FROM THE DIRECTOR

Kate Hennig is a dear friend of Cygnet Theatre. I was working on Hennig’s *The Last Wife* when she sent me her second play in her Queenmaker trilogy. I read it the way it moves — rapidly. I called her on the phone and told her I was aching to direct it. “The patriarchy seeks to control powerful young determined women,” I remember her saying. I wrote that sentence on the title page of the script and continued to rehearse her first play.

Flash forward to 2019 and I’m beyond delighted to be immersed in the world of Tudor women once again. Hennig’s plays are incredibly researched - she has taken documented moments and created their backstory. The rest, as she puts it, “must always favour the dramatic.” Setting the Tudors to a contemporary voice echoes what women both present and past have dealt with.

Ultimately, this story is about Bess. And the questions around her remain. How was a child so good at deflecting questions? Why was a child held down by her mother while her husband cut her dress off? Why was her stepfather found in her bed at night on several occasions? Why did Edward Seymour not sign the death warrant for his brother Thomas? The play is a complex chess match of power play, shifting loyalties, and consent. It will have you asking, ‘who is the puppet and who is the puppet master?’

The facts remain unchanged - Queen Elizabeth I, aka “The Virgin Queen,” survived and thrived in spite of efforts to quiet, control and push her aside. She quite literally almost lost her head twice in her lifetime. She reconstructed her past, proclaimed herself married to the people of England, and died in 1603 after a 45 year reign.

All hail the Queen!
FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT
KATE HENNIG

“What's a virgin?” my eight year old sister asked my father one Christmas in our very brown 1970s family room deep in the suburbs of southwest Calgary. As a sixteen year old I think my eyes bugged right out of my head while waiting with bated breath to hear how he would dig himself out of that one.

“A girl who is not yet married,” he replied, without a batting of the eye.

Darn. Good answer, I thought, somewhat disappointed at his ease. Of course my father, being a Lutheran minister, was practiced in his response to this question, bombarded as he was at this time of year by curious Christmas-pageant performers.

Elizabeth the First would also be pleased with his answer. The fact that it makes no mention of sexual intercourse would support the cult of innocence that was constructed around her: she was Gloriana: the Virgin Queen.

But though my father's answer was enough to satisfy my younger sister, it was certainly not the whole truth. It was a convenient truth.

I would venture to say that the professed virginity of the second queen regnant of England is also a convenient truth. It has extensive dramatic possibilities, and we know how this princess loved dramatic possibilities. Might we even consider her a creative artist?

What if Elizabeth created a campaign of virginity to distract the masses from her dubious integrity? What if this girl-who-is-not-yet-married was in full control of her destiny even in her teenage years?

Out of necessity, she imagined her own pristine narrative in the face of a life-threatening scandal: a wily teenager, well-trained in the arts of deception, she then put a spin on the facts to whitewash her part in a variety of extremely suspicious circumstances; this young

Elizabeth was capable at a very young age of making choices that would determine her highly potent future.

But she was only a girl. Can a girl really be capable of such foresight?

Ha! We don't give girls enough credit.

In 1549, Elizabeth was doing exactly what girls and young women are doing today: adapting, re-inventing her own image, pursuing herself as art, utilising her unique principles and prescient solutions to achieve her goals.

Call it girl power. Call it virgin power. Both then and now, it's the beating heart of my play.
WIL BETHMANN
Perry
A New York based actor, Wil is thrilled to return to the Cygnet stage. Wil has appeared in theatrical and commercial roles across the country. Most recently at Cygnet as Louis in Angels in America and King Arthur in Camelot. At Diversionary Theatre in Significant Other and up next in The Santa Land Diaries. On screen as the personality and creative mind behind ad campaigns for Snirro, AT&T, BrosBeingBasic, Applebee's, the NCAA, and coverage for the Governor's Ball and LoveLocal music festivals. Wil's on-site creative consulting and productions have been recognized with multiple nominations at the annual Shorty Awards social media award show in New York City. Wil studied at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, graduating with a BFA. Wil Bethmann is sponsored by Artist Advocates Debbie Bodinger & Deb Petry, Barbara Bolt, Di Caprinnelli and Linda Lanhard & Mark Kitchevsky.

BRITTNEY M. CALDWELL
Mary
Brittney is from San Diego, CA. She recently completed her Masters of Fine Arts in Acting at the University of Florida. She is excited to be joining Cygnet in The Virgin Trial for her first show in San Diego since graduating. Recently, she performed in the play she wrote and directed, From Colored To Black, It Shoulda Been You (The Studio Theatre), Wakay, Wakyay (Urbanite Theatre), This is War (ART), and Stage Kiss (The Hippodrome). Some of her favorite roles have been in The Colored Museum, Dancy and the Deep Blue Sea, and The Gadflies. Brittney M. Caldwell is sponsored by Artist Advocates Rob & Betsy Watson.

