# Female-led feminist adaptation of Dracula at Lyric Hammersmith challenges gothic tradition



Morgan Lloyd Malcolm’s feminist adaptation of Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* has premiered at the Lyric Hammersmith, offering a fresh interpretation of the classic 1897 tale through a contemporary, gender-conscious lens. The production, directed by Emma Baggott and featuring a cast of six, takes a meta-theatrical approach, framing the narrative as a staged re-enactment by the original characters. This device highlights themes of trauma and memory, positioning Mina Harker’s perspective—previously marginalised in Stoker’s novel—at the forefront. Using a blend of audio effects and stylised lighting predominantly in blood-red hues, the production leans heavily into symbolic representation rather than straightforward horror, aiming to dissect the story's enduring cultural implications.

Central to the play is Mina, portrayed by Umi Myers, whose commanding presence carries much of the show. Myers navigates the challenge of being both narrator and participant, though critics note that her performance is occasionally constrained by the script’s frequent exposition. Mei Mac appears as Lucy, whose role, while compelling, is underutilised, leaving audiences wanting more depth in her characterisation. The ensemble also includes Jack Myers, Phoebe Naughton, Macy Seelochan, and B Terry, contributing to the layered telling of the narrative. The casting underscores the production’s emphasis on female experiences and perspectives amid a Victorian patriarchy that historically suppressed them.

The play’s narrative structure disrupts linear storytelling with interruptions and mini-essays that serve almost as academic footnotes, dissecting the text and its underlying social commentary. While this provides intellectual engagement, it also unintentionally diminishes the atmospheric tension traditionally associated with *Dracula*. The use of minimal props—such as wheeled set pieces doubling as various objects—and a stark, often clinical production design by Grace Smart coupled with Joshie Harriette’s lighting choices creates an eerie yet abstract environment. However, the atmosphere occasionally takes a backseat to analysis, which some reviews hail as too didactic or overly self-conscious, detracting from the suspense and horror expected in vampire theatre.

The feminist reframing extends to the script, which addresses issues like toxic masculinity and women’s bodily autonomy, drawing clear lines from Victorian repression to contemporary gender politics. For instance, Mina’s role as an assistant schoolmistress is portrayed in contrast with the domestic imagery imposed by her fiancé, Jonathan, reflecting the rigid gender roles imposed on women. The production questions who the true monsters are in modern society, complicating the figure of Dracula with greater nuance about power and control.

Despite the production’s ambition and thoughtful thematic explorations, it has met with mixed responses regarding its emotional and dramatic impact. Some critics find that moments of genuine fright and gripping tension, reminiscent of more intense vampire psychodramas, surface sporadically but mainly near the conclusion, aided by intriguing illusions crafted by John Bulleid and Gareth Kalyan. Yet overall, the show’s stop-start pacing and focus on meta-commentary render it sporadically engaging rather than consistently thrilling.

Running from September 11 to October 11, 2025, at the Lyric Hammersmith, this *Dracula* ultimately offers a cerebral retelling of the gothic myth infused with contemporary feminist critique. While it may not satisfy all expectations for horror, it is a thought-provoking theatrical experience that foregrounds female voices and confronts the patriarchal underpinnings of its source material.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2025/sep/18/dracula-review-lyric-hammersmith-london), [[4]](https://lyric.co.uk/shows/dracula/), [[6]](https://www.wtyefm.com/2025/07/07/dracula-gets-female-driven-revival-at-londons-lyric-hammersmith/), [[7]](https://www.haworthagency.co.uk/news/dracula-announced-at-lyric-hammersmith)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2025/sep/18/dracula-review-lyric-hammersmith-london), [[2]](https://www.londontheatre.co.uk/reviews/dracula-review-lyric-hammersmith), [[3]](https://www.standard.co.uk/culture/theatre/dracula-at-the-lyric-hammersmith-umi-myers-b1248281.html)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2025/sep/18/dracula-review-lyric-hammersmith-london), [[2]](https://www.londontheatre.co.uk/reviews/dracula-review-lyric-hammersmith), [[3]](https://www.standard.co.uk/culture/theatre/dracula-at-the-lyric-hammersmith-umi-myers-b1248281.html)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2025/sep/18/dracula-review-lyric-hammersmith-london), [[3]](https://www.standard.co.uk/culture/theatre/dracula-at-the-lyric-hammersmith-umi-myers-b1248281.html), [[5]](https://www.timeout.com/london/theatre/dracula-12)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2025/sep/18/dracula-review-lyric-hammersmith-london), [[3]](https://www.standard.co.uk/culture/theatre/dracula-at-the-lyric-hammersmith-umi-myers-b1248281.html)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2025/sep/18/dracula-review-lyric-hammersmith-london), [[6]](https://www.wtyefm.com/2025/07/07/dracula-gets-female-driven-revival-at-londons-lyric-hammersmith/), [[7]](https://www.haworthagency.co.uk/news/dracula-announced-at-lyric-hammersmith)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2025/sep/18/dracula-review-lyric-hammersmith-london> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.londontheatre.co.uk/reviews/dracula-review-lyric-hammersmith> - This review discusses Morgan Lloyd Malcolm's feminist adaptation of 'Dracula' at the Lyric Hammersmith, highlighting its focus on female characters and the use of audio effects to convey the story. The production is noted for its atmospheric design and the performances of Umi Myers as Mina and Mei Mac as Lucy, though the review mentions that the feminist messaging can feel didactic at times.
3. <https://www.standard.co.uk/culture/theatre/dracula-at-the-lyric-hammersmith-umi-myers-b1248281.html> - This article reviews the Lyric Hammersmith's production of 'Dracula,' emphasizing its feminist reworking of the classic tale. It highlights Umi Myers's compelling performance as Mina and the innovative use of minimal props and lighting to create a haunting atmosphere. The review also notes the production's exploration of themes like toxic masculinity and misogyny, drawing parallels between vampires and the patriarchy.
4. <https://lyric.co.uk/shows/dracula/> - The Lyric Hammersmith's official page for 'Dracula' provides details about the production, including dates (11 September - 11 October 2025), ticket pricing, and the creative team. It describes the play as a feminist adaptation of Bram Stoker's classic, focusing on Mina Harker's perspective and her recounting of Dracula's journey from Transylvania to London.
5. <https://www.timeout.com/london/theatre/dracula-12> - Time Out's preview of the Lyric Hammersmith's 'Dracula' highlights the feminist reimagining of the story, with Mina as the sole survivor recounting events. The article notes the production's setting as a Victorian speaking tour and mentions the involvement of director Emma Baggott, though it leaves some details about the adaptation's specifics to be revealed upon viewing.
6. <https://www.wtyefm.com/2025/07/07/dracula-gets-female-driven-revival-at-londons-lyric-hammersmith/> - This article announces the Lyric Hammersmith's upcoming production of 'Dracula,' emphasizing its female-driven revival. It mentions the involvement of writer Morgan Lloyd Malcolm and director Emma Baggott, focusing on the adaptation's aim to uncover the female voices at the heart of the tale. The production is set to run from 11 September to 11 October 2025.
7. <https://www.haworthagency.co.uk/news/dracula-announced-at-lyric-hammersmith> - The Haworth Agency's announcement details the Lyric Hammersmith's production of 'Dracula,' highlighting the involvement of writer Morgan Lloyd Malcolm and director Emma Baggott. It describes the adaptation as uncovering the female voices at the heart of the tale and mentions the production's run from 11 September to 11 October 2025.