

TRIPLE FALSEHOOD

a new play by Glenn Saunders

SYNOPSIS

"This is a story told in and out of time..."

Miranda is a PhD candidate researching Shakespeare's lost play 'Cardenio.' Chasing the play in and out of footnotes, rehearsal rooms, and forgotten corners of history, she tries to come to terms with a play no one has seen for four-hundred years. Along the way, she meets two playwrights lost in the wilderness of an idea, a knight hellbent on stopping them from ruining his book, and a theatre director with a very particular agenda to push. *TRIPLE FALSEHOOD* attempts to reclaim a space for women in Early Modern Drama, and asks how do you properly look for a play if no one knows what it looks like or where it is?

A fierce, funny, and smart riff on Shakespeare, academia, and the post-#metoo moment.

WITH

Bo Chung – FLETCHER / LUSCINDA

Celia Handscombe – BILL / DOROTEA

Alexis Longley – MIRANDA

Aimee Marich – CARDENIO / FERNANDO / SANCHO / GEN

Verity Wells – THEOBALD / QUIXOTE / DIRECTOR

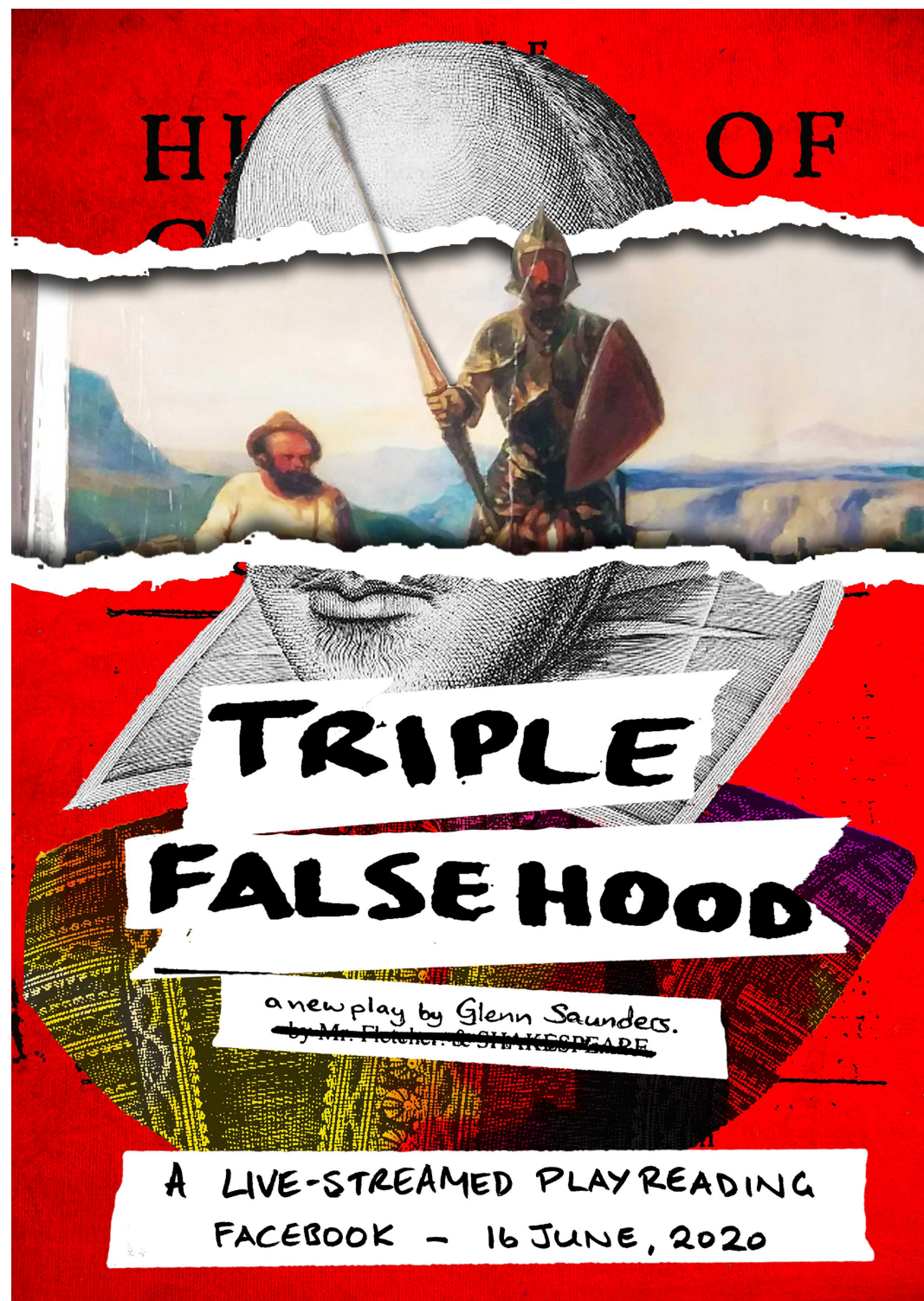
and

Glenn Saunders - MESSENGER / SHEPHERD / STAGE DIRECTIONS

THANK YOU

David McInnis at the University of Melbourne. Joshua Bell, Benjamin Hickey, Remy Graham Throssell, Floyd Throssell in the September 2019 workshop. Bo Chung, Celia Handscombe, Alexis Longley, Aimee Marich, Katherine McLure, Verity Wells in the online March 2020 development. Barbara Chung, David Dreimann. Janelle Ewert, Bronwyn Lim, Elyse Horan, Hilary Bell.

If you have any questions, thoughts, feedback, or would like to stay in touch, please don't hesitate to drop me a line at thespellofwakinghours@gmail.com



TRIPLE FALSEHOOD

If there is a lesson to be learned... it is that we must clear
a space for wonder.

– Daniel Swift, ‘Bad Will Hunting’
THE NATION, March 13 2006

A space for wonder: Writer’s note

Eight years ago, I became fascinated by the lost Shakespeare play ‘Cardenio’ – I even contemplated doing a Masters degree to grapple with it. While that didn’t work out, the idea stuck around, never quite seeming to coalesce – why was I telling that story at that time? What was I trying to say in my version of the story? I was deep in the final week of rehearsals for my play at La Mama Explorations when this play demanded I take notice of it now. ‘This is how it goes...,’ it said.

The beauty of ‘Cardenio’ is that no one knows what it was like. Reportedly based on a fragmented tale from Part I of ‘Don Quixote,’ it is a story about friendship and betrayal, honour and deceit, disguise and righting injustices, set in 1600s Spain (or so we presume). As in Shakespeare’s late plays, a bruised kind of love ultimately triumphs over adversity, but at what cost? A manuscript hasn’t survived (so far as we know) and it was never published; an eighteenth-century adaptation called ‘Double Falsehood’ does exist however, but it’s been cut and trimmed, rewritten in parts, and doesn’t *quite* work.

