

Media Release

Acclaimed Actress To Tour New Zealand

BAFTA award winning actress Miriam Margolyes – **Blackadder, Harry Potter, James and Giant Peach, Graham Norton** – is celebrating Charles Dickens' 200th Anniversary with her NZ tour of **DICKENS' WOMEN** in May.

As much about Charles Dickens himself, this applauded production presents twenty-three characters, each brought to life by Margolyes. The characters are drawn from Dickens' novels and sketches, including *Oliver Twist*, *Great Expectations* and *Nicholas Nickleby*.

The characters are famous and iconic, others are lesser-known creations from Dickens' books, and all offer a unique glimpse into the real-life Charles Dickens, such as Mrs Micawber from *David Copperfield*, Miss Havisham in *Great Expectations* or the grotesque Mrs Gramp in *Martin Chuzzlewit* are just some of the characters Margolyes brings to life on the show.

Miriam Margolyes is a little different to most actors. Recently described by a New Zealand reporter as "Saucy at Seventy", she has done Dickens and she has done porn. Margolyes has been a penguin, a sheepdog and a glow-worm. You may also know her as Professor Sprout from Harry Potter.

Dickens' popularity has waned little since his death and he remains one of the best known and most read English authors. At least 180 motion pictures and TV adaptations based on Dickens' works have been produced.

Her vast credits include: Professor Sprout in *Harry Potter*, James and *The Giant Peach*, *Blackadder*, *Oliver Twist*, *Miss Marple*, *Merlin*, and *The Graham Norton Show*.



MIRIAM MARGOLYES

February was the great writer Charles Dickens' 200th birthday and thanks to Miriam Margolye's vibrant one-woman stage show 'Dickens' Women', he lives again.

"Dickens' Women is a tour de force. When she appears as herself, Margolye sparkles with intelligence and enthusiasm and is full of witty erudition about Dickens' life and work. And when she inhabits his characters, you'd swear they lived and breathed in front of you."

Miriam plays 23 different characters, both men and women. They tell the stories of characters in Dickens' books.

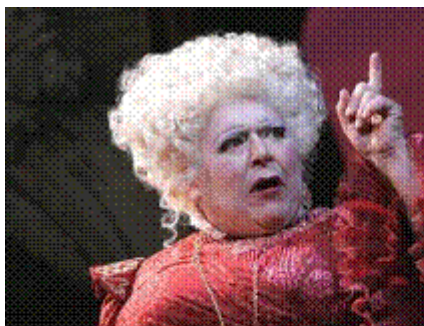
"Learn about the greatest man who ever wrote prose in English. There're quite a lot of revelations and salacious surprises too." she laughs.

Dickens' personality transcends his books and the characters explored in Dickens' Women were chosen not only because they are some of the most colourful and entertaining characters in Dickens' writing, but because they were based on real people in his life; people he fought with and cared for, loved and hated.

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However, Margolye hopes to offer a different and perhaps more critical perspective on the man himself. 'He's a surprising man' she says. 'Much crueller than people expect, so I hope the show will shock the audience and remove them from the comfort zone people likely expect from Dickens'.

Dickens' Women was developed by Miriam Margolye and Sonia Fraser for the 1989 Edinburgh Festival. It has since travelled worldwide, including London, Jerusalem, Santa Cruz, New York, Boston, Sydney, Auckland and all over India. In 1992, *Dickens' Women* was nominated for the prestigious Olivier Award.



About Miriam

Born in Oxford, England in 1941 and educated at Newnham College, Cambridge, Miriam Margolye is a veteran of stage and screen, an award-winning actress who achieved success on both sides of the Atlantic.

Winner of the BAFTA Best Supporting Actress award in 1993 for *The Age of Innocence*, she also received Best Supporting Actress at the 1989 LA Critics Circle Awards for her role in *Little Dorrit* and a Sony

Radio Award for Best Actress in 1993 for her unabridged recording of 'Oliver Twist'. She was the voice of the Matchmaker in *Mulan* and Fly, the mother dog, in *Babe*.

