‘Top Girls’ still proves a provocative piece

When the theatrically bold and thematically provocative play Top Girls premiered in New York in 1982, its creator Caryl Churchill was described by The New York Times theatre critic Frank Rich as having "a strikingly original and supple imagination".

It is this daring creativity that infuses the opening scene of Top Girls. The protagonist Marlene is holding a dinner party to celebrate her promotion to managing director of London’s Top Girls Employment Agency. Her guests are women from the past, both historical and fictional, who have achieved success in a man’s world – but always at some cost.

There is Isabella Bird, a Victorian explorer; Lady Nijo, a medieval Oriental concubine turned pioneering Buddhist nun; Dull Gret, who led a female charge through hell in Bruegel's painting Dulle Griet; Pope Joan, who may have presided briefly over the Vatican in the ninth century; and Chaucer’s Patient Griselda.

From this highly entertaining and dramatic opening, the play follows the journey of Marlene as she claws her way to the top. But at what cost?

Churchill, widely acknowledged as one of the leading female playwrights of the 20th century, uses shifts in time, place and style in her Thatcher-era drama to explore issues of feminism and economic politics.

From Friday 1 to Thursday 7 May, Top Girls by Caryl Churchill will be performed at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts' Roundhouse Theatre by the 3rd Year Acting students under the direction of visiting director, Andrea Moor.

Brisbane-based Moor trained at NIDA, E15 in London and with the Atlantic Theatre Company of New York. As an actor, her extensive theatre credits include world premieres such as Michael Gow’s Away for the Griffin Theatre Company, and David Williamson’s Emerald City and Siren for the Sydney Theatre Company. Moor’s film credits include Travelling North, Oscar and Lucinda and The Man Who Sued God, among others, and she has enjoyed many television roles. Moor is also an experienced acting teacher, dramaturg and performance consultant for film and television. In 2007, Moor established her own company ‘…and moor theatre’ and last year, she was an emerging director at Queensland Theatre Company.

Performance Information: Top Girls

Friday 1 May – Thursday 7 May at 7.30pm, Matinee Saturday 2 May at 2pm.
Roundhouse Theatre, WAAPA, Edith Cowan University, 2 Bradford St, Mt Lawley.
Tickets are $22 full/$17 concession. Bookings through WAAPA Box Office on 9370 6636.

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For further information or to discuss interview opportunities, please contact:
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