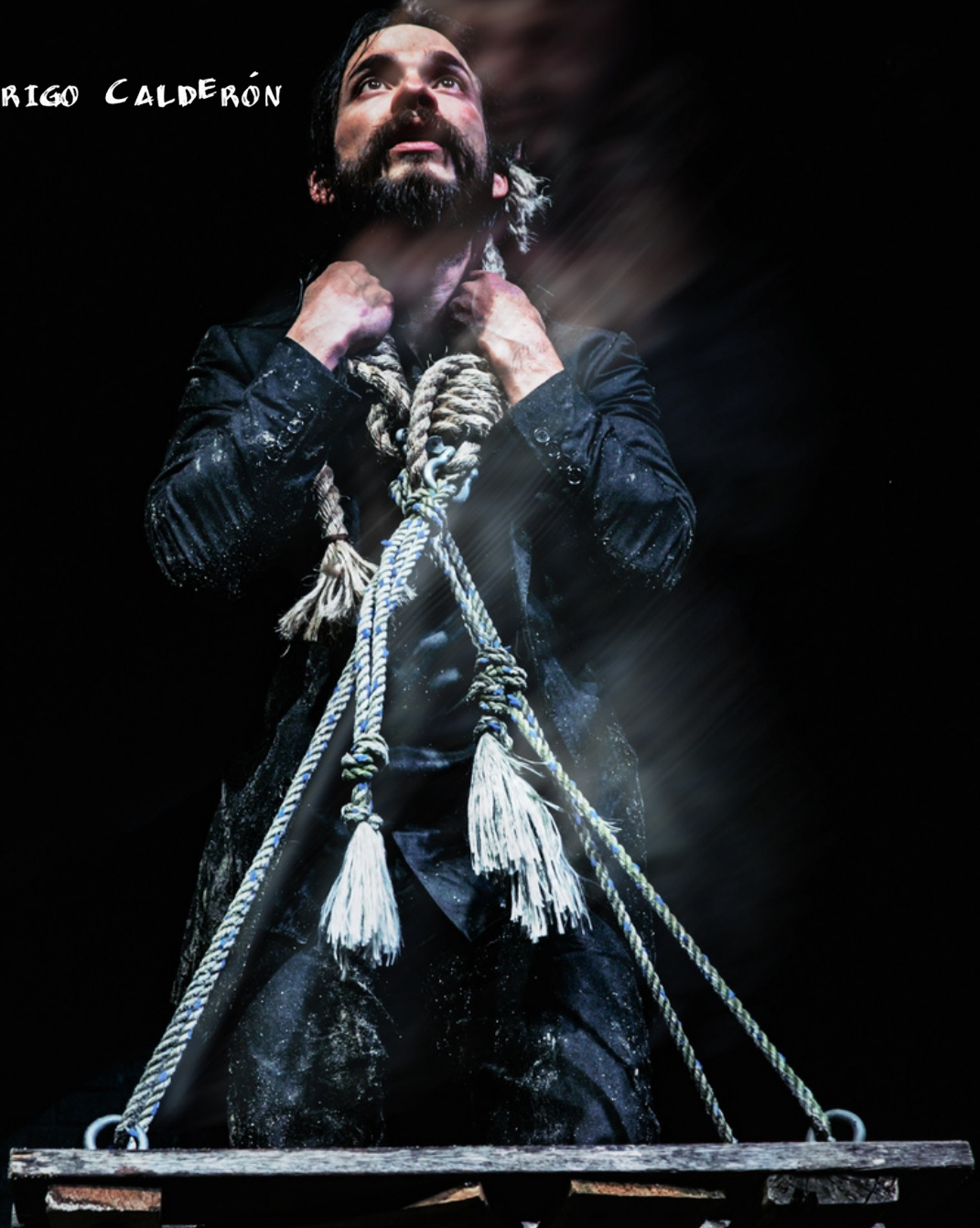


He

By RODRIGO CALDERÓN



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**Presenter Pack**

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# Introduction

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## Rodrigo Calderón

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Born in El Salvador, Rodrigo Calderón studied a bachelor of Dramatic Arts from Universidad del Salvador in Argentina; and has since immersed himself in directing, teaching, performing, and investigating different movement-based forms that potentialize the possibilities of the performer's body as a communicative and political tool.

