



BELVOIR ST  
THEATRE

LEARNING RESOURCES



# WELL- BEHAVED WOMEN

28 Sep – 3 Nov

# BELVOIR ST. THEATRE PRESENTS

## WELL-BEHAVED WOMEN

Music and lyrics by **Carmel Dean** with additional lyrics by **Miriam Laube** and orchestrations by **Lynne Shankel**. Directed by **Blazey Best**.

This production of *Well-Behaved Women* opened at Belvoir St Theatre on 2nd October 2024. It is co-produced by Michelle Guthrie Presents.

### Creatives

**Music and Lyrics** Carmel Dean  
**Additional Lyrics** Miriam Laube  
**Orchestrations** Lynne Shankel  
**Producer** Michelle Guthrie  
**Musical Director** David Gardos  
**Set and Costume Designer** Grace Deacon  
**Lighting Designer** Kelsey Lee  
**Sound Designer** Tom Brickhill  
**Video Designer** Susie Henderson  
**Lisa Callingham** Choreographer  
**Assistant Director** Margaret Thanos  
**Stage Manager** Isabella Kerdijk  
**Assistant Stage Manager** Krystelle Quartermain

### Cast

**STEFANIE CACCAMO**  
**ZAHRA NEWMAN**  
**ELENOA ROKOBARO**  
**URSULA YOVICH**  
**SARAH MURR** (*standby*)

### Musicians

**SEB BARTELS** Guitars  
**SARAH HOMEH** Bass  
**DAVID GARDOS** Piano/Keys

**INSTRUMENTS GENEROUSLY SUPPLIED BY KAWAI**

*We acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora nation who are the traditional custodians of the land on which Belvoir St. Theatre is built. We also pay respect to the Elders past, present and emerging, and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.*

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## ABOUT BELVOIR

**ONE BUILDING.**

**SIX HUNDRED PEOPLE.**

**THOUSANDS OF STORIES**

When the Nimrod Theatre building in Belvoir Street, Surry Hills, was threatened with redevelopment in 1984, more than 600 people – ardent theatre lovers together with arts, entertainment and media professionals – formed a syndicate to buy the building and save this unique performance space in inner city Sydney.

Thirty years later, under Artistic Director Eamon Flack and Executive Directors Aaron Beach and Fiona Houlton, Belvoir engages Australia's most prominent and promising playwrights, directors, actors and designers to realise an annual season of work that is dynamic, challenging and visionary. As well as performing at home, Belvoir regularly takes to the road, touring both nationally and internationally.

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## BELVOIR EDUCATION

Our Education Program offers students and teachers an in-depth look into the work of Belvoir St. and the theatre-making process.

Belvoir Education offers student workshops, teacher professional development workshops, work experience, VET placements, archival viewings and a wealth of online resources designed to support work in the drama classroom. Our arts access programs assist schools in Regional NSW and Western Sydney to access the company's work.

Explore our education pages at [belvoir.com.au/education](https://belvoir.com.au/education)



# CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM



**CARMEL DEAN**  
Music and Lyrics



**LYNNE SHANKEL**  
Orchestrations



**BLAZEY BEST**  
Director



**MICHELLE GUTHRIE**  
Producer



**DAVID GARDOS**  
Musical Director



**GRACE DEACON**  
Set and Costume Designer



**KELSEY LEE**  
Lighting Designer



**TOM BRICKHILL**  
Sound Designer



**SUSIE HENDERSON**  
Video Designer



**LISA CALLINGHAM**  
Choreographer



**MARGARET THANOS**  
Assistant Director



**ISABELLA KERDIJS**  
Stage Manager



**KRYSTELLE QUARTERMAIN**  
Assistant Stage Manager



**STEFANIE CACCAMO**  
Cast



**ZAHRA NEWMAN**  
Cast



**ELENOA ROKOBARO**  
Cast



**URSULA YOVICH**  
Cast



**SARAH MURR**  
Standby

# DIRECTOR'S NOTES | BLAZEY BEST

There is a raw emotional urgency to these songs of Carmel's. While featuring women who are justifiably celebrated for their achievements, each song deals with feelings and emotions common to all women. Whatever your journey to or through womanhood, *Well-Behaved Women* speaks to a universality that binds us together.

