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The BUZZ

A new queen is ready to reign on Broadway

With her performance in Broadway's "The Pirate Queen," **Linda Balgord** joins a list of actresses who've stepped into the embroidered wardrobe of **Queen Elizabeth I**, including two who were Oscar-nominated for the part the same year.

Balgord, a New York stage vet who played Grizabella in the final company of "Cats," says she's grateful there are past performances she can look to for insight into the 16th century monarch, arch rival of the Irish chieftain **Grace O'Malley**, the swashbuckling queen of the title. "It's intimidating to think about throwing my crown in the ring with the actresses who've played Elizabeth I," she says. "I try not to think about it."

Other thespians who've ascended to the Tudor throne include **Bette Davis**, who slapped on a healthy amount of white pancake in 1939 for "The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex" and again for the 1955 film "The Virgin Queen"; **Cate Blanchett**, of the 1998 movie "Elizabeth"; **Judi Dench**, who was QEI in the Oscar-winning 1998 film "Shakespeare in Love," and **Glenda Jackson**, who got all regal for 1971's "Mary, Queen of Scots." Dench and Blanchett were both Oscar-nominated, and Dench won.

Balgord can also be likened to **Helen Mirren**, the only actress to play both Queen Elizabeth I and II on screen, first in the 2005 HBO movie "Elizabeth I," and then in the beguiling recent Oscar winner, "The Queen." "The Pirate Queen" is getting ready for an April 5 opening at the Hilton Theatre.

— ROBERT KAHN



PHOTO BY JOAN MARCUS



GRAMERCY PICTURES PHOTO

Like a Virgin Queen: Linda Balgord, left, "The Pirate Queen," Cate Blanchett, above, in the 1998 movie "Elizabeth" and Helen Mirren in the 2005 HBO film "Elizabeth I."



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