At the beginning of his career, he intensively experimented with César Pineda the ritualistic nature of theatre, an experience that deeply inspired him to continue investigating the expressive possibilities of the actor's body to create a ceremonial gathering. Rodrigo's theatrical practice focuses on the building of a community. *HE* is Rodrigo's debut work as a playwright.

[www.rodrigocalderon.com](http://www.rodrigocalderon.com)

## Synopsis

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*HE* tells the story of a man who returns to his childhood home, a small coastal town in post-civil war El Salvador — a place he swore to the ocean he'd never set foot in again.

Twenty years have passed. Drenched with salt water, the man babbles a question to the ocean. "Do you remember?" He tells the ocean, and the audience, stories of his childhood—the exquisite spiced fish his grandma cooked, the vile jokes his dad loved telling to his ex-army buddies, the forbidden story his mum asked his grandma never to tell him, and about the time he was almost drowned by the ocean.

## Style

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Intimate poetic storytelling, physical theatre, direct audience address, magic realism.

## Themes

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Masculinity and manhood, coming-of-age, intergenerational trauma, sexuality and homophobia, and love.



## Credits

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**Writer / Director / Performer** Rodrigo Calderón

**Lighting Design** Zac Beaumont

**Playwright Consultants** Jorgelina Cerritos, Edgardo Dib, Matthew Crosby, and Damien Miller

**Design Consultant** Lara Week

**Provocateur** Kendra Keller

**Loving Witnesses** Stephen Phillips, Tony Yap, and Bagryana Popov

**Co-Producers** Kat Carrington and Rodrigo Calderón


## Production Information

The show is adaptable for both indoor and outdoor performance.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Duration</b>                                | 50 minutes, no interval  |
| <b>Indoor venue</b>                            | An intimate conventional black box or a proscenium arch or thrust stage.                                       |
| <b>Indoor minimum stage area</b>               | 4 metres deep x 4 meters wide, width and grid height of minimum 3.5 metres.                                    |
| <b>Capacity</b>                                | 50 - 150 audience members.   |
| <b>Outdoor venue</b>                           | A space on the beach or a park with soft ground.   |
| <b>Language</b>                                | The show can be performed in English or Spanish.   |
| <b>Maximum number of performances per week</b> | 7  |
| <b>Minimum break between performances</b>      | 120 minutes  |
| <b>Touring personnel</b>                       | The touring party consists of two people:<br>1 x performer / director<br>1 x tour and stage manager / operator |

## Performance History

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Venue / Location</b>                           | <b>Number of performances</b> |
|-------------|---|-------------------------------|
| 2020        | Old Ambulance station / Sunshine Coast, Australia | 6                             |
| 2022        | La Mama HQ / Melbourne, Australia                 | 3                             |
| 2023        | Red Velvet Underground / Melbourne, Australia     | 8                             |
| 2023        | Nave Cine Metro / San Salvador, El Salvador       | 2                             |
| 2023        | Playa El Zonte / La Libertad, El Salvador         | 1                             |
| 2024        | TheatreWorks / Melbourne, Australia               | 10                            |



## Wraparound activities

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### Post-Show Q&A

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Playwright and performer Rodrigo Calderón is available for post-show Q&As in multiple formats ranging from informal meet and greets, community incursions, or an allocated panel discussion at the venue. Q&As are excellent tools to deepen the audience's understanding of the work and its themes and the playwright's process of writing and creating *HE*.

### The Actor's Ensemble Practice

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In the "Actor's Ensemble Practice", participants explore the principles of Meyerhold Biomechanics and Suzuki Method For Actor's training, practising a hybrid of physical exercises that enhance the body-awareness. These workshops run by performer Rodrigo Calderón are suitable for industry professionals and students of acting, dance, circus, or other physical-based disciplines. Workshops can be delivered as a once-off masterclass or a series of workshops.

### The Actor's Playwriting Workshop

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Playwright and performer Rodrigo Calderón shares his unique approach to theatrical-writing, writing in a second language, and practical exercises for the development of script-writing. This workshop is a one-off three hour masterclass.

