TUG O WAR COMPETITOR/LICK JIMMY/SAILOR/
 DOCTOR/REPORTER/CAVES ATTENDANT/
 USHER George Zhao

All cast: BRASS BAND MEMBERS, FAIRGOERS, CAROLLERS,
 SCHOOLKIDS, PUBCRAWLERS, SURRY HILLS CITIZENS, STREET
 URCHINS, PADDY'S STALLHOLDERS, FIRE BRIGADE MEMBERS,
 POLICE OFFICERS, BARFLIES, CROWD MEMBERS, DUTCH
 SAILORS, REPORTERS, PHOTOGRAPHERS, QUIZ SHOW AUDIENCE,
 CONGREGATION, TRAIN PASSENGERS, LUNA PARK REVELLERS

Director, Kip Williams
 Set Designer, David Fleischer
 Costume Designer, Renée Mulder
 Lighting Designer, Nick Schlieper
 Composer, THE SWEATS
 Sound Designer, Nate Edmondson
 Musical Director, Luke Byrne
 Assistant Director, Jessica Arthur
 Fight and Movement Director, Nigel Poulton
 Voice and Text Coach, Charmian Gradwell
 Production Manager, Dominic Hamra
 Deputy Production Manager, Lauren Makin
 Stage Manager, Minka Stevens
 Deputy Stage Manager, Todd Eichorn
 Assistant Stage Managers, Katie Hankin, Jennifer Parsonage

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The family of Ruth Park, Tim Curnow, Kip Williams, Andrew Upton, Jonathan Church, Polly Rowe, Anthony Blair, Hamish Michael and all of the artists who gave their time to read and develop the work.

CHARACTERS

ACT ONE: MISSUS (1920)

THADY DARCY, 8

FRANCIS DARCY, late 40s

MARTIN DARCY, 50s

HUGH DARCY, 22

JER DARCY, 18

MARGARET KILKER, 19

JOSIE KILKER, 17

ENY KILKER, 45

JOHN KILKER, 55

HERB LENNON, 19

NOEL CAPPER, 19

TOWNSFOLK

FAIRGROUND ANNOUNCER

TUG-O-WAR COMPETITOR

BERTIE

LITTLE GIRL

FAIRGROUND NUN

ALF, 22

FATHER DRISCOLL, 50s

MAUREEN

ENID

ELSPETH

ACT TWO: THE HARP IN THE SOUTH (1948–1950)

THADY DARCY, 8
DOLOUR DARCY, 13-15
ROIE DARCY, 18-20
MARGARET DARCY (MISSUS), 47-49
HUGH DARCY, 50-52
ENY KILKER, 73-75
CHARLIE ROTHE, 19-21
LICK JIMMY, 40s
PATRICK DIAMOND, early 60s
MISS SHEILY, early 40s
JOHNNY SHEILY, early 20s
DELIE STOCK, late 40s
KIDGER
PHYLLIS, teens
FLO, 50s
MOLLY, 20s
MOLLY'S MAN
PUBLICAN
ABORIGINAL SOLDIER
THIRSTY WOMAN
BARFLIES 1, 2 and 3
BOOKSELLER
CLOTHES SELLER
TOMMY MENDEL, 20
JOSEPH MENDEL, 40s
TEASING CHILDREN
SCHOOLCHILDREN
SISTER THEOPHILUS
SISTER BEATRIX

FATHER COOLEY
HARRY DRUMMY
MR GUNNARSON
POLICE OFFICERS 1 and 2
FIREMEN
CROWD MEMBERS 1, 2 and 3
MRS SICILIANO
MAN
MRS X
LYNETTE
DUTCH SAILORS 1, 2 and 3
STEVIE
BILL BRIGGS
LYNDALL
BERNICE
DENISE
ERNEST BLAINY
USHER

ACT THREE: POOR MAN'S ORANGE (1950-1953)

