

QUEENSLAND THEATRE

1 April 2021

A SHREW FOR OUR TIMES

“My tongue will tell the anger of my heart, or else my heart concealing it will break”
Katharina, *Taming of the Shrew*

Queensland Theatre is inviting audiences to an Italian silent film set for its highly anticipated season of *Taming of the Shrew* from 8 May to 5 June, led by **Damien Ryan**, one of Australia’s most lauded directors of Shakespeare.

Under his considered, clever direction, this production will not only speak to the ‘anger of my heart’ felt by many women in Australia right now, but also to the promise of a love that *fre*es rather than subordinates a great woman.

“In the early days of film, women were very much the stars, but fundamental to their stardom was a silencing of their voices,” says multi-award winning director and actor, Damien Ryan.

“It’s a paradoxical setting. The early 20th century was really a turning point, with the rise of the aviatrix, of suffragettes, and with the advent of talkies, a woman’s voice on celluloid — but only after she’s been tucked and squished, then smeared with make-up, to look the part of feminine beauty on camera.

“It’s within that illusion of power, within a world of playfulness and role playing, that we are setting *Taming of the Shrew* and I hope to have an enormous amount of fun!”

Ryan hopes that the question in the hearts of audiences after the play will be: what would you do for love? Not just to *be* loved, but to *give* love?

“I want the experience in the Bille Brown Theatre to be of a really extraordinary love story — a messy, complex, at times disagreeable, but very funny, very moving, strangely satisfying love story. I think every successful relationship makes sense to the people who are in it. Other people’s rules and judgements don’t apply. It’s indefinable to anyone on the outside, and that holds true for Katharina (Kate) and Petruchio,” he suggests.

“I hope to find a story of a couple that will eventually just do anything for each other, absolutely selflessly anything. Not just Kate to Petruchio, but also he, entirely to her. We have a wonderful cast to interrogate that and provoke each other and challenge the story.”

Taming of the Shrew will see the role of free-spirited Kate played by Brisbane’s **Anna McGahan** (*Hydra*, Foxtel’s *Picnic at Hanging Rock*), matching wits against **Nicholas Brown** (Belvoir’s *Counting and Cracking*, Nine’s *Amazing Grace*) in his Queensland Theatre debut as the audacious, mercurial Petruchio.

They’ll be joined by local audience favourites **Bryan Proberts** (*The Holidays*, *Hydra*), **Barbara Lowing** (*Motherland*, Belloo Creative’s *Rovers*), **Ellen Bailey** (*Wisdom*, *Storm Boy*) and **Leon Cain** (*The 39 Steps*, Shake & Stir’s *Fantastic Mr Fox*). For the first time on the Bille Brown stage will also be **Patrick Jhanur** (La Boite’s *Single Asian Female*), **John McNeill** (Shake & Stir’s *Endgame*), **Wendy Mocke** (Darlinghurst Theatre’s *Jelbu Meri*), **David Soncin** (Bell Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*) and **Claudia Ware** (Sport for Jove’s *The Tempest*),

Artistic Director **Lee Lewis** said, “I know *Taming of the Shrew* is complicated. Damien has said time and time again that Shakespeare wrote it to be a deliberately divisive play. But just because it’s problematic to navigate, does that mean we should put it to the back of the bookshelf?”

“Artists should be brave enough to confront and own heritage works. In the right hands, with the right cast, this is a glorious play and I am eager to share Damien’s inspired, nuanced and downright hilarious interpretation of this love story with Queensland Theatre audiences.

“In this time when international travel remains impossible, Queensland Theatre is ready to sweep audiences away to Italy, if only for a night!”

TAMING OF THE SHREW by William Shakespeare

Directed by Damien Ryan

8 May to 5 June 2021

Bille Brown Theatre, South Brisbane

Bookings queenslandtheatre.com.au | 1800 355 528 | sales@queenslandtheatre.com.au

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Two sisters. One wants to marry, one doesn't. What could possibly go wrong?

It's *Lights! Camera! Action!* on an Italian silent film set. The suitors are lining up to woo movie mogul Baptista's enchanting film star daughter, Bianca. But there's a catch: Bianca can't marry until her elder sister is wed.

Enter Kate — bold, free and fierce, the last thing she wants or needs is a husband. Men conspire to marry this wild woman off to any man who will have her.

Enter Petruchio — Navy captain, in need of a wife. The stage is set for one of the most powerful clashes of wills in history.

With a sprinkle of old-time movie magic, director Damien Ryan rescues this classic love story from the clutches of controversy, by transporting it to a time when Kate is less of a problem and more of a promise of great women to come. This may not be the *Shrew* you were expecting, but it will be an irresistible night in the theatre filled with glamour, romance, song and laughter. And a plane.

CAST AND CREATIVES

Tania	Ellen Bailey
Petruchio	Nicholas Brown
Biondello/Tailor/Payer	Leon Cain
Lucentio	Patrick Jhanur
Vincentia/Haberdasher	Barbara Lowing
Katharina	Anna McGahan
Baptista	John McNeill
Rosa/Curtis/Ensemble	Wendy Mocke
Gremio/Grumio	Bryan Probets
Hortensio	David Soncin
Bianca	Claudia Ware
Playwright	William Shakespeare
Director	Damien Ryan
Design Realisation	Adam Gardnir
Lighting Designer	Jason Glenwright
Sound Designer	Tony Brumpton

PRODUCTION PARTNER



For further information, imagery or interviews, please contact Amanda Lawson, Queensland Theatre via publicity@queenslandtheatre.com.au or phone 07 3010 7669

Queensland Theatre acknowledges the Jagera and Turrbal people who are the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work, and their unique relationship with the lands, seas and waterways. We pay our respects to their Elders both past and present, and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