When Michelle Guthrie first brought *Well-Behaved Women* to my attention in 2021, I was immediately excited by the prospect of working with Carmel Dean. I'd heard of this bright, astonishing Australian talent and her successful showing at Joe's Pub in New York. I clicked on the YouTube link and saw the clips from the show and every song felt like the runaway hit tune from the yet-to-be-written musical of each woman's life. I knew I had to be part of it.

We had the opportunity to assemble a cast of four women who would bring these songs to life for five nights at Hayes

Theatre in Potts Point. I approached my "in my wildest dreams" performers and, to my delight, they all wanted to do it. And so, for five exhilarating nights between Covid lockdowns, in that packed, tiny space, Stefanie, Zahra, Elenoa, and Ursula brought a rare kind of magic to the room.

I'm unbelievably grateful that Belvoir has given us the chance to bring this special piece to my favourite Sydney stage. I have been blessed to collaborate with three of the finest artists in the business for my creative team: Grace Deacon, Susie Henderson and Kelsey Lee who have taken my original idea and amplified it to fill this famous corner space. With their design, this incredible cast, Dave Gardos' fierce band, and Carmel's banging songs, I am thrilled to bring *Well Behaved Women* to Sydney's mainstage.

I hope you enjoy it as much as I do.

- *Blazey Best*



*Blazey Best (2024, Photography by Brett Boardman)*





*David Gardos, Zahra Newman, Ursula Yovich and Stefanie Caccamo (2024, Photography by Brett Boardman)*

I've never thought of myself as a political person, or at least someone who is outspoken in her political views. However as I've gotten older I have both seen and experienced the same blatant gender inequality that has persisted throughout time - especially living in the US during Trump's presidency - and so I couldn't help but feel the need to use my voice and to "get political".

I decided to tell the stories, through song, of the countless women who've come before us who have been shamed, silenced and ignored. Women who've had to fight with everything they've had just to make a tiny change which, in many cases, decades or centuries later rippled into a seismic shift. I wanted to not only keep these women

and their stories alive, but to remind this generation and the generations to come of the battles and sacrifices of the women who paved the way for us to be where we are today. And to remember that these women, no matter where or when they lived, their backgrounds, their ethnicities or religions, are all connected - not only to each other, but to US, watching their stories here, in Sydney in 2024.

I am honoured and grateful to be included in the current Belvoir Theatre season, and thank you all for supporting new work by Australian writers!

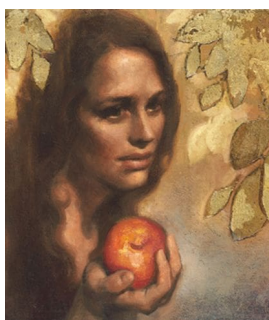
*- Carmel Dean*



# "WELL-BEHAVED WOMEN SELDOM MAKE HISTORY"

LAUREL THATCHER ULRICH

In *Well-Behaved Women*, four performers tell the story of sixteen extraordinary women who led the way, smashed class ceilings, and fought for their voices to be heard.



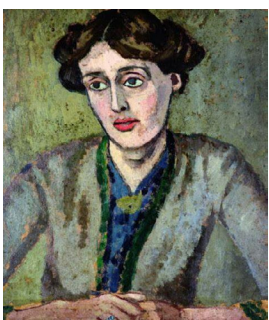
## EVE

In Judeo-Christian belief, Eve is the first woman, created by God, and is central to the story of original sin in the Garden of Eden.



## BOUDICCA

A warrior queen of the Iceni tribe in Britain who led a major uprising against Roman occupation around AD 60-61, becoming a symbol of resistance and British pride.



## VIRGINIA WOOLF'S JUDITH SHAKESPEARE

A fictional character from Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, representing the imagined sister of William Shakespeare.



## CLEOPATRA

The last active ruler of the Ptolemaic Kingdom of Egypt, renowned for her intelligence, and political savvy.



## HUA-LI (MULAN'S MOTHER)

A figure in Chinese folklore, representing the maternal influence and traditional family values in the famous story of a daughter disguising herself as a male soldier to protect her family and country.



## HARRIET TUBMAN

An escaped slave and conductor on the Underground Railroad, Tubman helped hundreds of slaves gain freedom and later became an advocate for women's suffrage and civil rights in the U.S.



## MARY MAGDALENE

A close follower of Jesus Christ, often depicted as a repentant sinner and a witness to his resurrection, often depicted as a symbol of devotion and faith.



