**Southbank Centre presents the London premiere of**

**Shakespeare’s *The Rape of Lucrece***

**Performed by Camille O’Sullivan**

**9 - 12 July 2014, Queen Elizabeth Hall**

**A Royal Shakespeare Company production**

Shakespeare’s politically-charged, sexually provocative and violent thriller *The Rape of Lucrece* is brought to life through storytelling and song in the hypnotic hands of internationally-acclaimed performer and singer Camille O’Sullivan. The production receives its London premiere at Southbank Centre as part of Southbank Centre’s summer-long Festival of Love (28 June – 31 August).

The epic poem tells the story of Lucrece, the chaste wife of a Roman officer, who is raped by the King’s son Tarquin. Through a mixture of spoken and sung verse Camille inhabits the souls of both Tarquin and Lucrece, playing the part of both victim and abuser. While narrating their fates, she delivers a range of human experience contained in this dark tale that is as beautiful as it is monstrous. The original music is co-written by composer Feargal Murray, who is Camille’s long-time collaborator and accompanies her on piano in the show. Elizabeth Freestone directs this Royal Shakespeare Company production.

Talking about the production, director Elizabeth Freestone says:

“I have always loved *The Rape of Lucrece*: it contains some of Shakespeare’s best writing. When I happened to see Camille perform at the Edinburgh Festival in 2008, something just clicked. I became convinced that her singing and narrative storytelling, which was dark, sexual, strange and political, would work with the poem.”

This rarely performed tragedy was a sell-out hit at the Edinburgh International Festival 2012, winning Camille the prestigious Bank of Scotland Herald Angel Award for Best Performance. In 2013 the production continued its critical success in Australia, as part of the Sydney Festival 2013 and also visited Melbourne, Dublin Theatre Festival, Derry/Londonderry, The Hague and Brazil. The show will also receive a special outing in Camille’s home town of Cork (5-7 June).

**Cast and Creatives:**

Adapted by Elizabeth Freestone, Feargal Murray and Camille O’Sullivan

Performed by Camille O’Sullivan, accompanied by Feargal Murray on piano

Directed by Elizabeth Freestone
Original music and songs by Feargal Murray and Camille O’Sullivan

Design by Lily Arnold

Lighting by Vince Herbert

Sound by Claire Windsor

*The Rape of Lucrece* was developed by RSC Studio.

**Listings information:**

Shakespeare’s The Rape of Lucrece

Performed by Camille O’Sullivan

Wednesday 9 – Saturday 12July, 7.30pm

Queen Elizabeth Hall

£27.50, £20.00

[www.southbankcentre.co.uk](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk)

0844 847 9910

**Notes to Editors**

**About Southbank Centre**

Southbank Centreis the UK’s largest arts centre, occupying a 21-acre site that sits in the midst of London’s most vibrant cultural quarter on the South Bank of the Thames. The site has an extraordinary creative and architectural history stretching back to the 1951 *Festival of Britain*. Southbank Centre is home to the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room and the Hayward Gallery as well as The Saison Poetry Library and the Arts Council Collection. For further information please visit [www.southbankcentre.co.uk](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk)

**Festival of Love at Southbank Centre**

Southbank Centre’s summer 2014 festival is dedicated to the theme of love. Hundreds of artists, communities and partners will participate in creating a festival that will explore the many different facets of human love – from romantic love and the breakdown of relationships, to the harmony (or disharmony) between nations and the concept of memorials. The festival runs from 28 June to 31 August, with a taster weekend from Friday 30 May to Sunday 1 June. Featuring a wide-ranging programme of themed weekends, performances, talks, outdoor art installations and urban greenery across the site, one of the highlights, in celebration of the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act becoming law in England and Wales this March, will be the mass wedding event for opposite sex and same-sex couples on the finale festival weekend (30 and 31 August).

**About Royal Shakespeare Company**

Our job is to connect and help others connect with Shakespeare and produce bold, ambitious work with living writers, actors and artists. We are an ensemble company so everyone here, from directors, writers and actors to production, technical and administrative staff, has a part to play in creating distinctive theatre.

We believe in taking risks and pushing creative boundaries - finding new ways of doing things and learning through action. Our audiences are at the heart of all we do and we want to challenge, inspire and involve them.

Our home is in Stratford-upon-Avon and in 2010 we reopened the Royal Shakespeare and Swan theatres after a £112.8m transformation to bring actors and audiences closer together. We play regularly in London, Newcastle upon Tyne and on tour across the UK and the world.

As well as the plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, we produce new work from living artists and develop creative links with theatre-makers from around the world.

We work with teachers to inspire a life-long love of Shakespeare in young people and run events for everyone to explore and participate in our work.

During 2012 we produced the World Shakespeare Festival as part of the Cultural Olympiad.

The new RSC Studio was formed in 2008. It is designed to support artists in the early development of work. *The Rape of Lucrece* was the first piece of work originating from the new RSC Studio programme to be seen by the public.

**Camille O’Sullivan**

Born in London, Camille was raised in Cork, Ireland to a French mother and Irish father. Previously an award winning architect and portrait painter, she now has a formidable international reputation for her interpretations of the narrative songs of Nick Cave, Jacques Brel, David Bowie and Tom Waits.

Chameleon like on stage, her solo shows include the Sydney Opera House, London’s Royal Festival Hall, The Roundhouse and the Apollo Theatre. She’s guested on the BBC’s *Later with Jools Holland*, and has supported him at the Royal Albert Hall. An original member of La Clique (Olivier Award 2010), she’s performed with Todd Rundgren, Tim Robbins and Shane McGowan (London 02), and appeared in Stephen Frears’ film *Mrs Henderson Presents*. Recently Camille was chosen by Yoko Ono to perform *Double Fantasy Live* at Meltdown RFH alongside Sean Lennon and Patti Smith. Her most recent album, *Changeling* was released in 2012.

**Feargal Murray**

Derry born Feargal Murray received an honours Music degree from Edinburgh University and a Masters degree in Contemporary Classical Composition from Goldsmiths College London. He is a songwriter, producer, string arranger and pianist/keyboard player. A long term collaborator with Camille O’Sullivan he has also worked extensively with Phil Coulter, Moya Brennan, Celtic Woman and Julie Feeney, to name but a few. He has performed on *Later with Jools Holland*, arranged for the Irish Film Orchestra, worked on Grammy-nominated albums, played at George Best’s funeral, and toured worldwide, including venues such as Carnegie Hall and Radio City.

**Elizabeth Freestone**

Elizabeth Freestone is Artistic Director of Pentabus Theatre, and has worked at the RSC, the National Theatre, Soho and the Royal Court. Besides *The Rape of Lucrece*, her credits for the RSC include: *Here Lies Mary Spindler*, *The Tragedy of Thomas Hobbes* and *The Comedy of Errors*.