

## **CAST ANNOUNCED FOR ROSE THEATRE KINGSTON'S ADAPTATION OF ELENA FERRANTE'S NEAPOLITAN NOVELS**

- **Niamh Cusack and Catherine McCormack lead the cast as Lenu and Lila**

A Rose Theatre Kingston production

World première

### **MY BRILLIANT FRIEND**

A two-part adaptation of **Elena Ferrante's** Neapolitan quartet of novels.

Adapted for the stage by **April De Angelis**

Director: **Melly Still**; Set and Costume Designer: **Soutra Gilmour**; Composer: **James Fortune**

Lighting Designer: **Malcolm Rippeth**; Sound Designer: **Jon Nicholls**

Movement Director: **Sarah Dowling**; Associate Director: **Sophie Larsmon**

Casting Director: **Charlotte Sutton**

Sat 25 February – Sun 2 April

**Press night: Saturday 11 March, Part 1: 2.30pm, Part 2: 7pm**

**Rose Theatre Kingston** today announces the cast for the world première of ***My Brilliant Friend***, a two-part adaptation of **Elena Ferrante's** Neapolitan quartet of novels which have become a global literary sensation. **Niamh Cusack** and **Catherine McCormack** lead the cast as Lenu and Lila, with the cast completed by **Justin Avoth, Adam Burton, Martin Hyder, Victoria Moseley, Emily Mytton, Ira Mandela Siobhan, Jonah Russell, Badria Timimi, Toby Wharton** and **Emily Wachter**. The production directed by Melly Still opens on 11 March, with previews from 25 February, running until 2 April.

**Elena Ferrante's** intense portrait of an all-consuming female friendship in post-war Italy is brought to life for the first time on the Rose stage.

This modern family saga chronicles the lives of friends, Elena and Lila, following them from their childhoods in a poor, tough neighbourhood of Naples, through passionate love affairs, burgeoning careers and family struggles. But even as life repeatedly tries to pull the two in separate directions, Elena and Lila remain inextricably bound to one another.

A powerful story of love, violence, sex, ambition, genius and self-destruction, the two-part play is an exploration not just of female friendship and rivalry, but of post-war Italy and the decades of political turmoil and cultural change that followed.

***This stage adaptation condenses Ferrante's four novels (My Brilliant Friend, The Story of a New Name, Those Who Leave and Those Who Stay, The Story of the Lost Child) into one play presented in two parts. Audiences will be able to see both parts in one day, or on separate days.***

Regarded as 'one of the most exciting and compelling contemporary literary voices today', **Elena Ferrante** was chosen this year as one of *Time Magazine's* 100 most influential people on the planet. Very little, however, is known about the author - she writes under a pseudonym, explaining: 'Anonymity lets me concentrate exclusively on writing'. Her first novels were published in the early 1990s, with *My Brilliant Friend*, the first novel in the Neapolitan quartet, translated into English in 2012, and the final book in the quartet, *The Story of the Lost Child*, shortlisted for the 2016 Man Booker Prize.

**April De Angelis** is an acclaimed writer whose extensive theatre work includes *After Electra*, *Rune*, *Gastronauts*, *Jumpy*, an adaptation of *Wuthering Heights*, *A Laughing Matter*, *A Warwickshire Testimony*, *The Positive Hour*, *Playhouse Creatures* and *The Life and Times of Fanny Hill*. She's currently under commission to the Royal Exchange, Manchester and the National Theatre. De Angelis has also written the libretto for *Flight*, music by Jonathan Dove, for Glyndebourne Opera and *The Silent Twins* libretto, which was set to music by Errollyn Wallen. Her work for radio includes an adaptation of *Life in the Tomb*, a serialisation of *Peyton Place*, *Visitants* and *The Outlander* which won the Writer's Guild Award in 1992. For television her work includes *Aristophanes*.

**Melly Still's** previous directing credits for theatre include *Cymbeline* (RSC), *The Haunting of Hill House* (Sonia Friedman Productions, Hammer and Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse), *Life Raft* and *Coram Boy* (Bristol Old Vic), *From Morning Till Midnight*, *Nation* and *The Revenger's Tragedy* (National Theatre), *Rats' Tales* (Manchester Royal Exchange) and *Beasts and Beauties* (Hampstead Theatre). Her opera directing work includes *The Cunning Little Vixen* and *Rusalka* (Glyndebourne) and *Zaide* (Sadler's Wells).