Major film credits during her long and celebrated career include *Yentl*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *I Love You To Death*, *End of Days*, *Sunshine*, Scorsese's *The Age of Innocence*, *Cold Comfort Farm*, and *Magnolia*. She starred in Stephen Hopkins' *The Life and Death of Peter Sellers*, *Modigliani*, *Istvan Szabo's Being Julia*, and *Ladies in Lavender* (dir. Charles Dance, with Dames Smith and Dench). Margolyes was Professor Sprout in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* and will appear in 2011 in the very last of the series, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. Most recently, Margolyes appeared in *The Dukes*, *How to Lose Friends and Alienate People* (with Simon Pegg) and *A Close Book* with Tom Conti.

Most memorable TV credits include, *Old Flames*, *Freud*, *Life and Loves of a She Devil*, *Blackadder*, *The Girls of Slender Means*, *Oliver Twist*, *The History Man*, *Vanity Fair*, and *Supply and Demand*. She was Franny in the CBS sitcom, *Frannie's Turn* and was a Guest Star in the Miss Marple episode, *Murder at the Vicarage* and in the BBC 3 comedy series, *Coming of Age*. Her 2004 BBC TV documentary series about Charles Dickens in 2004; *Dickens in America* was a worldwide success. In May 2010, she starred in the UK TV series, *MERLIN*. This year saw her playing Shirley Dunwich in *DOC MARTIN* and she returns to Australia later this year to complete filming of *THE MISS FISHER MURDER MYSTERIES* for ABC.

Stage credits include Madame Morrible in both the London and Broadway productions of *Wicked*, Madame Arcati in *Blithe Spirit* (Melbourne Theatre Company) Miss Prism in *The Importance of Being Earnest* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (dir. Sir Peter Hall), Lady Wishfort in *The Way of the World* at Sydney Theatre Company, *The Vagina Monologues*, Sir Peter Hall's Los Angeles production of *Romeo & Juliet*, *She Stoops to Conquer* and *Orpheus Descending* in London (dir. Sir Peter Hall), *The Killing of Sister George*, *The Threepenny Opera* (Tony Richardson) and her own award-winning, one-woman show, **DICKENS' WOMAN**, performed at festivals in Edinburgh, London, Sydney, Jerusalem, Santa Cruz, USA, New York City, Boston and all over India.

Most recently, she starred in Theatre du Complicite's West End production of Beckett's *Endgame*, playing Nell, for which she won the **WHATSONSTAGE** award for Best Supporting Actress for the second time. She played the Duchess in the revival of *ME AND MY GIRL* in December 2010. She has starred in *A DAY IN THE DEATH OF JOE EGG* at the Citizens Theatre, Glasgow.

Ms Margolyes' voice work has been internationally acclaimed and she is regarded as the most accomplished female voice in Britain: having recorded many audio books including *Oliver Twist*, *Great Expectations*, *Alice in Wonderland* and *Alice Through the Looking-Glass*, *Matilda*, *Pinocchio*, *The Worst Witch* series, *The Queen and I* (one of the best-selling audio books in the world) *The Little White Horse*, *The Sea*, *Troy* and *Wise Child*). She has voiced many TV documentaries, including *The Human Body*, and numerous commercials, the most notable probably being the Manikin Cigar ads, the Cadbury's Caramel Bunny, and Dolly, the Chimp in the PG Tips campaign.

In 2002, H.M The Queen awarded Miriam Margolyes the Order of the British Empire for her services to Drama.

Hamilton

May 2

Clarence Street Theatre

ON SALE NOW

Auckland

May 4-6

Bruce Mason Centre

ON SALE FEB 7 @ TICKETMASTER

Nelson

May 8 & 9

Theatre Royal

ON SALE NOW

Christchurch

May 12

Aurora Centre

ON SALE NOW

Oamaru

May 15

Opera House

ON SALE NOW

Dunedin

May 16

Regent Theatre

ON SALE SOON

Wellington

May 18 & 19

Opera House

ON SALE NOW

Palmerston North

May 22

Regent on Broadway

ON SALE NOW

Hastings

May 24

Hawkes Bay Opera House

ON SALE FEB 7

New Plymouth

May 26

TSB Theatre

ON SALE FEB 7 @ TICKETMASTER

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www.dickenswomen.com