

QUEENSLAND THEATRE

Queensland Theatre's *Medea* turns tragedy into child's play

Queensland Theatre will present an unforgettable reimagining of history's most misunderstood mother, in a bittersweet pressure-cooker performance of the ancient Greek tragedy, *Medea* at the Bille Brown Theatre from Saturday 11 May.

Penned by Kate Mulvany (*Jasper Jones*) and Anne-Louise Sarks, and directed by Queensland Theatre's Associate Artistic Director (Programming) and three-time Matilda Award winner, Daniel Evans (*Drizzle Boy*, *The Almighty Sometimes*, *Vietgone*), the multi-award-winning, internationally celebrated version will hit the Queensland stage following its UK premiere which earned rave reviews.

Audiences will experience a blending of new and old as they witness the unfolding of a 2,400-year-old tale of passion and revenge set in modern-day Queensland, with an even bigger twist — told entirely from the perspective of Medea's young sons, 10-year-old Jasper and 12-year-old Leon.

Despite its classical roots, director Daniel Evans described this story as one that will truly sink in for today's modern audiences.

"This play is a completely contemporary reimagining of the classic myth. There are no Greek togas. There is no chorus to guide or warn us. But there is deep and extraordinary catharsis and two of the greatest protagonists in the theatre canon — Medea's young sons, who show us this classic tale from the perspective of children," Evans said.

"This is a tragedy in the classic sense: we watch human suffering and know terrible and sorrowful events will befall the characters. And there's nothing we can do to stop it. But this is a candid and captivating, and sometimes surprisingly funny play, with star turns from our young performers."

Four of Queensland's young actors have been selected to alternate playing the lead roles of young brothers, Jasper and Leon, including 13-year-old Orlando Dunn-Mura, 8-year-old Edward Hill, 10-year-old Felix Pearn, and 11-year-old Jeremiah Rees.

Queensland Theatre's Associate Artistic Director (Education and Youth), Fiona MacDonald is working alongside the cast and crew to make the theatre stage a supportive, collaborative, and fun environment for the young cast members, which she said is an all-hands-on-deck effort.

"*Medea* is a well-known, classic piece of theatre and mythology, but in the original work Medea's children are silent. What's thrilling about this piece is that it flips that and shows us only the children's story.

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“What I love about this version of *Medea* is that it positions young people as capable of considering very complex and serious themes, both as audiences and for the young performers, and offers a classic famous story through a contemporary lens based in the world and culture of the child. Dan and the team are working very closely with the four young people and their families to ensure this experience is a safe and supported journey, wrapping significant care and support around them as these young performers embark on their professional debut that is unlike most young people’s first foray into theatre,” MacDonald said.

The young cast will stand alongside renowned Australian actor Helen Cassidy (*Family Values, As You Like It*) who will play the famous Medea.

“This thrilling new vision of *Medea* takes a full 180 degree turn from the well-worn Euripidean path. Here, the scorned woman and vengeful sorceress takes a backseat to Medea the mother. Audiences will see her overwhelming heartache and isolation coupled with the immense tenderness and love she has for her sons,” Cassidy added.

The cast will present the story inside an equally brilliant set by Chloe Greaves (*don’t ask what the bird look like, Barbara and the Camp Dogs*). Greaves’ design places the action behind a glass panelled fish tank to heighten the drama. This literal pressure cooker ups the tension as we watch the last 70 minutes of these young children’s lives. We can see in but we can’t get them out.

Medea will take over the Bille Brown Theatre from Saturday 11 May until Saturday 8 June. Tickets are available at queenslandtheatre.com.au/plays/medea.

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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.

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Medea

By Kate Mulvany and Anne-Louise Sarks
Original concept by Anne-Louise Sarks after Euripides
Directed by Daniel Evans

11 May — 8 Jun 2024
Bille Brown Theatre

Creatives

Writers Kate Mulvany and Anne-Louise Sarks
Director Daniel Evans
Set and Costume Designer Chloe Greaves
Lighting Designer Matt Scott
Composer and Sound Designer Mike Willmet
Dialect Coach Gabrielle Rogers
Intimacy and Fight Direction NJ Price
Voice Coach Luke Kennedy

Stage Manager Maddison Penglis
Assistant Stage Manager Tia-Hanee Cleary
Chaperone Damian Tatum

Cast

Medea Helen Cassidy
Leon Jeremiah Rees
Jasper Edward Hill
Leon Orlando Dunn-Mura
Jasper Felix Pearn