

# Masquerade

## WORLD PREMIERE

### A new Australian work by Kate Mulvany based on the book by Kit Williams

Presented by Sydney Festival & Sydney Opera House and co-produced by Griffin Theatre Company and State Theatre Company of South Australia



The iconic children's book *Masquerade*, written and illustrated by UK artist **Kit Williams**, has been lovingly crafted into a play by award-winning playwright and actor, **Kate Mulvany**.

In a wondrous world of riddles and hidden treasure, bumbling Jack Hare is on a race against time to deliver a message of love from the Moon to the Sun. Far, far away in a world just like ours, a mother cheers her ill son Joe with the tale of Jack Hare's adventure. But when Jack's mission goes topsy-turvy, Joe and his mum must come to the rescue, and the line between the two worlds becomes blurred forever.

Bound to enchant audiences of all ages, *Masquerade* stars a talking fish, a tone-deaf barbershop quartet, a gassy pig, a precious jewel and a few mere mortals. It's a magical adventure that is, at its heart, about the love between a parent and a child.

**Kit Williams'** book which combines fantasy, riddles and extraordinary illustrations, was a world-wide publishing sensation, selling over two million copies in the late '70s and early '80s. Hospitalised as a young child, **Kate Mulvany** was given *Masquerade* to distract her from her illness and she quickly fell under its spell. It became Kate's dream to adapt this classic book, which led her on a quest to track down **Kit Williams**.

Many years later, Kit agreed to meet Kate at his home in rural England, and he granted her the rights to develop *Masquerade* for the stage. His only stipulation was that Kate include "the riddle of herself", namely her own childhood story, and make the work suitable for audiences aged 9 to 90.

**Sam Strong** and **Lee Lewis** join forces to co-direct *Masquerade*, leading a stellar cast and creative team made up of Helpmann-Award winner **Helen Dallimore** (*Wicked* and *Cinderella* at Regent's Park, London); Play School host, actor and singer **Zindzi Okenyo**; **Nathan O'Keefe** (Windmill Theatre and State Theatre Company's *Pinocchio*); and actor **Kate Cheel** (Kneehigh Theatre in *Brief Encounter*)

"*Masquerade* is a gift to audiences," says Sam Strong. "This is a piece that will delight, move and charm the inner child in all of us, whatever our outward age."

Original music is composed by **Pip Branson** and **Mikelangelo**, and performed live by **Mikelangelo and the Black Sea Gentlemen** who have pushed the boundaries of cabaret and music theatre with their jazzy dark cabaret blues for over a decade. With Mikelangelo at the helm, the Black Sea Gentlemen weave complex ideas into accessible and highly entertaining shows that have garnered critical acclaim nationally and internationally at the Edinburgh Fringe, Sydney Opera House and London's West End.

**Kate Mulvany** is an extraordinary writer and one of Australia's most talented actors. Kate has held a number of lead roles for major Australian theatre companies as well as appearing extensively in film and television. Kate's recent acting credits include Bell Shakespeare's *Tartuffe* and Baz Luhrmann's *The Great Gatsby*. Her playwriting accolades include *The Seed*, commissioned by Belvoir and based on her own family history,

Somewhere, co-written with Tim Minchin to commemorate the opening of the Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre in Penrith, and Medea, which won the prestigious AWGIE award in 2013 in the Theatre: Stage category.

*Masquerade* has been commissioned by the Major Festivals Initiative in association with Sydney Festival, Melbourne Festival, Griffin Theatre Company and State Theatre Company of South Australia, and is a first time co-production between South Australia's flagship professional theatre company, State Theatre Company and Australia's new writing theatre, Griffin Theatre Company.

<b>Directors</b>	Sam Strong & Lee Lewis
<b>Designer</b>	Anna Cordingley
<b>Lighting Designer</b>	Geoff Cobham
<b>Composition &amp; Musical Direction</b>	Pip Branson & Mikangelo
<b>Assistant Director</b>	Nescha Jelk
<b>Associate Designer</b>	Romanie Harper

**With** Kate Cheel, Helen Dallimore, Nathan O'Keefe, Zindzi Okenyo & live music by Mikangelo and the Black Sea Gentlemen

**Where** Sydney Opera House, Drama Theatre

**When** Previews: 7-8 January  
 Season: 9-17 January  
 Mon to Fri: 6.30pm  
 Sat: 12.30pm & 7pm

**Price** Premium \$65  
 A Reserve \$45-55  
 Family ticket \$180 (2 adults & 2 children)

**Bookings** Griffin Theatre Company, 1 September – 8 December on 02 9361 3817 (Griffin Subscribers only)  
[griffintheatre.com.au](http://griffintheatre.com.au)  
 Sydney Festival from 24 October on [sydneyfestival.org.au/masquerade](http://sydneyfestival.org.au/masquerade)

**Multipacks** are available for all Sydney Festival events except *Disco Dome*. Book 3 or more events and save. Discounts apply to full price A Reserve or General Admission tickets.



**For interviews and further information contact:**

Jessica Keirle, Sydney Festival Publicity Manager, 02 8248 6525 / 0438 805 109 [jessica.keirle@sydneyfestival.org.au](mailto:jessica.keirle@sydneyfestival.org.au)

Emma Collison, Griffin Theatre Company Publicist, 02 9332 1052 / 0418 584 795 [emma@griffintheatre.com.au](mailto:emma@griffintheatre.com.au)