

Press release, Queen Bette, 14th March, 2016

G.bod Theatre are thrilled to announce a second season of Queen Bette, a one-woman show starring Jeanette Cronin as iconic movie star Bette Davis. The World Premiere of the show was part of both the Mardi Gras Festival 2015 and the Old 505 Theatre 2015 Season.

About the show

“The Queen has no hour for love. Time presses, and events crowd upon her. And for a shell, an empty, glistening husk, she must give up all that a woman holds most dear.”

Bette Davis was one of the most iconic and gifted film actors of the 20th Century.

This one-woman show retraces the remarkable steps of a true movie legend, from fledgling stage actress via an unrivalled glittering movie career that also saw her battling the Studios in an unprecedented attempt to gain independence as an artist. In an intimate cabaret style, Queen Bette follows her incredible life and makes reference to many of her most famous screen roles – in particular her fascination with Queen Elizabeth I (whom she played twice in two different movies). Davis fought hard all her life, had four husbands, two Oscars and a reputation as the biggest bitch in Hollywood. Queen Bette tells the whole story.

Queen Bette is a devised show, based on the hundreds of interviews that Bette Davis gave over her lifetime. It is set in 1959, just after her beloved mother Ruthie died, and just before her career revival in “Whatever Happened To Baby Jane”.

G.bod Theatre follow their critically acclaimed productions of Shallow Slumber and A View Of Concrete with this remarkable exploration of the glory days of Hollywood. Renowned Australian actress Jeanette Cronin (Holding the Man, The Boys, Parramatta Girls, Dark Voyager) returns to the role she was born to play.

Reviews for the Premiere Season of Queen Bette:

“A Wow moment of 2015”

Jason Blake, SMH

“A richly fascinating story... The result is an absorbing yet light-hearted docudrama that brings to vivid life one of Hollywood’s pioneering greats. The real royal deal.”

Diana Simmonds, Stage Noise

“Make sure you go. This is a night you won’t forget in a hurry.”

Lisa Thatcher

“Vibrant, funny, and tremendously expressive. Dynamically paced, with unexpected stylistic changes developing between scenes to keep us attentive and fascinated.”

Suzy Goes See

“Rain or shine, grab a ticket if you can.”

Judith Greenaway, Sydney Arts Guide

Reviews for A View of Concrete:

“An intriguing concept, and one that blurs the lines between truth and imagination in one drug-induced haze.”

Stephanie Yip, The Brag

“This was the most impressive piece I have seen at King St Theatre in quite a while. The cast almost danced around each other, often using each other as props or becoming a part of the set.”

SOYP

Presented by G.bod Theatre. <http://gbodtheatre.com>

Our stunning photos were taken by Richard Hedger. <http://www.richardhedger.net/>

Event Details

22nd March to 8th April, 2016

Tuesday – Saturday at 8.00pm

Venue Information

Old 505 Theatre

5 Eliza Street

Newtown NSW 2042

www.venue505.com/theatre

About Jeanette

Jeanette Cronin, Actor

A graduate of NIDA in 1986, Jeanette has worked extensively in theatre, film and television. In 1996, she was awarded the inaugural Mike Walsh Fellowship. With feature film credits including Primemover, The Boys, Terra Nova, Blackrock and the romantic comedies Danny Deckchair and Thank God He Met Lizzie. Jeanette has also appeared in television series including Rake, Water Rats, All Saints, Blue Water High and Crownies.

With a wealth of experience on stage, recently Jeanette performed in *Belongings* at Whitebox Theatre and *The Boys* at Griffin Theatre, *Anna Robi* and *The House of Dogs* at The Old Fitzroy and *Quack* for Griffin Theatre. Other highlights include *Bug* for Griffin Independent, *The Taming of The Shrew* (Bell Shakespeare), *Parramatta Girls* (Company B) *A Dolls House* (STC), *Three Sisters* (Theatre 20/20 at the Old Fitzroy) *Miss Julie* and *The Stronger* (State Theatre Company of South Australia), and *Holding the Man* in 2006 for The Griffin Theatre Co, with subsequent revivals in 2007 and 2008.

In 1995, Jeanette received a Green Room Award nomination for her role as Elizabeth Proctor in *The Crucible* (STC) and again in 2004 for Most Outstanding Actor for *Nightletters* (STCA). In 2008 Jeanette received a Sydney Theatre Award Nomination for Best Supporting Actress for *Holding the Man*.

A lifelong Bette Davis fan, and with a remarkable resemblance to her, in 2014 Jeanette played her idol onstage for the first time in John Misto's *Dark Voyager* at the Ensemble Theatre. She combines a wealth of theatrical experience and her knowledge and love of Bette Davis to the World Premiere of *Queen Bette*.

