

TWELFTH NIGHT

BY **WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**
DIRECTED BY **LEE LEWIS**
WITH **MAX CULLEN & BRENT HILL**



The sort of thing that can happen when a man looks a little too much like his sister.

Orsino is head over heels with Olivia, but she's too busy mourning her dead brother to notice. Meanwhile, her steward is trying to run a strict household while grappling with sexual frustration, and her boozy old uncle is chasing the maid and generally causing trouble. Into this mayhem enter the twins – one male, one female – equally lovable but a little too hard to tell apart.

Lee Lewis (*Love Lies Bleeding*, *Stoning Mary*) brings us a fresh re-telling of Shakespeare's romantic comedy for our disaster-ravaged world in which Viola has lost her twin brother following a natural disaster.

She and her fellow-survivors have taken shelter in a community centre for the night, and discover a copy of *Twelfth Night*. To help Viola get through the dark hours until she can resume the search for her brother, they use salvaged belongings brought with them to enact the play.

This contemporary framing device lends a subtle twist and a little bit of magic to Shakespeare's much-loved comedy of mistaken identity, deception and desire.

Lewis was inspired by images in the media following the Victorian bushfires and her production raises questions about what we value most when faced with the prospect of leaving our possessions behind.

A striking newspaper photo of a bushfire survivor with his salvaged guitar is reflected in this production's guitar-playing Feste, and epitomises the sense of hope that is at the heart of *Twelfth Night*.

With a cast of seven – one woman and six men, including Max Cullen as Feste and Brent Hill as Maria – Lewis' production will play with notions of gender and exploit the play's full theatricality as these characters transform in their attempt to depict Shakespeare's creations.

Lee Lewis, in her directing debut for Bell Shakespeare, says: "After years of directing new writing, it is unbelievably nourishing to come back to Shakespeare's scenes. New plays have great characters and amazing stories but very few writers are making scenes as astonishing as those you find in Shakespeare's plays.

"These were once the new plays. They sounded to the audience as fresh and immediate as Ross Mueller does to us now. I am excited to try and find that immediate a connection with the audience now."

MELBOURNE

31 AUGUST – 18 SEPTEMBER
THE ARTS CENTRE
FAIRFAX STUDIO
BOOKINGS: 1300 182 183 /
THEARTSCENTRE.COM.AU
OR 1300 723 038 /
TICKETMASTER.COM.AU

CANBERRA

12 – 23 OCTOBER
CANBERRA THEATRE CENTRE
THE PLAYHOUSE
BOOKINGS: 02 6275 2700
OR CANBERRATHEATRECENTRE.COM.AU

SYDNEY

26 OCTOBER – 27 NOVEMBER
SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE
PLAYHOUSE
BOOKINGS: 02 9250 7777
OR SYDNEYOPERAHOUSE.COM

ALSO TOURING TO 26 REGIONAL CENTRES AROUND AUSTRALIA – VISIT BELLSHAKESPEARE.COM.AU FOR DETAILS

For more information, images and interviews:

Tatia Sloyer, TS Publicity
03 9419 8837 or 0403 305 395
tatia@tspublicity.com.au