**Justin Avoth** plays Antonio and Pietro. His theatre credits include *Lot and his God* (The Print Room), *The Only True History of Lizzie Finn* (Southwark Playhouse), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Nuffield Southampton Theatres), *Molière* (National Theatre and Finborough Theatre), *De Montfort* and *Chains* (Orange Tree Theatre), *Nathan the Wise* (Hampstead Theatre), *Othello* (RSC), *Edward II* (Shakespeare's Globe), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Manchester Royal Exchange), *The Snow Palace* (Tricycle Theatre), *Venice Preserved* (Almeida Theatre), *King Arthur* (Royal Opera House and Chatelet Theatre de Paris). For television his credits include *Medici: Masters of Florence*, *Ripper Street*, *Dracula*, *Dark Matters*, *Whitechapel*, *The Borgias*, *Spooks*, *Merlin*, *Judge John Deed* and *Persuasion*; and for film, *The Hackney Downs*, *Giro Day* and *667 – The Neighbour of the Beast*.

**Adam Burton** plays Michele and Rino. His theatre credits include *The Hairy Ape* (Old Vic), *Everyman* (National Theatre), *The Drowned Man*, *Masque of the Red Death* and *Faust* (Punchdrunk), *All My Sons* (Watermill), *The Orphan of Zhao*, *Boris Godunov*, *A Life of Galileo*, *The Tempest*, *American Trade*, *King Lear*, *Anthony and Cleopatra*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Drunks* and *Julius Caesar* (RSC), *Timon of Athens* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Shakespeare's Globe). For television his credits include *Bloody Queens: Elizabeth and Mary*, *RMS Titanic: Case Closed*, *Jekyll*, *Harry on the Boat*, *Dangerfield* and *Treflan*; and for film *Alice Through the Looking Glass*, *The Butcher's Shop*, *Breaker* and *Brown Paper Bag*.

**Niamh Cusack** plays Lenu. Her theatre credits include *Ghosts* (HOME Manchester), *Unfaithful* (Found 111), *The Winter's Tale* (the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse), *Ticking* (Trafalgar Studios), *The Rehearsal* (Chichester Festival Theatre), *Juno and the Paycock* (Bristol Old Vic & Liverpool Everyman), *The Curious Incident Of The Dog In The Night Time* (National Theatre & West End), *Afterplay* (Sheffield Crucible), *Mammals* (Bush Theatre), *Playboy Of The Western World*, *Cause Celebre* and *Dancing At Lughnasa* (Old Vic), *The Enchantment*, *His Dark Materials* (National Theatre), *Breathing Corpses* (Royal Court), *As You Like It*, *Romeo And Juliet*, *Othello* and *Learned Ladies* (RSC). Her television credits include *Rebellion*, *Silent Witness*, *New Tricks*, *The Best of Men*, *The Hollow Crown*,

*Heartbeat* (series regular), *Always And Everyone*, *Little Bird* and *Loving You*; and for film, *The Ghoul*, *Departure*, *Testament of Youth*, *Hereafter* and *The Closer You Get*.

**Martin Hyder** plays Don Achille and Donato. His theatre credits include *Dead Dog In A Suitcase* (Liverpool Everyman), *Worst Wedding Ever* (Salisbury Playhouse), *Tartuffe* (Birmingham Rep), *The Mouse And His Child* and *The Merry Wives Of Windsor* (RSC) and *You Can't Take It With You* (Royal Exchange, Manchester). For television his credits include *Harry Hill's TV Burp*, *The Omid Djalili Show*, *Ruddy Hell! It's Harry And Paul*, *The Mark Steel Lectures*, *The Sickie*, *The Secret Show*, *The Lenny Henry Show*, *Deep Down*, *Big Train* and *Fifteen Storeys High*; and for film *Edge Of Tomorrow* and *The Harry Hill Movie*.

