**Gaslight – Pre Show Introduction**

Welcome to this introduction to **Gaslight** – written by Patrick Hamilton in 1938. First presented at the Richmond Theatre, London on December 5th 1938, *Gaslight* is a Victorian thriller, which spawned the 1944 film starring Ingrid Bergman and Charles Boyer. This is the inaugural main stage production to open the newly renovated Her Majesty’s theatre and is presented by State Theatre Company South Australia, directed by Catherine Fitzgerald.

The audio described performances at will be on Saturday 12th September and Monday 14th September, provided by Access2Arts.

On 12th September, there will be a sensory introduction at 1:00pm; the introductory notes will start at 1:45pm and the performance itself at 2:00pm. This performance will also be Auslan Interpreted.

On 14th September, there will be a sensory introduction at 5:30pm; the introductory notes will start at 6:15pm and the performance itself at 6:30pm. Following this performance there will be a post show Q&A.

The production lasts for approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes including one interval. Carol Wellman Kelly and Ruth Weldon will give the live audio description for Access2Arts.

There now follows information with background to the play, descriptions of the set, characters and costumes, and a list of cast and production credits. This will be followed by some additional useful information and contact details.

“Gaslight (verb): A form of psychological manipulation where a person seeks to make a targeted individual or group question their own memory, perception and sanity.”

In the program notes the director states that “The term **Gaslight,** has recently enjoyed a resurgence in the everyday vernacular to describe mistrust in relation to gender and world politics, in particular men and political leaders”.

**Characters and Costumes:**

The play opens with a **vaudeville singer,** Eileen Darley performing in front of the stage curtain. She’s dressed in black trousers, matching waistcoat and knee-length frock coat with a pink flower on her left lapel. Her red ringlets escape from under a black satin top hat. She wears black and white brogue shoes and wields a silver tipped black cane as she cavorts across the stage. Later she removes the jacket, loosens her hair and narrates from a book.

**Elizabeth (Lizzie)** the senior cook and housekeeper is played by Ellen Freeman who shuffles around, in a somber black full-length dress. The stiff fabric and corseted bodice has a swathe of black fabric around her ample hips, bunched into a bow and bustle at the back. Her grey hair is pinned up on top of her head and a small white bow sits at her throat.

**Mr Jack Manningham** played by Nathan O’Keefe is tall slightly balding with thick auburn sideburns. His long thin limbs dangle in a brown/grey tweed trouser and waistcoat set with a white wing tip collar and loose beige cravat-like necktie. He is well kept and smart in his black lace-up shoes. He wears silver sleeve garters around his arms just above the elbow.

**Mrs Bella Manningham** played by Ksenja (pron. kashenya) Logos is delicate, pale, small framed and blonde. Her hair has been styled and wound up on top of her head but is now somewhat disheveled. She is buttoned into a close fitted deep blue velvet jacket over a matching full-length velvet skirt. The lapels and skirt ruffles are made of satin in the same deep blue shade. The Victorian bustle and high ruffle at the neck give her a stiff and awkward gait.

**Nancy** played by Katherine Sortini is a spritely robust young woman with masses of black hair contained in a maid’s white mobcap. A white apron crossed at the back and tied in a bow has long tails that hang down over her full-length dark grey work dress.

**Inspector Rough** played by Eileen Darley appears enigmatically in dark trousers, a rouge pink shirt and waistcoat, brown long frock coat under a practical brown overcoat and pork pie men’s hat. Around her neck hangs a tweed woolen scarf. She sashays around in brown suede lace up shoes, sporting the same black cane as the vaudeville singer.

**The Set:**

The action takes place in the formal lounge of the Manningham home. The lounge room is set on raised platform in the middle of the stage. The walls of the lounge have irregular angles and panels creating nooks and alcoves with multiple wall surfaces. There are two doors in the lounge, the main door which leads to a hallway off stage, sits on the left side wall and on the right wall a door leads into Mr Manningham’s dressing room. Hanging from the ceiling to halfway down the wall on the right side of the main door, is a long bell pull cord to alert the house staff. The walls of the lounge are covered in blue wallpaper with a vintage pattern of repeated leaves and flowers. There are slight rips and stains across the top corners of the wallpaper. Running across the top of the walls, where they meet the imagined ceiling, there is a half-metre wide strip of green wallpaper with repeated patterns of pink, white and brown flowers.

The doors, skirting board and floorboards are all made of wood, as is the frame of the window that sits along the back wall. The wooden venetian blind in the window is lowered, but hangs at an obscure angle. There is enough room between the slats to peer out onto the street below. Pulled to the right side and held back with a woven cord, is heavy pale blue velvet curtain. Placed in front of the curtain is a wooden coat and hat stand, hung with two overcoats, and sitting on the floor beside this, a white umbrella stand with green trim.

In the centre of the room, a white lace tablecloth covers a round polished wood dining table with two matching chairs. Sitting approximately one meter in front of the table is a chaise lounge, in red fabric with embroidered flowers. A velvet red blanket with white trim is strewn across the back of the lounge. To the left of the chaise lounge, sitting a half a meter back is a large heavy leather lounge chair with a high back and thick arms. A leather bound footstool is placed in front. Next to the chair is a small round side table balanced on three curved legs.

