

March 2016

BREAKING THE RULES: THE IMAGINED TESTIMONY OF CARLO GESUALDO, COMPOSER AND MURDERER

To mark the 450th anniversary of the birth of composer and murderer Carlo Gesualdo, playwright **Clare Norburn** joins with choral group **The Marian Consort** to present a new kind of concert/drama – ***Breaking the Rules: The imagined testimony of Carlo Gesualdo (1566-1613), composer and murderer.***

It is 8 September, 1613: the day Gesualdo is to die. Gesualdo is alone in his chapel in his family estate in the hilltop village of Gesualdo, some 60 miles inland from Naples. He has been living at the castle as a recluse for some time. Only two weeks ago his only son and heir died. Now he stares death full in the face, knowing that he faces purgatory for the multitude of sins he has committed.

Blurring the boundaries between a one-actor play and a concert, *Breaking the Rules* explores Gesualdo's world and his music. The Marian Consort provides the sound-track of Gesualdo's mind triggering memories of his mother's death, his disastrous first marriage and the murder of his first wife and her lover, and includes Gesualdo's music including his Tenebrae Responsories and madrigals.

Directed by **Nicholas Renton**, the piece will tour across the country performing at various venues and major festivals from May to November.

Clare Norburn, playwright of *Breaking The Rules*, said: 'Many people are familiar with the music of Gesualdo, but in the 450th year since his birth, I wanted to explore the man behind the music and what led him to commit the violent murder, for which he is so well remembered. In writing this piece, I want to give audiences a way into his music and a chance to understand how Gesualdo's past and circumstances led inexorably to the murder.'

Rory McCleery, Director of The Marian Consort, said: 'Gesualdo is renowned for his distinctive musical voice and idiosyncratic chromatic compositional style, and was admired by figures as diverse as Igor Stravinsky, Aldous Huxley and Frank Zappa. It's exciting to show audiences how his music was shaped by the events of his life, and a privilege to work with Clare Norburn and Nicholas Renton. This groundbreaking theatre work and this tour are fitting celebrations of the 450th anniversary of Gesualdo's birth.'

For further information please contact

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Notes to Editors:

The Marian Consort

Jamie Akers, theorbo

Gesualdo, **actor to be announced**

Play by **Clare Norburn**

Directed by **Nicholas Renton**

Lighting Design by **Natalie Rowland** and **Pitch Black Lighting**

Tour details:

19th May: Newbury Spring Festival

20th May: Brighton Festival

22nd May 2016: Bury St Edmunds Festival

2nd July: Lichfield Festival

15th July: Oundle Festival

18th July: Cambridge Summer Music Festival

20th July: Ryedale Festival

22nd July: Buxton Festival

29th July: Branscombe Festival

3rd August: Lake District Summer Music Festival

12th September: Lammermuir Festival

24th September: Roman River Music

6th November: Music at Oxford



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