



2022

# MEDEA

National Theatre  
of Scotland

10–27 August (excl. 15 & 22) 8pm  
14, 18, 20, 25, 27, 28 August 3pm

**THE HUB**

The performance lasts approximately 1 hour 15 minutes with no interval.

Please ensure that all mobile phones and electronic devices are switched off or put on silent.



# **MEDEA**

**NATIONAL THEATRE OF SCOTLAND**

**WRITTEN BY LIZ LOCHHEAD, AFTER EURIPIDES  
DIRECTED BY MICHAEL BOYD**

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## **CAST**

Jason	<b>Robert Jack</b>
Glauke	<b>Alana Jackson</b>
Nurse	<b>Anne Lacey</b>
Kreon	<b>Stephen McCole</b>
Medea	<b>Adura Onashile</b>
Manservant	<b>Adam Robertson</b>
Understudy	<b>Pierce Reid</b>

## **CHORUS**

<b>Lola Aluko</b>
<b>Leyla Aycan</b>
<b>Lindsey Campbell</b>
<b>Janette Foggo</b>
<b>Pauline Lockhart</b>
<b>Fletcher Mathers</b>
<b>Eileen Nicholas</b>
<b>Wendy Seager</b>
<b>Brooke Walker</b>
<b>Bea Webster</b>

## **SUPERNUMERARIES**

<b>Brian McKigen</b>
<b>Euan Mitchell</b>
<b>Douglas Yannaghas</b>

## **CHILDREN**

**Frieda Bazie Gilmore**  
**Inigo Bazie Gilmore**  
**Otis Bazie Gilmore**  
**Kamsi Jibulu**  
**Amari Tadé**  
**Samuel Jude Walker**

## **CHAPERONES**

**Chloé Brown**  
**Cat Perry**  
**Claire Randall**  
**Gary Sloan**

## **CREATIVE TEAM**

Intimacy Coordinator	<b>Vanessa Coffey</b>
Casting Director	<b>Laura Donnelly CDG</b>
Lighting Designer	<b>Colin Grenfell</b>
Composer and Performing Musical Director	<b>James Jones</b>
Understudy Percussionist	<b>David Kerr</b>
Fight Director	<b>Janet Lawson</b>
BSL Consultant	<b>Brooklyn Melvin</b>
Assistant Director	<b>Jairus Obayomi</b>
Movement Director	<b>Janice Parker</b>
Set and Costume Designer	<b>Tom Piper</b>
Sound Designer	<b>Josh Robins</b>
Voice Director	<b>Jean Sangster</b>

## **PRODUCTION TEAM**

Lighting Supervisor	<b>Karin Anderson</b>
Personal Assistant	<b>Vaila Anderson</b>
Deputy Stage Manager	<b>Louise Charity</b>
Sound Supervisor	<b>Fraser Cherrington</b>
Lighting Supervisor	<b>Tom Davies</b>
Company Manager	<b>Michael Dennis</b>
Production Manager	<b>Chris Hay</b>
Costume Assistant	<b>Nicki Martin-Harper</b>
Costume Technician	<b>Lesley McNamara</b>
Stage Manager	<b>Jennifer McTaggart</b>
Assistant Stage Manager	<b>Susan McWhirter</b>
Lighting Programmer	<b>Tamykha Patterson</b>
Costume Supervisor	<b>Morag Pirrie</b>
Assistant Stage Manager	<b>Anna Reid</b>
Producer	<b>Lesley Anne Rose</b>
Technical Swing	<b>Ruben San Roman Gamez</b>

Set built by **Citizen's Theatre**, Glasgow and painted by **Jason Dailly**,  
**Lisa Greaf** and **Lisa Kellet**

Thanks to the **Royal Shakespeare Company** for the loan of percussion instruments  
and additional thanks to **Perth Rep Theatre** and the **Lyceum Theatre**, Edinburgh.

## **ACCESS**

BSL Interpreters	<b>Greg Colquhoun</b> <b>Yvonne Strain</b>
Audio Describers	<b>Bridget Stevens</b> <b>Lydia Kerr</b>
Captioner	<b>Ben Poots</b>

*MEDEA* , commissioned and directed by Graham McLaren for Theatre Babel as part of that company's 'Greeks' Project, was first performed on the 17th March 2000 before being revived later that year for the Edinburgh Festival Fringe prior to a national tour.

# WRITER'S NOTE

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When asked how I came to write my version of Euripides's *Medea* – unbelievably it's more than twenty years ago now – I have to be honest and admit that it wasn't something I had been burning to do. It was a first-the-phonecall project, as have been quite a few of the adaptations for the theatre I have ended up working on over the years. My friend Graham McLaren of Theatre Babel, then one of Scotland's most ambitious and well-travelled touring companies whose *raison d'être* was making new productions from the classic repertoire, was determined that his 'Greeks' project – three new versions from three of his then favourite Scottish dramatists of three of the most fundamental plays in the evolution of world drama – was the next thing he was putting his heart and soul into. And he was absolutely adamant that I was the writer he needed for a brand-new take on *Medea*.

