

MEDIA RELEASE

Level 5, 10 Hickson Road The Rocks
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Woyzeck

AUSTRALIAN EXCLUSIVE

A musical re-working of Georg Büchner's raw and unforgiving text by Robert Wilson, Tom Waits and Kathleen Brennan, presented by leading German theatre company Thalia Theater Hamburg



Photo: *Woyzeck* © Krafft Angerer

"So beautiful, so devastating, so visually striking and of such visionary power, that we barely dare to breathe."

Die Welt

"Under Jette Steckel's direction at the Thalia Theater, Georg Büchner's 'Woyzeck' is a work of drama with an audible heartbeat delivered by the fabulously nuanced band lead by Gerd Bessler"

Die Welt

Leading German theatre company Thalia Theater Hamburg make their long awaited Australian debut performance with the stage adaptation of **Georg Büchner's** eponymous play, *Woyzeck*.

Acclaimed theatre director **Robert Wilson**, American musicians **Tom Waits** and **Kathleen Brennan** have reinvented the raw and unforgiving *Woyzeck* as a 21st century musical. Something between a fever dream and social drama, *Woyzeck* is a lurid performance dealing with madness, obsession and murder.

A simple soldier on the fringes of society, *Woyzeck* sacrifices his body and sanity to an arrogant doctor's medical experiments. Facing a narrow and lifeless existence, *Woyzeck* loves Marie, but what can he offer her? When a drum major catches Marie's eye, it all becomes too much for *Woyzeck* as he transcends into a downward spiral of madness and vengeful fantasies.

One of the most influential and widely performed plays in German literature, Büchner's *Woyzeck* is based on a true story about a lowly private in the army who killed his girlfriend in Leipzig in 1821.

After his early death in 1837, Büchner left *Woyzeck* as a fragment, open for appropriation. Working with Robert Wilson, Tom Waits and Kathleen Brennan created a musical re-working of *Woyzeck* releasing this music as the album, *'Blood Money'*. Waits' songs look inside the characters and his music gives a new dimension to Büchner's text.

"Woyzeck deals with madness and obsession, with children and murder – all things that move us. The piece is wild and lurid and exciting and it inspires your imagination. It makes you fear for the characters and reflect on your own life. I don't think you can really demand more than that from a play." writes Tom Waits.

Robert Wilson worked with Tom Waits in 1990 to create the first so-called art musical produced for Thalia Theater Hamburg, *The Black Rider*. Following the production's enormous success, Thalia Theater commissioned another work by Waits and Wilson which resulted in *Alice*; a musical work about Lewis Carroll, the author of *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass*.

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Jette Steckel of Thalia Theater Hamburg creates two worlds in her *Woyzeck* (based on the Wilson, Waits, Brennan adaptation) - one of the poor German underclass speaking gutsy pre-Brechtian German; another of introspection through Waits' English songs.

Under the direction of Steckel, the actors are in constant combat with an oversized grid of steel and rope that is stretched across the stage and forms the centre of the powerful set design. Integrated with the action, the actors climb, hang and stumble over the netting which becomes an obstacle and a foothold; a prison in which the characters are both restrained and propelled.

Thalia Theater Hamburg is one of Germany's most successful theatres with their repertoire performed at renowned international arts festivals and theatres around the world. Thalia Theater's productions have been sought after for over two decades with invited guest appearances in New York, Beijing, Rio de Janeiro, Seoul, St. Petersburg, Moscow, Shanghai and Bogota.

Adapted from **Georg Büchner**
Created by **Tom Waits, Kathleen Brennan and Robert Wilson**
Songs and lyrics by **Tom Waits and Kathleen Brennan**
Text adaptation by **Ann-Christin Rommen / Wolfgang Wiens**

Director	Jette Steckel
Stage Design	Florian Lösche
Costume Design	Pauline Hüners
Musical Director	Gerd Bessler, Laurenz Wannemacher
Dramaturgy	Susanne Meister
Musicians	Gabriel Coburger, Johannes Huth, Uwe Granitza, Stephan Krause, Edouard Tachalow, Laurenz Wannemacher
Actors	Bernd Grawert, Julian Greis, Franziska Hartmann, Philipp Hochmair, Felix Knopp, Tilo Werner, Jörg Pohl, Gabriela Maria Schmeide
Where	Carriageworks Bay 17
When	7-12 January at 8pm No performance on Sunday
Duration	110 minutes
Price	Premium \$89 A Reserve \$79/\$71
Bookings	Sydney Festival on 1300 856 876 sydneyfestival.org.au/woyzeck

***Limited ticket offer: Book tickets to both *Woyzeck* and *Desdemona*, our special October launch season performance, for \$170 on sydneyfestival.org.au/early**



For interviews and further information contact:

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