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by [Shari Barrett](#) May 23 http://www.broadwayworld.com/los-angeles/article/BWW-Reviews-Australian-Theatre-Company-Presents-Spectacular-LA-Premiere-of-HOLDING-THE-MAN-20140523#.U3_URV7lduZ



Writer, actor and activist Timothy Conigrave's best-selling memoir **HOLDING THE MAN** (winner of the United Nations Human Rights Award for Non-Fiction and listed as one of the "100 Favorite Australian Books" by the Australian Society of Authors) is one of Australia's most successful plays of all time. And now, thanks to the newly formed Australian Theatre Company and brilliant direction by veteran Hollywood acting coach [Larry Moss](#), Los Angeles audiences have their chance to experience the wonder of a great love story presented with supreme devotion and skill by six extremely talented actors who play over 50 characters. [Nick Hardcastle](#), [Nate Jones](#) and Mike Abramson produce for the Australian Theatre Company.

Highly theatrical in style, **HOLDING THE MAN** runs the gamut from absurdism to magical realism (including unique puppets designed by Alex "Jürgen" Ferguson) to naturalism to farce to deep drama. It is a celebration of love that speaks across generations, sexual preference and culture. It will grab your attention from the start and take you along for the roller coaster ride of your theatrical life.

HOLDING THE MAN is one of Australia's great love stories. The stage version, adapted by Tommy Murphy from the memoir by Timothy Conigrave, starts off by capturing all the trials and tribulations of teenage love, which of course never runs smooth. But it is a white-water adventure if you are a gay boy in an all-boys school in 1970s Melbourne with a crush on the captain of the football team.

Despite the odds, Tim and John fall in love and for fifteen years their relationship survives everything life throws at it - the separations, the discriminations, the temptations, the jealousies and the losses - until the only problem love can't solve threatens to part them. The play's title refers to a transgression that incurs a penalty in Australian rules football, and the play centers on a transgression that reverberates across the years to inflict the greatest penalty of all.

[Larry Moss](#), perhaps best known for coaching Oscar, Emmy, Golden Globe and Tony Award-winning/nominated performances by many actors, has worked his magic with the actors, focusing on a

great deal of character work since the actors play a variety of parts. Their constant physical and emotional transformations will blow you away. Trust me - you will not believe you have seen only six people onstage when the play ends.



Nate Jones and Adam J. Yeend

Photo by Suzanne Strong

The two lead actors, [Nate Jones](#) as Timothy Conigrave and [Adam J. Yeend](#) as John Caleo, are riveting in the roles. Their characterizations are so real, from the way they walk to every heartfelt emotion on their faces, you will be drawn into their love story and feel you know them intimately by the end of the play. It's a real love story between two people that will resonate with everyone as the love Timothy and John share is what we all hope to have in our lives. Jones and Yeend bring these two men so thoroughly to life, I dare you not to have tears in your eyes as you would for a close personal friend or family member during their struggle to deal with HIV-AIDS. And with the ever-exploding cases still occurring across generations, I hope this play along with "The Normal Heart" will light the fire of realization that it can happen to anyone and we must all be ever-cautious in our own relationships.



Cameron Daddo, Adam J. Yeend, Nate Jones, Luke O'Sullivan, Roxane Wilson

Photo by Suzanne Strong

Taking on multiple roles, which often cross gender lines, are [Cameron Daddo](#), Luke O'Sullivan, [Adrienne](#)

[Smith](#) and [Roxane Wilson](#), all of whom are well-known Australian television and theater actors. Daddo shines as the very different fathers of both Tim and John, as well as in every other role he plays, including several over-the-top characters in gay bars and Tim's acting class. But that is true for all these fine actors who morph from teenage boys challenging each other in a circle jerk to a variety of bar patrons, acting class students, and medical professionals. O'Sullivan is a riot as Juliet's mother, the most accepting of all the parents. But it is his puppetry work as the AIDS patient Richard that will amaze you.

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