**Catherine McCormack** plays Lila. For theatre her credits include *Dancing at Lughnasa* (Lyric, Belfast), *King Lear* (Chichester Festival Theatre, also Brooklyn Academy of Music), *Top Girls* (also Trafalgar Studios), *The Heresy of Love* (RSC), *A Doll's House* (Theatre Royal Bath), *Anna Weiss* (Whitehall Theatre), *Dinner, Free, Honour* and *All My Sons* (National Theatre), *Kiss Me Like You Mean It* (Soho Theatre), *Lie of the Mind* (Donmar Warehouse), *Six Characters in Search of an Author* (Headlong Theatre and UK Tour), *The 39 Steps* (Tricycle Theatre and Criterion Theatre), *The Lady from Dubuque* (Haymarket Theatre), *When the Night Begins* (Hampstead Theatre) and *White Horses* (The Gate Theatre, Dublin). For television her credits include *Sherlock*, *Life in Squares*, *Lucan*, *Lights Out*, *Midnight Man*, *Stevie*, *Deacon Brodie*, *Elizabeth David*; and for film *The Journey*, *Magic in the Moonlight*, *The Fold*, *28 Weeks Later*, *A Rumour of Angels*, *A Sound of Thunder*, *Born Romantic*, *Braveheart*, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *Land Girls*, *Loaded*, *Shadow of the Vampire*, *The Debtors* and *The Weight of Water*.

**Victoria Moseley** plays Gigliola. For Filter Theatre her credits include *Macbeth*, *Faster* and *Twelfth Night* (also at Tricycle Theatre), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Water* (both also at Lyric, Hammersmith), *From Morning to Midnight* and *His Dark Materials* (National Theatre), *Beyond Caring* (National Theatre and The Yard), *Jason and the Argonauts* (Warwick Arts Centre and UK tour), *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (RSC), *Hobson's Choice* (Birmingham Rep) and *Alice in Boogie Wonderland* (Liverpool Everyman). For television her credits include *Peterloo*, *War Horse Prom*, *Jo-90* and *The Whistle Blower*.

**Emily Mytton** plays Melina. Her theatre credits include *Medea* (Almeida Theatre), *From Morning to Midnight*, *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour*, *War Horse* and *His Dark Materials* (National Theatre), *The Empress* and *The Lion The Witch and the Wardrobe* (RSC), *The Drowned Man*, *Tunnel 228* and *The House that Jack Built* (Punchdrunk), *World Cup 1966'* and *The Creation of the Violin* (BAC), *Beasts and Beauties* (Hampstead Theatre) and *The Communication Chord* (Haymarket Theatre).

**Jonah Russell** plays Stefano and Dario. For theatre his credits include *A View from the Bridge* and *Kursk* (Young Vic), *Pains of Youth*, *Waves*, *Women of Troy*, *Attempts on her Life*, *The Seagull* and *War Horse Prom* (National Theatre), *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and *Romans in Britain* (Sheffield Theatres), *Of Mice and Men* (Birmingham Rep), *Hood* (Theatre Royal Nottingham), *The Mikvah Project* (The Yard) and *Clytemnestra* (Sherman Cymru). For television his credits include *Hollow Crown II*, *24*, *Live Another Day*, *The Borgias*, *Green Wing*, *D-Day*, *Hidden City*; and for film *Dark River*, *'71*, *Queen and Country*, *Hell's Pavement*, *Play The Game* and *What a Girl Wants*.

**Ira Mandela Siobhan** plays Marcello. For theatre her credits include *Imogen* (Shakespeare's Globe), *Everyman* and *Fela!* (National Theatre), *Macbeth* and *A Season in the Congo* and *Feast* (Young Vic), *The Wind in the Willows* (Vaudeville Theatre), *Running Wild* (Regent's Park Open Air Theatre), *The Drowned Man: A Hollywood Fable* (Punchdrunk), *Can We Talk About This? To Be Straight With You*

(DV8) and *Lifeguard* (National Theatre of Scotland). For film her credits include *Pan*, *London Road*, and *Desert Dancer*.

