

NYU
SKIRBALL

MARY SAID WHAT SHE SAID
FEBRUARY 27-MARCH 2
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

MARY SAID WHAT SHE SAID

Direction, Set, and Lighting Design

Robert Wilson

With

Isabelle Huppert

Text by

Darryl Pinckney

Music

Ludovico Einaudi

A Production of

Théâtre de la Ville-Paris

Costumes

Jacques Reynaud

Associate Director

Charles Chemin

Associate Set Design

Annick Lavallée-Benny

Associate Lighting Design

Xavier Baron

Associate Costume Design

Pascale Paume

Collaboration for Movement

Fani Sarantari

Sound Design

Nick Sagar

Make Up Design

Sylvie Cailler

Hair Design

Jocelyne Milazzo

Translation from English

Fabrice Scott

Assistant to the Associate Director

Agathe Vidal

Assistant Costume Design

Alix Descieux Read

Collaboration for Music

Gianluca Mancini

Video Design

Tomek Jeziorski

Technical Supervisor

Reinhard Bichsel

Stage Manager

Thaiz Bozano

Lighting Supervisor

Charly Hove

Electricians/Followspots

Véronique Marsy, Christophe Métereau

Stage Master

Marion Pauvarel, Léo Cortesi

Sound Engineer

Nick Sagar

Wardrobe

Charline Radigois

Head of Production

Simona Fremder

Production Delegate and Company Manager

Kristine Grazioli

Production Manager

Romane Reibaut

Communication/Press

Audrey Burette

Photos

Lucie Jansch

Mr. Wilson's Personal Assistant

Paul Auls

Set and Props made by

Atelier Espace et Compagnie

Costumes made by

Atelier Caraco and Théâtre de la Ville-Paris

Shoes made by

Repetto

Produced by

Théâtre de la Ville-Paris

Coproduced by

Wiener Festwochen, Teatro della Pergola-Florence, Internationaal Theater Amsterdam, Thalia Theater-Hamburg

In association with

EdM Productions-Elisabetta di Mambro

Premiered on

May 22, 2019 at the Théâtre de la Ville-Espace Cardin

Robert Wilson is represented exclusively by

RW Work, New York

robertwilson.com

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DANCE BY
REFLECTIONS
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ROBERT WILSON

"[Robert Wilson] is a towering figure in the world of experimental theater and an explorer in the uses of time and space on stage." — *The New York Times*

Born in Waco, Texas, Wilson is among the world's foremost theater and visual artists. His works for the stage unconventionally integrate a wide variety of artistic media, including dance, movement, lighting, sculpture, music and text. His images are aesthetically striking and emotionally charged, and his productions have earned the acclaim of audiences and critics worldwide. After being educated at the University of Texas and Brooklyn's Pratt Institute, Wilson founded the New York-based performance collective "The Byrd Hoffman School of Byrds" in the mid-1960s, and developed his first signature works, including *Deafman Glance* (1970) and *A Letter for Queen Victoria* (1974-1975). With Philip Glass he wrote the seminal opera *Einstein on the Beach* (1976).

Wilson's artistic collaborators include many writers and musicians such as Heiner Müller, Tom Waits, Susan Sontag, Laurie Anderson, William Burroughs, Lou Reed, Jessye Norman and Anna Calvi. He has also left his imprint on masterworks such as Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape*, Brecht/Weill's *Threepenny Opera*, Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Goethe's *Faust*, Homer's *Odyssey*, Jean de la Fontaine's *Fables*, Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, Verdi's *La Traviata* and several of Shakespeare's works.

Wilson's drawings, paintings and sculptures have been presented around the world in hundreds of solo and group showings, and his works are held in private collections and museums throughout the world.

Wilson has been honored with numerous awards for excellence, including a Pulitzer Prize nomination, two Premio Ubu awards, the Golden Lion of the Venice Biennale, and an Olivier Award. He was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters, as well as the German Academy of the Arts, and holds eight Honorary Doctorate degrees. He is a Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters and Officer of the Legion of Honor in France, bearer of the German Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit, and laureate of the 2023 Praemium Imperiale.