Behind the chair, on the left wall is a carved wood fireplace, with a mantel above. On the mantel is a large mirror, in an ornate wooden frame, rounded at the top. The mirror is dirty and smudged and the reflection is unclear. On the mantel is a large mint green glass vase containing two peacock feathers. Either side of the vase are matching ceramic dog statues. In front of the fireplace is a brass stand with equipment to keep the fireplace clean, a shovel, poker and broom. To the left of the fireplace is a decorative chair with a leather seat, curved wooden arms and rounded wooden back.

On the right wall, opposite the fireplace is Mr Manningham’s bureau, a polished wooden desk with a lid that folds down to become the writing surface. It has a number of draws within and two draws below the lid. Piles of books sit on top of the desk, including a Bible, along side a brass desk lamp with a circular cut-glass shade. To the left of the desk, sitting in the alcove near the dressing room door, is a wooden cupboard, with three shelves on top that display glassware and decorative plates. Here Mrs Manningham keeps her medicine; a small vile with a dropper and another with smelling salts. On the floor between the desk and the cupboard is Mrs Manningham’s box. It is wooden and shiny with polish, and houses her embroidery and other belongings. On the right of the desk, towards the edge of the lounge, is a one metre high wooden statue of a bear standing with its arm up. Its paw is open flat and holds candelabra.

The walls are covered in many paintings, including china plates with scenes painted on them. A large landscape sits above the main door and portraits of the Manningham’s, each in an oval frame, sit either side of the fireplace. Below each portrait is a gaslight with two more lamps mounted on the opposite wall above the bureau. Each has rounded glass covers, metal fixtures and small round dials to control the level of light.

**Cast and Production Credits:**

Playwright Patrick Hamilton

Director Catherine Fitzgerald

Designer Ailsa Paterson

Lighting Designer Nic Mollison

Composer Andrew Howard

Stage Manager Abigail Heuer

Assistant Stage Manager Steph Bone

**Cast:**

Inspector Rough Eileen Darley

Elizabeth Ellen Freeman

Bella Manningham Ksenja Logos

Jack Manningham Nathan O’Keefe

Nancy Katherine Sortini

Understudy Martha Lott & Mitchel Butell

Please Note: This production contains *smoke haze.*

**Access Information:**

**Audio Description**

The Audio Describer delivers a live verbal commentary via a personal headset providing information on the visual elements of a performance as it unfolds.

Please ensure you tell the box office that you are planning to use the audio description so a headset can be booked.

**Sensory Information Tour:**

Indicates a 30minute guided sensory tour one hour prior to a live performance, visual art or museum exhibitions. This may include costumes and props that may be touched and a tour of the on stage set if practical.

**The Pre-show audio notes:**

These notes are available in audio format on the websites for State Theatre Company of SA and Access2Arts.

**Booking Tickets:**

To book access tickets, please call BASS on 131 246

**The Venue:**

Her Majesty’s Theatre is located at 58 Grote Street, Adelaide, directly across from the Central Markets. The venue has been recently renovated, the foyer space has increased, there are now lifts and bathrooms and bars at each level. The theatre has kept the influence of original art deco design, with red velvet carpet and brass fixtures. When entering through the main doors, the tall double doors to the stalls are directly in front, with the curved wooden stairwells to the other levels on either side. When entering, take a sharp left to get to the new foyer, where you will find the bar, BASS counter and bathrooms. There is an accessible entrance to the stalls on the left, under the stairwell and just before you reach the new foyer.

The Theatre is wheelchair accessible and guide dog friendly.

**COVID Safe behaviour:**

* – Do not come to the theatre if you have cold or flu symptoms. Contact BASS on 131 246 to exchange your ticket or seek a refund.
* – Wash your hands often and use hand sanitiser.
* – Cover coughs and sneezes in your arm.
* – Keep 1.5m from others wherever possible in foyers and queues.
* – Download the COVIDSafe app for speedy contact tracing.

Please note: Adelaide Festival Centre venues are cash-free.

Due to current social distancing rules, the bars are closed and audience will be asked to stay in their seats during interval, unless they need the facilities. Seating is checkerboard, which means there will be a seat between all audience members, even those who attend together.

**Car Parking and Public transport:**

Currently there is no taxi zone in front of the theatre, but there are loading zones on Grote St and Pitt St, that run down the side of the theatre. There are bus stops directly in front of the theatre on Grote St and the tram stop at Victoria Square is about a 5-minute walk to the venue. Being centrally located there are many parking options around the Grote Street precinct, including on Pitt St, Adelaide Central Markets and Wilson Parking on Franklin Street (23 Franklin St).

Up to date parking and access information should be obtained by calling the Adelaide Festival Access Officer on 8216 4444 or email: access@adelaidefestival.com.au

For more information on audio described performances please contact

Jody Holdback at Access2Arts by telephone 8463 1689 or email: audio.describer@access2arts.org.au