I have never found working on the texts of great plays by writers as various as Molière (three times, all three of his greatest plays in rhyming couplets, in three very different versions of 'Scots') or Chekhov, or Schnitzler even, any less 'creative' than working on my 'own stuff'. Though of course it is a very enticing prospect not to be starting with that terrifying blank page. It's been almost as

demanding and difficult to be an adapter, though, but in the end – when I have managed to get what felt (to me at least) like a handle on the task in hand – just as deeply satisfying.

You start with your gut instinct. Can I sense something, even if I don't know what yet, which other recent versions seem to me to be missing and which I'd like to try to bring out? In this case I had read a couple of excellent recent English translations of *Medea* and told Graham so. One of them would work very well, surely? But he wouldn't let me off the hook. He was sure there was a new version of this play in me, not necessarily in Scots, but especially for this Scottish Company, and he wanted me to know that it wasn't necessarily a literal line-for-line translation he was looking for. I could change things as I saw fit. (Exactly as the Greeks themselves did – just Google and you'll see – there are many, many conflicting stories surrounding the myth of Medea, though Euripides's version of her final and iconic action caps the lot for all time in its terror and pity.) I think it was this freedom that he promised which made me eventually agree to make my version.

This was in the very, very late 1990s. At the time, I was deep into the second or third draft of a play all of my own devising – a comedy. It was set in the here-and-now, in the booming, trendy and confident post-City-of-Culture Glasgow of those times, and was about a successful, well-off, self-made woman who, just about to hit her 40th birthday, was suddenly desperate to give birth to a child. Thus there was a frisson of slightly perverse attraction in the notion of my next play if I accepted this challenge, being – in every way – exactly the opposite: a tragedy, absolutely timeless and ancient, about a woman driven by female desperation of a quite different sort, to killing her children.

## **It is not a very elevated reason for taking on a great classic play, but it's the truth.**

My method? I started off by reading all the versions of *Medea* in translation I could find. And the footnotes in English in the Greek editions arguing the nuances of particular words he'd used. I was trying to understand – imperfectly of course, but as exactly as I could – what was articulated in an argument, the implications of the imagery he used, and to somehow intuit what seemed to me to be its unique and thrilling tone. From the word go I was thrilled by Euripides's astonishing and bold irony. I was delighted to work on a text so outrageous, so impious and so

jaggedly colloquial as, being faithful to it in my fashion, I recognised it was turning out to be, as my version of it began to emerge. Euripides seemed to me, even then, very different from what the scholars called 'the sublime and mellifluous Aeschylus' and 'the grand and stately, morally complex, poetic Sophocles.'

I do remember as I began my version of *Medea* reading, astonished, disagreeing profoundly with it sometimes, some of what was written about this man Euripides. How could that feminist critic find him a misogynist? Had she been reading the same play as me? It seems astonishing to me that the passionate diatribe against the palpable unfairness of woman's lot – that Euripides gives to his Medea – was written and performed by a male to an all-male audience in Athens in this brand-new form of story-telling that we now call drama, about 500 years BC. Someone else I read somewhere speculated that – as Greek dramatists often performed their own plays – his predilection for female protagonists might well have been because he was a brilliant 'travesty actor' writing himself great roles. Now we were talking...

Eventually, sticking with a couple of pedantic and not-at-all speakable Victorian and even earlier translations – ones that would elucidate without influencing my own language in any way, I simply used Euripides's *Medea* as a complete structural template. Then let go and did, at a crucial part of the drama, change *his* narrative to put what I felt was even more pressure on

Medea and raise the stakes that made it inevitable that she do what she does. I invented an encounter with the ‘other woman’, Glauke, the princess of Corinth (who does not appear in person in the Euripides version at all.) While I was at it, I dispensed with the ‘deus-ex-machina’ ending too. It felt deliberately, ironically implausible anyway. My Medea is not supernatural, not an immortal, but is all too human. Even if she does have some spectacular poisons and skills, I chose not to interpret them as spells.

The mixed marriage between Jason and Medea in my version isn’t between a man and demi-goddess, but between a man and a woman. I’d say this is why Euripides’s *Medea* will continue to mean as much as it always has to human beings, for as long as our species survives.

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# NATIONAL THEATRE OF SCOTLAND

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**Jackie Wylie** Artistic Director and Chief Executive

**Brenna Hobson** Executive Director

**Seona Reid dbe** Chair

Established in 2006, the National Theatre of Scotland has created over 250 productions. As a theatre without walls and building-free, the company presents a wide variety of work that ranges from large-scale productions to projects tailored to the smallest performing spaces. In addition to conventional theatres, it has performed in airports, schools, tower blocks, community halls, ferries and forests.

The company has toured extensively throughout the UK and internationally. Its notable productions include Gregory Burke's *Black Watch*, whose numerous awards included four Olivier Awards; Rona Munro's landmark historical trilogy *The James Plays*; a radical

reimagining of *Macbeth* starring Alan Cumming, presented in Glasgow and at the Lincoln Center Festival, New York, and subsequently on Broadway; and the Olivier Award-winning *Our Ladies of Perpetual Succour*.

The National Theatre of Scotland creates much of its work in partnership with theatre-makers, companies, venues and participants worldwide. From extraordinary projects with schools and communities to the ground-breaking online 5 Minute Theatre and immersive pieces such as David Greig's *The Strange Undoing of Prudencia Hart*, it aspires to tell the stories that need to be told and to take work to wherever audiences are to be found.