THADY DARCY, 8
DOLOUR DARCY, 15-18
ROIE DARCY, 20, 21
MARGARET DARCY (MISSUS), 49-51
HUGH DARCY, 52-55
CHARLIE ROTHE, 21-24
LICK JIMMY, 30s
PATRICK DIAMOND, 60s
SUSE KILROY, 16
FATHER COOLEY
SISTER THEOPHILUS
SISTER BEATRIX
PHOTOGRAPHER
REPORTERS 1, 2 and 3
FLO
PHYLLIS KIDGER
LEERING BARFLY
POLICE OFFICERS 1, 2, 3 and 4
DOCTOR
TRAINEE DOCTORS 1, 2 and 3
MRS WILEY
FLORRIE
SCHOOLCHILDREN
HARRY DRUMMY
EYE DOCTOR
NURSE WATKINS
MR KILROY
MRS KILROY
BUMPER REILLY

GUS MCINTOSH, 50s

BRETT, 28

ELSE

BRETT'S DAD

HOTDOG SELLER

FRANKY

TUG

SHIRLEY

MINNIE

CAVES ATTENDANT

SUGGESTED DOUBLINGS

FRANCES DARCY / ENID / DELIE STOCK / DENISE / ELSE

THADY DARCY

MARTIN DARCY / ADULT HUGHIE

YOUNG HUGHIE DARCY / LOLLY MOLLY'S MAN / STEVIE / BRETT /
POLICE OFFICER 2 / REPORTER 1 / CAVES ATTENDANT

FATHER DRISCOLL / MR DIAMOND / BRETT'S DAD / HOTDOG SELLER

ENY KILKER / MRS WILEY

JER / SOLDIER / BOOKSELLER / POLICE OFFICER 1 / CHARLIE ROTHE

YOUNG MARGARET KILKER / ROIE DARCY

JOSIE / DOLOUR DARCY

ELSPETH / ADULT MARGARET DARCY

JOHN KILKER / FATHER COOLEY / MR KILROY / JOSEPH MENDEL /
MR GUNNARSON / EYE DOCTOR

BERTIE / MAUREEN / THIRSTY WOMAN / LOLLY MOLLY / LYNETTE /
BERNICE / NURSE WATKINS / SUSE / MINNIE

NOEL CAPPER / PUBLICAN / TOMMY MENDEL / BILL BRIGGS /
BUMPER REILLY / LEERING BARFLY / FRANKY

HERB LENNON / JOHNNY SHEILY / HARRY DRUMMY /
ERNEST BLAINEY / REPORTER 3 / TUG

TUG-O-WAR COMPETITOR / LICK JIMMY / USHER

ALF / FLO / MISS SHEILY / MRS X / SISTER BEATRIX / MRS KILROY /
SHIRLEY

FAIRGROUND NUN / BETSY / CLOTHES SELLER / SISTER THEOPHILUS /
PHYLLIS / MRS SICILIANO / FLORRIE

FAIRGROUND ANNOUNCER / KIDGER / PHOTOGRAPHER /
REPORTER 2 / DOCTOR EVANS / GUS MACINTOSH

All actors play:

BRASS BAND MEMBERS, FAIRGOERS, CAROLLERS, SCHOOLKIDS,
PUBCRAWLERS, SURRY HILLS CITIZENS, STREET URCHINS,
PADDY'S MARKET STALLHOLDERS, FIRE BRIGADE MEMBERS,
POLICE OFFICERS, BARFLIES, CROWD MEMBERS, DUTCH
SAILORS, REPORTERS, PHOTOGRAPHERS, QUIZ SHOW AUDIENCE,
CONGREGATION, TRAIN PASSENGERS, LUNA PARK REVELLERS

SETTINGS

Act One: Missus

Trafalgar, rural NSW, Plymouth Street, Surry Hills, Sydney

Act Two: The Harp in the South

Surry Hills and its surrounds

Act Three: Poor Man's Orange

Surry Hills and its surrounds

The play was written with the intention of a highly movable set, shifting fluidly from one locale to another, one home to another, one room to another.

This play was written on Gadigal land.

This play went to press before the end of rehearsals and may differ from the play as performed.

ACT ONE: MISSUS

SCENE ONE

The outskirts of Trafalgar, New South Wales, 1920. A dam on the far edges of a rural property.

