



Press Release
Monday 11 July 2022
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SOPHIE MELVILLE AND RACHEL O'RIORDAN REUNITE TO BRING GARY OWEN'S CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED IPHIGENIA IN SPLOTT TO LYRIC HAMMERSMITH THEATRE

Lyric Hammersmith Theatre today announces the return of Gary Owen's critically acclaimed *Iphigenia in SploTT*, originally commissioned and produced by Sherman Theatre and later performed at the National Theatre, directed by the Lyric's Artistic Director Rachel O'Riordan, with Sophie Melville reprising her role as Effie for which she won a The Stage Award for Acting Excellence and an Evening Standard Award nomination for Best Actress. The monodrama inspired by the Greek myth, opens on 30 September, with previews from 26 September, and runs until 22 October.

★★★★★

"Sophie Melville is remarkable as Effie."
Telegraph

Rachel O'Riordan said today, "This play is a call to arms and its relevance now is sharper than ever before. It delves into austerity and cuts; are we colluding as a society where some people get to live and others get to survive? What this play does so beautifully is give voice to something that we can all easily ignore. It gives a platform to the voice of people who are demonised by society and are not given the opportunities in life to thrive. Iphigenia or 'Effie' as she is called in the play is extraordinary. Yet, her life can be easily seen as less valuable and what this play does is make her the hero.

"For me, it felt important to bring this work back. Theatre's role is to showcase us as a society: why we are here and how we got here. It's not been staged in a proscenium arch theatre before and on our stage, it will play its biggest house ever.

"The reaction to this play, from Berlin to Liverpool, has always been profoundly visceral which is rooted in our connection to Sophie's incredible performance, Hayley's dynamic design and Gary's ferocious story. To me, as a director, and as an Artistic Director that immediate audience reaction is a complete joy. We can recognise truth when we see it and Iphigenia's story hits you in the heart and in your gut."

Gary Owen says today: *"The play was originally written in response to the austerity policies of David Cameron's government, which slashed public services while pushing the message that we were 'all in it together', suffering equally from painful cuts to welfare and health, for the good of the nation as a whole.*

I think it's certainly true for us in the UK now. Our NHS has been under-funded for a decade. The pandemic has brought it to a point of collapse faster than we might have expected; but that collapse was always coming. People will suffer because of that collapse - and it's the most vulnerable who suffer the most.

What the play aims to do is present someone who is obnoxious, offensive, aggressive, who doesn't help herself, who is a nightmare to live next door to; then it presents her suffering. It dares us to say that her suffering doesn't count...if we can."

★★★★★

"Melville's performance is a perfect whirlwind of aggression, seduction, violence and pity, and Rachel O'Riordan's superlative production never once lets it drop the pace."

The Guardian

IPHIGENIA IN SPLOTT

Written by **Gary Owen**, directed by **Rachel O'Riordan**, starring **Sophie Melville**

Designer **Hayley Grindle**; Lighting Designer **Rachel Mortimer**; Sound Designer **Sam Jones**

Monday 26 September - Saturday 22 October

Press night: Friday 30 September, 7pm

"What is gonna happen, when we can't take it anymore?"

Stumbling down the street drunk at 11.30am Effie is the kind of girl you avoid making eye contact with. You think you know her, but maybe you don't know the half of it.

Effie's life is a mess of drink, drugs and drama every night, and a hangover worse than death the next day - till one night gives her the chance to be something more.

Biographies

Gary Owen's plays include a radical reworking of *The Cherry Orchard* (Sherman Theatre), *Killology* (Sherman & Royal Court), *Violence and Son* (Royal Court), *Perfect Match*, *Mrs Reynolds and the Ruffian*, *We That Are Left* (Watford Palace), *Blackthorn* (Theatr Clwyd), *Love Steals Us From Loneliness* (National Theatre Wales), *Ghost City* (Sgript Cymru), *A Christmas Carol*, *Amgen:Broken* (Sherman Theatre), *The Shadow of a Boy* (National Theatre), *Cancer Time* (Theatre503), *The Drowned World* (Paines Plough), *Crazy Gary's Mobile Disco* (Paines Plough & Sgript Cymru).

