

MEDIA RELEASE – for immediate release

MALTHOUSE THEATRE

Playbox Theatre Company
trading as
MALTHOUSE THEATRE
at The CUB Malthouse
113 Sturt St Southbank
Victoria 3006

Telephone +613 9685 5100
Fax +613 9685 5112
www.malthousetheatre.com.au
ABN 58 006 885 463

MALTHOUSE THEATRE PRESENTS

ELIZABETH

ALMOST BY CHANCE A WOMAN
(*QUASI PER CASO UNA DONNA: ELISABETTA*)

MERLYN THEATRE
APRIL 3 – APRIL 24 2010

BY **DARIO FO**

TRANSLATED AND FREELY ADAPTED BY

LUKE DEVENISH AND LOUISE FOX

DIRECTOR **MICHAEL KANTOR**

SET AND COSTUME DESIGNER **ANNA CORDINGLEY**

LIGHTING DESIGNER **PAUL JACKSON**

COMPOSER **MARK JONES**

SOUND DESIGNER **RUSSELL GOLDSMITH**

DRAMATURGE **MARYANNE LYNCH**

CHOREOGRAPHER **TONY BARTUCCIO**

CAST **BILLE BROWN / JULIE FORSYTH / MARK JONES / CHRIS RYAN / NIKKI SHIELS / DAVID WOODS**



A MALTHOUSE THEATRE COMMISSION

Historical revisionism has never been so much fun as Malthouse Theatre present a new translation from iconic Nobel prize winning Italian playwright **Dario Fo**, of the fabulous monstrosity which is *Elizabeth, almost by chance a woman!*

Michael Kantor directs a cast of Australia's finest comic actors including **Julie Forsyth** as Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth 1 and **Billie Brown** as her attendant Grosslady as they blunder through the draughty corridors of power, intrigue, warfare and subterfuge – as well as a few beauty treatments along the way – in a new translation of Fo's work by writers **Louise Fox & Luke Devenish**.

Set in the boudoir of Queen Elizabeth 1 of England, in the midst of political upheaval, the 'virgin' Queen waits for the arrival of her lover, the Earl of Essex, who is busily preparing for an attempted *coup d'etat* against the queen. Haunted by her actions in the beheading of her cousin Mary Stuart, Elizabeth suspects everyone's out to get her – even that "theatrical tub thumper" William Shakespeare who seems to be basing all his works on Elizabeth's life. As well meeting our decrees and dealing with affairs of the state, there is the small fact, almost by chance, that Elizabeth is a woman. And as such she calls on her grammerlot-speaking grotesque quack of an aid in the form of Dame Grosslady and her ever-suffering maid Martha to assist her in her preparations.

Buffoonish and irreverent in its tone, **Dario Fo's** masterpiece speaks as much to the excesses of today and the vestiges of power as it does to a historical epoch. True to the theatrical legacy of this work in its origins with *commedia dell'arte* style and improvisational story telling, this play is a gift for actors and a director to have fun with. In this new translation, the anarchic spirit that Fo brings to all of his work, promises to shine as it attacks the political zeitgeist as well as theatrical convention itself.

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Dario Fo is a respected satirist, playwright, theatre director, actor and composer and most characterised by his ability to use comedy and laughter as a weapon against conservative political establishments. He received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1997 and his most famous works include *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*, *Mistero Buffo* and *Can't Pay? Won't Pay!*

Julie Forsyth returns to the Malthouse stage after her critically acclaimed performance as Winnie in Samuel Beckett's *Happy Days* and she is joined by her *Exit the King* ensemble members **David Woods**, who recently charmed Malthouse Theatre and then Edinburgh Festival audiences in *Optimism*, and **Billie Brown**. **Billie** is an internationally renowned stage and film actor and has recently been seen on Melbourne stages in *Spamalot* and *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*.

Season info: MELBOURNE

Merlyn Theatre, The CUB Malthouse

3 April – 24 April 2010

Opening night: Wednesday 7 April at 7.30pm

Season: Tuesdays at 6.30pm, Wednesday – Saturday at 7.30pm, Sundays at 5.00pm; Matinees - Saturday 10 & 24 April at 2.00pm, Thursday 15 April at 1.00pm

Booking info: www.malthousetheatre.com.au / 03 9685 5111

Ticket Prices: \$16.50 – \$49 + min booking fee \$1.50

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