



No skating over tragedy

FEW theatre productions can match the exhaustive polishing process *Antigone* has undergone. For thousands of years it has been told, interpreted, re-shaped and re-made.

Now, the latest incarnation of this classic tale by Sophocles makes its appearance at the Perth International Arts Festival.

Director Matthew Lutton first shared the project with writer Eamon Flack back in 2006 before approaching Rachael Dease of band Schvendes, to tap into her gloom-drive, mournful rock.

"Strangely, the work I've done for this show is some of the least gloomy music I've ever written," Mount Hawthorn-based Dease tells the *Voice*.

"It's such a dark play that it'd be cheating to wallow in it. We already have characters pushing the gloom. There has to be some hope, some relief.

"The play's issues are extremely grey – the characters want to make the issues black and white but the audience can see this world and issues are just murky grey waters."

The collaborations have resulted in a complex re-telling of this tale of civil disobedience, family versus state and love versus law. *Antigone*, in a fit of disregard for authority and mourning, has broken the law



to bury her brother, Polynices, a traitor to Thebes. King Creon, his hold on power already shaky, has no choice but to sentence his beloved niece to death.

"There's a whole heap of political resonances in the piece," says Lutton. "One of the beauties of Sophocles' tragedies is that you don't need to signpost the contemporary references.

"It's not a piece where we've tried to stick things on our current global political climate."

Flack rejected re-adapting the well-known 1900s adaption, preferring to go back to the source material. While previous interpretations generally write *Antigone* as noble heroine, Lutton strips her back and presents Creon in a more sympathetic light.

"Creon is essentially comparing family to the state," Lutton says, "you need love, obedience, leadership loyalty around the dinner table in your family just as you need these to run your city and the rest of the country.

"Nobody is noble, nobody here is a great martyr, they're all flawed and forget their own arguments... we're making them a lot more human."

Tickets through PIAF 9484 1133.



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• Rachael Dease as Thebes in Thinle's production of *Antigone*