Rachel O'Riordan is Artistic Director and CEO of the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre where she launched her critically acclaimed debut season in Autumn 2019 with a triumphant adaptation of *A Doll's House* by Tanika Gupta. She recently co-directed the Lyric's 2020 summer reopening production *Out West*, and Martin McDonagh's *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* with Chichester Festival Theatre. Previously, she was Artistic Director and CEO of Sherman Theatre, Wales from 2014 and transformed the venue which won The Stage's prestigious Regional Theatre of the Year Award in 2018. Directing credits include the Olivier Award-winning *Killology* and *Iphigenia in Splott*. She was Artistic Director of Perth Theatre, Scotland between 2011 and 2014 and won The Critics' Award for Theatre in Scotland for Best Director and Best Ensemble for *The Seafarer* by Conor McPherson. From 2002 to 2011, she co-founded and ran Ransom Productions in Northern Ireland. She has been named as one of the most influential people in UK Theatre in The Stage 100. Published work includes *Women in Irish Theatre*.

Sophie Melville reprises her role as Effie, previously performing the role at the Sherman Theatre and National Theatre. Her other theatre credits include *The Merchant of Venice*, *Romeo and Juliet* (Shakespeare's Globe), *Mum*, *Herding Cats* (Soho Theatre), *Living Newspaper* (Royal Court Theatre), *Wolfie* (Theatre503), *Close Quarters* (Sheffield Theatres), *The Divide*, *Pagans* (The Old Vic), *Pops* (Young Vic), *No One Will Tell Me How To Start A Revolution* (Hampstead Theatre), *Low Level Panic* (Orange Tree Theatre), *2066* (Almeida Theatre), *Blackbird* (The Other Room Theatre), *Insignificance*, *Under Milk Wood* (Theatr Clwyd), and *The Shape of Things*, *'Tis Pity She's A Whore and See How They Run* (Theatre

by the Lake). Her television credits include *The Pact*, *Film Club*, *Bang 2*, *Call the Midwife*, *The Left Behind* and *The Missing*.

- ENDS -
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Supported by
**ARTS COUNCIL
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Notes to Editors

IMAGES available to download [here](#).

Listings

Lyric Hammersmith Theatre
Lyric Square, King Street, London, W6 0QL
Box office: 020 8741 6850
www.lyric.co.uk
Tickets from £10

Twitter: [@LyricHammer](#)
Instagram: [/LyricHammersmith](#)
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#IphigeniaInSplott

ABOUT THE LYRIC HAMMERSMITH THEATRE

The Lyric Hammersmith Theatre is a UK leading producing theatre, creating world class theatre from the heart of Hammersmith, London, its home for more than 125years.

Acclaimed works include debuts of Harold Pinter's *The Birthday Party* and Michael Frayn's *Noises Off*, the Olivier Award-winning revival of Sarah Kane's *Blasted*, the triumphant *Bugsy Malone*, the international cult hit *Ghost Stories* and most recently the lauded adaptation of *A Doll's House* by Tanika Gupta.

Under the leadership of Artistic Director and CEO Rachel O'Riordan, the Lyric's programme of reimagined classics, contemporary plays and bold new works celebrates its unique Matcham theatre.

We are West London's largest creative hub and home to an innovative partnership of arts organisations. Together we are committed to nurture the next generation of talent from all backgrounds, providing necessary and accessible life-changing creative opportunities for thousands of young West Londoners.

SEASON AT A GLANCE
CLOSER

14 July - 13 August

Press Night: Wednesday 20 July 7pm

Mon - Sat 7.30pm

Weds & Sat 2.30pm

Open Captioned Performance: Saturday 30 July 2.30pm

Audio Described Performance: Saturday 30 July 7.30pm

IPHIGENIA IN SPLOTT

26 September - 22 October

Press Night: Friday 30 September 7pm

Mon - Sat 7.30pm

Weds & Sat 2.30pm

Open Captioned Performance: Friday 21 October 7.30pm

Audio Described Performance: Friday 14 October 7.30pm

BSL Performance: Tuesday 18 October 7.30pm

JACK AND THE BEANSTALK

19 November - 7 January 2023

Press Day: Saturday 26 November

Performance schedule: For full listings see <https://lyric.co.uk/shows/jack-and-the-beanstalk-2/>

Relaxed Performance: Tuesday 06 December, 11am

Open Captioned Performance: Wednesday 21 December, 6pm

Audio Described Performance: Saturday 17 December, 6pm

BSL Performance: Wednesday 28 December, 2pm

OTHELLO

19 January - 11 February 2023

Press Night: Tuesday 24 January 7pm

Mon - Sat 7.30pm

Weds matinee: 1.30pm

Sat matinee: 2.30pm

BSL Performance: 01 February, 1.30pm

Open Captioned Performance: Saturday 04 February, 2.30pm

Audio Described Performance: Saturday 04 February, 7.30pm