OLIVIA HODSON
Bess
Olivia is incredibly honored to make her Cygnet debut with the role of Bess in The Virgin Trial. Regional Credits: Sophie in MAMMA MIA!, Chava in Fiddler on the Roof, Jesus Christ Superstar, My Fair Lady (Walr) Retail; Amy March in Little Women (Barnstaple Company), Luisa in The Fantasticks (Scirpp Ranch Theatre). You can currently see Olivia as Young Anna/Elsa in FROZEN: Live at the Hyperion (Disney Creative Entertainment). She has also worked in pre-show workshops: Life After (The Old Globe); various staged readings: None of the Above (La Jolla Theatre Ensemble), The Finish Line Commission (Cygnet), and as a choreographer/chorographer. Olivia is currently pursuing a career in Theatre and Film/Television. Thank you Rob Luty for trusting me with this beautifully complex girl and giving me a chance to grow as an actor. www.oliviahodson.com @Oliviahodson. Olivia Hodson is sponsored by Artist Advocates Sandy & Danny Campbell and Barbara Zell & Bill McHarg, Jr.

TOM STEPHENSON
Ted
Cygnet Resident Artist.
Tom is a 40 year veteran of the stage. He trained in Great Britain at The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama and at the Interlochen Center for the Arts, in Michigan. At Cygnet Theatre Company he has been seen in over 15 productions notably as Hector in The History Boys, Joe Ryan in When the Rain Stops Falling, and Scrooge in A Christmas Carol. Tom was awarded Actor of the Year in 2014 by the San Diego Theatre Critics Circle. Tom Stephenson is sponsored by Artist Advocates Sandy & Danny Campbell and Barbara Zell & Bill McHarg, Jr.

KATE HENNIG
Playwright
Kate has been writing in one way or another for most of her life. Her writing includes plays, poetry, stories, articles for industry publications, a dissertation, two blogs, and a research paper. Kate's play The Last Wife had its world premiere in the 2015 Stratford Festival season. The Virgin Trial, a second play in what Kate is calling The Queenmaker Trilogy, was commissioned by the Stratford Festival and had its world premiere in the 2017 Stratford Festival season. The third play in the Queenmaker series, Mother's Daughter, was also commissioned by the Stratford Festival, and is currently having its world premiere in

MYRA M. CALDWELL
Mary
Myra is from San Diego, CA. She recently graduated with her Masters of Fine Arts in Directing from the University of Florida. She is excited to be returning to Cygnet in The Virgin Trial. Myra has worked in theatre across the country, from regional theatre to fringe festivals. She recently directed the world premiere of Can Your Penny Go All The Way? at the 2017 New York International Fringe Festival. Myra is currently pursuing a career in Theatre and Film/Television. Thank you Rob Luty for trusting me with this beautifully complex girl and giving me a chance to grow as an actor. www.myramcaldwell.com. Myra M. Caldwell is sponsored by Artist Advocates Rob & Betsy Watson.

KATE HENNIG
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PROFILES

in the 2019 Stratford Festival Season. As a playwright Kate has been a member of the Groundswell Playwrights' Unit 2003 (More), Tarragon Playwrights' Unit 2004 (More), the Banff Playwrights' Colony 2007 (More) and 2008 (Waterworks), and the Leighton Artists' Colony 2016. Her play, The Eleventh David was produced in August 2006 as part of the SummerWorks Festival, to great critical and audience acclaim. Kate has written a monologue for movement and voice called, The Penelope Principle. Her play Waterworks was given a reading at the Stratford Festival in 2012. Kate is a member of the Playwrights' Guild of Canada. She lives and writes in both Stratford and Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario in Canada.

ROB LUTFY
Director


JAENONIE DAVIS-CRAWFORD (Assistant Director) Jaeonnie is working with Cygnet for her first time, and she is so grateful for the opportunity! Before this show, she was the Director of the Sweetwater Kids Theatre, and the co-director of the 41st annual Bonfante Melodrama. She also has a few directing and acting credits under her belt from her time at San Diego State University, from which she graduated with a B.A. in General Theatre Arts.

RACHEL HENGST (Properties Designer)
Cygnet Resident Artist. Rachel is delighted to work with Cygnet Theatre again. Recent prop design credits include Cygnet Theatre's Pride and Prejudice, Shockheaded Peter, On the 20th Century, Bad Jews, A Christmas Carol, The Rocky Horror Show, and Gypsy. Lamb's Players: Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, West Side Story, Mixtape, The Wizard of Oz, Dinner with Marlene, The Miracle Worker, American Rhythm, and Equivocation. She also contributes to Lamb's Players Theatre and Cygnet Theatre as an Assistant Stage Manager/Production Assistant. She thanks her family for their endless support and for God's guidance in her life.

