

Monday 19 August 2019

## Casting announcement for *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*

### **The Beauty Queen of Leenane**

**By Martin McDonagh**

**18 Nov – 21 Dec. Roslyn Packer Theatre. Opening Night: Fri 22 Nov.**

Yael Stone and Noni Hazlehurst have joined the cast of Sydney Theatre Company's *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, which will play at the Roslyn Packer Theatre this November. Yael will play Maureen Folan and Noni will play her mother Mag in the ink-black Martin McDonagh comedy, directed by STC Associate Director Paige Rattray. They join a cast which also includes Shiv Palekar and Toby Schmitz.

Paige Rattray said: “Our two central characters, Mag and her daughter Maureen are brilliant roles for women. They are both incredibly flawed beings, playing domestic roles that have been thrust onto them by society and circumstance. Their psychology is complex and you see-saw between feeling anger, sympathy, understanding and outrage at their actions. I can’t wait to see what actors of Yael and Noni’s calibre will bring to these roles. If our photo shoot is anything to go by our audiences are in for a very funny and surprising ride!”

In a small town in the Irish hills of Connemara, Maureen Folan lives a lonely existence with Mag, her aged mother. Their relationship is more arm wrestle than warm embrace. Right now, when Maureen stands the chance of having her first romantic relationship, Mag’s cantankerous presence is simply unbearable.

This play was the first big hit for McDonagh who went on to pen the Broadway and West End hits *The Pillowman* and *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, as well as acclaimed films such as *In Bruges* and *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*. On both stage and screen he combines a devilishly satisfying sense of humour with a cruel underbelly.

Yael Stone has worked extensively in the Australian film, television and theatre industry; the NIDA graduate began acting professionally at thirteen years old. Theatre credits include Stephen Sewell’s *The Blind Giant Dancing*, directed by Eamon Flack for Belvoir Street Theatre. Other Belvoir credits include: *As You Like It*, *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, *The Diary of a Madman*, *The Book of Everything* and *Scorched*. For Sydney Theatre Company she has appeared in *Honour* directed by Lee Lewis, *Elling* directed by Pamela Rabe and *Frankenstein* directed by Ralph Myers.

Yael is best known for her portrayal of Lorna Morello in *Orange is the New Black* (Netflix), a global phenomenon which has been honoured with the SAG Award for

Outstanding Comedy Ensemble in 2015, 2016 & 2017, and nominated for the 2014 and 2015 Emmy Awards for Outstanding Comedy and Outstanding Drama. Yael's performance as Lorna throughout the show's seven seasons earned her critical acclaim worldwide. Other US television credits include *High Maintenance* (HBO) and *Childhood's End* (Syfy). Most recently in Australia, Yael played Tori Lustigman in *Deep Water* (Blackfella Films and SBS) and Dora Lumley in *Picnic At Hanging Rock* (Foxtel and Fremantle Media).

Noni Hazlehurst is one of Australia's most loved and respected entertainment figures, as a celebrated film, theatre and television actor, beloved *Playschool* presenter and *Better Homes and Gardens* host. In 2019 Noni stars in the soon-to-be-released feature film, *June Again*. Other recent film credits include *Ladies in Black*, *Truth, The Mule* and *The Broken Shore*. Her recent TV credits include *A Place to Call Home* (Foxtel), *The End* (Foxtel and Sky UK), *The Letdown* (Giant Dwarf and the ABC) and *Redfern Now*.

In 2016 Noni completed sell-out tours of the one-woman stage production, *Mother*, which was nominated for a Helpmann Award, and in 2018 reprised the show at Belvoir Theatre followed later that year by a sell-out season at QPAC for which she received the Matilda Award for Best Performance by an Actress. The play returns to QPAC in 2020.

Noni is the 2016 inductee into the Logies Hall of Fame. She is the winner of two Best Actress Awards for the film *Bitter and Twisted*, four AFIs for *Little Fish*, *Waiting at the Royal*, *Fran* and *Monkey Grip*, and two Logies for the mini-series' *Waterfront* and *Ride on Stranger*. She has also received an Order of Australia and an Honorary Doctorate of Philosophy from Flinders University.

During her time on *Playschool* Noni recorded albums and appeared in many children's concerts together with state orchestras MSO, SSO and QSO. She has been an advocate for children's welfare and literacy programs, and is currently a patron of the Australian Children's Laureate. Noni has served on numerous boards, including Film Australia and Belvoir Street Theatre and currently sits on the board of ACCTA.

**The production patrons for *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* are the W & A Johnson Family Foundation and Jane & Andrew Clifford.**

#ENDS#

**Director** Paige Rattray. **Designer** Renée Mulder. **Lighting Designer** Paul Jackson. **Composer and Sound Designer** Steve Francis. **With:** Noni Hazlehurst, Shiv Palekar, Toby Schmitz, Yael Stone.

**For more information:** Katherine Stevenson: 02 9250 1705//  
[kstevenson@sydneytheatre.com.au](mailto:kstevenson@sydneytheatre.com.au) or Angelina Grien 02 9250 1703//  
[agrien@sydneytheatre.com.au](mailto:agrien@sydneytheatre.com.au)