

Citation for the Award of the Degree of Doctor of Letters *honoris causa*

Professor Gale Edwards

Professor Gale Edwards is one of Australia's most acclaimed international directors of theatre and opera, and one of the most distinguished graduates from Flinders University's School of Humanities and Creative Arts. She is known nationally and internationally for her work directing drama, comedy, established classics and large-scale musicals, as well as for the development of new Australian work. She was the first Australian, and the first woman to direct on the main stage at the Royal Shakespeare Company, and to open a musical on both the West End and Broadway. Gale spent a year as Associate Director to Trevor Nunn on *Les Miserables* on Broadway, and oversaw the production in Australia. She spent seven years as Andrew Lloyd Webber's chief collaborator, directing productions of *Whistle Down the Wind*, *Aspects of Love* and the revival of *Jesus Christ Superstar*. She has also directed the Australian feature film, *A Heartbeat Away*, and won an International Emmy Award for her televised film of her stage production of *Jesus Christ Superstar* shot at Pinewood Studios for The Really Useful Group and Universal Pictures.

Gale graduated from Flinders University in 1974, and began her career at Adelaide youth theatre company Energy Connection. From 1986 to 1989 she was Associate Director to the State Theatre Company of South Australia followed by the Melbourne Theatre Company. Over the past 25 years has worked for almost every other subsidised and commercial arts companies in the country including Opera Australia, for whom she directed *The Magic Flute*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Sweeney Todd*, *La Boheme*, *Salome*, the spectacular *Carmen on Sydney Harbour* and, most recently, highly acclaimed *AIDA on Sydney Harbour*. She has directed over thirty productions in Australia during her career; including the legendary original version of *The Boy From Oz*, *Jerry Springer*, *Coriolanus*, *Arcadia*, *God of Carnage*, *The Rover*, *The Tempest*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Festen*, *King Lear*, *The Way of The World*, *A Doll's House*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Shaughraun*, to name a few. Her international work includes *Whistle Down The Wind*, *The Far Pavilions*, *Jesus Christ Superstar* and Shaw's *Saint Joan* on London's West End; *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Duchess of Malfi*, *Don Carlos* and *The White Devil* for the Royal Shakespeare Company; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Merchant of Venice* at the Chichester Festival; as well as *Maria Stuarda* at The English National Opera. In the USA Gale has directed *Romeo and Juliet* for the Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, *Macbeth* for *The Oregon Shakespeare Festival*; *Hamlet*, *Richard 111*, *Titus Andronicus*, and *Edward 11*, for *The Washington Shakespeare Theatre*. Both *Don Carlos* and *The White Devil* were also invited to the prestigious Brooklyn Academy of Music (B.A.M.) in New York. In 2011 Gale spent a year as a guest of the Chinese corporation W.A.N.D.A. in Beijing, creating, writing and directing China's first International Scale Musical - in Mandarin. This production is currently touring to 44 Chinese cities.

Gale Edwards has been the recipient of three Sydney Critics Circle Awards, five Green Room Awards, two Mo Awards, an Emmy Award, two Helpmann Awards, two nominations for the Helen Hayes Awards and a 2000 Centenary Medal 'for Service to Australian Society'. She received a Convocation medal from Flinders University for outstanding professional achievement in the field of dramatic art, and an Australian Export Award for International Achievement in the Arts representing Australia. Her career and her many achievements in the performing arts were celebrated in a 2013 exhibition "Gale Edwards: The Girl from Oz," held as part of the Adelaide Festival Centre's 40th Anniversary celebration.

Gale has taught acting and directing all over the world, from her early practice at Secondary Schools in South Australia, which gave birth to her first theatre company, *Energy Connection* in 1980, to holding the position of full time Acting Lecturer and Play Director at the National Institute of Dramatic Art for five years from 1982. In 2014 she renewed her connection with Flinders University by taking up a position as Professor of Drama for several months, during which time she taught a number of specially-targeted master classes as well as regular topics in the Drama program, and also commenced research on her forthcoming autobiography.