A small boy of eight, THADY DARCY, wanders. He doesn't belong there. He is of another time and place. He wears navy trousers and red braces and clutches a bag of marbles. He watches as ...

A woman, FRANCES DARCY (late 40s), appears—an odd figure on the barren landscape.

THADY: Frances Darcy.

FRANCES is dressed in a slip and an extravagant coat with deep pockets. She has a red embroidered shawl swathed around her neck. She sings as she travels.

FRANCES: [*singing*] 'Tis the last rose of summer,
Left blooming alone;
All her lovely companions
Are faded and gone ...

THADY: Often she was fantastically merry, though falling suddenly from laughter into tears.

FRANCES: [*singing*] No flower of her kindred,
No rosebud is nigh,
To reflect back her blushes,
Or give sigh for sigh.

A man appears in the distance—Frances's husband, MARTIN DARCY (50s). He watches his wife solemnly. He does not see THADY.

THADY: Martin Darcy had brought Frances to Trafalgar at the start of the century when everything was hopeful. Long before today—1920.

Long before her throat started to swell and her brain started to boil.

But now ... he did not know what to do with a madwoman.

FRANCES *drinks from a bottle of laudanum, wincing as it burns her throat.*

FRANCES: [*singing*] I'll not leave thee, thou lone one!

To pine on the stem;
Since the lovely are sleeping,
Go, sleep thou with them.

*Although her song has ended ... another plays in the distance.
A lone harp.*

THADY: Perhaps she was haunted by the harp. Calling from a faraway land.

They all hear it. Like the call of a ghost.

FRANCES *removes her shawl to reveal a horrifically flayed neck. As she sings on, she gathers stones and places them in her pockets. Her husband watches on. As does THADY ...*

The harp plays on.

FRANCES: [*singing*] Thus kindly I scatter,

Thy leaves o'er the bed,
Where thy mates of the garden
Lie scentless and dead.
When true hearts lie withered,
And fond ones are flown,
Oh! who would inhabit
This bleak world alone?

She steps into the water and disappears. The harp echoes ...

MARTIN *wanders away.*

THADY *walks down to the dam. He looks into the water then out to us.*

THADY: We are all haunted by the harp.

The harp echoes ...

Blackout.

SCENE TWO

Two young men now stand over the dam. They are HUGH and JER DARCY.

HUGH: Ma ...

HUGH is a small, muscular 22-year-old. 'He often found a lump in his throat for no reason. He began to look at things, stars, girls' hair; the way a paddock of cabbages was not green, but blue ...'

JER is his younger brother (18), but they don't look alike. Whereas HUGH's skin is pale and freckled, JER's is much darker. His feet are twisted awkwardly and he leans on a pair of crutches. 'Born a dark elvish thing with its feet back to front.'

JER: Now what?

HUGH *shrugs*.

We can't leave her in there.

The boys stare down at the water.

She's been missing two weeks. We pull her out, she might fall apart.

Silence.

I thought she could swim ... We can't leave her in there.

MARTIN approaches. He stands between the two boys. Looks into the dam.

It's Ma.

MARTIN: I know who it is.

JER: Reckon she fell in.

MARTIN: She didn't fall in.

Beat.

Mad bitch. Madder than that goitre growing out of her bloody neck.
Mad with shame. For you.

He glares at JER.

She's gone. Now I want you gone too.

JER: But, Da—

MARTIN: Just because your ma opened her legs to any man that paid her mind, don't mean I have to atone for her sins.

JER: [*turning to his brother*] Hughie ...?

MARTIN: Get him off my property, Hugh. She's gone. Now he can go too. Twisted black bastard.

HUGH snaps. He fights his father to the ground. It is a long, protracted grapple, as JER watches on. HUGH makes guttural grunts with each punch, beating his father brutally.

JER: *Hugh, enough!*

But HUGH doesn't hear. Just keeps punching until his father lays still. The two boys stare down at MARTIN in silence.

Is he dead?

HUGH: No.

JER: Why do you do that, Hughie?

HUGH: Cos he's a mean bastard, Jer. And he had my face. And I don't wanna look at a mean bastard with my face anymore. So I'm takin' it back and I'm gettin' away from here.

