

LYCEUM 2015/16 Season Press Release

The Royal Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh is proud to announce its 50th Anniversary Season with a mix of new writing, contemporary and modern classics, literary adaptations, four world premieres and two new co-producers.

Mark Thomson, Artistic Director of The Lyceum comments on the season ahead:

"It's a pleasure to celebrate 50 years of The Lyceum Company with a programme of work that combines a powerful mix of four world premieres with great theatre voices such as Samuel Beckett and Arthur Miller. Not a hint of a mid-life crisis. It's particularly exciting to launch with original company member Brian Cox alongside Bill Paterson in Waiting For Godot. Two great Scots to start the season and to celebrate a great Scottish theatre company that is confident, proud of its past but with contemporary theatre adventure keeping it youthful and vigorous. On our stage this season we have gods, kings, war, songs, love, murder, revenge, forgiveness, sex, faith, betrayals, enlightenment, characters who don't turn up and others who wish they hadn't. Each play holds the world in all its inexplicableness up to the light. "

Kicking off this momentous season is one of the greatest plays of the twentieth century **Waiting for Godot** by **Samuel Beckett** starring two of Scotland's finest actors **Brian Cox** and **Bill Paterson**. The show will be directed by **Mark Thomson**, Artistic Director of The Lyceum.

Brian Cox says:

'It's great, not to say a miracle to be returning to The Lyceum for the 50th anniversary. I was a founding member of the company 50 years ago as a wet behind the ears 19-year-old. The Lyceum was and still remains the most formative experience of my theatrical life. To be afforded the opportunity to observe and work with the greatest Scottish actors of their day. A formidable roll call that included; Duncan Macrae, Fulton MacKay, Russell Hunter, Una Maclean, Calum Mill, Eileen McCallum all led by the visionary ahead-of-his-time Tom Fleming. It introduced me to the tremendous heritage of world class theatre practitioners that is unique to Scottish theatre. This anniversary production of 'Waiting for Godot' very much continues that tradition with a tremendous cast and the great Bill Paterson. "

Bill Paterson says:

"Unlike Brian I wasn't actually in that first 1965 production of 'A Servant o' 'Twa Maisters' but at least I saw a matinee on a day return from Glasgow! So, fifty years later, I'm honoured and delighted to share The Lyceum stage with him in the timeless masterpiece of 'Waiting for Godot'"

Our second play is a world premiere of a new stage adaptation of **Sarah Waters'** novel, **Tipping The Velvet**. This is The Lyceum's first co-production with The Lyric, Hammersmith where the play will have a 5 week run before heading up to Edinburgh.

Acclaimed playwright **Laura Wade** brings Sarah Waters' audacious bestselling novel to the stage for the first time in an electrifying new adaptation, directed by **Lyndsey Turner**.

It's 1887 and Nancy Astley sits in the audience at her local music hall: she doesn't know it yet, but the next act on the bill will change her life. Tonight is the night she'll fall in love... with the thrill of the stage and with Kitty Butler, a girl who wears trousers. Giddy with desire and hungry for experience, Nancy follows Kitty to London where unimaginable adventures await.

Author **Sarah Waters** says:

"I am absolutely thrilled that 'Tipping the Velvet' is to be brought to life on the stage of The Lyric, Hammersmith. I can think of no better setting for the play than the lush Lyric interior or the beautiful Lyceum in Edinburgh, and no more exciting creative talents than those of writer Laura Wade and director Lyndsey Turner. The production promises to be full of energy, fun and music-hall sparkle - in other words, everything I could wish for. I am simply delighted."

Later in October, **Lyceum Youth Theatre** invite audiences to a unique site specific experience in the darkest, unseen corners of the Lyceum building as their contribution to The Lyceum's 50th year. Audiences will be guided where no backstage tour goes, where hidden places meet the hidden voices of youth. This will be a unique theatrical adventure full of surprise and no little terror with live music and lively encounters inspired by The Lyceum's secret spaces. Devised by members of the Lyceum Youth Theatre and **Mark Thomson, Christie O'Carroll and John Glancy** this is a special one off production as part of our anniversary celebrations.

Our Christmas show is another literary classic and a firm family favourite '**The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe**' by **C.S. Lewis**.

Dramatised by **Theresa Heskins**, the show will be directed by **Andrew Panton** (*A Christmas Carol, The BFG*) and designed by **Becky Minto**.

