

# Pre-Show In-The-Know

## Mary Stuart

A new adaptation by Kate Mulvany, after Friedrich Schiller

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### CURRICULUM LINKS

Stage 5: Dramatic Traditions and Performance Styles:  
Scripted Drama

Stage 6: Links to Topic 3: The Voice of Women in Theatre

### PLOT SYNOPSIS

*Mary Stuart* is an examination of the lives of two powerful women of very different natures: Mary, Queen of Scots and Elizabeth I of England – cousins but not friends.

Following an uprising, Mary has fled Scotland only to be imprisoned for treason at Fotheringhay Castle in England at Elizabeth's orders. Elizabeth feels threatened – Mary is younger, more beloved, and with her own claim to the throne. Though equally headstrong, the two women's views on life couldn't be more different – one calculating and tactical, the other rash and passionate.

The question now is whether Elizabeth will release Mary or execute her. As the men around them scheme and switch loyalties to pursue their own ends, the two queens struggle to maintain autonomy. Elizabeth seems to have the power, but Mary has a final card to play.

### CAST AND CHARACTERS

Mary Stuart	Caroline Brazier
Queen Elizabeth	Helen Thomson
Mortimer	Fayssal Bazzi
Paulet	Simon Burke
Shrewsbury	Peter Carroll
Burleigh	Tony Cogan
Leicester	Andrew McFarlane
Davison	Rahel Romahn
Aubespine	Matthew Whittet
Young Girl	Darcey Wilson

### STYLE

Romanticism

Magic Realism

### RUNNING TIME

1 hour 40 minutes

### THINGS TO LOOK OUT FOR

- A big party scene - Leicester hosted a party for Elizabeth as a gift, the party famously lasting for 10 days. Mulvany has taken the idea of the biggest party of all time and made it the location of Mary and Elizabeth's meeting.
- A revolving stage, the tiered platform rotates throughout the play
- A blend of period and contemporary costumes with ruffs for the male characters and bright fashionable costumes for the woman.
- The introduction of a 'young girl' servant character who symbolises the working class and powerlessness.
- A live dog on stage.

### ADAPTATION

Kate Mulvany has adapted Schiller's *Mary Stuart* with a strong feminist approach, examining the psychology of the two queens and the enduring and obsessive nature of their relationship. Mary and Elizabeth lived parallel lives as women in power, but underwent different journeys in their personal lives and circumstances.