## BILLIE JEAN KING

A tennis champion and gender equality advocate, King famously defeated Bobby Riggs in the 1973 "Battle of the Sexes" match, and campaigned for equal prize money in professional tennis.



### **FANNY DURACK**

An Australian swimmer who became the first woman to win an Olympic gold medal in swimming at the 1912 Stockholm Olympics, breaking barriers for women in competitive sports.



### **MINA WYLIE**

An Australian swimmer and Fanny Durack's teammate, she also competed in the 1912 Olympics, advocating for women's inclusion in swimming events and furthering female participation in sports.



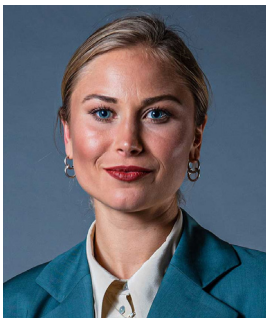
### **JULIA GILLARD**

The first female Prime Minister of Australia, serving from 2010 to 2013, she implemented major reforms in education and healthcare, while also being a trailblazer for women in Australian politics.



### **MALALA YOUSAFSAI**

A Pakistani education activist who survived a Taliban assassination attempt, Malala became a global symbol for girls' right to education and won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014.



### **GRACE TAME**

An Australian activist and sexual abuse survivor, she became the Australian of the Year in 2021 for her advocacy work in empowering survivors of sexual assault and promoting justice reforms.



### **FRIDA KAHLO**

A Mexican painter known for her vibrant, surrealist self-portraits and exploration of identity, gender, and disability, Kahlo is an icon of feminism and Mexican culture.



### **JANET ARMSTRONG**

Wife of astronaut Neil Armstrong, she supported him during the Apollo moon landing mission.



### **CATHY FREEMAN**

An Australian sprinter who became the first Aboriginal Australian to win an Olympic gold medal in 2000 for the 400m, her victory is seen as a moment of national unity and pride, celebrating Indigenous achievement.

## **CLASSROOM ACTIVITY | CREATING PHYSICAL TABLEAUS (45 MINUTES)**

1. In groups of 4-5, choose one of the women listed – ideally someone you know little about.
2. Research her life story using sources online.
3. As a group, create three physical tableaux (frozen scenes) that depict key moments or themes from her life. Be sure to use the elements of space and tension in your composition.
4. Present your tableaux to the class.

# LEARNING ACTIVITY : WRITING MONOLOGUES

In this 1-hour activity, students will explore the lives of influential women in history, focusing on those who challenged norms, broke barriers, or were under-recognised. They will create a 60-second monologue from the perspective of their chosen woman, allowing them to step into her shoes and voice her story.

## Materials:

- Access to the internet or biographies/books on historical figures.
- Pen and paper (or digital devices for drafting).

**Discussion:** Begin with a brief conversation about women in history who have been trailblazers, pushed societal boundaries, or who were undervalued. Ask students:

- Can you name women from history who have made significant contributions but were overlooked or faced challenges because of their gender? How might these women have felt during their struggles?

**Choose a Woman:** Ask students to select a historical/literary figure they either already know or want to learn more about.

**Research:** Give them time to research the background of their chosen woman. Encourage them to look for key moments in her life where she demonstrated resilience, courage, or leadership.

## CONSIDER:

*What obstacles did she face?*

*How did she push boundaries?*

*What are her greatest accomplishments?*

**Quick Reflection:** Have students jot down initial thoughts or key themes from their research that they might want to explore in their monologue.

**Monologue Creation:** Instruct students to write a 60-second monologue from the perspective of their chosen woman, as though she were speaking to an audience. Remind them to focus on:

- *Her thoughts and emotions during key moments in her life.*
- *What message she would want to share with people today.*
- *A significant memory or moment of decision.*
- *A reflection on societal expectations and her defiance of them.*
- *A call to action or wisdom she'd like to pass on to future generations.*

**Support:** Walk around to offer guidance, helping students dig deeper into their chosen figure's motivations and feelings.

*You may want to divide this exercise over two lessons to give students more time to research their chosen character and draft their monologue.*



# MONOLOGUE STRUCTURE OUTLINE

## 1. Opening (10-15 seconds): Setting the Context

- Introduce the character - who are you?
- Where are you? Establish time and place, or an important moment in her life.
- What is happening?: Briefly describe a key challenge or situation she is facing.

