

# **Easter Play 2024 in Princes Street Gardens**

**This year, Edinburgh's passion play in Princes Street Gardens will tell the story of Easter from a new perspective – through the voices of the women.**

Easter – The Women's Story, which will be performed at 2pm on Saturday 30th March with the backdrop of Edinburgh Castle, tells the story of Easter from the perspective of eleven women whose lives were changed.

The large-scale community play, which has become a highlight of Easter weekend in the city, is staged by a cast of 40 actors of all ages and backgrounds.

Director Suzanne Lofthus said: "There are women in the story of Easter but they are at the edges. They are mentioned in the Bible but we don't often get to hear their stories. Sometimes they are not even named.

"I wanted to see what the story looks like from their point of view, and it has been quite revealing. We worked with the actors to give them names, faces, identities.

"We know women were there along with the male disciples, but we're not used to seeing women at the Last Supper or in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus was very radical in that time because he treated men and women equally.

"Peter the disciple had a wife, for example, but we only know she existed because Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law.

Pontius Pilate's wife tries to save Jesus' life. The first person to see Jesus after his Resurrection was a woman, Mary Magdalene."

She said the fresh take on the story was directly inspired by the injustices which are still being suffered by women in parts of the world today.

"The Easter story is one of the great stories of the world and has relevance in whatever time we're living in.

"I was struck by the oppression of women in countries like Iran and Afghanistan, how women are not allowed to have a voice, and how they are being arrested, jailed, even killed if they speak out.

"In Afghanistan, women are stopped from going out unaccompanied, not allowed to have an education, not able to have jobs. There is a scene in the play where the women go to the temple because they want to hear the teaching, and the priests turn them away."

The passion play has been staged on Easter Saturday in Princes Street Gardens since 2005 in a new version each year, attracting audiences of up to 3,000 people.

The spectacle is the product of months of work by around 100 people, including actors, costume-makers, stewards and technicians, making the play one of the largest community theatre productions in Scotland.

The 40-strong cast from all faiths and none work with a professional director and actor (Calum Barbour, playing Jesus) to create the play. Past productions have included a series of monologues and a hard-hitting contemporary version set in a near future Scotland.

Producers Cutting Edge Theatre are committed to making the Easter play more accessible every year with integrated BSL interpretation (when the BSL interpreters become actors in the play), audio description and designated stewards to help those

with disabilities.

- Easter: The Women's Story
- *A large-scale community passion play bringing the Easter Story to life in the heart of the city*
- Saturday 30 March, 2pm
- West Princes Street Gardens
- Free and unticketed, more information at [www.easterplay.org](http://www.easterplay.org)



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