



Preshow Notes: *RBG: Of Many, One*

Welcome to this audio introduction to ‘**RBG: Of Many, One**’, by Suzie Miller. A State Theatre Company of South Australia Production.

The Audio Described performances will take place at the Dunstan Playhouse on Saturday, 18th April, with a sensory tour at 1.00pm, and the performance at 2.00pm, and on Monday 20th April, with a sensory tour at 5.30pm, and the performance at 6.30pm, followed by a post-show Q&A.

The performance runs for **100 minutes** with no interval and contains mature themes, herbal cigarettes smoked onstage, complete theatrical blackout and flashing light effects.

The following introduction will take about 10 minutes to listen to and features information about ‘**RBG: Of Many, One**’ including descriptions of the set, characters and costumes.

The live description will be given for Access2Arts by **Hen Vaughan** and **Jules Fielke**.

RBG: Of Many, One is a one-woman performance, commissioned by the Sydney Theatre Company and written by Suzie Miller, an Olivier Award-winning Australian playwright also known for *Prima Facie*. Miller brings both a dramatic and a legal sensibility to the material.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg was the second woman appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court and spent decades as a prominent voice for gender equality and reproductive rights within the American judiciary. The play traces her life — her landmark rulings, her dissents, and the personal and political pressures that shaped her — moving between the public record and the private moments behind it. The timeline is non-linear, and the work unfolds in three parts, each built around one main scene with flashbacks throughout.

Heather Mitchell returns to the role, following her award-winning performance in the original production. She is a slight woman, roughly a hundred and fifty centimetres tall, in her late sixties, with brown hair pulled back in a ponytail tied with a white polka-dot scarf. Mitchell depicts Ruth at various stages of life — from teenager to elderhood — with changes to voice, posture, and physicality marking these shifts more often than full costume changes. She also embodies a small constellation of other figures: former US presidents Bill Clinton, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump, each rendered through precise physical mimicry. Clinton motions with one arm out to the side and a leery grin; Obama speaks with measured authority, hands outstretched in a steadying gesture; Trump delivers with rigid posture, pouting and jabbing emphatic fingers toward the audience. Other characters — Marty, Ruth's husband; her late mother Celia; her granddaughter Clara — are conveyed more sparingly, through shifts in tone and expression. Occasionally, Ruth speaks to them as though they are just offstage, out of view.

At the beginning of the performance, she wears a horizontally striped red and white long-sleeved top, a thin grey jacket with a wide collar, pleated navy-blue slacks, and low white heels with a pointed toe. She wears large round clip-on earrings, a slender wristwatch, and clear-framed 1980s-style spectacles with oversized square lenses. Later, at the Kennedy Centre, she appears in a glittery bronze ensemble: a short waist-length coat over a matching knee-length dress with brown suede heels. A workout sequence finds Ruth in a dark-grey



velour hoodie, pale grey trackpants, and white trainers — *Super Diva !!* printed across her chest in white capitals. In the final section, she wears a horizontally striped cardigan in shades of blue and grey, with grey slacks and low white heels.

Ruth occasionally shows off her judge's robe and detachable collars. The robe is black and floor-length, with long wide sleeves and a single clip at the neck. The first collar — which she describes as her dissent collar — is 'spiky and bejewelled', with branching rows of glistening diamonds on black fabric. The other is crocheted lacework with small yellow beads, flat round golden studs, and smoky-coloured cut gems along its edges.

The set is spare, with a dark floor. As the performance begins, the light briefly focuses on Ruth's still face, creating a cameo or portrait effect, before she is revealed standing in a pool of light in her Washington DC apartment. Narrow cream drapes flank either side of the stage. At the centre sits a tub chair in cream upholstery, its dark inset wooden armrests and slender upright legs lending it a quiet elegance. Alongside, on our left, a small round coffee table stands on a carved marble base referencing a cross-section of a Corinthian column. On the table, a cream push-button phone with a spiral cord and a small glass lamp.

Occasionally a stage manager enters to move furniture inconspicuously or to introduce or remove items. Dressed in black, they interact with Ruth but have no dialogue.

Lighting in this production is not merely atmospheric — it is structural, a dramaturgical element. When Ruth retreats into memory, the light dim and warm, edges soften, and a spotlight angles down from overhead, seeming to cocoon her. At other moments, the overhead light sharpens into a crisp rectangle: the geometry of light falling through a tall apartment window. Nine footlights punctuate the front edge of the stage, their low beams capable of throwing long shadows upward against the set.

A series of tall, large walls, shaped with soft folds and creases undulate like curtains cross the stage behind the action. They are lit in varying colours to provide a warm, cool, or neutral foil — developing mood and atmosphere across the production. During the opera scenes, this expanse reads as curtaining and is flooded in deep carmine-red or vibrant bright blue.

The operatic music underscores Ruth's emotional journey from childhood to adolescence, into maturity and old age — a continuous thread woven throughout her life.

In the courtroom scenes, the rear wall is lit with ingenuity: its deep folds catch the light and transform, becoming the columns of a vast stone building, alabaster or marble, cool and imposing. The vertical grooves accentuate the height of the building and majesty of the space, throwing into relief the small, fine, and formidable figure at its centre.

In Part Two, Ruth revisits her landmark cases, moving from right to left with each recollection. Above her, the name of each case and its year are projected in clean white capital letters. Stage managers wheel in large mobile screens — illuminated squares of light — repositioning them across the stage as they flash from both sides in rapid succession, evoking the frenzy of a press corps: paparazzi, cameras, the glare of public life.

Part Three finds Ruth at the height of her powers and in the last passage of her life. A large pink gym ball and white yoga mat sit centre stage; beside them, a pair of powder-blue one-kilogram hand weights and a blue water bottle. To the right, a wooden clothes valet holds her black court robes and collars, draped carefully over the stand.



In the closing moments, Ruth's shadow looms large against the darkening curtaining that swathe the space. A tight white light slants in from the upper left — as if falling through a window onto a bed — illuminating her slumped body as it reclines. Within that fall of light, we focus on this woman: her extraordinary endurance, her precision of mind, her strength and courage.

The Creative team

Playwright: Suzie Miller
Director: Priscilla Jackman
Designer: David Fleischer
Lighting Designer: Alexander Berlage
Composer & Sound Designer: Paul Charlier
Cast: Heather Mitchell
Stage Manager: Katie Hankin
Assistant Stage Manager: Brooke Kiss

Access Information

Getting to the Venue

This show will be performed at the Dunstan Playhouse, Adelaide Festival Centre.

The recommended Dunstan Playhouse drop off zone is at the northern end of the Riverbank Footbridge on War Memorial Drive (walk across the Footbridge to Dunstan Playhouse) or at the Intercontinental Hotel (walk north between the Intercontinental Hotel and Railway Station along the lane way to the Riverbank). There is also a drop off area and two accessible car spaces on lower Festival Drive, accessible from the west via Montefiore Road.

Adelaide Festival Centre is easily accessible by public transport, including the tram (stop at Railway Station), trains, buses and a free bus service that operates on a loop throughout the city and North Adelaide with stops on the corner of King William Road and North Terrace.

Wheelchair access & Companion Cards

Wheelchair accessible seats, companion cards and other accessible bookings can be made via phone on 08 8415 5353 (Monday – Friday, 9.00am – 5.00pm), or via email at tickets@statetheatrecompany.com.au

For more information on audio described performances please contact Access2Arts using the email address audio.describer@access2arts.org.au