

An amateur production by arrangement with Nick Hern Books

MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS GOT HER HEAD CHOPPED OFF



Once upon a time, there
were twa queens on the
wan green island...

BY LIZ LOCHHEAD

29th October to 1st November at 7:30pm

Network
Theatre
Company

Chairman's Message

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, and a warm welcome to Network Theatre.

In a year when English-Scottish relations have been tested to the point of severance, it is interesting to look at the monarch who many argue had a better right to sit on the English throne than her cousin. A united throne in the 1500s; who knows what might have then ensued? Substitute West Lothian with West Ruislip perhaps....

This evening's production of *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* brings the return of some familiar faces and the opportunity to welcome some new. Network Theatre Company lives in part by its membership; without them the theatre becomes merely a very popular fringe venue and ceases to be a place where many a non-professional can rekindle their love of drama. Network Theatre Company exists to allow people to indulge in whatever aspect of theatre they enjoy without pressure but with support. Over the years, more than one person has given up the day job and gone, belatedly, to drama school. We have an Olivier Award winner and a stand-up comedian among the many who have worked in this space. If you would like to get involved please get in touch, either with one of the Front of House volunteers or through the website.

So back to tonight: enjoy the play, and don't forget that there is a welcome opportunity to meet with the company and friends in the Green Room bar, which will be open before and after the performance, as well as during the interval. We look forward to seeing you here again.

Nigel Williams

October 2014

Director's Notes

Thank you for coming to see this production of one of Liz Lochhead's most celebrated plays. At the time of writing in 1987, the author described the play as being "in the context of a debate about the then current state of affairs between Scotland and England". It is a debate that has continued and intensified, culminating in the recent referendum on Scottish independence.

I can't claim that the timing is intentional - we originally planned to stage a quite different show this evening, but had to reconsider due to performing rights issues. "Mary..." was the first of several of the author's plays that I hoped to direct at some point and, little more than a week later, we started rehearsal.

Its appeal for me lay in its intrinsic theatricality - every opportunity is taken to do things that only theatre can - for example, having a talking crow act as Narrator/Chorus or for Mary and Elizabeth to switch to being the other's maid in a heartbeat. The author also inserts many anachronistic elements, such as portraying Scottish Presbyterians as Orangemen long before the Battle of the Boyne.

I am indebted to many people for getting this production on stage in a short time: Emma Byrne and Mike Wyer for pulling together an ambitious technical plot; Cam Dunham for writing the fantastic score; Eleni Young for costume; Dodger Phillips for movement workshops; Stuart McMillan for poster design; Nigel Williams for his support and advice. I have to express particular gratitude to my AD Juliet Heap for being an oasis of calm throughout and to my incredible cast who have never ceased to amaze me with their creativity, dedication, inventiveness and filthy sense of humour!

The author stated that this play doesn't need much more than an empty stage and terrific actors. I've been lucky enough to have exactly that and I hope that watching the performance is as enjoyable an experience for you as working on it has been for me.

James McKendrick
October 2014

Cast

La Corbie

Mary

Elizabeth

Hepburn O' Bothwell

Knox

Darnley

Riccio

Emily Carmichael

Laura Jayne Hickerton

Lauren Edwards

John Soffe

John Irvine

Nicholas Stafford

Gareth Kearns

Director

Assistant Director

Set construction Paul Lunnon/Nigel Williams/Cast

Lighting

Sound

Stage Management

Costume

Movement Coach

Composer

Poster design

James McKendrick

Juliet Heap

Emma Byrne

Mike Wyer

Juliet Heap

Eleni Young

Dodger Phillips

Cam Dunham

Stuart McMillan

There will be one interval of 20 minutes

The video and/or audio recording of this performance by any means whatsoever are strictly prohibited

Biographies

Emily Carmichael

Emily returns to Network, having previously appeared in *Road* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. A graduate of the London School of Dramatic Art, Emily has also appeared regularly in productions by Woodhouse, Tower Theatre and a number of other London-based companies. She has greatly enjoyed immersing herself in the strange world of Mary Queen of Scots and the character of La Corbie, and will miss it very much.

Laura Jayne Hickerton

This is Laura Jayne's début with Network Theatre. Previous roles include Mrs Dangle (*The Critic*), Eliza Doolittle (*Pygmalion*) and Fornia (*Hamlet Part II*), for which she won Best Actress at both the Waltham Forest and Welwyn theatre festivals this year. Television includes Celebrity Transformation on Sky Living TV. She is excited to be involved in a production based around her favourite historic period and has very much enjoyed playing the complex and fascinating Mary.

Lauren Edwards

Lauren returns to Network and to working with Director James McKendrick after a break from acting. Having played a fiery, headstrong northerner in James's production of *Road* previously, Lauren has thoroughly enjoyed playing the deliberate and measured Elizabeth as well as the more flirtatious Bessie, among others.