Around the same time as I was first reshaping this story, the American Shakespeare Center in Staunton, Virginia, opened submissions for the third year of its Shakespeare’s New Contemporaries program – responses to Shakespeare’s plays to be staged in a replica indoor playhouse in almost-Jacobethan conditions. The coincidence was far too neat to ignore, so I started to dream of a play for a dozen actors to be ultimately played in a similar space. (An especially limiting option to producing a play, I know, moreso now than before.)

I hunted down every journal article, book, or chapter I could get my hands on, and dove headfirst into the mad world of lost plays, adaptations, and twenty-first century interrogations of it. It had taken me seven-and-a-half years to realise the tension in this obsession wasn’t so much the lost play itself, but its journey – the story of the play

throughout history, rather than it’s actual narrative. What had started out as a mild curiosity in a bookshop had steadily become something rather (appropriately) quixotic.

And I had questions, too: what was the socio-political context in London 1612? Why was there a sudden boom in Spanish literature in the early 1600s, when Spain had been England’s mortal enemy barely twenty years earlier? Why are there gaps in ‘Double Falsehood,’ what is missing? Is ‘Double Falsehood’ an adaptation of an actual Shakespearean play, or is it a well-disguised fake? Were Don Quixote and Sancho in ‘Cardenio,’ or was the story a more linear telling in the same vein as ‘Double Falsehood’? These gaps in the literature became my sandpit – my space for wonder.

This play is not an attempt to recreate the lost play or fill in the gaps of the eighteenth-century adaptation – there’s no fun in that. Rather, It is a love letter to the world of Shakespeareana and academia; my response to ‘doing’ Shakespeare in the twenty-first century, its intersection with the #metoo movement, and about finding allies in unlikely places in uncertain times. Embracing a bit of Jacobethan dramaturgy and fluidity, I’m interested in why these plays were written then, why they might still be relevant three or four hundred years later, what we can glean and learn from them, what they can tell us about us now, and how we can grow because of them.

GS

June 2020

We acknowledge the Wallumedegal of the Dharug nation; the Gadigal of the Eora nation; the Boon Wurrung and the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation; and the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation, on whose land this play was conceived, researched, written, developed, and performed. We pay our respects to First Nations Elders past, present, and future. We are humbled to be able to share this story on lands which have a rich storytelling tradition, and ask that you tread with the awareness that this always was always will be Aboriginal land.