JER: You wouldn't leave me, Hughie, would you? Hughie, don't you leave me by myself. How am I gonna get my feet fixed if I'm all by myself?

HUGH puts an arm around his brother, who nestles, twisted, into the embrace.

Hughie ... Hugh?

HUGH: I'll never leave you wanting, Jer. I promise you that. We're all each other's got, me and you. I'll get your feet fixed. I will. Soon.

Silence.

JER: Now what?

A moment of silence. Then ...

HUGH: Now we go into town. I need a drink. Go on, I'll give you a head start.

JER limps away.

Rest now, Ma. I'd pray for you but ... I've gotta find somethin' more.

SCENE THREE

Pained grunting and fast, shallow breathing ...

In the town of Trafalgar, we are in the Kilker household. In one bedroom are two teenage girls—MARGARET (19) ‘soft and broad’ and JOSIE (17) ‘narrow and hard’.

JOSIE is pulling tightly on the laces of her sister’s stays. MARGARET inhales in pain.

MARGARET: Mother of God, Josie ... I’ll bring up a lung! You’ll pop the top off me like a daisy!

JOSIE: Serves you right for having such a big burst. You’ll thank me later when Herb Lennon keeps his hands off you.

MARGARET: I’m not officially walking with Herb Lennon. He’s romantic as an egg.

JOSIE: That’s not what the rest of Trafalgar thinks. I heard he was going to ask you to marry him.

MARGARET: What? Who said such a thing?

JOSIE: Margaret, I’m two years younger than you and I’ve been walking with Noel Capper for three whole months. You should just settle for Herb Lennon to save yourself further embarrassment.

MARGARET: And why do I have to marry the first person who pays me mind?

JOSIE: He’s not the first. He’s the only.

MARGARET: The world’s a big place, Josie. There’s gotta be something more.

JOSIE: The world may be big but Trafalgar is not. You’ll be married to Herb Lennon by 1921. Mark my words.

MARGARET: There’s better out there than Herb Lennon. The prospect of him makes my belly heave.

JOSIE just pulls tighter on the stays, knocking the wind out of her older sister.

Meanwhile ... ENY (45) and JOHN KILKER (55) are in the kitchen. He clips his nose hairs. She stirs a pot vigorously so that her breasts jiggle.

ENY: Here. John. Look at this.

JOHN looks up as ENY makes her breasts jiggle even more. He can't help be turned on.

JOHN: God in heaven, woman. Was last night not enough?

ENY: Come on, let me put me hand where it'll do the most good.

She places her hand down JOHN's pants.

Solid as the bloody Vatican, you are, John ...

JOHN starts to enjoy it for a brief while. Then ...

JOHN: Eny, no. I have to stay focused for Carnival Day.

ENY: Don't go to Carnival Day, John. Let's just send the girls off and spend the day here together. You're too old for Carnival Day anyway.

JOHN: I can handle a game of tug-o-war, Eny.

ENY: Can you, though?

She rubs him harder. He sighs.

JOHN: It's your lifelong insatiability that'll put me in the grave.

But she continues. As JOHN starts to enjoy it again, JOSIE pulls tighter on MARGARET's stays until the older girl screams in agony and breaks free, charging into the kitchen. ENY and JOHN separate in a hurry.

MARGARET: Ma, she's squeezed me inside / out!

JOSIE: She won't be contained Ma!

ENY: Josie, don't be a tattle. You'll learn to love your stays, Margaret. Soon they'll feel like you're wearing nothing at all.

They all stare pointedly at ENY's jiggling, unlaced bosom. A knock at the door.

JOSIE: That'll be the boys. For God's sake make yourselves presentable!

MARGARET, ENY and JOHN do so.

JOSIE opens the door to NOEL CAPPER (19), dapper and handsome in a blazer, holding a large bunch of flowers, and HERB LENNON (21), scruffy and buck-toothed and carrying a euphonium.

Good morning, Noel.

NOEL: Good morning, Josephine. Good morning, Mr Kilker. Good morning, Mrs Kilker. Good morning, Margaret.

ENY: Good morning, Noel.

JOHN: Good morning, Noel.