

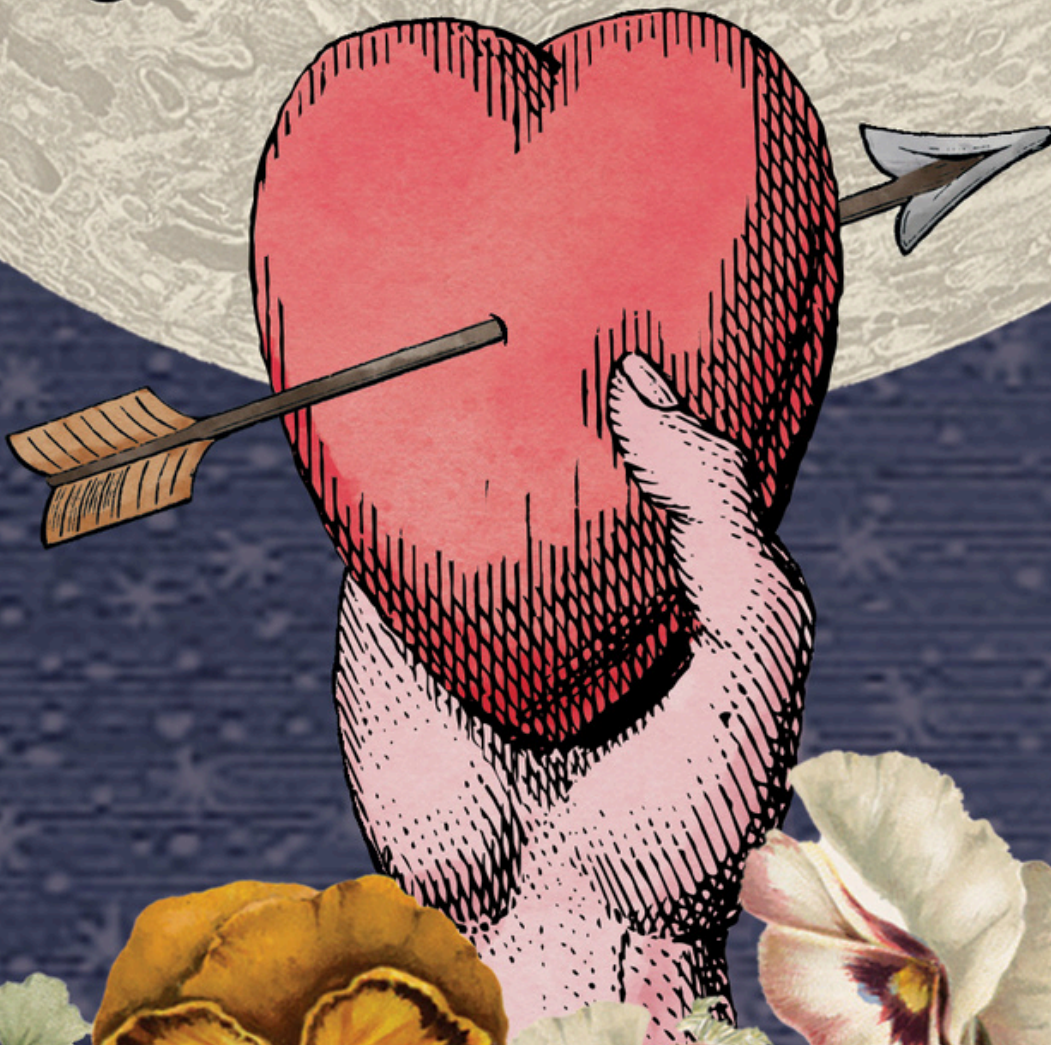


QUEENSLAND
SHAKESPEARE
ENSEMBLE

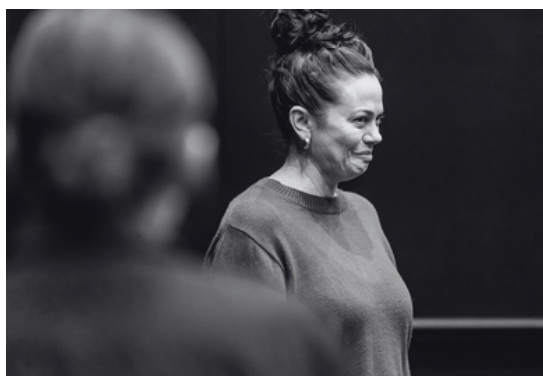
A Midsummer Night's Dream

by William Shakespeare

August 15 - 30



The Queensland Shakespeare Ensemble acknowledges the traditional Indigenous owners and custodians of the lands on which we live, work and play. We pay our respects to their Elders, ancestors, and descendants, and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, acknowledging that their sovereignty over these lands has never been ceded.



