



CATALPA: Flight to Freedom by Stuart Halusz and Myles Pollard

MARKETING KIT SUMMARY (7 pages total)

Please access the [Dropbox folder](#) for more materials including all the marketing assets and other content related to the show.

CONTACTS	
Marketing Contact	Executive Director: Rebecca Davis rebecca@theatre180.com.au 0414 345 381
Tour Coordination Contact	Executive Director: Rebecca Davis rebecca@theatre180.com.au 0414 345 381
Tour Technical Contacts	Artistic Director: Stuart Halusz stuart@theatre180.com.au 0404 895 381 Stage Manager: Craig Williams craig@theatre180.com.au 0418 909 636

PERFORMANCE & COMPANY INFORMATION	
Performance title	CATALPA: Flight to Freedom
Company	THEATRE 180
Producers	THEATRE 180
Scriptwriter	Stuart Halusz and Myles Pollard
Director	Stuart Halusz
Cast	Myles Pollard, Tadhg Lawrence, Taran Knight
Visual Designer	Josephine Hayes - Gneiss Design
Sound Designer & Programmer	Ben Collins
Lighting Designer	Aaron Stirk

Costume Designer	Ingrid Zurzolo
Theme Song Composer	Craig Skelton
Theme Song Vocalists	Tadhg Lawrence
Theme Song Musicians	Ian Simpson, Guitar/Banjo Phil Waldron, Bazouki John Clare, Bodhran Chris Gibbs, Electric Guitar Josephine Hayes, Fiddle Fiona Doyle, Irish Whistle Craig Skelton, Bass Guitar Elliot Jebb, Drums
Stage Manager	Craig Williams
Assistant Stage Manager	Aaron Stirk
Artform	Theatre
Running Time	105 minutes (no interval)
Audience recommendation	Families, students, adults, all genders, theatre and cinema audiences, regional audiences, lovers of Australian stories, Irish community
Show themes	<p>1. LOYALTY</p> <p>The six Irish Fenians at the centre of the CATALPA rescue were fighting for the independence of Ireland, to be free of the 700 years of occupation by the British who were destroying their culture, language and sense of community. These men were exhibiting extreme loyalty to the cause when they were arrested and sent away to penal servitude in the remote and isolated colony at Fremantle in 1868. When others were released and given tickets of leave, or in the case of JB O'Reilly escaped himself to freedom in America, they showed loyalty to their comrades and never forgot those left languishing in Fremantle Prison, living in abject misery in what was known at the time as one of the worst places in the world. The Irish ex-pat community were loyal to their freedom-fighters and crowd-funded the plan to purchase, equip and crew CATALPA to sail her to WA and break the remaining prisoners out, a plan which</p>

	<p>also included sending agents to WA in disguise as wealthy American investors, to oversee the land-end of the plan. Money and support came in from Ireland, America, Australia and New Zealand. This loyalty was rewarded when the CATALPA rescue provided a boost to the Irish cause and eventually led to the 1916 Easter Rising and Irish Independence later in the 20th Century.</p> <p>2. RESILIENCE</p> <p>The Fenian Six weren't criminals yet they were serving their sentences alongside hardened criminals also sent from England to the remote colony – murderers, rapists and thieves among an assortment of criminal minds. They showed extreme fortitude in surviving the privations of Fremantle Prison – lack of food and nourishment, hard labour including the back-breaking tasks of building roads, felling trees, breaking rocks and other menial tasks involved in the establishment of infrastructure in the colony. In addition to this they were living under the threat of corporal punishment for minor indiscretions which contributed greatly to both mental and physical strain. Enduring lashes from the cat-o-nine tails (a punishment which often resulted in death), solitary confinement, lack of contact from family and loved ones and other suffering was felt by all. For the rescuers, resilience came in a different form as they conceived and committed to the greatest and most audacious break-out ever attempted. The will to raise the enormous capital needed, to maintain the necessary secrecy to avoid discovery, and to enact the bold and daring plan required a significant degree of</p>
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	<p>resilient fortitude. In addition to this, the whaling operation which was a front to the secret plan, had its own element of danger, trepidation and challenges which require resilience and commitment to the cause.</p> <p>3. HOPE</p> <p>The Fenian Six held out hope to the last breath and over years of incarceration that they would be freed. This hope drove them every day, fed their will to live and underpinned the resilience needed to survive the hell of imprisonment. They hoped they had not been forgotten by their comrades, a hope which despite the lack of communication, never waned. Our rescuers too, hoped that they would succeed in their plan, hoped they were not too late and hoped in the eventual independence of Ireland which was at the heart of their beliefs and core of their spiritual self. Their biggest, most immediate hope was that they would not be caught by the British as the incumbent risk was imprisonment themselves or even death. For George Anthony who captained the Catalpa, and American Quaker with no connection to Ireland or Catholicism, his desperate hope was also for success for the same reasons, but also he had made the choice to break promise with his new wife, abandon her and their infant daughter, to commit to a 10-month whaling expedition which also set him up against the British Empire.</p>
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SYNOPSIS & SHOW COPY