*Example: "I am [name]. In [year], I stood at the crossroads of history, determined to change what seemed unchangeable..."*

## 2. Key Event or Obstacle (15-20 seconds): The Turning Point

- Describe a defining moment: Explain a pivotal moment in her life, an obstacle she overcame, or a boundary she broke.
- Emotion: Reflect her feelings—fear, courage, anger, hope—during this moment.

*Example: "When they told me I couldn't, I knew it was because they were afraid—afraid of what I might become if I didn't stay silent."*

## 3. Message (20-25 seconds): Her Perspective and Legacy

- What did she learn or fight for?: Share her message or the value of her achievements.
- Impact on society: Highlight the larger significance of her actions—how did she change the world, or how does she hope to be remembered?

*Example: "But I wasn't fighting just for me. I fought for every woman who was told 'no,' for every girl who would one day dare to dream."*



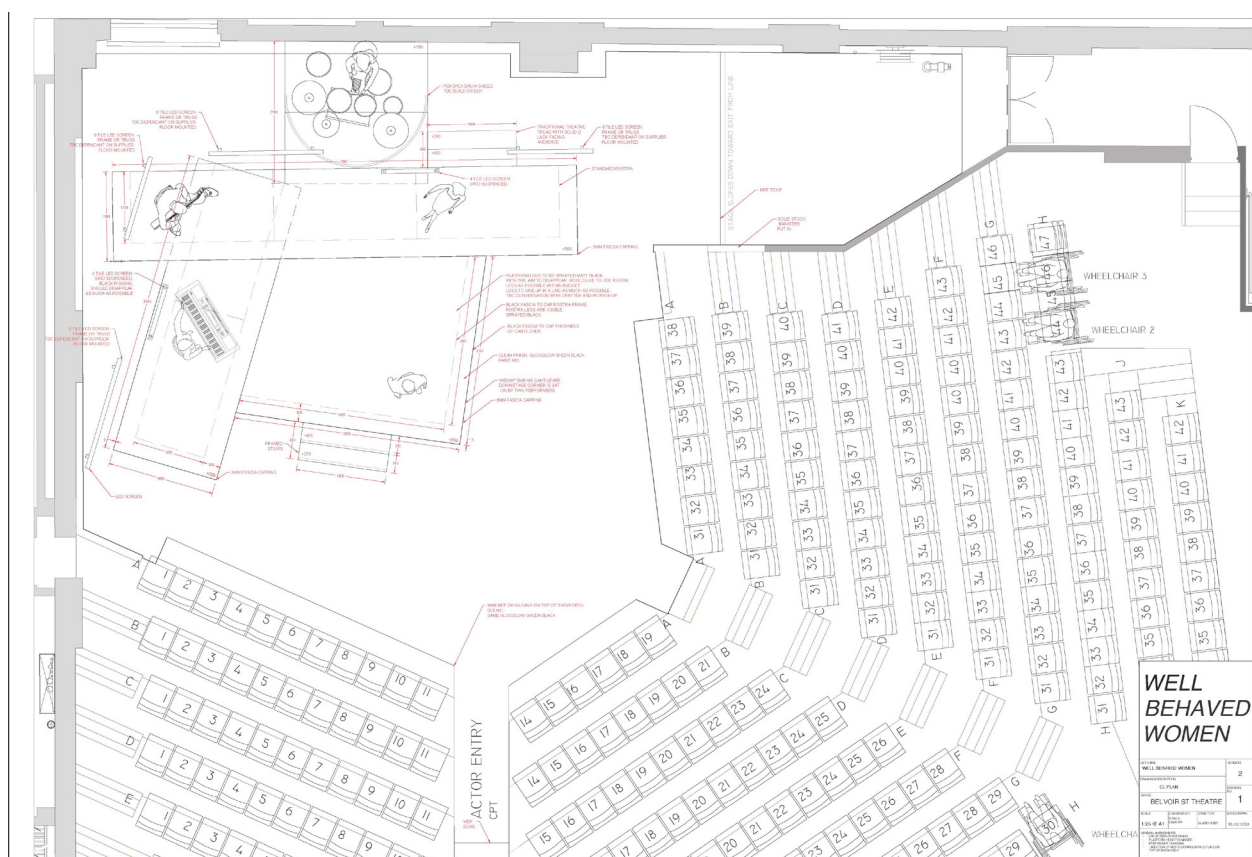
Zahra Newman (2024, Photography by Brett Boardman)

# PRODUCTION ELEMENTS

The elements of production are the technical and visual elements used to manipulate the elements of drama in order to effectively tell a play's story. In these notes we are going to look at the set and costume design for *Well-Behaved Women*.

