

Media Release

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SYDNEY THEATRE COMPANY STRIKES HISTORIC 'FIRST LOOK' CONTENT DEAL WITH MICHAEL CASSEL GROUP

Sydney Theatre Company (STC) and Michael Cassel Group (MCG) have today announced a commercial 'First Look' agreement for all future works produced by the theatre company.

In the first agreement of its kind in Australia, STC's productions will have the opportunity to be transferred or remounted as commercial productions to entertain audiences in new markets, with the intention of touring across Australia and internationally.

The first production to benefit from the partnership with international touring will be STC Artistic Director Kip Williams' critically acclaimed adaptation of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Written and directed by Williams, Wilde's century-old fable of beauty, excess and a deal with the devil becomes a spectacular mirror to our times and an odyssey of theatrical storytelling. In a virtuosic performance, Eryn Jean Norvill plays all 26 characters as multiple live cameras and pre-recorded video allow her to create an audacious cascade of theatrical transformations. The show premiered to five-star reviews, sold-out audiences, and two season extensions in 2020 and will return for an encore in STC's 2022 program.

The agreement comes as part of STC's ongoing dedication to producing Australian works of ambition and scale, and to developing work that can be shared through regional, national, and international touring, partnerships, and outreach activities.

STC will work closely with MCG across their long-term development projects. The first-look deal starts immediately and encompasses worldwide rights.

Sydney Theatre Company Artistic Director, Kip Williams said: *"I am so thrilled to be partnering with the visionary Michael Cassel and everyone at MCG as we look to take STC productions to new audiences in Australia and overseas. I continue to be inspired by the brilliant work of Michael and his extraordinary team and I'm very much looking forward to working together, developing new work, and creating new opportunities for our artists"*

Sydney Theatre Company Executive Director, Patrick McIntyre said: *"This partnership with Michael Cassel Group creates enormous cultural and market development opportunities. STC has a long history of regional and national touring, but taking work overseas has remained more sporadic owing to our distance from key markets. This arrangement will not only help us expand audiences for our work locally via commercial remounts, but also to access MCG's broader international networks so we can grow audiences for Australian theatre makers worldwide. The possibilities are tremendously exciting."*

Michael Cassel Group Producer and CEO, Michael Cassel said of the announcement: *"As Australia's pre-eminent theatre company, STC has a wonderful legacy of creating compelling, ground-breaking theatrical productions. The brilliant Kip Williams and his talented team clearly share our passion for creating incredible theatrical productions that inspire, engage and entertain. This innovative agreement allows us to be able to pursue opportunities for these productions to be shared with a greater audience, on stages in Australia and around the world. I look forward to working closely with Kip, Patrick and the entire STC company in producing original productions that showcase Australian talent and theatrical creativity for an international audience."*

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

ABOUT STC

With around 300,000 ticket sales in Sydney each year, and more on tour around the country and the world, STC is one of Australia's foremost performing arts institutions, and one of the largest not-for-profit theatre companies in the world. Since its inception in 1978, Sydney Theatre Company has offered audiences an eclectic program of Australian plays, interpretations of the classic repertoire and the best of new international writing. The Company seeks to produce theatre of the highest standard that consistently illuminates, entertains and challenges, and shares its work widely through regional, national and international touring, partnerships and outreach activities. Over the years, acclaimed artists such as Cate Blanchett, Toni Collette, Hugo Weaving, Barrie Kosky, Deborah Mailman, Richard Roxburgh, Sarah Snook, Yael Stone and Rose Byrne have made work with STC; and the Company often collaborates with many renowned international practitioners including Benedict Andrews, Howard Davies, Declan Donnellan, Liv Ullmann, Steven Soderbergh and Tamás Ascher. STC's four home venues - two theatres at The Wharf, the Roslyn Packer Theatre and the Drama Theatre at the Sydney Opera House - range in size from 160 to 890 seat capacities and allow the Company to develop and celebrate theatrical expression of all kinds.

ABOUT MCG

Michael Cassel Group is a leading live entertainment company formed to produce and present the world's high-quality hit musicals and theatrical productions, live entertainment experiences, marquee events and concert attractions. Productions include the first international tour of the world's #1 musical, *The Lion King* and the Australian premieres of the award-winning productions *Hamilton* and *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*. Previous productions include *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*, *Les Misérables*, *Kinky Boots*, *Singin' In The Rain* and *Priscilla Queen of the Desert*. Concert tours and major events include *The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo*, *Celeste Barber*, *Tina Arena*, *Darren Criss* and *Lea Salonga*, along with the opening celebration of the *ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2020* which was televised internationally. In addition to the group's expanding theatrical interests, the company represents former Australian Prime Minister, The Hon. Julia Gillard AC, journalist and broadcaster Liz Hayes, former Olympian and global sporting administrator Lord Sebastian Coe CH, KBE, *Strictly You* by Sonia Kruger & Better Homes and Gardens personality Charlie Albone. TixTrack Australasia, a partnership between TixTrack Inc and Michael Cassel Group, provides ticketing for live entertainment and cultural organisations in Australia and New Zealand including the Queensland Performing Arts Centre (QPAC). Michael Cassel Group is headquartered in Sydney, with offices in New York, Singapore and Melbourne.