### Community Engagement

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We are open to developing a program with presenters tailored to the needs of their community.

## Marketing

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### Tagline

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Playing with the ocean is not a game.

### Marketing Copy

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A man returns to his childhood home, a small coastal town in post-civil war El Salvador – a place he swore to the ocean he'd never set foot in again.

*HE* is a coming-of-age tragedy about the treacherous waters of masculinity, homophobia, and love. About dad, the war, mum, the moon, the shadows of the past...still lingering. A story about sex, sin, Jesús, and the ocean.

Conceived, written and performed by Salvadoran-Australian theatre practitioner Rodrigo Calderón Tobar, *HE* is physical, vivid and delirious storytelling, with a cumbia heartbeat.

### Media Quotes

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★★★★★

"I found it! The gem every theatre critic dreams of...  
*HE* is blindingly fantastic on all levels."

**Samsara Dunston | What did she think?**

"Rodrigo Calderón weaves a lovingly crafted piece of theatre magic."

**Keith Gow | Theatre First**

"[*HE*] is engagingly balanced by the simplicity of the stage with a complex, deep, and passionate delivery."

**Pablo Gonzalez | Brunswick Daily**

## Audience & Industry Quotes

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★★★★½

“An absolute MUST SEE. It’s so rare you get to experience theatre so raw, so real, so rich, so beautiful and poetic in all its brutality”

**Dr Rachael Maza | Artistic Director & Co-CEO of Ilbijerri Theatre Company (Melbourne)**

“The Exploration of *HE* [December 2022] showed great potential. It was gentle, powerful, raw and insightful. Rodrigo’s performance was both nuanced and commanding. I’m really excited to see how this work will develop and have every faith in Rodrigo as a maker of great integrity.”

**Caitlin Dullard | Artistic Director & CEO of La Mama Theatre (Melbourne)**

“Rodrigo’s artistry is that he invites us to be human together again. The feeling is of coming back to ourselves. To breathe together. To laugh together. To dance together. To smell together. To feel the same thing at the same time. To recognise our own lives in a story of another. The audience are not separate to the work, we are part of the work. The work is not just telling a story, it is growing a community. HE is a radical act of truth telling and hope, performed by one man, simply and skillfully, with courage and with heart.”

**Penny Harpham | CEO & Executive Director of Western Edge Theatre (Melbourne)**

“I was lucky enough to witness Rodrigo Calderón’s outstanding performance in *HE* late last year [2020] on the Sunshine Coast. His performance was nothing short of virtuosic (both physically and vocally) and the passion which he brought to the work was something that is unfortunately far too rare in Australia.”

**Dr. Lynne Bradley | Founder/Director Zen Zen Zo Physical Theatre (Brisbane) and Artistic Director of Horizon Festival (Sunshine Coast)**

“Rodrigo is an utterly compelling performer. He can hold an audience’s attention with his visceral physicality. He is unafraid to tackle subjects that are taboo and has the intelligence and creativity to make bold and engaging work.”

**Susie Dee | Theatre Director (Melbourne)**

“Rodrigo’s piece *HE* is strange, captivating and alluring. A beautifully textured and embodied performance exploring the great (and endless) mystery - the ocean...Surprising, sensual, political, visceral and delicate. A piece performed with skill and passion.”

**Dr. Bagryana Popov | Director, performer & lecturer in theatre (Melbourne)**



## Indoor Performance

photos by Daisy Et and  
Abraham





Outdoor Performance

photos by Nette Klement



## Marketing kit information

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*Rodrigo Calderón presents* will provide each venue with a comprehensive Marketing Pack, including all performance, company, and artist information.

We will provide access to various marketing collateral with scope for individualisation, including:

- Promo videos (30 second online-ready trailer).
- Print-quality promotional, production, and rehearsal photography.
- Social media collateral including pull-quotes.
- Media release with existing five star reviews.

## Archival video documentation

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**Link here**            <https://www.rodrigocalderon.com/video-footage>

**Length**             55 minutes excluding credits.

Footage from June 2023 production at Red Velvet Underground in Melbourne, Australia.