Director **Andrew Panton** says:

"Narnia has always been a special, magical place for me. The stories of 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' continue to enchant and captivate children (of all ages) and I can't wait to bring the story to the Lyceum stage this December"

We start 2016 with some ghost stories to warm up those cold January nights in **The Weir** by **Conor McPherson**. The play set in a rural Irish pub was written in 1997 and won The Laurence Olivier Award for Best New Play. This is the second show to be directed at The Lyceum by Associate Artist **Amanda Gaughan** (*Hedda Gabler*).

Director **Amanda Gaughan** says:

"It's just people talking," said Conor McPherson of his 1997 play, 'The Weir'; which has been hailed as a modern-day classic and I am delighted to be directing this for our 50th anniversary year. Set in a rural Irish pub; the men meet for their usual pint together but this night is different when a stranger, Valerie comes amongst them and then, the real stories begin...

Storytelling is at the core of this funny yet emotionally visceral and haunting play. Through Irish myths and ghost stories, 'The Weir' examines how the ghosts of our past – both personal and universal - can affect the fragility of our own present and asks if or how we can move forward from personal tragedy."

Following huge acclaim for *All My Sons, Death of A Salesman, The Price* and *A View from the Bridge* Lyceum Associate artist **John Dove** returns to direct one of Arthur Miller's best loved works **The Crucible**. This powerful tale of the witch hunts in Salem in 1693 was written during McCarthy's anti – communist trials in America and the play remains as relevant today as a comment on the temptation and the dangers of the politics of fear.

Director **John Dove** says:

"It will be a privilege to direct this great play of Arthur Miller's for Mark Thomson at The Lyceum. The Edinburgh audience seems to have a peerless rapport with the writer, and to many this is his greatest play. The Salem witch trials are its inspiration, the McCarthy trials of the 40's were its genesis. The USA was in ferment after the second world war with terror of Communism and the USSR. And the fear was similar to many fears in our society today where uneasiness prompts whispered lies and cover-ups, from the world of Edward Snowden's revelations to the fears which have prompted police investigations under Operation Yew Tree. And that a finger pointed can mean guilt with only a shread of evidence.

Miller writes with huge inventiveness and flair, and points to a shifting world of uncertainty which is very much present with us today."

For the fifth play of the season The Lyceum will be working with the acclaimed **National Theatre of Scotland** and famously playful theatre-makers **Told by an Idiot** on the world premiere of ***I Am Thomas - A brutal comedy with songs***.

The play takes us back in time to Edinburgh 1696 where in this University town, seat of the Scottish parliament, we meet Thomas Aitkenhead, a student whose irreverent views about God are about to become deadly serious.

Using Told by an Idiot's trademark anarchic physicality and inventive storytelling, this glimpse into Edinburgh's dark past brings out the black humour in this true story.

Artistic Director of Told by an Idiot **Paul Hunter** says:

"Told by an Idiot are delighted to be working alongside The Lyceum and the National Theatre of Scotland for the first time. To make this show we have been delving into a fascinating era of Scotland's past and we are very much looking forward to sharing what we find at The Lyceum – the perfect stage on which to tell an extraordinary Edinburgh story."

The second play of the season to be directed by Lyceum Artistic Director **Mark Thomson** is a world premiere of the classical Greek epic ***The Iliad*** in a new version by Chris Hannan (***Crime and Punishment***).

Writer **Chris Hannan** says:

"On the simplest level The Iliad is an action-packed love story set during the Trojan War, in a world crying out for forgiveness.

I was attracted to it because it feels like a story from the time when the world was young. Things are being experienced for the very first time; the grief of Achilles for Patroclus overwhelms not only him but the gods – the entire universe is turned upside down by his sense of loss.

Moral chaos in the universe. Ring a bell? "

Director **Mark Thomson** says:

"Homer's great poem, The Iliad, about the Trojan War is one of the oldest existing pieces of western literature. Chris Hannan's clever adaptation is fresh and classical and conjures an ancient world to engage with timeless human quandaries. A big story of war, lust and anger. Of the humans and the gods. "

We end this historic season with comedy and another world premiere of a new stage play by Scots Makar **Liz Lochhead: *Thon Man Molière (or Whit got him intae aw that bother...)***. In debt to the banks, in bother with the church and worst of all, painfully and disastrously in love with the wrong wife, the offstage life of Jean-Baptiste Poquelin de Molière is all the hell he needs to inspire his brilliant, desperate comedies - but putting his latest play on stage is about to really turn up the heat!