Wilson is the founder and Artistic Director of The Watermill Center, a laboratory for the Arts in Water Mill, New York.

ISABELLE HUPPERT

When contemplating an actor such as Isabelle Huppert, the temptation is to draw up an impressively long list of names of artists including some of the greatest who have been lucky enough to direct her, on stage and in film, or to have simply been partners in the same cast. This goes to show that not only is there recognition of the great talent of the actor, but also the extraordinary openness of a woman. We shall endeavor to focus on what is essential, being fully aware that it is impossible to cover everything.

First there were drama classes, then studies at La Rue Blanche-ENSATT and the CNSADP Conservatoire of Dramatic Art. For the cinema, Isabelle Huppert has been directed by Claude Goretta (*The Lacemaker*, BAFTA award for Most Promising Newcomer to Leading Film Roles), Claude Chabrol (Best Actress award at the Cannes Film Festival for *Violette Nozière*, at the Venice Film Festival for *Story of Women* and *La Cérémonie*, and the César award for Best Actress also for *La Cérémonie*), Jean-Luc Godard, André Téchiné, Maurice Pialat, Patrice Chéreau (*Gabrielle*, Jury's Special Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival), Michael Haneke (*La Pianiste*, Award for Best Actress at the Cannes Film Festival), Benoît Jacquot, Jacques Doillon, Claire Denis, Christian Vincent, Laurence Ferreira Barbosa, Olivier Assayas, Patricia Mazuy, Diane Kurys, Caroline Huppert, François Ozon, Anne Fontaine, Joachim Lafosse, Eva Ionesco, Serge Bozon, Catherine Breillat, Mia Hansen-Løve, Pascal Bonitzer, Guillaume Nicloux, and Samuel Benchetrit. Prominent international directors include Michael Cimino, Joseph Losey, Otto Preminger, the Taviani brothers, Marco Ferreri, Hart Hartley, David O. Russell, Andrzej Wajda, Werner Schröter, Rithy Panh, Brillante Mendoza, Joachim Trier, Hong Sang Soo and Paul Verhoeven (*Elle*, with a number of distinctions in the United States including the Gotham Award, the Golden Globe and the Spirit Award, as well as a best actress Oscar nomination, and a nomination for the best actress César award in France). Isabelle Huppert was head of the jury of the 62nd Cannes Film Festival and of the Tokyo International Film Festival. In recognition of her career, the Berlin International Film Festival awarded her the Silver Bear for Outstanding Artistic Contribution.

In her stage career, in France and internationally, Isabelle Huppert has been directed by leading figures such as Robert Wilson (*Orlando*, *Virginia Woolf*, adapted by Darryl Pinckney), Heiner Müller (*Quartett*), Peter Zadek (*Measure for Measure*, Shakespeare), Claude Régy (*Jeanne au bûcher*, Paul Claudel; *4.48 Psychosis*, Sarah Kane); for these last two performances, she was required to remain almost entirely motionless from beginning to end. Other directors include Bernard Murat (*A Month in the Country*, Turgenev), Jacques Lassalle (*Medea*, Euripides, Festival d'Avignon), Éric Lacascade (*Hedda Gabler*, Ibsen), Yasmina Reza (*Le Dieu du carnage*), Krzysztof Warlikowski (*A Streetcar*, based on the play by Tennessee Williams, and *Phèdre(s)* by Wajdi Mouawad, Sarah Kane and J. M. Coetzee), Benedict Andrews, on stage with Cate Blanchett (*The Maids*, Jean Genet, Sydney Theatre

Company and New York), and Luc Bondy (*Les Fausses confidences*). More recently she has been seen in the American production of Florian Zeller's *The Mother* in New York, *La Ménagerie de verre* by Tennessee Williams directed by Ivo van Hove, and Chekhov's *Cherry Orchard*, directed by Tiago Rodrigues and premiered in the Cour d'honneur at the Festival d'Avignon. She has the French Molière lifetime achievement award, and won the 16th Europe Theater Prize in Rome.

She is working with Robert Wilson for the third time.

