



MAITLAND  
REPERTORY  
THEATRE

To Commemorate 70 years since the 1955 Maitland Flood

# FLOOD STORIES 1955

*Including Selections from The Flood Show (1988) by W F Oakes,  
Adapted and Directed by Anne Robinson*

*And a Performance of The Maitland and Morpeth String Quartet  
by Nick Enright, Narrated and Directed by Nadia Piave*

21-22 February, 2025

**P R O G R A M**

With Assistance from a Maitland City Council Community Grant



Car covered with  
flood debris



Belmore Bridge  
with debris



An aerial view of  
the River

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## ***Directors' Notes***

As the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 1955 Maitland flood approached, people were talking about a play by Maitland playwright, Frank Oakes, produced in 1988. I was encouraged by their interest and spoke to Frank about updating his play, *The Flood Show*. He agreed to our doing a production containing selections from his play. This project was the beginning of *Flood Stories 1955*. Thank you to Frank for his research, stories and inspiration.

Following a chance meeting with Nadia Piave, we decided this would be a good opportunity to produce a work by another Maitland playwright, Nicholas Enright. His whimsical tale, *The Maitland and Morpeth String Quartet*, is also set around the time of the flood. We believe that this is the first time this production has been produced in Maitland in this manner. We hope you enjoy this production, which is partly fact, partly fiction and mostly fun.

*Anne Robinson and Nadia Piave*

## ***The Directors***

**Anne Robinson** is a Life Member of Maitland Repertory Theatre. She has been involved as a Committee Member and has worked behind the scenes of many theatre productions since joining twenty-five years ago. This is the third major production Anne has directed.

**Nadia Piave** is a Voice teacher and performer working in Sydney in the Art and World music spaces. She has performed recitations within concerts of Elizabethan and Early Baroque music, and makes spoken word a regular part of performances by her community madrigal group. Nadia is making her directorial debut with this MRT production of *The Maitland and Morpeth String Quartet*.

## ***Our Musician***

**Mauro Colombis** is an accomplished pianist and composer. He is one of the most renowned silent film pianists in the world and performs regularly at *The Pordenone Silent Film Festival* in Italy, the world's premier silent film festival.

## ***The Playwrights***

**Frank Oakes** is a Life Member of Maitland Repertory Theatre. He has written, directed and produced many plays at our theatre. He was the President for almost 20 years and a long-serving committee member.

**Nicholas Enright** (1950-2003) was awarded the Order of Australia posthumously for service to the performing arts, particularly as a playwright, teacher, actor, director, and as a mentor of emerging talent. Nicholas Enright was nominated for an Academy Award (along with director/co-writer George Miller) for *Lorenzo's Oil* (1992). He spent his early years in Maitland.

## Setting

These events take place in Maitland and Morpeth, around February, 1955.

**ACT I** Maitland Mercury Reporters, Richie and Cariya, walk around Maitland and talk to some interesting characters

**ACT II** Maggie buys a violin soon after her daughter marries, and practises in the back shed. She has no idea of the adventures in store for her, her husband and their friends.



Rachel Enright plays Maggie Flynn in *The Maitland and Morpeth String Quartet*.  
Rachel is Nicholas Enright's niece.



## **Cast**

Cariya Pidgeon	<b>Lisa Thomas</b>
Ritchie Didge	<b>Peter Eyre</b>
Actor 3	<b>Angie Hesketh</b>
Actor 4	<b>Rachel Enright</b>
Actor 5	<b>Terry Allen</b>
Actor 6	<b>Thomas Henry</b>
Actor 7	<b>Angie Hutchison-Ussher</b>
Actor 8	<b>Elwyn Coventry</b>
Actor 9	<b>Isabella Furner</b>
Actor 10	<b>Rebecca McKenzie</b>
Actor 11	<b>Marcus Howell</b>

## ***Production Credits***

Directors	<b>Anne Robinson and Nadia Piave</b>
Piano Accompaniment	<b>Mauro Colombis</b>
Stage Manager	<b>Robert Comber</b>
Stage Manager Assistant	<b>Isabella Furner (TM&amp;MSQ)</b>
Set Designer	<b>Ian Robinson</b>
Set Construction and Realisation	<b>Ian Robinson, Alexandra Comber, Dimity Eveleens, Robert Comber, Richard Rae, Danny Shaunessy, Anne Robinson and the Saturday morning crew</b>
Costumes	<b>Anne Robinson and Cast</b>
Makeup/Hair	<b>Cast</b>
Properties	<b>Dimity Eveleens</b>
Lighting Design	<b>Colin Campbell</b>
Lighting Operator	<b>Ian Robinson</b>
Sound Design and Operator	<b>Scott Rankin</b>
Poster	<b>Anne Robinson</b>
Photography	<b>Anne Robinson and Ian Robinson</b>
Program	<b>Anne Robinson and Ian Robinson</b>
Publicity	<b>Ian Robinson and Alexandra Comber</b>
Catering Officer	<b>Terry Allen</b>



## ***Thank you***

Thank you to Kirsten Gorton (for allowing us to use images by Athel D'Ombra, taken during and after the Maitland Flood in February, 1955), and to Frank Oakes, Chas Keys and Gregory Ray for their stories, encouragement, ideas and support.

We'd also like to thank Maitland City Council (Community Grant), The Maitland Mercury, Katy and Paige at University of Newcastle Living Histories and Victoria Roberts for permission to use her cartoon images.

Thank you to our volunteer members who make this show possible.

## ***To the CONDA Judges***

Sascha Okenhall, Larni Christie, Dan Stranger, Christine Fletcher, Wendy Ratcliffe, Jackie King and Joanna Andrew

## ***To our Patrons***

Meryl Swanson MP, Mayor Philip Penfold, Keith Cockburn.

## ***And also to:***

2NUR-FM, Scott Bevan of ABC Radio 1233, The Sign Shop, Scott Deamer of Jim's Test and Tag, and to our audiences for their continued patronage.

***Disclaimer:*** Flood Images may show people who are now deceased.

***Warning:*** There will be limited use of strobe effects during the show.

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***Deborah Van Heekeren*** is a visual artist, anthropologist and author. She completed art training in 1990 and studied art history, philosophy and anthropology. Deborah's artworks are displayed at the theatre during *Flood Stories 1955*.

***We acknowledge the Wonnarua People as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land upon which Maitland Repertory Theatre stands.***



MAITLAND  
REPERTORY  
THEATRE

# David Williamson's **THE GREAT DIVIDE**

Directed by Ian Robinson

Tickets \$27/\$32

**February 26 to March 16, 2025**

Bookings: [mrt.org.au](http://mrt.org.au) or 02 4933 2766

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# The Hanging

by Angela Betzien

Directed by Aimee Cavanagh

7 - 25 May 2025

Tickets: \$27/\$32 | Bookings: [mrt.org.au](http://mrt.org.au) or 02 4933 2766