

PRE-SHOW IN-THE-KNOW

FAST FACTS

TITLE

Orlando

From the novel by Virginia Woolf

Adapted by Sarah Ruhl

ABOUT THE PLAY

He had been kissed by a queen without knowing it

Orlando is a woman, a young man, and a grand, epic adventure that transcends time, space and gender.

Virginia Woolf's novel *Orlando* has been described as the most charming love letter in literature. Inspired by Woolf's affair with the author and aristocrat Vita Sackville-West, it is part biography, part fabulation, part poetry.

Now it has been brought to life by award-winning playwright Sarah Ruhl (*In the Next Room, or the vibrator play*) with all the luscious lyricism and playfulness of the original.

As *Orlando*'s story unfolds, we glide effortlessly from Elizabethan England to Constantinople, waking up with ravishing Russian beauties and taking up with Romanian aristocrats, always with a wink in the eye.

The adventures pile up, as do the lovers, and somewhere along the line our hero becomes a heroine.

Orlando abandons herself to five centuries of change with an insatiable appetite to discover what it means to live fully in the present, in her own skin and in her own time.

STC Resident Director Sarah Goodes (*Switzerland*) and designer Renee Mulder (*Battle of Waterloo*) have created a bold, contemporary new production at Sydney Opera House for this light-hearted, gender-bending frolic through the ages.

CHARACTERS

Orlando - Jacqueline McKenzie

Desdemona/Marmaduke/Chorus - Matthew Backer

Elizabeth I/Chorus - John Gaden

Luisa Hastings Edge - Sasha/Chorus

Archduke/Archduchess/Chorus - Garth Holcombe

Poet/Othello/Chorus - Anthony Taufa

STYLE

Gender bending, genre bender!

RUNNING TIME

1 hour and 45 minutes

ACTIVE AUDIENCE

THINK ABOUT

- How gender is constructed
- The influences on *Orlando*'s gender identity
- How gender and gender expectations have changed over time
- How the varying theatrical styles complement *Orlando*'s journey

WATCH AND LISTEN FOR

- *Orlando*'s costume changes from era to era and the colours chosen for each era
- The use of the chorus as the verbal and visual storytellers
- The revolving mirror set
- The soundscape and use of song to create a whimsical atmosphere

MEMORABLE MOMENTS

- *Orlando* and Sasha skating on the ice
- *Orlando*'s change from man to woman
- *Orlando* having tea with the Archduke
- *Orlando* in the present day