Writer of the acclaimed *Perfect Days*, and *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*, as well as celebrated Scots versions of *Medea*, *Oedipus*, *Antigone* and Molière's great trio of masterpieces, poet and playwright Liz Lochhead returns to the Lyceum with a brand new original play. It tells the outrageous story of the life and times of her hero, the great master of comedy, Molière, his scandalous marriage, his scurrilous plays and the creation of his infamous and celebrated satire *Tartuffe*.

The show will be directed by Lyceum Associate Artist **Tony Cownie** who has previously directed Liz's plays *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* and *Educating Agnes* at The Lyceum.

Writer **Liz Lochhead** says:

"I am absolutely delighted that, exactly thirty years after The Lyceum first put on my very Scottish version of Molière's great French comedy in rhyming couplets, Tartuffe, my new play all about its author and his monstrous and irresistible creation, which really landed him in it, will premiere as part of this theatre's 50th Anniversary Season. Coming home..."

ENDS>

Lyceum 2015/16 Season Dates - all dates correct at time of going to press

Waiting for Godot

By Samuel Beckett

Directed by Lyceum Artistic Director Mark Thomson

Design by Michael Taylor

Lighting design by Mark Doubleday

Dates: 18 September– 10 October 2015

Press Night: Tue 22 September 7.30pm

Tipping the Velvet

A Royal Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh and Lyric Hammersmith co-production.

Written by Sarah Waters

Adapted by Laura Wade

Directed by Lyndsey Turner

Design by Lizzie Clachan

Choreography by Alistair David

Lighting by Jon Clark

Music by Michael Bruce

Sound by Nick Manning

Casting by Julia Horan

Dates: 28 October – 14 November 2015

Press Night: Thursday 29 October 7.30pm

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

By CS Lewis

Dramatised by Theresa Heskins

Directed by Andrew Panton

Design by Becky Minto

Lighting design by Simon Wilkinson

Dates: 28 November 2015 – 3 January 2016

Press Night: Saturday 28 November 7pm

The Weir

By Conor McPherson

Directed by Lyceum Associate Artist Amanda Gaughan

Dates: 15 January – 6 February 2016

Press Night: Tuesday 19 January 7.30pm

The Crucible

By Arthur Miller

Directed by Lyceum Associate Artist John Dove

Design by Michael Taylor

Dates: 18 February – 19 March 2016

Press Night: Saturday 20 February

I Am Thomas

A brutal comedy with songs

A co-production with Told by an Idiot and National Theatre of Scotland

Directed by Paul Hunter

Dates: 23 March – 09 April 2016

Press Night: Thursday 24 March

The Iliad

By Chris Hannan

Directed by Lyceum Artistic Director Mark Thomson

Dates: 20 April – 14 May 2016

Press Night: Saturday 23 April 7.30pm

Thon Man Molière (or Whit got him intae aw that bother...)

By Liz Lochhead

Directed by Lyceum Associate Artist Tony Cownie

Dates: 20 May- 11 June 2016

Press Night: Tuesday 24 May 7.30pm

NOTES TO EDITORS

Tickets

Season tickets go on sale from 1 May

All tickets go on sale from 1 June

Box Office 0131 248 4848

Groups 10+ 0131 248 4949

Online www.lyceum.org.uk

Every production in the 2015/16 Season will have at least one audio-described, captioned and BSL interpreted performance. Dates TBC.

The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company is one of Scotland's leading producing theatre companies. It has a reputation for excellence in its presentation of bold, eclectic programmes celebrating classical and contemporary work. Its commitment to developing new talent alongside its pursuit of the finest artists enables it to bring dynamic and high quality drama to the stage. The Lyceum enjoys creative partnerships led by passion for the work and has co-produced with many of the best theatre companies in the UK. The Lyceum engages with a wide audience and has one of the liveliest youth theatres in Scotland. The Lyceum is funded by Creative Scotland and The City of Edinburgh Council.

The Lyceum would also like to gratefully acknowledge the support and commitment of our corporate Supporters and Partners, Trusts and Foundations, and the many individuals who have generously donated by joining The Lyceum Patrons or made contributions throughout the year.

Press Office

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