

Bell Shakespeare announces 2023 season

- New productions of **Macbeth**, and **Twelfth Night** in collaboration with Sarah Blasko, to mark the 400th anniversary of these plays' publication in the First Folio -



Images: Jacob Warner and Rose Reilly for *Romeo and Juliet*; Hazem Shammass for *Macbeth*; Jane Montgomery Griffiths for *Twelfth Night*

Sydney, Australia: Bell Shakespeare has today announced its **2023 season**, with three new productions touring throughout the country. To mark 2023 as the **400th anniversary** of Shakespeare's First Folio, the company will stage new contemporary retellings of plays from the Folio, ***Macbeth*** and ***Twelfth Night***, the latter featuring all new music by **Sarah Blasko**. The company will also stage a raw and intimate performance of ***Romeo and Juliet*** in the company's new theatre **The Neilson Nutshell** and at the **Fairfax Studio** at **Arts Centre Melbourne**.

Peter Evans, Bell Shakespeare Artistic Director, said: "Next year is the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's First Folio, without which we wouldn't have some of Shakespeare's most-loved plays, including *Macbeth* and *Twelfth Night*. It felt like the right time to restage these blockbuster works, starting with *Macbeth* which we've set in the moody 1920s with the fantastic Hazem Shammass and Jessica Tovey, and our good friend Heather Fairbairn will direct our national tour of *Twelfth Night*, collaborating with Sarah Blasko on the musical score."

*"To showcase our new theatre The Neilson Nutshell at Pier 2/3 Walsh Bay Arts Precinct, I've conceived a stripped back version of *Romeo and Juliet*, that focuses on the beauty of the text and stars Rose Riley and Jacob Warner who I worked with on *Hamlet* earlier this year. The show will transfer beautifully to the Fairfax Studio in Melbourne. We can't wait to welcome our audiences into the theatre and are looking forward to a year of Shakespeare's greatest hits!"*

Opening the season at the **Sydney Opera House** from **1 March – 2 April**, Shakespeare's most haunting thriller ***Macbeth*** will take audiences back to the bleak 1920s post World War 1. Logie Award winning actor **Hazem Shammass**, known for his work on TVs *Safe Harbour* and *The Twelve*, stars as the murderous Macbeth, alongside **Jessica Tovey** as Lady Macbeth. Directed by **Artistic Director Peter Evans**, the production is a terrifying portrayal of moral collapse and an intense and compelling journey into the dark heart of humanity. The production will also tour to **Canberra Theatre Centre** from **15 – 22 April**, and **Arts Centre Melbourne** from **28 April – 14 May**.

Bell Shakespeare's national tour for 2023 is ***Twelfth Night***, directed by **Heather Fairbairn**, who has also worked internationally with companies including the Royal Opera House and the Royal Court

Theatre in London. This fresh retelling of the romantic comedy will feature music by Aria Award winner **Sarah Blasko** in a collision of hidden identities and unrequited love, that ultimately asks us to find light in the darkness. The production will travel to **25 venues** across the country, including **Canberra Theatre Centre** from **13 – 21 October** and **Sydney Opera House** from **26 October – 19 November**.

Artistic Director Peter Evans' beautifully intimate new production of ***Romeo and Juliet*** will be presented at **The Neilson Nutshell** at **Pier 2/3 Walsh Bay Arts Precinct** from **28 June – 27 August**, with a two-week season at the **Arts Centre Melbourne** in the middle, from **14 – 29 July**. Starring **Rose Riley** and **Jacob Warner**, this passionate portrayal of the star-crossed lovers will bring audiences closer than ever before to the intensity and the heartbreak of Shakespeare's most evocative tragedy.

Alongside this mainstage programming, Bell Shakespeare will present their extensive national outreach and education program in schools, communities and Juvenile Justice centres across Australia.

Other events throughout the year will include A Celebration of the First Folio, lively script reading series, Play In A Day featuring *Timon of Athens* and *The Spanish Tragedy*, and the ever popular Sonnets & Semillon.

Download the brochure [here](#).

Ends

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ABOUT BELL SHAKESPEARE

Bell Shakespeare is Australia's national theatre company specialising in the works of William Shakespeare and his contemporaries. Founded in 1990 with the aim of sharing Shakespeare's plays in a way that was relevant and exciting to all Australians, the company has evolved further than its visionary founder, John Bell AO, could have hoped.

Today, Bell Shakespeare tours major theatre productions, education programs and outreach initiatives to every state and territory in Australia. Performing and teaching in theatres, schools, juvenile justice centres and regional and remote communities, the company enjoys unrivalled reach and impact, further extending its influence through innovative digital programs.