ABOUT QSE

VISION | Transforming communities through creativity.

MISSION | QSE exists to:

- Powerfully share epic stories with live audiences
- Provide world class training opportunities to actors and non-actors
- Support creativity in contexts and communities where it has been historically excluded
- Nurture an ensemble of artist managers that drive the company's activities and works together to develop their skills on stage off



Performing Shakespeare demands the cultivation of whole self in service communal enterprise, and as such is ideal vehicle for this exploration. Although Ensemble performs works other playwrights authors, will always be home from which we travel.

CAST

Claire Pearson – Titania, Snout
Dom Tennison – Egeus, Snug, Mustardseed
Eamon Langton – Demetrius
Emily Croft – Puck
James Enwright – Philostrate, Flute, Cobweb
Jason Nash – Theseus, Peaseblossom
Leah Mustard – Hermia
Liliana Macarone – Quince
Meg Bennett – Lysandra
Mikala Crawley – Helena
Paris Lindner – Hippolyta, Moth
Rebecca Murphy – Oberon, Starveling
Rob Pensalfini – Bottom

PRODUCTION TEAM

Director – Angus Thorburn
Assistant Director/ Choreography – Rebecca Murphy
Production Manager – Kylii Davies
Stage Manager – Jordan Ferguson
Assistant Stage Manager (Backstage) – Marisa Bucolo
Assistant Stage Manager (Lighting) – Eleanor Shaw
Set and Prop Design & Construction – Josh Murphy
Costume Design & Construction – Harmony Barath
Costume Assistant – Loretta Donnelly
Lighting Design – Ziggy Enoch
Music Directors/ Composers – Liliana Macarone & Rob Pensalfini
Musicians – Liliana Macarone, Rob Pensalfini, Jason Nash
Fight Coordinator – Jason McKell

2025 CORE ENSEMBLE

Rob Pensalfini – Artistic Director
Rebecca Murphy – General Manager/ Marketing & IT Coordinator
Meg Bennett – Finance Officer
Mikala Crawley – Marketing & Events Coordinator
Leah Mustard – Youth Engagement & Education Coordinator
Liliana Macarone – Shakespeare Beyond Manager
Angus Thorburn – Administration & Training Coordinator
Lillian Duggan – Shakespeare's Shorts Coordinator (Associate Portfolio Holder)

QSE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Rebecca Murphy – President
Kylii Davies – Treasurer
Liliana Macarone – Secretary
Victoria Bladen – General Member



FROM THE DIRECTOR



I first performed in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* during high school, then again at university. I've spent more hours with this play than I care to say. Since I began Directing in 2019, *Midsummer* has been at the top of my bucket list. I nearly staged the play during the post-lockdown renaissance of 2021 but was advised to choose a different play due to *Midsummer* oversaturation at the time. However, the stars have finally aligned, and this play is now my debut as a QSE Director. Working on this play has been a dream AND a nightmare. I am grateful to everyone involved who gave me the chance to lead them through this beautiful mess of a play. It's an experience I will hold with me for a long time, as I hope my fellow audience will as well.

What's left to say about *A Midsummer Night's Dream*? After 400 years, it remains one of Shakespeare's most hilarious, visionary and lyrical plays. The creative and stylistic potential in this text has made it one of the Bard's most frequently performed plays. Last year, Queensland Ballet and Brisbane Arts staged their versions. Later this year, Villanova Players will delve in too. This is QSE's second time with the play since 2013, and my third since 2015. So, I ask again: what's left to say about *A Midsummer Night's Dream*?

Charlie Chaplin once said: "Life is a tragedy when seen in close-up, but a comedy in long-shot." So it is with *Midsummer*. We all enjoy the magical forest and slapstick moments that the play offers, but when you zoom in, beneath the trees, the enchantments, and the laughter, there lies: a constant struggle for working class artists, a series of roofied individuals forced into non-consensual encounters, a patriarchal dictatorship that enforces the death penalty on women, and a mass of environmental disasters grown from the irresponsible negligence of those with the most power to prevent it. To deny the darkness at the heart of this play is to deny the play altogether. But I'm not here to transform *Midsummer* into the next *Hamlet* or *Macbeth*. It is from this tragic grounding that we reap some of the most comedic and ridiculous moments to ever be staged.