DARRYL PINCKNEY

Darryl Pinckney is the author of two novels, *High Cotton* (1992), *Black Deutschland* (2016), three collections of essays, *Out There: Mavericks of Black Literature* (2002), *Blackballed: The Black Vote and U.S. Democracy* (2012), *Busted in New York and Other Essays* (2019), and a memoir, *Come Back in September: A Literary Education on West 67th Street, Manhattan* (2022). He has written and adapted texts for Robert Wilson's productions of *The Forest*, *Orlando*, *Time Rocker*, *The Old Woman*, *Letter to A Man*, *Garrincha: A Musical of the Street*, and *Dorian*, as well as *Mary Said What She Said*.

LUDOVICO EINAUDI

Ludovico Einaudi first studied at the Music Conservatory in Turin, and then at the Milan Conservatory, studying with Azio Corghi, and gaining a diploma in composition. Further training saw him working as assistant to Luciano Berio, and then to Karlheinz Stockhausen. In the following years, he composed music for ballet, cinema and theater, while also writing works for orchestra and ensembles. His first solo album, *Le Onde* (1996), based on the novel *The Waves* by Virginia Woolf attracted great interest in the world of the piano. He developed further with the next album *Eden Roc* (1999), featuring a string quintet with duduk player Djivan Gasparyan, then *I giorni* (2001), a ballad cycle for piano inspired by a trip through Mali.

His sound tracks drew recognition and prestige: *Fuori dal mondo* (2000), *Luce dei miei occhi* (2001), *Le Prix du désir* (2004), *This is England* (film, 2004; series, 2010), *Intouchables* (2011), *Samba* (2014), *La Promesse d'une vie* (2015) and *The Third Murder* (2017).

The studio album *Una mattina* (2004) is more introspective and meditative, and was followed by *Divenire* with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, a wide-ranging, ambitious and magnificent album. These two recordings became the first best-sellers in the classical record category to be also listed for the best popular music sales. Ludovico Einaudi is the only classical musician who performed at the first iTunes Festival. He embarked on a long international tour while continuing to compose. In 2013 he released a contemplation of

time that was recorded in a monastery and designed as a suite, or rather, as chapters in a novel for piano accompanied by strings, percussion and electronics. The world tour included memorable concerts, e.g. at the Sydney Opera House and the Verona Arena. The album *Elements*, released in 2015, became "a map of thoughts and feelings, of points, lines, shapes and fragments of an inner stream flowing across myth, Euclid, the periodic table of elements, and the writings of Kandinsky."

On tour, performances of *Elements* at both pop and classical venues were sold out for the next three years. In 2016, *Elegy for the Arctic*, commissioned by Greenpeace, was performed on a platform floating in the Arctic Ocean.

In 2019, he undertook a long-term venture with *Seven Days Walking*, an imaginary journey over seven days and seven episodes producing seven albums, all released in 2019. In 2021, a large part of his music composed for film and television was compiled in a double album named *Cinema*. The year 2022 saw the release of *Underwater*, a solo piano album inspired by the calm, quiet suspension of time during the pandemic.

THE WATERMILL CENTER

Founded in 1992 by avant-garde visionary Robert Wilson, The Watermill Center is an interdisciplinary laboratory for the arts and humanities situated on ten acres of Shinnecock ancestral territory on Long Island's East End. The Center has welcomed thousands of international artists and visitors to enjoy 10 acres of landscaped grounds and gardens, a Collection of over 8000 artworks representing various cultures and movements, expansive research library, and archives illustrating the life and work of Robert Wilson. With an emphasis on creative process and collaboration, The Watermill Center offers year-round artist residencies, education and public programs, providing a global community with the time, space, and freedom to create and inspire.

