



Noteworthy adaptation



IN an unusual turn of events, local singer-songwriter Rachael Dease has found herself playing a city. Dease will “play” the city of Thebes in exciting young director Matthew Lutton’s highly contemporary reinvention of Sophocles’ Greek tragedy, *Antigone*, which promises to be the locally produced highlight of this year’s Perth International Arts Festival.

While WA Academy of Performing Arts graduate Eamon Flack’s adaptation of the ancient story will retain the language and events of Sophocles’ tale of flawed leadership, a modern visual aesthetic has been added to the proceedings.

The biggest variation in the production is the replacement of the Greek chorus with a series of new songs, which were written by, and will be performed live by Dease – a musician, lyricist and lead singer of award-winning band Schvendes.

Musicians Tristen Parr, Bill Darby and Pete Guazzelli will accompany Dease’s evocative torch songs.

“I sing about the over-riding emotions that are coming from the city of Thebes; their responses to things,” Dease said. “After my research I had to sit back and forget it all and write from the heart again.”

While it features acting and songs on

stage, Dease is quick to point out “it is definitely not musical theatre.”

“The original vision was to marry song and theatre together in a way that wasn’t musical theatre,” she said in a break from rehearsals.

“We wanted to make sure that each of these factors stood on their own.

“I think we have achieved that. All the actors and musicians are slotting together quite well, and that is a big relief actually.”

Even though this is the adaptation of a 2451-year-old text, Dease said people might be surprised to find out exactly how pertinent it was to people in today’s age.

“It’s relevant to contemporary society because nothing really has changed that much,” she said.

“It is about love, tragedy and the fragility of human emotion and the fragility and consequences of our decisions, on not just us and our families, but whole societies.

“And I think that stands true now as it did when it was written.”

■ *Antigone* will be reborn at Subiaco Arts Centre from February 21 to March 7.

Ross McRae



Clockwise from bottom: Rachael Dease, Bill Darby, Peter Guazzelli and Tristen Parr.

Picture: Andrew Ritchie

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