So welcome one and all to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (during a late Brisbane winter). Relax, have a drink, and enjoy a sweet sojourn from the woes of your miserable lives. Explore our musings on Love, Gender, Escapism and Nature up close and personal. Experience an Athens that harkens back to classical Ancient Greek aesthetics, a Fairy Realm that looks and sounds like a setting from *The Legend of Zelda*, and of course, a crew of rude Mechanicals trying their damndest to produce ground-breaking community theatre. Let the Dream begin...

With love,
Angus Thorburn



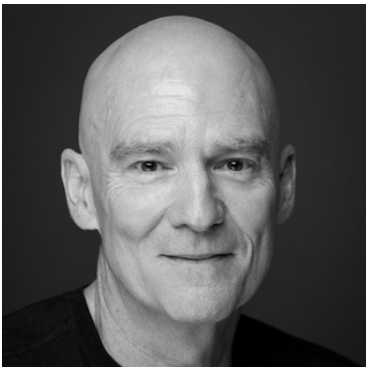
Angus Thorburn

Angus is a Core Ensemble member, acting in QSE shows since the 2019 Apprenticeship. In 2024, he stepped into QSE's directing sphere as Assistant Director for *Tartuffe* and *Julius Caesar*; 2025 marks his debut as principal Director. Angus started directing after graduating from the Southbank TAFE Acting course in 2018. His directorial debut was Edward Bond's *Have I None* for the 2019 Anywhere Festival at Boggo Road Gaol. He was chosen as Associate Director for Egan Sunbin's work-in-development, *Blue Iris*, for Vena Cava Productions' 2020 Fresh Blood Festival. He directed his first Shakespeare production of *As You Like It* for the 2021 Anywhere Festival in his parents' backyard. After taking a break, he was selected as a Director for the 2023 La Boite Assembly program, helping create the 10-minute performance *And Then I Grew Up*. This is Angus' third production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the last 10 years.



Claire Pearson

Claire Pearson is a QUT Acting graduate (2008) who trained in Shakespeare at RADA, London, supported by the Ian Potter Cultural Trust and Arts Queensland (2011). She has performed with Queensland Theatre, La Boite, The Good Room, Queensland Ballet, and Brisbane Festival, and appeared with Melbourne companies including Boutique Theatre, Burning House Theatre, and fortyfivedownstairs. A core member of Queensland Shakespeare Ensemble in 2010 and guest artist in 2012, Claire has also written, produced, and starred in three sell-out comedic seasons: *Esther Hicks is Vibrationally Speaking* (Melbourne International Comedy Festival, PIP Theatre), *Battlefield Blues* (Melbourne Fringe), and *Mona Brow: Retired Actress...* (Anywhere Theatre Festival). She's been twice shortlisted for the Queensland Young Playwrights Award and won Best Female Actor at the Queensland New Filmmaker Awards. As a stand-up comedian, Claire has opened for acts at the Melbourne International Comedy Festival and performs regularly in Brisbane, including at the Sit Down Comedy Club.



Dom Tennison

Dom has been performing for over 13 years. He recently appeared in Queensland Shakespeare Ensemble's 2024 production of *Julius Caesar*, playing six roles. Dom also played Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde at Sunnybank Theatre in 2024. Between 2022-23, he played Jacob Marley's Ghost in *Ebenezer*, Darth Vader in *Bard Wars*, Charlie 'the Duck' in *One Man, Two Guvnors* and Leonato in *Much Ado About Nuthink* all at the Brisbane Arts Theatre. Some notable dramatic roles over the years have included Leo Bailey in *Mr Bailey's Minder* (Centenary Theatre Group 2020), Actor/Kipps in *The Woman in Black* (Brisbane Arts Theatre 2017), Martin Dysart in *Equus* (Brisbane Arts Theatre 2016) and Roo in *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* (Villanova Players 2015).



Eamon Langton

Eamon is an emerging actor based in Brisbane. He first discovered his passion for acting after studying *The Tempest* in Year 10 drama class and subsequently spending most classes learning a wide variety of Shakespearean monologues. After graduating school, he joined the Queensland Shakespeare Ensemble's Apprentice program to further develop his acting skills. He has had a wide variety of acting experiences including playing Grimsby in a production of *The Little Mermaid* (2023) in addition to performing in Role Initiative Theatre Company production of *No Exit* and *Bawdy Tales and Critical Fails: A Role Playing Adventure*.



