

QUEENSLAND THEATRE

A Queensland Theatre premiere

Antigone

By Merlynn Tong, after Sophocles

Queensland Theatre's 'epic and heartfelt' season finale a tale as old as time - with a pertinent modern twist

Bille Brown Theatre at Queensland Theatre | Saturday 26th October – Saturday 16th November 2019

Young female citizen stands up for her values in the face of fierce and powerful criticism....

You could be forgiven for thinking this was a modern news report about students protesting climate change, instead it is the premise of *Antigone*, a Greek tragedy that's more than two millennia old, and the epic finale to Queensland Theatre's 2019 Season.

Matilda award-winner **Merlynn Tong's** adaptation of **Sophocles'** 441 BC play *Antigone* is a compelling and fitting final production for Queensland Theatre in a year that has featured several powerful works that challenged the status quo.

Antigone opens on October 26 and runs until November 16 in Queensland Theatre's Bille Brown Theatre.

The show reunites powerhouse actors, Logie award-nominee **Jessica Tovey** (QT's *Constellations* also in TV's *Bad Mothers, Wolf Creek, Home & Away, Underbelly*) in the title role with multi award-winner **Christen O'Leary** (QT's *End of the Rainbow, Scenes from a Marriage, Ladies in Black* also in TV's *Homes, Wentworth* and *Neighbours*) as Antigone's adversary Creon, and **Kevin Spink** (*Hydra, Kelly, Macbeth*) as her ill-fated fiancé, Haemon. All three were last seen on stage together in Queensland Theatre's *Twelfth Night* (2018).

Led by **Travis Dowling**, in his Queensland Theatre mainstage directorial debut, *Antigone* also stars Queensland Theatre stalwart **Penny Everingham** (*Once in Royal David's City, Pygmalion*) as the prophet Tiresias with haunting songs performed by Queensland Conservatorium graduate **Shubshri Kandiah** (as Antigone's sister, Ismene) fresh off the back of her 18-month stint as Jasmine in *Aladdin – The Musical*.

Whilst *Antigone* was written by Sophocles almost 2,500 years ago, playwright Merlynn Tong believes the tale resonates with modern audiences.

"I have tried to create a version of *Antigone* that pays tribute to the beautiful poetic language of the original, whilst pulling in sentiments from our present day. We don't have a chorus as such, but we do still share the odes in a heightened fashion. My version of the play also satiates some long-standing curiosities that I've nursed. For example: Why does Ismene never return to the story? Can she have another role to play besides that of a fearful 'sister'? What is Antigone and Haemon's relationship like?"

"Also, last but not least, Creon will be played by a woman, the powerhouse that is Christen O'Leary."

"This is exciting for me as I get to explore the patriarchy as embodied by a woman; a comment that patriarchy is not dead, rather, it has morphed and taken on a different flavour since the original play was written."

Director Travis Dowling said, "Merlynn Tong's play is as heartfelt as it is epic. I expect audiences to feel overwhelmed by the bigness of this epic and everlasting story and to question why we are still having debates like this in our modern world."

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Artistic Director **Sam Strong** agrees, “Merlynn has written an adaptation for the ages and for right now. As we watch the world respond to young climate campaigners, it’s hard not to see the parallels with this classic story of a young activist woman standing up for what she knows is right. People talk a lot about the timelessness of classic plays, but this version of Antigone cuts through the clichés, creating something genuinely urgent.”

Antigone in a nutshell

The epic argument rages on - A great city has been torn apart by a civil war between two brothers. In the aftermath, both lie dead – one hailed as a hero and lying in state, the other condemned as a traitor and dumped in a carrion pile. From the ashes of their conflict rises a dystopian state under a new leader – Creon (Christen O’Leary), a career politician who rose to power by dint of her ruthlessness.

Grieving and heartbroken, their sister Antigone (Jessica Tovey) challenges the leader for the right to bury and mourn her dead brother with dignity, sparking a furious act of rebellion that will shake the city to its foundations.

CAST

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|----------|------------------|
| Antigone | Jessica Tovey |
| Creon | Christen O’Leary |
| Tiresias | Penny Everingham |
| Ismene | Shubshri Kandiah |
| Haemon | Kevin Spink |

CREATIVES

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|--------------------------|----------------|
| Director | Travis Dowling |
| Designer | Vilma Mattila |
| Lighting Designer | Ben Hughes |
| Composer/ Sound Designer | Tony Brumpton |

Accessibility

Auslan Interpreted Mon 4 Nov 2019, 6.30pm

Audio Described Thu 14 Nov 2019, 7.30pm + Sat 16 Nov 2019, 2pm

Play Briefing

Mon 21 Oct 2019, 6 - 7pm

Bille Brown Theatre

QT Club

Sat 2 Nov 2019, 2pm

Night with the Artists

Mon 4 Nov 2019, 6.30pm

TICKETS AT:

www.queenslandtheatre.com.au | Telephone 1800 355 528 | Email mail@queenslandtheatre.com.au

Postal via PO Box 3310, South Brisbane 4101 or in person at 78 Montague Road, South Brisbane

Queensland Theatre is assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body. Queensland Theatre is supported by the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland.

For further information, imagery, interviews or more, please contact Kath Rose 0416 291 493 or email kath@kathrose.com