

For immediate release: 23 February 2026

Theatre Works and Machination Theatre
Ensemble proudly present

Mara

By *Hanna Pyliotis*

Directed by *Megan Jones*

22 April – 2 May 2026

Theatre Works – 14 Acland Street, St Kilda

www.theatreworks.org.au

This April, a fierce new reimaging of **Charles Perrault's** fabled *Cinderella* comes to **Theatre Works**. Written by Paris-based Australian playwright **Hanna Pyliotis** and directed by acclaimed theatre-maker **Megan Jones**, *Mara* refocuses the traditional lens in the *Cinderella* myth. Positioning it from the step-mother's perspective, this pertinent tale reveals a woman trapped inside a story she never wrote.

A spirited, ambitious girl desperate to escape her prescribed destiny, marriage to a wealthy widower seems to promise a new beginning for *Mara*, but the fantasy quickly unravels. Families won't blend, her husband vanishes, and she is left caring for a stepdaughter who will never love her. Exploring the emotional terrain of blended families and the complex bonds between parents and children, this powerful retelling is set in a crumbling home, haunted by broken promises.

"At Theatre Works, we're really drawn to work that interrogates power, gender, and inherited narratives, and Mara does that in a very clear and fearless way", explains **Executive Director Dianne Toulson**.

"It's a piece that asks, who gets to be seen as monstrous? And who gets to be forgiven? Those questions landed very strongly for us, particularly in a moment where blended families and women's ambition are still so heavily judged."

"Mara isn't a villain origin story, it's a reckoning. There's a point in the piece where the fairytale scaffolding falls away and you're left sitting with a woman who made choices, believed in a future, and paid a price for it. And that's incredibly powerful."

Blending **Brechtian** storytelling and contemporary fairytale aesthetics with **Poor Theatre** traditions, *Mara* uses minimal set and maximum imagination, transforming the **Theatre Works** black-box stage into a living storybook.

Performed by critically acclaimed singer/actor **Aurora Kurth**, this virtuosic one-actor work brings ten characters to life while a live musician creates a richly layered, Foley-inspired soundscape that functions as both score, and storytelling engine. Children, parents, lovers, and ghosts emerge in a collision of yearning, memory, music, and myth.

Asking what happens when the fairy tale breaks down and a woman is left holding the consequences, this production of *Mara* has been selected for the **2026 VCE Theatre Studies Playlist** and is playing as a part of the **By Theatre Works** programming stream.

Running for **two weeks only** at the **Acland Street** venue, it's well placed to be a true highlight on the Melbourne Arts Calendar, not to be missed.



Based in St Kilda, **Theatre Works** has been home to bold, independent theatre for more than 40 years. They give artists the space, support, and freedom to take risks, and audiences the chance to discover powerful new Australian stories. Each year, they present dozens of productions across their three venues, from reimagined classics to brand new works, created in partnership with some of the country's most exciting theatre makers.

Mara is playing as part of the 2026 **By Theatre Works** programming stream. Other **By Theatre Works** productions include *Australian Open*, *Savages*, *Beyond The Neck*, *Red Sky Morning*, *Lazarus*, *Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity*, *The Wolves*, and *Lord of the Flies*.

Written by Hanna Pylotis

Directed by Megan Jones

Performed by Aurora Kurth and Ania Reynolds

Music and sound design by Ania Reynolds

Original music by Hanna Pylotis and Ania Reynolds

Produced by Theatre Works

22 April – 2 May 2026

Tues – Sat 7:30pm, Tues – Fri 11am, Sat 2pm (25 April only)

Preview: 22 (7:30pm) and 23 April (11am)

Opening Night: Thursday 23 April 7:30pm

Tickets: \$55 Full, \$48 Concession, \$40 Preview

Bookings: www.theatreworks.org.au/2026/mara

Enquiries: (03) 9534 3388

Venue: Theatre Works – 14 Acland Street, St Kilda

www.theatreworks.org.au

Duration: 90 minutes no interval

Age suitability: 15+

Warnings: depictions of bullying

Accessibility: Theatre Works is a wheelchair-accessible venue. A full-access guide will be available closer to the date