Eleanor Shaw

Ellie is an emerging Brisbane-based creative who is increasingly falling in love with stage management. She is studying a Bachelor of Education/Arts (English and Drama) at the University of Queensland, and that is where she discovered stage management, working on *ALGORTIHM* (SM, 2023) and *Vanguard 2024: Visions of Us* (Festival Director, 2024) for UQ Drama. Ellie would like to thank QSE for generously embracing her into the team for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, letting her have a ridiculous amount of fun and learn so much. Even more so, she would like to thank her God and heavenly Father: the ultimate and original artist.



Emily Croft

Emily Croft is thrilled to be playing Puck after completing her training with Queensland Shakespeare Ensemble as a 2025 Apprentice!

Emily is a UK trained actor who has recently made Brisbane her new home after falling in love with the city during her travels. Emily trained at East 15 Acting School in Essex (UK) and is a QSE 2025 Apprentice.

Emily has worked professionally around the UK, including touring *Once Upon A Princess* as the role of 'Anna', Stage Manager (*Our Town*), and popular British pantomime's Dorothy (*The Wizard of Oz*), Snow White (*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*), and Cinderella (*Cinderella*).

Since moving to Brisbane, Emily has been delighted to discover the vibrant world of performing arts 'down under'. She feels extremely privileged to have trained alongside the talented Queensland Shakespeare Ensemble – and even more excited to be making her Aussie debut with them!



Josh Murphy

Josh Murphy is a designer and artist based in Brisbane.

Growing up a theatre kid Josh then spent the last 16 years in and around live music, performing and designing for clients including other musicians, record labels and radio stations. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is Josh's third production as a set designer for QSE after working as graphic designer on a number of shows over the years.

When not building sets Josh can be found designing across a number of fields as Two Crate Studio.



James Enwright

James is a 2025 Apprentice who is excited to be making his QSE mainstage debut with *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Through his Drama study at UQ he appeared in his first Shakespeare production, a mashup of *The Taming of the Shrew* and *The Tamer Tamed*, and as part of a course was involved with the company's 2023 production *The Penelopiad*. Since then, he's been appearing in independent theatre and pursuing his passion for acting for two years now, appearing in Underground Productions' *How to Vote* and short play *The Birth of Rugby League*, Ad Astra Theatre's *Loot*, and Centenary Theatre's *Across the Barricades*. *Midsummer* is his most challenging role yet, bringing to life three distinct characters (and one character playing another), but he's immensely proud of the production and the hard work of the cast and crew, and hopes everyone enjoys the show.



Jason Nash

Jason is a local performer, director, filmmaker, multimedia designer, and educator who has been active in the Brisbane community theatre scene for the last fifteen years. He was a QSE Apprentice in 2022. Jason's previous acting credits include *The 39 Steps* (Footlights Theatrical), *The Crucible* (Beenleigh Theatre Group), *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (Skimble Skamble Fools), *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Twelfth Night* (St Luke's Theatre), *Perve*, *The Boys Next Door*, *Tuesdays with Morrie* (Centenary Theatre Group), *The Tempest*, *Henry IV Pt.1* (Nash Theatre), *Popcorn*, *12 Angry Men* (Ipswich Little Theatre). He has received accolades for his film and design work through various festivals and productions and had a number of written works staged in various theatrical contexts. Jason is an AITSL certified Highly Accomplished Teacher, the Ipswich region representative for ATOM QLD, and a fierce advocate for the necessity of the Arts in education.



Jordan Ferguson

Jordan Taylor Ferguson is a Brisbane/Meanjin based artist and creative with a Bachelor of Acting and Performance (2020) and a Bachelor of Art and Design (Honours) (2022) from TAFE Southbank.

Jordan has stage managed with the Queensland Shakespeare Ensemble [QSE] for many of their mainstage shows over the past few years, including *'Macbeth'* (2022), *'Penelopiad'* (2023), and *'Tartuffe'* (2024). During this time, Jordan completed their apprenticeship with QSE within the 2023 period. They also have previously stage managed for Director Angus Thorburn's production of, *'As You Like it'*, in 2021. In addition to their stage managing, Jordan Taylor Ferguson is a primary game master and member of local table-top role-playing game (TTRPG) actual play called *'Roll for Role'*. Featuring fellow actors and creatives, they aim to tell captivating collaborative stories that are engaging and inspiring.



