

MEDIA RELEASE: 15 November 2021

BATTLE OF THE QUEENS HITS THE PERTH STAGE

MARY STUART

Adapted by Kate Mulvany, after Friedrich Schiller

Produced by Perth Festival and Performing Lines WA



Caroline Brazier and Kate Walsh (Image credit: Dan Grant)

‘In this richly satisfying production . . . two women at times reluctantly battle out this deadly game of thrones.’ — Sydney Morning Herald

The landmark theatrical event ***Mary Stuart*** will bring to magnificent life one of history’s great rivalries – Elizabeth I’s battle royale with Mary, Queen of Scots.

Acclaimed WA playwright **Kate Mulvany** has adapted Friedrich Schiller’s epic tale into a sumptuous costume drama with an outstanding WA cast led by the colossal acting talents of **Kate Walsh** (Elizabeth) and **Caroline Brazier** (Mary).

The commanding production, co-produced by **Perth Festival** and **Performing Lines WA** in association with **Fremantle Theatre Company**, is directed by **Mel Cantwell**, whose production *Whale Fall* was a highlight of the 2021 Perth Festival. Expect fierce performances from the large cast, opulent period-inspired costumes and ingenious design to reveal both the grandeur and danger of Elizabethan England.

Mary Stuart unfolds with the Scottish uprising and the capture of Mary as she tries to flee the country. Elizabeth feels threatened – Mary is younger, more beloved, and with her own claim to the

throne. Do they have more in common than they realise? The question now is whether Elizabeth will release Mary – or execute her.

With plot twists, witty dialogue and political intrigue, *Mary Stuart* transcends its 16th century origins to become the story of two smart, strong women scheming and struggling to hold on to power, determined to survive in a world dominated by double-crossing men.

Kate Walsh (*The Other Place*, *Grey's Anatomy*) plays Elizabeth, and Caroline Brazier (*Dinner*, ABC's *Rake*) reprises her role as Mary from the 2019 original Sydney Theatre Company production. These are two flawed and fascinating women locked in a monumental feud in which the endgame is to kill or be killed.

Geraldton-born playwright, screenwriter and actor Kate Mulvany showcases her work at home in this 13-show run in the **Heath Ledger Theatre**.

Director Mel Cantwell is thrilled to be bringing the iconic story to life. 'Kate Mulvany's beautiful play is bold, empathic and powerful. Written with fierce wit and intelligence, it achieves that most remarkable of things: bringing history to the stage in a living, breathing contemporary form. *Mary Stuart* is striking in its relevance and resonance with today's world.'

Perth Festival Artistic Director Iain Grandage said Mulvany's utterly compelling version of Schiller's male-dominated play focuses on the relationship between the two queens by imagining an in-person meeting between the two. 'It is a beautiful reinvention and distillation of the original play,' he said. 'It is a thrill for the Festival to be able to celebrate three extraordinary women, each with a strong connection to Western Australia, in this centrepiece theatrical tour-de-force.'

This adaptation of *Mary Stuart* was commissioned by the Sydney Theatre Company and was first produced at the Roslyn Packer Theatre in February 2019.

This production is in association with Fremantle Theatre Company.

WHAT: *Mary Stuart*

WHERE: Heath Ledger Theatre / Yandilup / Northbridge

WHEN: Thu 10, Fri 11, Sat 12, Tue 15, Wed 16, Thu 17, Fri 18, Sat 19, Tue 22, Wed 23, Thu 24, Fri 25, Sat 26 Feb 7pm. Sun 13 and Sun 20 Feb 6pm.

HOW MUCH: \$59 - \$99

BOOKINGS AND FESTIVAL INFO: perthfestival.com.au

Click [here](#) for images. For further information, interviews or images please contact:

Stephen Bevis

+61 8 6488 8618 / 0448 927 281

sbevis@perthfestival.com.au

Lauren Papendorf

+61 8 6488 2000 / 0414 050 846

lpapendorf@perthfestival.com.au

Perth Festival acknowledges the Noongar people who continue to practise their values, language, beliefs and knowledge on their kwobidak boodjar. They remain the spiritual and cultural birdiyangara of this place and we honour and respect their caretakers and custodians and the vital role Noongar people play for our community and our Festival to flourish.

ABOUT PERTH FESTIVAL

Founded in 1953 by The University of Western Australia, Perth Festival is the longest running international arts festival in Australia and Western Australia's premier cultural event. The Festival has developed a worldwide reputation for excellence in its international program, the presentation of new works and the highest quality artistic experiences for its audience. For nearly 70 years, the Festival has welcomed to Perth some of the world's greatest living artists and now connects with hundreds of thousands of people each year. Iain Grandage is the Artistic Director 2020 – 24.

