

QUEENSLAND THEATRE

Queensland Theatre celebrates The Divine Sarah as Angie Milliken returns home for *Bernhardt/Hamlet*

UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 9AM THURSDAY MAY 5

Queensland Theatre is set to open its second play of the 2022 Season, Theresa Rebeck's *Bernhardt/Hamlet* at the end of May. The story of one of the most audacious actors ever to have lived, Sarah Bernhardt. Trailblazer, legendary lover, crocodile owner, theatre builder — she broke hearts and records around the world and is one of the greats on whose shoulders every woman in the theatre stands.

Rebeck's play follows the life of its heroine as she upends the status-quo of late 19th Century Paris with her unconventional, and at times outrageous, approach to life and work. But will her latest feat prove a step too far?

As the turn of the 20th century approaches, bankruptcy threatens Sarah Bernhardt's Parisian theatre and the star knows only a box-office hit, a true crowd-pleaser, can save her debt-ridden business. In this instance, only stage royalty Shakespeare will suffice. Bernhardt being Bernhardt, she chose his greatest script, *Hamlet*, and decided that she was most apt for the titular role of Prince.

Queensland Theatre Artistic Director Lee Lewis takes the helm as Director with a powerful cast featuring Australian legend of screen and stage Angie Milliken (*Death of a Salesman, Passengers*) as Sarah Bernhardt. Brisbane born, Milliken has had an abundant and diverse career spanning film, television and theatre, both here in Australia and abroad. Winner of two AFI Best Actress Awards for her TV work, she now returns home to take to the stage once more in the title role.

Starring alongside Milliken is Hugh Parker (*Hydra, Nearer the Gods*), Anthony Gooley (*Boy Swallows Universe, Young Rock, A View from the Bridge*), Nicholas Brown (*Taming of the Shrew, The Unlisted*), David Valencia (*Mortido, NARCOS*), Julian Curtis (*Wuthering Heights, 25 Down*), Wendy Mocke (*Taming of the Shrew, Troppo, Moby Dick*), Amy Ingram (*I Want to Know What Love Is, Trollop*), Gareth Davies (*The Cherry Orchard, Little Monsters*), and Leon Cain (*Taming of the Shrew, The 39 Steps, Kelly*).

"Yes, this play is funny, but it is at its heart a love story," says Director Lee Lewis. "It is a love letter to women everywhere who have bitten off more than they can chew and fought through their fear to deliver. It is about how we hope for change in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles and how we are running a relay race without end to make the world better for all women. Did I mention how important laughter is in all this?!"

Speaking of her heroine, writer Theresa Rebeck said "Bernhardt discovers that, unearthed in the character of Hamlet, is Shakespeare himself, rising with the questions that truly perturbed him. And that those are questions for all of us, beyond gender."

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Emerging from Brooklyn, New York, Rebeck's play comes to Queensland Theatre after a successful run on Broadway in 2018 and another in Chicago in 2020, where it was lauded "so clever it uplifts, so timely it hurts" (The New York Times).

Fast-paced and fearless, this production exemplifies how women can challenge the restrictive systems they exist within, perhaps still a timely and relevant topic over 200 years on.

Tickets are available now for performances from 28 May – 18 June:

<https://queenslandtheatre.com.au/plays/bernhardt-hamlet>

ENDS

For Media Enquiries or Requests Please Contact:

Nicholas Price,
nprice@ivypr.com.au
0432 482 003

Full Creatives and Cast for *Bernhardt/Hamlet*

Creatives

Writer: Theresa Rebeck

Director: Lee Lewis

Set/Costume Designer: Simone Romaniuk

Lighting Designer: David Walters

Composer/Music Supervisor: Max Lambert

Sound Associate: Brady Watkins

Stage Manager: Khym Scott

Assistant Stage Manager: Natalie Callaghan

Cast

Sarah Bernhardt: Angie Milliken

Constant Coquelin: Hugh Parker

Louis/Ensemble: Anthony Gooley

Edmond Rostand: Nicholas Brown

Alphonse/Ensemble: David Valencia

Maurice/Ensemble: Julian Curtis

Rosamond: Wendy Mocke

Lysette/Ophelia: Amy Ingram

Raoul/Ensemble: Gareth Davies

Francois/Ensemble: Leon Cain

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GOVERNMENT PARTNERS



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.