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Northumbria students given starring roles at Northern Stage

Northumbria Performing Arts students will step into the spotlight this week for two shows produced by Northumbria University, Newcastle in collaboration with Northern Stage.

The partnership will showcase 38 final year students in two spectacular productions, *More Light* and *Idomeneus*, which are being performed for the first time in the North East.

Both shows are directed by two emerging directors, Northumbria graduate

Amy Golding, Artistic Director of Curious Monkey Theatre Company and Performing Arts alumna, and Rebecca Frecknall, who is part of Northern Stage's Regional Theatre Directors Scheme.

Industry partners, media and the public are invited to watch the next generation of performers, writers and makers in these two stunning shows, with script readings and discussions also taking place in an exciting week of performances and activities.

The two shows make up part of the final year Undergraduate Performing Arts Showcase: Making, Writing and Performing. In addition, Performing Arts students will present a showcase of work from the BA (Hons) Drama and Applied Theatre, and BA (Hons) Drama and Scriptwriting programmes, and a public symposium will address the role of drama and arts in the school curriculum.

The first show *More Light* is a story of love, survival, sexuality, loyalty, art and power, set in imperial China.

Director Amy, said: "I'm delighted to be working with the third years on their final production at Northern Stage.

"Bryony Lavery's *More Light* is a challenging play and one I've always loved from being a young performer myself. It has some great meaty roles for young women and I'm really enjoying working with a 16 strong female cast to bring it to life, along with our two male actors who have the unenviable task of getting gagged and tied up repeatedly! "I hope to see many of these students soon making their own work and starting careers in the theatre beyond their degree."

The second show *Idomeneus* is a Greek tragedy about the King of Crete's sacrifice to the gods which explores the human desire to tell stories and need to know the truth.

Director, Rebecca, said: "*Idomeneus* is a beautifully complex and surprising text and it's been a pleasure and an eye-opener to explore it with this company of students especially as it's only the second time this translation has ever been performed in the UK.

“The cast have approached the text and the process of unravelling it with intelligence and imagination and have worked as true devisers during the intense rehearsal period. I wish them all the best as they venture into the world of professional theatre.”

Director of Performing Arts Programmes at Northumbria, Steve Gilroy said: “We’re lucky to have such an exciting cultural scene in the city of Newcastle. Students work with a host of passionate, talented actors, writers and directors over the course of their degree and the North East has an impressive calendar of shows. As a department, we’re proud of the support we give our partners and grateful for the fantastic opportunities they offer our students.”

Steve added: “Working with young professionals in the industry is something we encourage our students to do from day one so they are industry ready and have a network of contacts before they graduate. It’s wonderful that they have had the chance to work with two talented but very different directors Amy and Rebecca – I’m really looking forward to seeing the shows.”

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