Kylii Davies

Kylii started being involved with many backstage roles at the Brisbane Arts Theatre over the years as well as being a member of the Brisbane Arts Theatre's Drama Festival Organising Committee. Kylii's role of Deputy Stage Manager in QSE's 2011 production *The Merchant of Venice* was her first exposure to the Ensemble and the works of Shakespeare. She has come back as the Production Manager for *Two Gentlemen of Verona* in 2012; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 2013; *The Tempest* and *The Bomb-itty of Errors* in 2014; *Voices Inside/Out* and *Titus* in 2015; *Twelfth Night* in 2016; *The Winter's Tale* and *Bogga* in 2017, *Hamlet/Rosencrantz* and *Guildenstern Are Dead* in 2018, *Henry IV Part 1* in 2019, *Macbeth in the Dark* in 2020, *Romeo & Juliet* in 2021, *The Rover* in 2022, *The Penelopiad* in 2023 and *Julius Caesar* in 2024. As well as joining as Treasurer of the Management Committee since 2020.



Leah Mustard

After completing the Apprenticeship and Advanced Apprenticeship Programs, Leah is excited to play with the Queensland Shakespeare Ensemble in 2025. In 2022, Leah graduated with a Bachelor of Arts/Secondary Education from the University of Queensland and completed her Honours program in 2023. She has recently been seen in *Julius Caesar*, *Tartuffe*, *The Penelopiad*, *Macbeth* with Queensland Shakespeare Ensemble, and *As You Like It* with Thunderbear Productions for Anywhere Theatre Festival.

As an artist, Leah is interested in the intersection between education and theatre, as well as making classical texts more accessible to young people.



Liliana Macarone

Liliana has considered QSE her artistic home for many years. A multidisciplinary artist, her QSE acting credits include: *Julius Caesar* (Brutus), *Tartuffe* (Cleante), *The Penelopiad* (Penelope – Matilda Award Nomination), *Romeo and Juliet* (Romeo), *The Rover* (Moretta), *Henry IV Part I* (Henry IV), *Hamlet and Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead* (Gertrude), *The Blood Votes* (Mrs Reibe/Mrs Patterson), *The Winter's Tale* (Camillo), *Twelfth Night* (Orsino), *Shakespeare's Shorts* – (Bottom, Mercutio/Friar, Polonius/Horatio, Macduff/Witch2/Murderer).

A singer/songwriter, Liliana composes for and performs in the QSE Band. Recent Music Director credits: *The Rover* (QSE), *Monster's Mother* (Anywhere Festival), *Ladies Write Letters of Lemony Love* (Melbourne Fringe), *Shakespeare's Shorts* (QSE).

A facilitator, tutor and performance coach, Liliana's work with QSE includes: Shakespeare Prison Project, Young Actor's Shakespeare Intensive, Youth Justice Project, Theatre Games with QSE! Other work includes: the University of Queensland, Access Arts, InsideOutside Theatre, and Sweet Adelines Australia (Regional Education Faculty).



Meg Bennett

Meg is a Brisbane based artist who began her infatuation with theatre and Shakespeare at a young age. After completing an unusual apprenticeship in 2020, 2025 marks her fifth year as a member of the Core Ensemble. Meg completed a Bachelor of New Media Arts (Performance) at James Cook University.

Her theatre credits include *Julius Caesar* (QSE), *Tartuffe* (QSE), *The Penelopiad* (QSE), *5 Women Wearing the Same Dress*, *Macbeth* (QSE), *The Rover* (QSE), *Romeo & Juliet* (QSE), *Two Noble Kinsmen* (Skimble Skamble Fools), *Pulp*, *Henry IV Part 1*, *Nonsense*, *Twelfth Night*, *As You Like It* and *Hamlet*. She has also participated in workshops with the touring cast of *Cats* and *DanceNorth*.



Mikala Crawley

Mikala has been with the Queensland Shakespeare Ensemble (QSE) since 2021 where she completed the Apprenticeship program. She then became a portfolio manager for Marketing/Events starting in 2022, in 2023 completed the new Advanced Apprenticeship program, and in 2024 joined the Core Ensemble.

Mikala has performed some of Shakespeare's works including *The Tempest* (2016), *As You Like It* (2018) and *Henry IV Part 1* (2019) with New Farm Nash Theatre, *As You Like It* (2021) with Thunderbear Productions, *Much Ado About Nothing* (2022) with St. Luke's Theatre Society, *Macbeth* (2022) and *Julius Caesar* (2024) with QSE. She also directed/produced a staged reading of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* for the 2022 Anywhere Theatre Festival.