Filmed by Gia Bui, and edited by Ruiqi Fu

## Production Images

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High res production, rehearsal, and marketing images will be provided. Samples images have been used throughout this pack.

## Target Audiences

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*HE* engages large audience demographics, including:

- Latin American diaspora
- LGBTQI+ communities and their supporters
- Spanish speakers
- Drama lovers seeking relevant, socially engaged theatre
- Migrant communities
- Lovers of physical theatre

## Content Warnings

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Contains references to sexual violence and homophobia, including the use of homophobic slurs.

## Sponsor or other acknowledgements

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This project's development was supported by La Mama Theatre through the 2022 Explorations Season and the 2023 Pathways program.

# Production Details

## Technical Summary

This technical summary relates to an indoor performance.

## Crew required from venue

Pre-rig is required unless negotiated. Crewing figures may be negotiable for smaller venues.

|                     |       |
|---------------------|-------|
| <b>Pre-Rig</b>      | 3 hrs |
| <b>1 x Lx</b>       | 3 hrs |
| <b>Bump in</b>      | 3 hrs |
| <b>1 x Lx</b>       | 3 hrs |
| <b>1 x Rigger *</b> | 2 hrs |
| <b>Bump out</b>     | 2 hrs |
| <b>1 x Lx</b>       | 2 hrs |

*\* Intermediate or advanced, depending on venue requirements*

## Example schedule

|                    |                               |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>1230 -1330</b>  | Rig swing                     |
| <b>1330 - 1530</b> | LX focus and plot, test sound |
| <b>1530 - 1730</b> | Dress Rehearsal               |
| <b>1730 - 1830</b> | Cast & crew break             |
| <b>1830 - 1930</b> | Hour call                     |
| <b>1930 - 2030</b> | Show                          |
| <b>2100 - 2300</b> | Bump out                      |

## Stage

The performance features a solo performer who utilises a rope swing in different ways throughout. The swing ropes are natural fibre and are set approximately 400mm wide. It is used to partially bear the weight of the performer and also to fully bear the weight of the performer. When used in a full weight bearing manner, it is only used as a swing apparatus. It is only to sit or stand on the wooden seat while swinging lightly.

The swing apparatus has been approved at a minimum WLL of 600kg. This is operating at approximately a 6:1 safety ratio. This more than satisfies the requirements of the performance.

**Venue to supply** A sufficient anchor point to satisfy the minimum required load on the swing of 700kg or 7kn.

If the venue anchor points are wider than the necessary 400mm spread, a suitable steel spreader bar will need to be supplied in order to act as an intermediary between the venue anchor points and the anchor points of the swing ropes.

A rigger with an intermediate or advanced rigging licence to sign off on the installation of the swing to the anchor point.

**Company to provide** Wooden swing to be installed onto the anchor point.

## Lighting

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The show utilises house stock from a standard rig (essentially require an isolated front wash and side wash, ideally with LED stock). LX operated by touring Stage Manager, from standard FoH position.

**Venue to supply** Basic house stock. If LED fixtures are not available, additional time will be required for the pre-rig or bump-in process.

Hot power on stage.

**Company to provide** 3 on-stage practical lights (all tested and tagged)

## Sound

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We will have a laptop loaded with Qlab and our show file ready to patch into your system. The touring stage manager will operate sound.

## Special Effects

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The show uses a haze machine throughout the performance.

**Venue to supply** DMX haze machine with additional haze fluid.

## Wardrobe & Props

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The performer's costume is drenched in sea water at the start of each performance.

**Venue to supply** 1x dressing room with dressing / makeup stations and chairs for the performer and access to toilets and showers.

Washer and dryer.

## Freight

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This production does not require any freight. All necessary items can travel with performers.

## Contacts

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**Kat Carrington**  
**Co-Producer / production manager**  
[katcarrington01@gmail.com](mailto:katcarrington01@gmail.com)  
0424 553 277

Please contact Kat for producing and logistics, personnel, tour scheduling, and marketing requests.

**Rodrigo Calderón**  
**Co-Producer / performer**  
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0402 880 799