## Audio Description Pre-Show Notes for GASLIGHT prepared by Vantagepoint Audio Description.

# Event Details:

GASLIGHT by Patrick Hamilton, adapted by Johnna Wright and Patty Jamieson

Presented by: Queensland Theatre and Rodney Rigby

Venue: Playhouse Theatre, Queensland Performing Arts Centre, (Brisbane/Meanjin)

Audio described performance: 1pm Wednesday 28 February, 2024.

Audio Described by: Todd MacDonald for Vantagepoint Audio Description.

These notes, current at time of distribution, are subject to change and are intended as a guide to prepare you for the live Audio Description.

# Running Time.

Two hours, 15 minutes, including a 20-minute interval.

# Show Warnings.

This production uses simulated weapons, lightning, dynamic sound and haze effects.

In-depth content advisories with spoilers can be found here.

If you or someone you know needs information or support, these organisations are there to help:

Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636.

Headspace 03 9027 0100.

Lifeline 13 11 14.

Special Notes.

Not applicable.

# Context/Overview.

Young, trusting and fragile — Bella Manningham thinks she’s losing her mind. In the evenings, she hears strange noises. The sitting room gas lamps dim for no apparent reason. Is Bella’s loving relationship with her urbane partner Jack all that it seems?

Patrick Hamilton’s 1938 play introduced us to the powerful term we now use to describe an insidious form of deception and manipulation. This liberating adaptation by Johnna Wright and Patty Jamieson, which world premiered at the 2022 Shaw Festival, is a gripping, reimagined thriller of daring and doubt. Will the ‘gaslighting’ have its intended dire effect, or will our heroine find the strength to save herself?

With all the hallmarks of Victorian Gothic, refreshed with intriguing new insights, *Gaslight* is a thrilling theatrical experience.

# The Stage.

The Playhouse has a proscenium arch stage, 12 metres wide, 7 metres deep and two stories high. This theatre has a fly tower that allows set and scenery to be lowered onto the stage or lifted out. The auditorium seats 800 people.

# The Set.

The set depicts the ground floor living room of a middle-class home, in a Victorian row house in London, England, in 1901.

The dark wood panelling on all three walls, which extends from the floor to the very high ceiling, dominates the tone and texture of the room.

At the far-left edge of the set, against the wall, is a large dark-wood **credenza**, taller than a person, and 1.5 meters wide

To the right of the credenza, is a 2-metre-wide **entrance way arch** into the living room. This is the only way into, or out of the living room. Through the entrance way we see deeper into the house: on the right a **staircase** leads up out of view to the next level of the house, and on the left, the hallway leads to the unseen front door. In this hallway a **coatrack** is partially in view on the left side of the entrance way arch. On the right edge of the entrance way arch, inside the living room, hangs a long cord which rings the bell for the housekeepers.

To the right of the entrance way, at the 12 o’clock position, in the centre of the back wall of the living room, is a **fireplace**, with wooden mantel. Stacked on the mantle ledge are some books.

To the right of the fireplace in the back right corner of the room is a **liquor cabinet** with jugs and glassware on it. Several paintings are mounted on the wall above the liquor cabinet and fireplace mantle.

At the far-right edge of the set is a large, **bay window** alcove 3 meters high and 2 meters wide. Within the window bay is a dusty pink **chaise lounge**. The entire window bay and lounge can be concealed by two deep green **curtains** drawn from the outer edge side to meet in the centre.

Towards the front right edge of the stage is **Jack’s desk**. A stately wooden work desk with many lockable drawers. The desk is populated with small stacks of papers, writing materials, stationery and so on. A wooden chair accompanies this desk.

Towards the centre of the living room are two groups of furniture: The first, which is directly in front of the entrance way, is a small circular **dining table**, and two chairs, with a Persian rug beneath. The second, in front of the fireplace, is a low circular **coffee table** and around it two chairs and a foot stool, clustered over a Persian rug.

A large light fixture hangs in the centre of the room, in the space between the dining table and the coffee table. The hanging light features three ornate metalwork arms, with a glass lamp shades at the each end.

Other glass lampshades are mounted directly onto the walls of the room. One near the credenza, two above the fireplace, one over Jack’s desk.

The wooden floor boards are dressed with three large Persian-styled rugs.

Lighting and other effects will be described live.

# Characters and Costumes.

**Bella Manningham**, performed by Geraldine Hakewill.

In her 30s. Fair-skinned woman, with a tall and lean build, and dark hair tied in an elegant bun. Her garments reflect the fashion of the early 1900s, with a corseted waistline making an S-shaped silhouette: embellished or voluminous bustline and sleeves, narrow waist, floor-length skirts made full at the back with petticoats and flat at the front. Bella changes costumes through the performance, with the colour palette of her dresses ranging across white, cream, peach, soft blues and lilac.

**Jack Manningham**, Bella’s husband, performed by Toby Schmitz.

In his 40s. Fair-skinned man, tall and slim build, with black hair just below ear-length.

Jack wears a dark coloured three-piece suit over a white starched collared shirt, and black necktie. He changes costumes through the performance, the colour palette remaining sombre browns, greys, and black. He often has a pocket watch on a chain, within his waistcoat. He occasionally is seen with a long grey overcoat, or burgundy-coloured smoking jacket.

**Elizabeth**, the housekeeper, performed by Kate Fitzpatrick.

In her 60s. Fair-skinned woman of short, solid build, with dull-brown hair tied back in a low bun. She wears a housekeeper’s uniform of a floor length black dress cinched at the waist, with long sleeves, and high neckline. Black frill accents at her cuffs and neckline. Around her waist she sometimes wears a white apron.

**Nancy**, the maid, performed by Courtney Cavallaro.

In her 20s. Fair-skinned woman, average height and build, with dark hair fixed in a bun on the top of her head. She is first seen in a plaid skirt, under a belted jacket. Later she wears a house-maid’s uniform of a floor-length black dress, cinched at the waist with long sleeves and high neckline with tall stiff white collar, and cuffs. Over the dress she wears a pinafore-style white apron, and white cap over her hair.

Any pertinent costume changes will be described live.

END OF PRE-SHOW NOTES.

# Upcoming Audio Described Events.

“Rumour Has It” by The Little Red Company.

Saturday 2 March, 8pm at the Concert Hall, QPAC.

(audio described by Vantagepoint)

“A Midsummer Night’s Dream” presented by Queensland Ballet.

Saturday 20 April, 1:30pm at the Playhouse, QPAC

(audio described by Vision Australia)

“37” presented by Queensland Theatre.

Saturday 20 April, 2pm at the Bille Brown Theatre.

(audio described by Vantagepoint)

For more event information visit [Vantagepoint Audio Description](https://www.vantagepointad.com/audio-description) and [Vision Australia’s events listing.](https://www.visionaustralia.org/services/staying-connected/events?sort_by=field_event_start_value&sort_order=ASC&field_event_start_value_1=All&field_event_state_value%5b5%5d=5)

If you wish to give feedback about the live audio description, today’s describer will wait at the cloakroom after the show.

Or, email vantagepointad@gmail.com

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