Mikala's other theatre credits include *Medea* (2018) with Underground Productions and UQ's Classics and Ancient History Society, *Game of Tiaras* (2018) with Re-Act Theatre Group (Strathclyde University), *The Penelopiad* (2023) and *Tartuffe* (2024) with QSE.



Paris Lindner

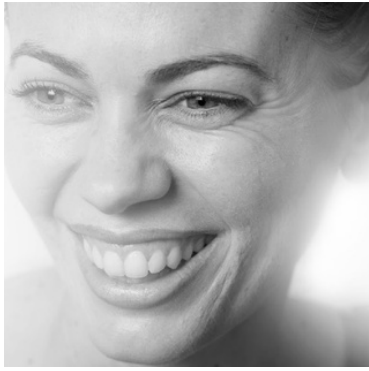
Paris is a Brisbane-based emerging actor and creative.

She was lucky enough to complete the QSE Apprenticeship in 2023, and in 2025 has been delighted to play again as a QSE Advanced Apprentice.

Paris has worked with a range of student and independent theatre companies both on and off the stage, most recently as ASM and Lighting Operator for QSE's *Julius Caesar* (2024).

Her work in education has sparked an artistic interest in the intersection between education and theatre - especially in its capacity to provoke thought and promote connection.

Paris has loved working with QSE to stage this production, and she looks forward to sharing the world of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with audiences!



Rebecca Murphy

Rebecca is a Meanjin/Brisbane-based director, facilitator, and actor. A longtime Core Ensemble member, she also serves as QSE's General Manager. Directing credits include *The Penelopiad* (Matilda Award nomination for Best Ensemble), *The Rover*, *Henry IV Part I*, *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead*, *Shakespeare's Shorts*, and *Bogga*. Notable QSE performances include Cassius in *Julius Caesar* (Matilda Award nomination), Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth* and *Macbeth in the Dark*, the Nurse in *Romeo & Juliet*, Paulina in *The Winter's Tale*, Mary in *Mary Stuart*, Tamora in *Titus*, Ariel in *The Tempest*, and Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Other performance and stage management credits include *Tales of Rain*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, *LovePuke*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Mullah Nasrudin*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. A sought-after facilitator and tutor, Rebecca has worked across a broad range of companies, settings, and age groups, including QSE, the Shakespeare Prison Project, UQ, NIDA Open, Brisbane Drama Studio, Tropical Arts, Underground Productions, and ABCN.



Rob Pensalfini

Rob was one of QSE's founders and has been Artistic Director since 2001. His previous roles include *Tartuffe* (2024), *Macbeth* (2020), *Falstaff* (2019), *Titus Andronicus* (2015), *Prospero* (2014), *Shylock* (2011), and *Coriolanus* (2003). Rob often composes and plays music for QSE productions.

He has also directed numerous productions including *Julius Caesar* (2024), *Romeo & Juliet* (2021), *Hamlet* (2018), *The Blood Votes* (2018), and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2013). Rob has also directed eight inmate productions for QSE's Shakespeare Prison Project. His 2015 book, *Prison Shakespeare: for these deep shames and great indignities*, examines Prison Shakespeare as a global phenomenon.

Rob is a Designated Linklater Voice Teacher and teacher trainer, and an Associate Professor of Linguistics and Drama at the University of Queensland. His linguistic research focuses on Indigenous languages of central Australia.

Rob was inducted as a Queensland Culture Champion in 2013.

Rob is a member of MEAA (Equity).



Ziggy Enoch

Ziggy is an Meanjin theatre artist with a varied skillset. His primary interests are in Production Design, Dramaturgy, and writing for the stage. Ziggy recently completed a Bachelor of Advanced Humanities (Drama) at UQ, and is undertaking an Honours Thesis focused on immersive performance and digital memory. Ziggy was a key collaborator with Salad Days Collective in 2024, making contributions to dramaturgy, sound, and visual design. This earned the Collective a Matilda Award as Queensland's Best Emerging Artist. Ziggy contributed sound design to *Dragspeare's* successful run at Metro Arts. He takes pride in employing a multidisciplinary approach to his practice, and draws joy from the opportunity to collaborate, work, and play in the theatre. Ziggy is currently working as a Dramaturg and Production Lead on the team behind @antifreezejournal. With the journal's debut performance on the 20th of September, *Antifreeze* will feature original work from 25 Brisbane writers, soundtracked by a live band in an immersive setting.





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Visit qldshakespeare.org for more information.



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