

Media Release

Beauty, brains and a ballsy belt

“Melissa Western and her band earned a standing ovation.” ★★★★★ Edinburgh Reviews

“Western is a phenomenal vocalist” ★★★★★ Brig News

“impeccable interpretations” ★★★★★ UK Theatre Web



Official sellout at Edinburgh Fringe 2024, 1954: Ella, Etta, Eartha celebrates three musical icons at the peak of their powers – breaking barriers of race, gender and class while creating timeless jazz, soul and cabaret.

Created and performed by British-born, Australian-based award-winner Melissa Western – a Churchill Fellow and University Medal recipient – this show blends her powerhouse vocals, magnetic stage presence and meticulous research into a love letter to Ella Fitzgerald, Etta James and Eartha Kitt.

Backed by an all-female jazz band, the production has toured extensively across Australia and the UK, selling out venues from the Queensland Cabaret Festival to the Edinburgh Fringe, and winning audiences with stories of resilience, glamour and musical brilliance.

At first glance Melissa Western may appear the quintessential sultry diva, but scratch a little below the surface and you soon find a brainy entrepreneur with an elastic voice and a particular addiction to research.

It's her enquiring mind and love of mid 50s style that led her to create her cabaret show 1954: Ella, Etta, Eartha. “I'm really quite a nerd. I can't help researching! I'd be learning another tune sung by a gorgeous, amazing female singer and then want to know more about their life, so I'd dig and dig and be so surprised to learn about their lives” says Western. “As my understanding of the mid 50s developed I was drawn to the stories of Ella Fitzgerald, Eartha Kitt and Etta James. Though very different in their styles of music, I noticed this

common thread of genre trailblazing, of three women of colour breaking glass ceilings all around them and paving the way for so many who followed after them” . .

Praise for previous work:

“Western is a force of nature...Great storyteller, feisty, highly enjoyable; ... Warm, witty and supremely talented ... captivating ...fantastic instrumentalists” ★★★★★ Broadway Baby

“When the music stops, there is the longest silence. Then Melissa Western’s voice reappears, snatching you away again, inspiring a big grin on your face. You knew she was never gone for long, yet in that silence you still missed her.” ★★★★★ Three Weeks

All ENQUIRIES

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Images

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1ECfNPeSGT_T2Tw_QIJx1FQ8BobYMpefa