**Badria Timimi** plays Nunzia and Professor Galiani. For theatre her credits include *The Eleventh Minute*, *Told From the Inside* and *Birth of a Nation* (Royal Court), *Feed The Beast* (Birmingham Rep and New Wolsey Theatre), *Subterranean Sepoys* (National Theatre), *Titus Andronicus*, *A Mad World*, *My Masters* and *Candide* (RSC), *The House of Bernarda Alba* (Almeida Theatre), *Tales From The Harrow Road* (Soho Theatre) and *The War Next Door* (Tricycle Theatre). For television her credits include *Unforgotten*, *Killing Jesus*, *Drifters II*, *Whitechapel IV*, *Law & Order*, *The Shadow Line*, *The Little House*, *The Fixer*, *Generation Kill*, *The House of Saddam*, *Trial and Retribution*, *Secret Smile* and *Afterlife*; and for film *Miss Peregrine's Home For Peculiar Children*, *Pusher*, *Henna Night* and *Syriana*.

**Emily Wachter** plays Adele and Immacolata. Her theatre credits include *Swallow* (Traverse Theatre), *Caucasian Chalk Circle* and *Britain's Best Recruiting Sergeant* (Unicorn Theatre), *Bedroom Farce* and *Separate Tables* (Salisbury Playhouse), *The Humans* (Avignon Festival), *From Morning to Midnight* (National Theatre), *Rats' Tales* (Royal Exchange Theatre), *The Master Builder* (Chichester Festival Theatre), *Pride and Prejudice* (Theatre Royal, Bath), *Origins* (Edinburgh Festival /Pentabus), *Blithe Spirit* (Watermill Theatre) and *Julius Caesar* (RSC). For television her credits include *Psychoville*, *Compulsion*, *Judge John Deed* and *Booze Cruise III*.

**Toby Wharton** plays Nino. For theatre his credits include *State Red* (Hampstead Theatre), *Medea* and *Home* (National Theatre), *Carthage*, *Fog* and *His Greatness* (Finborough Theatre), *Fog* (The Park Theatre and UK tour), *Shalom Baby* (Theatre Royal Stratford East) and *Days of Significance* (RSC). For television his credits include *Rillington Place*, *Aliens*, *Babs*, *Marcella* and *Gates*; and for film *Patient Zero*, *The Forgotten Man*, *Echo Road*, *Bashment* and *Postcode*.

## Listings

## Rose Theatre Kingston

24-26 High Street, Kingston, KT1 1HL

[www.rosetheatrekingston.org](http://www.rosetheatrekingston.org)

Twitter: **@Rosetheatre**

Facebook: **/RoseTheatreKingston**

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- Box Office: 020 8174 0090 (bkg fee)  
Monday – Saturday: 10am – 8pm (6pm non-performance days)  
Sun: one hour before the performance  
No fees are payable when booking in person at the Box Office  
An additional £1 per ticket booking fee and £2.50 per booking transaction fee are payable when booking online and by phone
- Concessions: Only one discount per ticket, subject to availability  
Terms and conditions apply - no discounts on Pit Cushion prices.  
Over 60, unwaged, entertainment union, children under 16 and Students: £5 off.
- Under 26yrs: £5 tickets available. Please note valid ID will be required upon collection.  
Limited availability; certain shows only; terms and conditions apply.

- Schools, Colleges: Tickets are priced from £8 at selected performances for school & Universities: groups of 10 or more; 11th teacher ticket free with every 10 purchased. Please contact the Box Office for more details.
- Babies: Babies under 18 months old are welcome at family productions. We do not charge admission but a free ticket must be collected from the Box Office. Prams and buggies may be stored in the foyer at the owner's risk.
- Access: Patrons with disabilities enjoy half price tickets.  
The Rose is a fully accessible organisation and we welcome everyone.  
There is Blue Badge parking in High Street and Rose car park.
- Sensory Access: A digital hearing system is available for patrons with a hearing aid, and Sennheiser headsets for patrons without a hearing aid. Guide and hearing dogs are welcome. Please let us know in advance so we can provide a dog-sitter and water bowl.
- Learning Disabilities: Please contact us in advance to discuss how we can help make your visit as comfortable as possible, on 0208 174 0090 or email [access@rosetheatrekingston.org](mailto:access@rosetheatrekingston.org).

### **ROSE THEATRE KINGSTON SPRING SEASON AT A GLANCE:**

#### **SILVER LINING**

3 – 11 February

#### **MY BRILLIANT FRIEND**

25 February – 2 April

Pres day: 11 March

#### **THE TWITS**

5 – 16 April

#### **JUNKYARD**

19 – 30 April

**For further information please contact:**

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