John Soffe

John has worked as a professional actor and writer for 15 years, including touring Shakespeare internationally, working at the Globe, appearing at the Edinburgh Festival and performing stand-up in venues throughout the UK. Television work includes Channel 4's *Just Write* and ITV2's *Gagging For It*. John works extensively with Theatre Exchange, facilitating workshops, writing and directing for

the company. John has thoroughly enjoyed working with James and the team at Network and hopes to work with them again in the future.

John Irvine

John's previous roles have included Brabantio (*Othello*), The Doctor (*Woyzeck*), First Chap (*Largo Desolato*), Tropatchov (*The Parasite*), Sigmund Freud (*A Knife In The Whale*), Sir Toby Belch (*Twelfth Night*), Aristarkh (*Dying For It*), Sorin (*The Seagull*), Duke Senior (*As You Like It*), Keir Hardie (*Her Naked Skin*), Jim (*Breathing Corpses*), Ross (*Breaking The Code*), Innocent Princess (*Ivona*), and Duncan (*Macbeth*) (London and Paris).

Nicholas Stafford

This is Nicholas's second production at Network. He trained at Rose Bruford, graduating with distinction in 2012. Theatre includes: *As You Like It* (Lord Chamberlain's men: National & International Tour: 2013), *Fair Em* (Steam Industry: Union Theatre: 2012/13), *Wastwater* (forgotten silence: Trinity Buoy Wharf: 2012), *Best Man's Speech* (forgotten silence: Lord Stanley: 2012) *Cafe Friedrich* (Burnt Ensemble: Mecklenburg Staatstheater Schwerin, Germany: 2012) *Four Boys* (Made From Scratch: Soho Theatre: 2012). Short film includes: *The New Sexy* (LFA/BFI: 2014) Commercial: Land Rover & Acer.

Gareth Kearns

Gareth's previous acting credits at Network include *Romeo and Juliet* (Mercutio) and *Henry V* (Monjoy). Elsewhere he has appeared in *Much Ado About Nothing* (Benedick and Leonato in different productions), *Twelfth Night* (Sir Andrew Aguecheek), Cherea in *Caligula*, Doctor Dorn in *The Seagull*, and Doctor Spegelski in *A Month in the Country*. Film appearances include Alex in *Kid Gloves* and Norman Scragg in *Got-Got*. Gareth will also be appearing as Camillio in *The Winter's Tale* in December.

James McKendrick

James returns to directing at Network, following his production of *Road*. He has also directed *Two* and *Bed* for Woodhouse, the latter receiving best play and best director awards at the 2012 Waltham Forest Festival. Recent acting credits include *Glengarry Glen Ross* (Shelley Levene), *The Acid Test* (Jim Bank) *Dying For It* (Yegor Timoveivich) and *Large Desolato* (Leopold Nettles). He has also performed at the Edinburgh, Brighton and Prague Fringe Festivals and in productions that transferred to the Orange Tree Theatre and Riverside Studios.

Juliet Heap

Juliet's acting credits at Network include *The Three Musketeers* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. She has also acted and worked as producer and AD for Phantasmagoria Events. Additionally, she was AD on *Blithe Spirit* and directed *In the Flesh* at Network. She was also producer/AD on *Dances for Wolves*, *On the Bench* and *Pandora's Box* with Class Stage Productions, taking them to the Edinburgh Fringe.

Coming up: Who shot Santa?

The story of an amateur theatre on the verge of closing and their attempt to save themselves from oblivion by putting on the best possible version of the worst possible Christmas show, 'Who Shot Santa?'. They have roped in the assistance of former group member, and TV star of the 80s and 90s Michael Pritchard to play the title role of Santa. Will it be enough to save the theatre group? And does it deserve to be saved? The show will be brand new, and take the form of a promenade piece of theatre and a mixture of scripted and devised work.

Performances: 3 - 6 December 2014

The Arch 200 Club

Over 70 years ago Southern Railways founded a theatre group at Waterloo.

The spirit of amateur theatre has survived through changes of name and nationalisation but is finding it tough to cope with the costs that followed the privatisation of the railways.

Please help us to continue to entertain you by becoming a member of the Arch 200 Club.

The aim of the Club is to ensure the continued existence of the Network Theatre as a building in the face of ever increasing overheads. Membership subscriptions fund projects that are for the general good of the theatre, not productions themselves.

Each membership costs just £5.00 a month. Every month three numbers are drawn and half that month's subscriptions paid out in prizes.

To date the Arch 200 Club has funded either in part or entirely

The new staging and seating

The rewiring of the lighting grid

A sound control desk

A lighting control board

A smoke machine

The false wall on stage

A scaffold tube cutter

A draught excluder in the back arch

Waterproof black paint to cover over the constant water ingress

Costume storage

We are in the process of replacing the scenery flats. Some of the current stock dates from the 1950s and are showing their age more than a little. There is so much that an audience does not see that is in desperate need of refurbishment and modernisation.

The fabric of these arches needs your support. Who knows, if the membership is large enough it might even be possible to shorten the wait for the gentlemen's toilet.

More details are available from Nigel Williams at
arch200@networktheatre.org