About the Director

Peter Mountford, Director

Peter trained at Bretton Hall (B.A. Hons), specializing in devised theatre, physical theatre and contemporary dance, and Central School of Speech & Drama (M.A. Applied Theatre) in the UK. He has toured throughout the U.K. as a performer with physical theatre company *fecund theatre* and is artistic director of *G.bod Theatre* (formally *Gaybod Theatre*).

Peter Mountford and Marcella Hynes formed *Gaybod Theatre* in 1997 to create contemporary Queer performance with a political edge. He has regularly directed devised shows for London Black History Month (all adaptations from existing literature) and is a member of the U.K.-based *Young Vic Genesis Directors' Project*. UK Directing credits include: *Trip-eez* (devised show about the relationship between two women in London's gay clubland, featuring physical theatre and aerial performance), a contemporary update of Frank Marcus' *The Killing Of Sister George* (Camden People's Theatre). Both of these shows were selected for the London Gay Pride Arts' Festival.

Jealousy (Ovalhouse Theatre, devised piece about a gay schoolboy crush and a woman's obsession with cooking for her girlfriend), all for *Gaybod Theatre*, Mark Ravenhill's *Citizenship* at the Greenwich Theatre and the acclaimed musical *Pack Up Your Troubles* at the Royal National Theatre, London. His production of *Pack Up Your Troubles* received a 4 star review from Lyn Gardner in *The Guardian*.

Since moving to Sydney in 2007, Peter has directed Lorca's *Shoemaker's Wife* for Actors Centre Australia and Helen Blakeman's *Cloud Busting*, Rory Mullarkey's *The Grandfathers* and *SPYCODE*, a devised show, all for NIDA. In 2012, Peter directed the Australian premiere of Chris Lee's *Shallow Slumber* for G.bod Theatre and Richard Zajdlic's *Dogs Barking* for pantsguys productions. As part of NIDA Independent, Peter has recently adapted and is developing a new stage version of Ruth Park's classic Australian novel, *The Harp In The South* which has been approved by the estate of Ruth Park. In July 2014 he directed *A View Of Concrete* by Gareth Ellis for G.bod Theatre at the King Street Theatre, Sydney, receiving excellent reviews including 4.5 stars from *The Brag*. In February 2015, he directs *Queen Bette* at The Old 505 Theatre, Sydney.

Peter qualified as a teacher from the Institute of Education, London, and has taught drama and acting extensively in the U.K., Malaysia and Sydney, where he has taught at NIDA, Actors Centre Australia and Newtown High School for Performing Arts. He was Course Manager of Youth and Holidays for NIDA Open Program from 2010 to 2012.

Peter specializes in devising, adapting text and creating movement for theatre.

Both Jeanette Cronin and Peter Mountford are available for interview.
Contact Peter Mountford 0415 585 133 peter@gbodtheatre.com

About g.bod theatre

text + movement = G.bod Theatre

G.bod Theatre is a physical theatre company based in Sydney. Formally known as Gaybod Theatre, formed by Peter Mountford & Marcella Hynes in London 1997.

<http://gbodtheatre.com>

Reviews for the Director's previous work:

Pack Up Your Troubles, National Theatre, London

“Responded wholeheartedly to both the bizarre and the poignant, with a nod to Moulin Rouge and performance art.” Lyn Gardner, The Guardian

Dogs Barking, King Street Theatre

“Peter Mountford’s direction is excellent, allowing for an uncomfortable settling into the crossover point between active viewer and passive observer. The audience sit teetering between the two until finally they are drawn – or rather absorbed – into the unfurling drama” Lisa Thatcher

Shallow Slumber, NIDA Parade Studio

“Peter Mountford’s direction brings out fine performances from Johnson and Terracini as they pick their way through the tangle of hurt, accusations, half-truths and lies.” Jason Blake, Sydney Morning Herald

“Gripping stuff as we are left with our own gruesome imaginings until the final moments of the play. It is certainly a daring and admirable first for both Mountford and the (NIDA Independent) program.” Alternative media group

A View Of Concrete, King Street Theatre

“In an inspired burst of creativity, Mountford likens this dystopia to that of a cartoon world, utilising Mickey Mouse ears, Sleeping Beauty songs and Peter Pan dialogue to suggest that escapism into Disney-like dreams is the key to survival. It’s an intriguing concept, and one that blurs the lines between truth and imagination in one drug-induced haze.” Stephanie Yip, The Brag

“This was the most impressive piece I have seen at King St Theatre in quite a while. The cast almost danced around each other, often using each other as props or becoming a part of the set.” SOYP

“Peter Mountford’s direction of the piece introduces considerable dynamism to the stage. There is a prominent choreographic aspect to his work that aims to engage us visually, which also demands of his cast, a level of exertion to keep energies high and sustained.” Suzy Wong