The Byrd Hoffman Water Mill Foundation Thanks: Arison Arts Foundation, Giorgio Armani, Maria Bacardi, Paola Bacchini & Arnold Rosenschein, Thierry Barbier-Mueller (in memoriam), Jeff Beauchamp, Kelly Behun & Jay Sugarman, Helen Berggruen, Karin & Jörg Bittel, Karolina Blåberg, Jane Bobrow, Elizabeth Bonatti, Virginie & Nicolas Bos, Countess Cristiana Brandolini & Antoine Lafont, Brown Foundation, Rosamond Brown, Teresa Bulgheroni, Bonnie Cornley & Stewart F. Lane, Amy Cooney & Marty Feinman, Susan Cook & Drew Fine, Paula Cooper, Valerie & Harry Cooper, Cowles Charitable Trust, Cox Foundations, Madison Cox, Rose Anne de Pampelonne, Markus Dochantschi, Dr. Lee MacCormick Edwards Charitable Foundation, Lisa & Sanford Ehrenkranz, Beatrice & Pepe Esteve, Stephan Farber, Shoshana Fisher & Richard Katzman, The Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, Fondazione Carla Fendi, Wendy & Roger Ferris, Anke & Jürgen Friedrich, The JAF Foundation, Nitin Gambhir, The Robert D.L. Gardiner Foundation, Beth & Frank Gehry, Milly & Arne Glimcher, April Gornik & Eric Fischl, Audrey & Martin D. Gruss, Susan Gullia (in memoriam), Drs. June & Mark Halsey, Catherine & Alan Harper, Herget Family Foundation, Michelle & Christian Hernandez, Alexandra Hoberman, David Hockney, Wolfgang Hoenniger, Barbara Hoffman, Rose Hofmann, Isabelle Huppert, David Israel, Marie-Rose Kahane & David Landau, Joyce & Philip Kan, Jan Kengelbach, Wendy Keys, Lummi & Martin Kieren, William Kistler, The Calvin Klein Family Foundation, The Knowles Family, Eileen O'Kane Kornreich, Dorothy Lichtenstein (in memoriam), The Marilyn Lichtman Foundation, Earle I. Mack Foundation, Constantinos Martinos, Joyce Menschel, Léone-Noëlle Meyer, Mid Atlantic Arts, Monique Millane and Curtis ter Kuile, Alexandra Munroe & Robert Rosenkranz, The National Endowment for the Arts, The New York State Council on the Arts, The Nina Maria Arts and Culture Foundation, Georgia Oetker, Christl & Michael Otto, Inga Maren Otto, Katharina Otto-Bernstein & Nathan Bernstein, PACE Gallery, Donald A. Pels Charitable Trust, Lisa & Richard Perry, Michele & Steven Pesner, Dominique Piermay, Joseph Pirogato & Paul Michaud, Judith Pisar, Tatiana & Campion Platt, Miuccia Prada, Katharine Reyner, Jerome Robbins Foundation, Theodorus Rogpac, Colleen Rosenblatt, Toni Ross, Eric & Ruiz-Geli, Paul Salib, Mimi Saltzman Foundation, Grace Sanford, Louisa Sarofim, Elizabeth Segerstrom, Cindy Sherman, Roberta Sherman, Juliet Lea Hillman Simonds Foundation, Joseph & Sylvia Slifka Foundation, Jean & Martin Shafiroff, Anastasiya Siro, Annaliese Soros, Suffolk County Office of Cultural Affairs, Drs. Gordon Sze and Carl Johnson, The Johnny Joe Trillayes Artist Scholarship, Paul Trotta, Van Cleef & Arpels, Christine Van Itallie, Edwina Von Gal, Christine Wächter-Campbell & William I. Campbell, Jockel Waitz, Mary and Roger Wallace, Helen Lee & David Warren, Franz Wassmer (in memoriam), The Robert W. Wilson Charitable Trust, The Robert Wilson Arts Foundation, Bettina & Raoul Witteveen, L.K. Whittier Foundation, Woffler Estate Vineyard, Laura-Lee Woods, Nina Yankowitz, Neda Young, National YoungArts Foundation, Rana and Riad Zein, Antje & Dr. Klaus Zumwinkel and many other esteemed donors.