PETER HERMAN (Wig & Makeup Designer)

VERONICA MURPHY (Costume Designer)

ELIZABETH PUKSTO (Scenic Designer)
Elizabete Puksto is a scenic and production designer who received her BFA in Design & Production from University of North Carolina School of The Arts. For years she has been working as a freelancer for many major companies in United States and Europe designing sets and productions for theatres, TV shows, music videos.

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PROFILE

photo shoots, commercial installations and advertising. Recent completed projects:
Marie and Rosetta at Cygnet Theatre,
Ariadne Auf Naxos, La Rondine, Gianni
Schicchi, Peter and Wolf, Chamberian,
Monacler installation, Pips Island, Pink,
"Wild Hearts Can't Be Broken", Solange,
"Metatronia" Partnership with Uniqlo, Kali
Uchis - "Just A Stranger", ECPI University,
Comedy Central, Preme - "Coastline", Kilo
Kish - "Void". Elizabeth is also a visual artist
& sculptor. She recently did an exhibition
working with Charles Long at the Hammer
Museum in Los Angeles.

DEAN REMINGTON (Stage Manager)
Cygnet Resident Artist. Dean is thrilled
to return to the Cygnet having completed
successful runs of Pride & Prejudice,
Every Brilliant Thing, The Wind and the
Breeze, A Christmas Carol, The Effect
of Gamma Rays on Man in the Moon
Marigolds, Shockheaded Peter, When the
Rain Stops Falling, and Stupid F**king
Bird. National Tours include The Lion
King and Disney's Beauty and the Beast.
In the UK he was delighted to work with
Cameron Mackintosh on his musical, Hey,
Mr. Producer! Other highlights include The
Luckiest, the Annual Gala and the WoW
Festival for La Jolla Playhouse; Outside
Mullinger and the world premiere of
Manifest Destinities at San Diego Repertory
Theatre; as well as international productions
of Grease, 42nd Street, Anything Goes, A
Chorus Line and Meet Me in St. Louis.

MAEANN ROSS (Sound Designer) MaeAnn
Ross is a third-year UC San Diego MFA
Sound Design Candidate. She was born and
raised in Texas and holds a BFA in Technical
Production from Texas State University.
TXST design credits: Foot of Love, Legally
Blonde: The Musical, and 5 Women Wearing
the Same Dress. Professional design credits:
Lost in Yonkers, The 39 Steps, Wait Until
Dark (Wimberley Playhouse); She Loves Me
(ST. Edward's University); And Then There
Were None, All Shook Up (TEXArts), UC
San Diego design credits: Revolt. She Said.
Revolt Again. 53% Of and S.E.R.E. (WNPF
2018), A Beautiful Day in November on the
Banks of the Greatest of the Great Lakes,
Life is a Dream, An Iliad, Monster and Shame
Spiral (WNPF 2019), maeannrossdesigns.
myportfolio.com.

CHRIS RYNNE (Lighting Designer) Cygnet
Resident Artist. Cygnet Theatre: Pride &
Prejudice, Angels in America, Spamazon,
A Little Night Music, The Last Wife,
Shockheaded Peter, On the Twentieth
Century, Gypsy, When the Rain Stops
Falling, My Fair Lady, Sons of the Prophet,
Spring Awakening, The Importance of Being
Earnest, Travesties, Company, Assassins,
Gem of the Ocean, Parade, Little Shop of
Horrors, Cabaret, Hedwig and the Angry
Inch (2003). Off-Broadway: The Pianist of
Willesden Lane. Additional credits include
The Old Globe, Geffen Playhouse, San Diego
Opera, South Coast Repertory Theatre,
Madison Opera, Pasadena Playhouse, San
Diego Repertory Theatre, Michigan Opera
Theatre, Berkeley Rep, Cleveland Playhouse,
Hartford Stage, San Diego Musical Theatre,
North Coast Repertory Theatre, Houston
Grand Opera, Diversionary Theatre, Laguna
Playhouse, and Starlight Theatre. Chris also
designs lighting for museum exhibitions,
special events, architectural features, and
lighting systems for new venues. Chris Rynne
is sponsored by Artist Advocates Adriaan Jaffer
& Ann Laddin.

CHASE THOMPSON (Assistant Stage
Manager) Chase is very excited to be joining
The Virgin Trial for his first show at Cygnet!
He is originally from Sacramento, where he
worked in various roles such as assistant
stage manager, light board operator, and
master carpenter. He is now focusing on
stage management at San Diego State
University, where he has been the assistant
stage manager for Midsomer Murders and the
Giant Peach. He would like to thank the cast
and crew for making this experience such an
enjoyable one!

ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION
(AEA), founded in 1913, represents more
than 45,000 actors and stage managers
in the United States. Equity seeks to
advance, promote and foster the art of
live theatre as an essential component of
our society. Equity negotiates wages
and working conditions, providing a wide range of
benefits, including health and pension plans. AEA is a
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actorsequity.org

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Questions? Please call Barbara Bolt, Cygnet Social Circle Chair,
at 619-889-7121 or e-mail barbarabolt@me.com.

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