Marketing By-line options

1. Courage...tenacity...daring and a shipload of adventure! The incredible true story of the most audacious prison break in Australia's history.
2. The incredible true story of the rescue in 1876 of six Fenian prisoners from Fremantle Prison in the most daring and audacious prison break in Australia's history.
3. Courage...tenacity...daring and a shipload of adventure! The greatest prison break in history and the catalyst for Irish independence.

Short Description

THEATRE 180 in collaboration with WA Museum tells the incredible true story of the greatest prison break in Australian history: the escape of six Irish Fenians from the fortress of Fremantle Prison in 1876 on board the American whaleship CATALPA.

Known as a living tomb, Fremantle Prison was a place of hellish imprisonment and far from the green fields of Ireland and the land of birth for these freedom fighters seeking independence from centuries of crippling British rule.

Two years in the planning, involving espionage, secret letters, undercover operatives who travelled from Boston to Western Australia to enact the plan, a love affair, a rescue ship masquerading as a whaleboat, a desperate boat chase and the threat of war against the might of America - this story has all the hallmarks of a major Hollywood movie and all the heart of an Irish ballad.

With its sprawling storyline, cast of thousands and epic landscapes from the high seas to 19th century Western Australia, the daring and audacious CATALPA rescue is a dramatic and gripping tale of hope and adventure not to be missed!

Long Description

THEATRE 180 in collaboration with WA Museum tells the incredible true story of the greatest prison break in Australian history: the escape of six Irish Fenians from the fortress of Fremantle Prison in 1876 on board the American whaleship CATALPA.

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war against the might of America - this story has all the hallmarks of a major Hollywood movie and all the heart of an Irish ballad.

With its sprawling storyline, cast of thousands and epic landscapes from the high seas to 19th century Western Australia, **CATALPA: Flight to Freedom** is the latest in THEATRE 180's successful and immersive CinePlay genre.

The daring and audacious CATALPA rescue is a dramatic and gripping tale of hope and adventure not to be missed!

WORLD-PREMIERE SEASON

WA Maritime Museum, Fremantle

October 30 – November 9, 2025

BOOKINGS: www.theatre180.com.au

MARKETING ASSETS & COLLATERAL

Artwork	1. A3, A5 & AO Posters (with space for your venue's details in PDF & PNG) 2. Show title designs can be found here
Images & Web Graphic	Images link Note: Please credit Stewart Thorpe Photography
Static/Video Social Media Tiles	Images link Note: Please credit Stewart Thorpe Photography
Videos	15sec & 30sec promo trailers and show theme song trailer

WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

Website	www.theatre180.com.au
Facebook	@theatre180
Instagram	@theatre180wa
Linked In	@theatre180
Hashtags	#theatre180 #wamuseum #catalpa #fenian

LOGOS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS *to be included on **ALL** advertising and promotional material associated with the tour and performances of CATALPA: Flight to Freedom.

Logos	Logos can be found here
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OTHER RESOURCES

Company Profile & Cast Biography	Biographies can be found here
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Media Release	Media Release can be found here
Reviews	Reviews can be found here
Education Pack	Education Pack can be found here