PROGRAM NOTES

Mary Said What She Said is a three-part monologue of 86 paragraphs that makes clear its intent right from the outset: “Memory, open my heart.” Mary, Queen of Scots and, for a while, Queen of France, reviews her life as “the one and only Mary in Scotland and the Isles,” a worthy pretender also to the English throne. We learn that this long study in remembrance takes place just as she has been sentenced to death by beheading by her cousin Elizabeth I, Queen of England, and stands accused of conspiring against her. But it is also a play in the course of which Mary composes a drama of her life, a life whose trajectory begins more or less with her birth and ends with a heart-rending letter of farewell written in French to her brother-in-law Henry III, King of France, on the eve of her death. The timeline unfolds as if the memory of it came to her through free associations. The journey takes us from one surprise to the next, marked by the twists and turns of an existence interspersed by all-too-short periods of happiness and unspeakable calamities. A singular wealth of details, simple and charming, mingles with an implacable destiny. Is she searching for her true self? Who can say? After all, what she does know and keeps reminding us is that she is queen and, as such, sacred, and that she proclaims her innocence.

It is worth mentioning a few facts likely to shed light on some of the references that Darryl Pinckney has deliberately dropped into the shadows. The first part retraces Mary’s adolescence in France during the reign of Henry II of France. The second, her return to Scotland, the conflicts that assailed her and her imprisonment — for eighteen years — until her death sentence. The third focuses more on the clashes — particularly those of a religious nature — she was forced to confront, Catholics versus Protestants. And in effect she illustrates what she said at the time: “In my end is my beginning.”

Gradually, we become privy to her meeting with, and marriage to, Francis II, son of Henry II and Catherine de’ Medici; she was sixteen years of age at the time, as was he. Thus she became Queen of France, but only for a year. Then, her forced return to Scotland, her marriage to her half-cousin Henry Stuart, the latter’s murder, her marriage to Bothwell (following her affair with him, most probably during the reign of Henry Stuart) and the accusation of conspiring with Bothwell in her husband’s death, whom she likewise accuses in the play of plotting to bring about her own death.

Darryl Pinckney came across the fascinating figure of Mary, Queen of Scots, in the historical text by Stefan Zweig. He also became aware of Mary’s letters, rediscovered in the 19th century and subsequently published, albeit few in number. But they did include this final letter to Henry III of France, written on the eve of her execution, which Darryl Pinckney then adapted somewhat as he wrote his play with Robert Wilson in

mind. Within the skillful counterpoint with which the author intertwines the themes of his play, we are struck by the fact that Mary recalls learning to dance at the French court thanks to Diane de Poitiers, mistress of Henry II. It is a theme that clearly resonates with the slow waltz for a queen deceased. The Queen’s destiny is characterized by her righteousness, even if the text fluctuates between a number of themes, serious or innocuous, mundane or fatal.

He may well have been troubled by the question of Mary’s innocence or guilt, for she stood accused, as the accomplice of her lover Bothwell, of instigating the murder of her second husband, Henry Stuart. In any case, he does not believe she conspired against Elizabeth I, whose turbulent and tumultuous reign caused her to believe she was surrounded by enemies. In fact, despite what Schiller imagined in his play *Mary Stuart*, Mary Queen of Scots never met Elizabeth. Her spell — or rather spells — in prison over a period of eighteen years of captivity were never anything other than trial and tribulation. She rarely ventured out of the castles in which she led her reclusive life, preferring instead to lock herself up. In the play she does not bemoan her fate and, indeed, complains little, for it was not a matter of aggrieving, let alone saddening, the spectator. Rather, it was about demonstrating her pride at being Queen of both France and Scotland, as she had been, and worthy of the throne of England, had fates and fortunes been otherwise. Her lot was indeed an unfortunate one, hence the kind affection with which she is held in posterity. But as a figure, she is not “romantic” (and Robert Wilson would not have wanted her to be). She was not particularly interested in the principles of politics, nor in the substance of those religious quarrels, even if, as a Catholic, she had to face no few Protestant enemies. She is essentially a Renaissance figure, with all the culture that entails. And then of course Darryl Pinckney is an admirer of the immense intelligence of Isabelle Huppert, an actress capable of embracing every aspect of the character, and her destiny.

— *François Regnault for the Théâtre de la Ville*

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Explore *Mary Said What She Said* through a curated collection of online interviews, essays, articles, reading lists, and other digital resources, offering deeper perspectives into the production.



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