

## Media Release

For immediate release

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### All the world's a stage with Shakespeare send-up

SHAKESPEARE'S long-lost first play, written when he was 17, is coming to Melville Theatre after being found in a treasure-filled English parking lot.

The literary holy grail features Shakespeare's most famous characters and familiar speeches in a new story.

But at 100 hours with multiple unwieldy storylines, it was decided by writers Reed Martin and Austin Tichenor to abridge it – as a public service – to a brief and palatable 90-minute performance.

Vanessa Jensen is directing *William Shakespeare's Long Lost First Play (abridged)*, a fast, funny and fictional 40th play by the Bard that weaves together his popular speeches and plot devices.

"This is Shakespeare without really being Shakespeare," she said. "It's funny, a bit silly and filled with references to pop culture, Disney and many of Shakespeare's most famous characters.

"Three actors give a physical and frantic performance playing many roles and changing numerous costumes, voices and accents, while also occasionally playing musical instruments – frequently all at the same time!"

The main challenge, according to Vanessa, is reassuring non-Shakespeare fans that they don't need to know or like his work to enjoy the show.

"We also don't want to offend true Shakespeare aficionados with the way the great Bard's work is twisted and turned inside out for the sake of humour," she said.

"The play, with its multitude of characters, costumes and accents, needs to be carefully choreographed and managed to ensure the flow is smooth and the audience can keep up."

First appearing on stage as an eight-year-old and directing her first show at 14, Vanessa has a wealth of theatre experience behind her.

She wrote, directed, stage-managed and acted in various shows at Curtin University's Hayman Theatre over a four-year period and has staged a plethora of successful productions at the Old Mill and Melville Theatres.

Vanessa has plenty of best director and best play awards and nominations to her credit for shows including *Away*, *Jamie's Chooks*, *Twelve Angry Men*, *Mr Bailey's Minder*, *Amadeus*, *Rabbit Hole* and *Love, Loss and What I Wore*.

"*William Shakespeare's Long Lost First Play (abridged)* appealed because it's clever and funny," she said.

"It has Shakespeare, which I like; Disney, which I love; pig latin, which was my second language as a child, and it contains some truly terrible puns – what's not to love?"

*William Shakespeare's Long Lost First Play (abridged)* is on at 8pm November 19, 20, 25, 26, 27, December 2, 3 and 4 with a 2pm matinee November 28. Tickets are \$23, \$18 concession – book at [www.TAZTix.com.au](http://www.TAZTix.com.au).

Melville Theatre is at 393A Canning Highway (corner of Stock Road), Palmyra.

Ends

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#### CAPTIONS

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LLP1: *William Shakespeare's Long Lost First Play (abridged)* features Thomas Dimmick, left, John Whinnen and Grace Edwards.

LLP2-3: Thomas Dimmick, left, Grace Edwards and John Whinnen take on several classic roles in *William Shakespeare's Long Lost First Play (abridged)*.

LLP4: Alas! Poor Yorick! Despite his fate, Thomas Dimmick, left, John Whinnen and Grace Edwards are all smiles in *William Shakespeare's Long Lost First Play (abridged)*.

LLP5: *William Shakespeare's Long Lost First Play (abridged)* features Thomas Dimmick, John Whinnen and Grace Edwards disguising themselves cunningly with skulls

LLP-grace: Grace Edwards plays the Disney-loving Eddy who also likes Shakespeare "quite a bit".

LLP-john: Winston (John Whinnen) takes his hat off to the Bard in *William Shakespeare's Long Lost First Play (abridged)*.

LLP-thomas: Mick (Thomas Dimmick) contemplates his friend Yorick in *William Shakespeare's Long Lost First Play (abridged)*.

LLP-director: Director Vanessa Jensen, right, with the cast of *William Shakespeare's Long Lost First Play (abridged)*: John Whinnen, Thomas Dimmick and Grace Edwards.