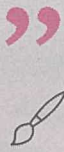


# Melbourne French Theatre brings Marivaux's *La Surprise de l'Amour* to life

“ The Melbourne French Theatre (MFT) is excited to announce 14 performances of their 2024 production, *La Surprise de l'Amour* by Marivaux, from August 6 to 17.

WORDS BY  
GEORGIE ATKINS



One of the most successful theatre companies across Australia, the MFT is a not-for-profit organisation founded 47 years ago by Michael Bula and David Gorrie.

The passionate team produces one to two productions annually, alternating between classic and modern works, providing a unique platform for both professional and amateur actors to perform in French.

This August, MFT will bring Marivaux's classic to life for local audiences.

"We chose Marivaux because he's a playwright as good, but not as well-known as Molière. Molière is Shakespeare of France, and Marivaux is the next generation after," Mr Bula said.

"It's a beautiful play. What attracted me to it was one word – love. You give this word to 1000 people and you have 1000 interpretations of what it means or what it does."

*La Surprise de l'Amour* is a three-act romantic comedy that follows Lelio, who, after being betrayed by a woman, renounces love and retreats to the countryside with his

valet, Arlequin.

While Lelio struggles with his heartache, Arlequin remains infatuated with women despite their imperfections. Meanwhile, Lelio's servant, Jacqueline, yearns to marry Pierre, a servant in Lelio's home. But his views stand in the way of their happiness.

"This particular plays also brings in a lot of what was happening in France in that period, so it's got a historical and educational element," Mr Bula said.

Mr Bula describes the cast as a "United Nations of actors", highlighting the diverse backgrounds represented in the show, including Moroccan, Mauritian, Algerian, and

Spanish artists who unite through their love for the French language and theatre.

"French is a world language, so it really brings together a lot of different people and different experiences," he told *Inner City News*.

A distinctive feature of MFT's production is its commitment to authenticity, presenting the play in its original French.

English surtitles will also be displayed to indicate character names alongside dialogue.

"We do not change a comma, that would be an insult to Marivaux," Mr Bula said. "The actors can't wait to perform, they're very excited." ●

  
directory

ton  
y is out now

to local businesses,  
arlton, from history and

