

QUEENSLAND THEATRE

Sunday 26 September 2021

The power of a great story — Queensland Theatre's 2022 Season

2022 at Queensland Theatre will reach beyond boundaries to inspire, challenge and entertain audiences

Artistic Director Lee Lewis has today revealed her plans for a big year, announcing the eight plays including two world premieres that form the Company's 2022 Brisbane Season.

"Our 2022 Season boldly crosses all boundaries, altering time and place and transporting us from Brisbane to Paris, Afghanistan, Far North Queensland, Vietnam and Arkansas. It will carry us across the decades, from the 1890s to the 1940s, to 1975 and 2011, and will bring us back to the current moment, reflecting the issues that matter deeply to us now," Lewis said.

2022 begins with a fresh version of Edward Albee's masterpiece *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* at the Playhouse, QPAC from 12 February.

"In so many ways, this play really shouldn't be funny, but it is," noted Lewis. "Audiences will delight in the caustic, brutal and spectacularly petty antics of the two couples behaving badly in this modern staging under Margaret Harvey's skilful direction."

March sees the world premiere of a compelling debut work, *First Casualty* written by Christopher Johnston, a currently serving member of the Australian Defence Force and veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan. Set in a remote Afghanistan outpost, *First Casualty* reaches beyond the headlines of this 20-year war.

"This play is not a pro-war story and it's not an anti-war story," Lewis said. "It is simply a story about our soldiers. It offers us a chance to understand what they experienced."

The Bille Brown Theatre will then become a more tranquil town, the setting for Hannah Belanszky's *don't ask what the bird look like* from 30 April. This gentle, almost gothic tale was a finalist in the Queensland Premier's Drama Award 2018-19 and now makes its world premiere, directed by Isaac Drandic (*City of Gold*).

"Hannah's beautiful play invites audiences to join a search for family, identity and connection, interspersed with some serious games of Scrabble!" said Lewis.

Theresa Rebeck's *Bernhardt/Hamlet* at the Bille Brown Theatre from 28 May is a treat for lovers of a big theatrical play, for those who adore luscious costumes, the glamour of Paris and a strong woman taking charge of her destiny.

"This is the perfect play to entice audiences out on a cooler evening to enjoy some grandeur, some romance, some laughs and a dash of Shakespeare — I can't wait to direct this gorgeous story starring Angie Milliken (*Death of a Salesman*)," Lewis said.

July at the Playhouse, QPAC sees Wesley Enoch return to Queensland Theatre to direct his acclaimed musical *The Sunshine Club*, with music by John Rodgers. A ground-breaking work in 1999, *The Sunshine Club* brought together some of the biggest First Nations talent including Wayne Blair, Elaine Crombie, Roxanne McDonald, David Page, Stephen Page and Ursula Yovich.

"It is a joy to welcome Wesley home to lead the next generation with a glorious revival of his home-grown hit, a story filled with song, dance, love and dreams," Lewis said.

Kendall Feaver's *The Almighty Sometimes* is a powerful and honest family drama about raising a child, their search for independence and the grey areas in mental health care. It will run at the Bille Brown Theatre from 13 August.

"I'm excited to see director Daniel Evans (*Oedipus Doesn't Live Here Anymore*) find the heart, hope and humour in this captivating multi-award-winning play," said Lewis.

September sees the much-anticipated Brisbane season of Shakespeare's *Othello* adapted by Jimi Bani (*My Name is Jimi, Our Town*) and Jason Klarwein (*My Name Is Jimi, Death of a Salesman*) at the Bille Brown Theatre. This trilingual (Kala Lagaw Ya, Yumpla Tok and English) production illuminates the vital role of the Torres Strait Light Infantry Battalion during World War II and brings together two powerful artistic cultures — Shakespeare and Wagadagam.

"Delayed by Covid, this unstoppable work is utterly compelling and will absolutely be well worth the wait," said Lewis.

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Audiences will then be whisked away from Far North Queensland to America for the wild, road-trip romance of Qui Nguyen's *Vietgone*. The story begins at an Arkansas arrival camp for Vietnam War evacuees and sets off through the heartland of the United States. At the Bille Brown Theatre from 29 October, this irreverent work features Ngoc Phan (*Boy Swallows Universe*) and is likely to be the only 2022 production to include live hip hop.