PERFORMING LINES

Performing Lines is a national organisation that produces provocative contemporary performance by Australia's most audacious independent artists.

The company curates a portfolio of work that is propelled by pressing questions and new ways of seeing the world. They champion the unconventional, the marginal, the rebellious and the new. Their purpose is to champion risk and to ensure that the breadth and plurality of Australia's creative potential is represented and celebrated.

Performing Lines is led by Executive Producer Marion Potts and manages teams in Sydney, Perth and Hobart, with a network of producers and presenters around the country and the world.

In Western Australia, Performing Lines WA has a dynamic office of four staff working out of the King Street Arts Centre. The last 12 months has seen the company produce six new works, including four successful seasons at Perth Festival 2021 – *Black Brass*, *Children of the Sea*, *Galup* and *Slow Burn*, *Together*.

In everything Performing Lines does, they acknowledge that we live on Aboriginal land and constantly learn from the wisdom of First Peoples. Where we are and the history that precedes us informs how Performing Lines works and how they move forward.

ARTISTIC CREDITS

Adapted by Kate Mulvany

Starring Kate Walsh, Caroline Brazier, Humphrey Bower, Raj Labade, Kyle Morrison, Igor Sas, George Shevtsov, Dalip Sondhi, Peter Holland, Angelina Curtis

Director Mel Cantwell

Designer Bruce McKinven

Produced by Performing Lines WA

The Sydney Theatre Co commissioned and produced the premiere production of this adaptation in 2019

Original Director Lee Lewis

Original Cast Fayssal Bazzi, Caroline Brazier, Simon Burke, Peter Carroll, Tony Cogin, Andrew McFarlane, Rahel Romahn, Helen Thomson, Matthew Whittet, Darcey Wilson.

KATE MULVANY

Kate Mulvany is an award-winning playwright and screenwriter.

Kate's adaptation of Ruth Park's *Playing Beatie Bow* premiered at the STC in 2021. She had two plays premiere in 2019, her adaptation of Friedrich Schiller's *Mary Stuart* (STC) and her original work *The Mares* (Tasmanian Theatre Company) which won the 2020 Tasmanian Theatre Award for Outstanding New Writing. In 2018 Kate premiered her adaptation of Ruth Park's *The Harp in the South* (STC) which won both the Stage AWGIE Award and the Major AWGIE Award, along with the David Williamson Prize. In 2017 Kate's play *The Rasputin Affair (Ensemble Theatre)* was nominated for an AWGIE award. Her adaptation of Craig Silvey's *Jasper Jones* premiered at Barking Gecko followed by productions at Belvoir Street, MTC, QT and STCSA.

Her autobiographical play *The Seed (Belvoir St Theatre)* won the Sydney Theatre Award for Best Independent Production. Co-written by Kate and Anne-Louise Sarks *Medea* (Belvoir St Theatre) was produced in 2012 and won several awards including an AWGIE and five Sydney Theatre Awards and has been produced in Poland, London and Basel. Other works include; *Masquerade* (based on the book by Kit Williams), *The Danger Age*, *Blood and Bone*, *The Web*, *Somewhere* (co-written with Tim Minchin) and *Storytime*, which won Kate the 2004 Philip Parsons Award.

As a screenwriter, Kate has worked on the development of several television series and is developing a TV series based on *The Seed*. She has also written two episodes of the Lingo Pictures/Foxtel series *Upright*. She is currently writing a half-hour script of an anthology series for Gristmill Pty Ltd for the ABC.

Kate is also an award-winning stage and screen actor with credits with many of the major Sydney theatre companies and in many television dramas and films.

KATE WALSH

With over two decades of experience, Kate Walsh remains one of the busiest actresses in the industry. Her most recent live performance was right here in Perth, in the Fremantle Theatre Company production of *The Other Place*.

Kate is widely known for her starring role as Dr. Addison Montgomery in the ABC dramas *Grey's Anatomy / Private Practice* as well as Netflix's *13 Reasons Why*, *The Umbrella Academy*, and *Emily In Paris*. Most recently Walsh co-starred with Liam Neeson in the film *Honest Thief*, & Donal Logue in *Sometime Other Than Now*.

Kate is a passionate advocate for carbon offsets, as well as ocean and marine life conservation. As a long time partner of Oceana, she seeks to protect the world's oceans and marine life with policymaking, successfully advocating & winning protective legislation for the lower US Eastern Seaboard and Belizean Reef from deep water drilling. Kate has always been a strong voice in the fight for women's rights, serving as a member of Planned Parenthood's Board of Advocates for over 10 years as well as being an ambassador for Operation Smile.

Walsh created and founded the award-winning fragrance, *Boyfriend Perfume*, and continues to grow and expand the company.

