



- *Blessed Union* is a new Australian play written by Maeve Marsden,
- This production is directed by Hannah Goodwin and premiered at Belvoir on Wednesday 15th February 2023, in association with Sydney WorldPride 2023.
- *Blessed Union* runs for approximately 2 hours and 10 minutes, including one 20-minute interval.
- *Blessed Union* is set in the recent past and takes place over the months between Easter and Christmas during one particular year.
- There are four actors in the production, each of whom play one character each. The story centres around a family. The characters are members of one family: characters **Ruth** and **Judith** are parents to two teenage children, characters **Delilah** and **Asher**. **Delilah** has recently commenced studying Law at university and **Asher** is in his final year of high school.
- The play contains two Acts. The action of the play takes place inside a family home in Sydney, Australia. The style of the production is slightly heightened naturalism. Scenes take place in chronological order.
- The set represents a kitchen and dining room in a family home. There is a hallway off to the side from which the audience sometimes hears characters speaking or carrying out activities.
- The play opens with the family gathering for a meal at Easter time. Before sitting down to eat, parents Ruth and Judith announce to their children that after a 30-year relationship they are separating.
- The play is described as a comedy, but does contain moments of strong emotional impact, including characters displaying distress over the end of a relationship.
- *Blessed Union* contains strong language and sexual references. Many of the sexual references are spoken by a teenage character in the context of colloquial, teenage comments, sometimes designed to shock. At one point during the play a teenage character briefly mimes fellatio.
- *Blessed Union* contains characters referring to religion, in particular Catholicism, in a way some audience members may find disrespectful. The references are exaggerated for comic effect. **SPOILER:** a plot point revolves around the character Asher being expelled from a Catholic school for pretending to fellate a statue of the Virgin Mary. This action is described by the character in words. The character also comments that this is not the 'worst' the school has seen and says 'Daniel Finley got caught by Father Joseph masturbating with a crucifix up his butt.'
- *Blessed Union* contains references to anxiety and depression. In one scene, 19-year-old Delilah has a panic attack and admits to having had them for years. It is suggested that the panic attack was triggered by the stress caused by Ruth and Judith's break up.
- In one scene, the character Asher suggests his sister Delilah come to a party with him to relieve the stress of looking after their depressed parent Judith. Delilah scoffs at Asher and says, 'She'll hang herself'. The line is delivered in a sarcastic tone that suggests Asher does not appreciate the responsibility his sister is taking, rather than suggesting the character Judith is on the brink of taking her own life.
- Characters are seen on stage drinking (fake) alcohol to excess, as a response to the relationship break up. An underage teenage character is seen drinking alcohol moderately in their own home. Towards the end of the play, a marijuana 'joint' is smoked by the teenage characters and one of the adult characters.
- There are spoken references to the existence of homophobia, and to parents disowning their gay children.
- There are spoken references to racism, racial colour blindness and to the impact of being raised without reference to an individual's cultural background.
- *Blessed Union* contains a scene in which a strong haze effect is used. This haze may travel into the auditorium and other parts of the theatre building.
- Some students may need to be briefed about theatre etiquette. Please turn off mobile phones completely and refrain from eating in the theatre. Students need to know that the performance is live and that the actors see and hear them in the audience.

Phone our box office on 02 9699 3444 if you need to check your booking.

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