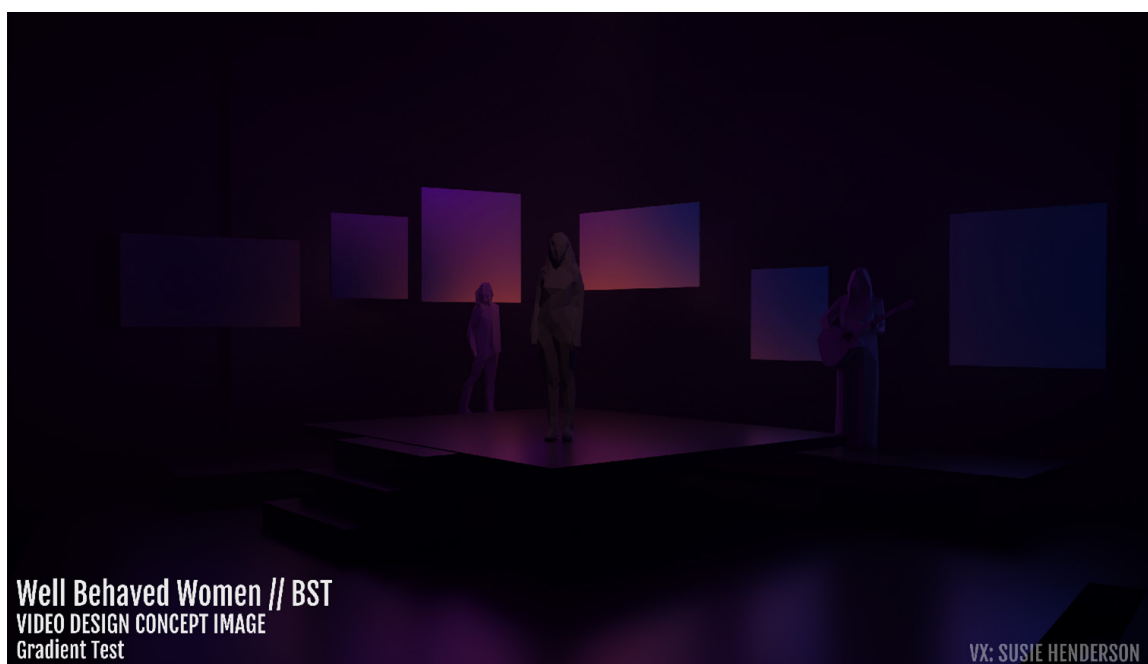
## SET AND COSTUME DESIGNER

GRACE DEACON



The diagram above is a theatre plan for Belvoir's Upstairs Theatre as marked up by the set designer of *Well-Behaved Women*. Take a close look at the image.

- What structural challenges might a set designer encounter when working in a theatre with Belvoir's unique layout?





## COSTUME DESIGN | CLEOPATRA

Cleopatra (70/69 BC - 30 BC) was the last active ruler of the Ptolemaic Kingdom of Egypt, renowned for her intelligence and political savvy.

Examine the costume design for Cleopatra shown below.

- Observe the reference images Grace Deacon has gathered on the right-hand side. Which aspects—such as color, texture, and shape—have influenced her final costume rendering?
- How has she successfully captured the essence of a woman from 70-30 BC while incorporating a modern sensibility?



CLEOPATRA

ELENOA ROKOBARO		
	ITEM	NOTES
1.	Gold dress	Statement piece. Loud. TBC length.
2.	Chunky Bracelets	Gold mix
3.	Chunky Rings	Gold mix
4.	Chunky necklaces	Gold mix
5.	Gold or Black heels	



CLEOPATRA



BOUDICCA

URSULA YOVICH		
	ITEM	NOTES
1.	Straight high waisted trouser	WINE. Structured. Strong lines.
2.	Blouse, v plunge neckline. Full sleeves.	Red. Silk.
3.	High ankle boot heels	Gold, shiny or glittery.
4.	High neck Chainmail neck/shoulder piece	Dependant on what we can find online. Either silver chainmail or gold plated look. Metallic element.
5.		