"A story that may, or may not, have led to the birth of this astonishing playwright, Qui will take audiences on a wonderful ride to see out our year of big stories," said Lewis.

"2022 will be about recovering from the last two years," said Lewis. "If there is anything we have learned in this time, it is that theatre remains vital. It is so essential that we gather together as a community to hear the stories that are important and urgent right now, that will help us imagine our future together.

"And together, we can celebrate the power of a great story, told by talented artists, to change our night, our year, and sometimes, our lives."

Reflecting on the 2021 Season — which has seen box office records smashed as Trent Dalton's *Boy Swallows Universe* adapted for the stage by Tim McGarry continues its incredible run at QPAC, as well productions interrupted by COVID-19 lockdowns — Lewis is "absolutely thankful for the support of our government, corporate and philanthropic partners who have believed in our shared vision to ensure the power and the excitement of live theatre is always here for our communities.

"With so many theatres still closed due to the current lockdowns, our hearts go out to our industry friends down the east coast of the country. Everyone at Queensland Theatre feels so grateful to have delighted so many theatre-goers in the last nine months. We hope the new year brings more joy for more audiences across Australia."

For more information visit queenslandtheatre.com.au

Further casting announcements will be made closer to season dates.

SEASON PACKAGES NOW ON SALE

Season Ticket holders save up to 28% off single ticket prices as well as enjoying a range of benefits, including the best available seats, before single tickets go on sale to the public. 8, 6, 5 and 3-play packages are available.

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

ACROSS THE STATE

Queensland Theatre's Brisbane season is just one of the many ways in which the Company is working to strengthen the industry and develop the next generation of artists and audiences.

"Every week our building reverberates with the energy of the Young Artists' Ensembles working with our teaching artists. We support the playwrights of the future with our annual Young Playwright's Award and reading those scripts is one of my favourite times of the year. Our flagship program The Scene Project introduces a newly commissioned work for young people into 100 classrooms across the state and our Theatre Residency Week in both Brisbane and Townsville builds confidence and creates treasured memories for students.

"In early 2022 we will reveal the finalists of the Queensland Premier's Drama Award 2022–23, now the richest playwriting prize in the country. Our First Nations program, which began in 2012, continues with productions underway for future seasons. In regional Queensland, I'm excited that we will be fostering new partnerships with local theatre companies and artists to develop stories that present diverse experiences and histories," Lewis said.



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.

QUEENSLAND THEATRE – 2022 SEASON

[Watch the digital season launch and find out more](#)

[Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?](#)

By Edward Albee

Directed by Margaret Harvey

12 – 26 Feb at the Playhouse, QPAC
A State Theatre South Australia Production

Nothing good ever happens after 3am.

[First Casualty](#)

By Christopher Johnston

Directed by Lee Lewis

12 Mar – 9 Apr at the Bille Brown Theatre
World Premiere

This is not an anti-war story. This is not a pro-war story. This is a story of soldiers.

[don't ask what the bird look like](#)

By Hannah Belanzky

Directed by Isaac Drandic

30 Apr – 14 May at the Bille Brown Theatre
World Premiere

A gently funny, almost gothic tale of land, family and reconnection.

[Bernhardt/Hamlet](#)

By Theresa Rebeck

Directed by Lee Lewis

28 May – 18 Jun at the Bille Brown Theatre

To be or not to be... theatre star Sarah Bernhardt *absolutely* will be.

[The Sunshine Club](#)

Book and Lyrics by Wesley Enoch | Music by John Rodgers

Directed by Wesley Enoch

9 – 30 Jul at the Playhouse, QPAC
A Queensland Performing Arts Centre co-production

A joyous revival of this radiant Brisbane musical.

[The Almighty Sometimes](#)

By Kendall Fever

Directed by Daniel Evans

13 Aug – 3 Sep at the Bille Brown Theatre

A heartfelt family drama about loving someone with a mental illness.

[Othello](#)

By William Shakespeare | Adapted by Jimi Bani and Jason Klarwein

Directed by Jason Klarwein

10 Sep – 1 Oct at the Bille Brown Theatre
In association with Brisbane Festival

Shakespeare's classic tale lands in the Torres Strait.

[Vietgone](#)

By Qui Nguyen

With original music by Shane Rettig

Directed by Lee Lewis

29 Oct – 19 Nov at the Bille Brown Theatre

A wild road-trip romance through the heartland of America.