CAROLINE BRAZIER

Caroline is one of Australia's most accomplished actors working extensively across film, television and theatre since graduating from the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA).

Caroline is most recognisable for her roles portraying Wendy Greene, the long suffering ex-wife to Richard Roxburgh's Cleaver on ABC's *Rake*, to the quirky Chrissy Merchant on the Seven Network's *Packed to the Rafters*, or the wonderful Shanti on Network Ten's *Offspring*. Caroline's lead roles extend across a wide range of high profiled television series including *Water Rats*, *City Homicide*, *Legend of the Seeker*, *Parallax*, *Wild Boys*, *Terra Nova*, *Miss Fishers Murder Mysteries*, *Dripping in Chocolate*, *Deep Water*, *Tidelands*, *Home & Away*, *Reef Break*, *Diary of an Uber Driver* and most recently ABC's *Wakefield*.

Caroline's theatre work is equally high profiled, including the lead role of Paige in the Sydney Theatre Company's smash hit production of *Dinner*, along with lead roles in *Merchant of Venice*, *Julius Caesar* and *Anthony and Cleopatra* - all for Bell Shakespeare company, *Ray's Tempest*, *Enlightenment* and *Jumpy* for Melbourne Theatre Company, *Don's Party* for Sydney Theatre Company, *Gasp!* For Queensland Theatre Company/Black Swan Theatre Company, *Europe* for La Mama Theatre, *The Incredible Here and Now* for the National Theatre of Parramatta and *The Literati* for Griffin Theatre Company.

Caroline's recent theatre work is Sydney Theatre Company's hit production *Death of an Anarchist* in the role of Superintendent, and most recently Sydney Theatre Company's critically acclaimed production, *Mary Stuart* as Mary Stuart.

Caroline's feature film work includes lead roles in Greg McLean's thriller *Rogue*, the sci fi fantasy *Pulse*, Ben Elton's comedy *Three Summers* and Heath Davis' *Locusts*. Caroline will next be seen opposite Guy Pearce and Liam Neeson in the feature film *Blacklight*.

MELISSA CANTWELL

Melissa is a director, writer and Creative Director of independent company The Kabuki Drop.

She has a BA (Film & TV, ECU) and post-graduate Bachelor of Performing Arts (Directing, WAAPA). Melissa's previous roles in the WA arts sector include Program Manager for The Blue Room Theatre, Associate Director of Perth Theatre Company and Artistic Director of PTC. Under her leadership PTC focused on the development of contemporary works with a unique West Australian voice and providing new opportunities and platforms for emerging and mid-career artists.

For The Kabuki Drop: *Nocturna*; *Whale Fall* (PICA/Perth Festival); *Slap and Tickle* (Adelaide Cabaret Festival); *The Elders Project* (Fremantle Festival/Art on the Move); *The Average Joe* (Summernights); *Blink* (Winter Arts Festival). Directing highlights for PTC: *Tender Napalm*; *A Number*; *The Ugly One*; *From the Rubble*; *Equus*; *Blackbird*; *The Goat, or Who is Sylvia*. Independent directing credits include *States of Shock* (PICA); *The Proper Shoes* (DADDA WA/ ABC Radio). Playwriting Credits include *After the Fair*; *Marmalade and Egg* (PTC; JUTE and Queensland Theatre); *The Seven Deadly Australian Sins* (JUTE, Darwin Theatre Company); and *The Lost Girl* (Perth Festival / Barking Gecko). She received an Emerging Leader's fellowship from the International Society for Performing Arts and has been a guest artist, lecturer and speaker for numerous national organisations and institutions.

BRUCE MCKINVEN

Bruce is the Senior Production Designer for Dark Mofo Festival in Hobart, and Site Designer for Adelaide Festival's Adelaide Writer's Week. Bruce has a 30-year career designing for theatre, festivals, dance and events across Australia, working with some of the nation's leading practitioners. In theatre Bruce has designed productions for Company B Belvoir, Bell Shakespeare, Queensland Theatre Company, Sydney Theatre Company, La Boite, State Theatre Company of South Australia, Black Swan State Theatre Company, Perth Theatre Company, and in dance, companies Bruce has designed for include Strut Dance, WA Ballet, Link Dance Company, Expressions Dance Company, Force Majeure, Australian Dance Theatre, Dance North, Tasdance, Queensland Ballet and Singapore Dance Theatre.

Most recently he has designed *Slow Burn*, *Together* for Emma Fishwick, Rachael Dease's *Hymns for End Times*, *Whalefall* for The Kabuki Drop, and was Design Associate for CO3's *Archives of Humanity*, all part of the 2021 Perth Festival.