BOUDICCA

## COSTUME DESIGN | BOUDICCA

Boudicca was warrior queen of the Iceni tribe in Britain who led a major uprising against Roman occupation around AD 60-61, becoming a symbol of resistance and British pride.

- Observe the reference images Grace Deacon has gathered on the right-hand side. Which aspects—such as color, texture, and shape—have influenced her final costume rendering?
- How has she blended historical and contemporary elements?
- What are some factors a costume designer must consider when an actor is required to sing on stage?

# IMAGES OF THE SET IN PRODUCTION



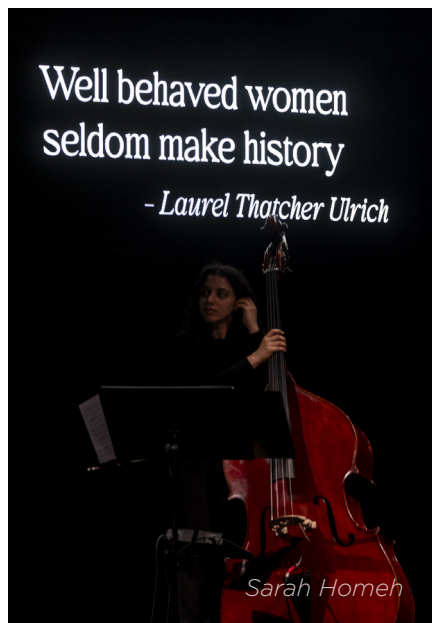
*Zahra Newman*



*Ursula Yovich*

*Video Design by Susie Henderson  
Set and Costume Design by Grace Deacon  
Production Photography Brett Boardman 2024*





1. How is the set different from the early models?
2. Was there anything that surprised you about the way the set looked or worked?



## REHEARSING: WELL-BEHAVED WOMEN



*Cast and creative in the rehearsal room (2024, Photography by Brett Boardman)*

- Describe what you see in the photo above.
- At what point in the rehearsal process do you think these creatives are? What leads you to that conclusion?



*(2024, Photography by Brett Boardman)*

- Describe what you see in the photo above.
- What insight does this image give you into the process of rehearsing this show?





*Matty James (2024, Photography by Brett Boardman)*

- These two images feature Belvoir's sound technician, Matty James.
- What do you think he might be doing in the rehearsal room?



*Lisa Callingham and cast (2024, Photography by Brett Boardman)*

- This images features choreographer Lisa Callingham.
- What do you think the role of a choreographer is in a production like *Well-Behaved Women*?



# POST SHOW DISCUSSION

PROGRAM

TEXT

DESIGN

PRODUCTION

MEDIA



*Elenoa Rokobaro (2024, Photography by Brett Boardman)*

**How did this production make you feel?**



*Elenoa Rokobaro (2024, Photography by Brett Boardman)*

**Which character did you feel most connected to in the show?**



*Ursula Yovich (2024, Photography by Brett Boardman)*

**Which characters were unfamiliar to you before watching the production?**



*Stefanie Caccamo and Zahra Newman (2024, Photography by Brett Boardman)*

**In what ways was the production different to what you expected?**



## REVIEWS

*The beauty of Well-Behaved Women lies in its ability to balance the grandeur of these historical figures with a keen sense of modern day relevance. It serves as a reminder that while the faces and names may change, the challenges women face remain strikingly similar across time.*

**- ARTS HUB**

*Faultless performances...supported by a tight four-piece ensemble....This show is right on key.*

**- SYDNEY MORNING HERALD**

*Each frame in its unique song style held the audience in its thrall. Character building or diva-esque delivery, each gave us the possibility. Women we knew or knew of. Others welcomed with a new voice. All with something to stand out.*

**-SYDNEY ARTS GUIDE**



*Elenoa Rokobaro (2024, Photography by Brett Boardman)*





## BELVOIR BRIEFING | LIVESTREAM RECORDING

Hear from some of the artists involved in creating *Well-Behaved Women* at the Belvoir Briefing.

[WATCH NOW](#)



## INTERVIEW WITH CARMEL DEAN

Listen to this short interview with writer Carmel Dean as she describes the inspiration behind her production *Well-Behaved Women*.

[WATCH NOW](#)



## INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR

Listen to Director Blazey Best share what excites her most about this upcoming musical production and the four remarkable performers set to light up Belvoir's stage.

[WATCH NOW](#)



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