

**THE NEW  
PSYCHOLOGICAL THRILLER**

**Patrick Hamilton's  
GASLIGHT**

**MADNESS OR MANIPULATION?**

Adapted by

**Johnna Wright** and **Patty Jamieson**



**EDUCATION RESOURCES**

# GASLIGHT

## MADNESS OR MANIPULATION?

*“In this world there is always danger for those who are afraid of it.”*

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

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 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.

# GASLIGHT

## MADNESS OR MANIPULATION?

### CAST

#### GERALDINE HAKEWILL • **Bella**



Geraldine graduated from WAAPA in 2008 and has since starred in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, *Fury*, *Baal*, *The Real Thing*, *Disgraced*, *Chimerica* and *Julius Caesar* (Sydney Theatre Company), *Peter Pan* (Belvoir), which toured to New York, *Tartuffe* (Bell Shakespeare Company), *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice* (Darlinghurst Theatre Company), and *Macbeth* (Melbourne Theatre Company).

Geraldine's television credits include lead roles in *Ms Fisher's Modern Murder Mysteries*, *Wakefield* and *Wanted* for which she was nominated for a TV Week Logie for Most Outstanding Newcomer.

Geraldine has also appeared in many independent Australian feature films including *The Pretend One*, *Disclosure*, *Uninhabited*, *Wasted on the Young* and *Joe Cinque's Consolation*.

Geraldine recently produced the feature film *The Rooster*, starring Hugo Weaving, which premiered in competition at the Melbourne International Film Festival in 2023.

#### TOBY SCHMITZ • **Jack**



Toby Schmitz is a writer, director and actor. He was most recently seen on stage in *Amadeus* (Red Line Productions) opposite Michael Sheen.

His other acting theatre credits include *The Rover*, *Hamlet*, *The Wild Duck*, *Measure for Measure*, *Thyestes*, *Strange Interlude*, *Ruben Guthrie* and *Dance of Death* (Belvoir), *The Present*, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, *Travesties*, *Hanging Man*, *Rabbit* and *The Great* (Sydney Theatre Company), *Wild* and *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Melbourne Theatre Company), *Much Ado About Nothing* (Bell Shakespeare Company), *The Boyce Trilogy* (Griffin Theatre), and *Thom Pain* (based on nothing) and *Degenerate Art* (Red Line Productions), which he wrote and directed.

Toby received Helpmann Award Nominations for his performances in *Thyestes*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Ruben Guthrie*, and Sydney Theatre Award Nominations for *Howie the Rookie*, *The Great* and *Ruben Guthrie*.

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## CAST

### KATE FITZPATRICK • Elizabeth



Perth-born, Adelaide-raised Kate Fitzpatrick is an actor and writer who is a NIDA Bachelor of Arts graduate. She was also a NIDA Board Member for two terms.

Her films include: *The Removalists*, *A World Apart*, *Heaven's Burning*, *Summer of Secrets*, *Goodbye Paradise*, *By Night*, *The Perfectionist*, *Salute to the Great McCarthy*, *The Promised Women*, *The Office Picnic* and *Deep Water*.

Television credits include *Something in the Air*, *Players to the Gallery*, *Redheap*, *The Last Resort*, *Packed to the Rafters* and *Rake*.

Her extensive theatre credits include: *Arcadia* (Queensland Theatre); *The Recruiting Officer* (Melbourne Theatre Company); *Hamlet on Ice*, *Celluloid Heroes*, *The Ride Across Lake Constance*, *Shadows of Blood*, *Rooted*, *Beyond Mozambique*, *Kennedy's Children* and *On the Shore of the Wide World* (The Nimrod/Stables/Belvoir).

For the Old Tote Theatre Company, later the Sydney Theatre Company, her credits include: *The Legend of King O'Malley*, Nola Boyle in *The Season at Sarsaparilla*, *The Misanthrope*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *The Country Wife*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Les Parents Terribles*, *The Jungle*, *Hamlet*, *DelDel*, *Macbeth*, *The Bourgeois Wedding* and *Late Arrivals* (which opened The Wharf Theatre). She was also Jenny Diver in Jim Sharman's *The Threepenny Opera*, which opened the Sydney Opera House Drama Theatre, *The Comedy of Errors*, Don in *Don Juan*, Marguerite Gautier in *The Lady of the Camelias*, and Mag in *Big Toys*, the play Patrick White wrote for her.

For the Playbox/Malthouse Theatre: Kate played Marilyn Monroe in *Insignificance*; a Molière Season of four plays, *Britannicus*, *Spring Song*, *Unsuitable for Adults*, *Ghosts*, *Twelve Angry Men*, *Scapin*, *Singled Out*, *The Fat Boy* and *Julia 3*.

Kate is also an accomplished writer, essayist and humourist, with four published books – two of these, *Namedropping* and *Airmail*, are still in print. She has worked as a feature writer/columnist for major newspapers and journals, and on TV as an interviewer/presenter.

In the summer of 1983-1984 she became the world's first female cricket commentator on the Nine Network. Her cricket writing has been included in two volumes of Australia's Best Sports Writing, and syndicated in India and Pakistan.

Kate is one of 50 people who wrote a piece for the recently published book *Transcendence*, about working in the Sydney Opera House, to celebrate its 50th birthday.

She recently completed a Renny Harlin movie, *Deep Water*, to be released 2024. She did her own stunts.

Kate is a grandmother and was awarded the Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal for services to the theatre.

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### **COURTNEY CAVALLARO • Nancy**



Courtney is an actor and writer who invites vulnerability, heart and glee into her work. Upon graduating from WAAPA (Performance Making), she was awarded the Belinda Dunbar Prize which recognises the most outstanding Bachelor of Performing Arts graduate and went on to be nominated as best newcomer in the WA Performing Arts Awards. Courtney was selected for the AFTRS National Talent camp, cast as Simone Sinclair in *Irreverent* (Netflix), and in 2023 Courtney made her Queensland Theatre debut in *As You Like It*.

# GASLIGHT

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## CREATIVES

### PATRICK HAMILTON



Patrick Hamilton was born in Hassocks, Sussex in 1904. He and his parents moved a short while later to Hove, where he spent his early years. He published his first novel, *Craven House*, in 1926 and within a few years had established a wide readership for himself.

Despite personal setbacks and an increasing problem with drinking, he was still able to write some of his best work. His plays include the thrillers *Rope* (1929) – on which Alfred Hitchcock's film *Rope* was based – and *Gaslight* (1939), also successfully adapted for screen in the same year. There was also a historical drama, *The Duke in Darkness* (1943).

Among his novels are *The Midnight Bell* (1929), *The Siege of Pleasure* (1932), *The Plains Of Cement* (1934), a trilogy entitled *Twenty Thousand Streets Under The Sky* (1935), *Hangover Square* (1941) and *The Slaves Of Solitude* (1947). *The Gorse Trilogy* is made up of *The West Pier*, *Mr Stimpson* and *Mr Gorse* and *Unknown Assailant*, which were first published during the 1950s.

### JOHNNA WRIGHT • Co-writer



Johnna has worked, studied and collaborated in various parts of Canada as a director, actor, producer, dramaturg and playwright.

She was a co-founder of Vancouver's Bard on the Beach Shakespeare Festival (now Canada's largest Shakespeare festival outside Stratford). There, her most recent project was an acclaimed adaptation of *All's Well that Ends Well*, set in India on the eve of Partition, co-created with Rohit Chokhani.

Johnna is a two-time recipient of Vancouver's Jessie Richardson Awards for Outstanding Direction and Outstanding Production, as well as other awards.

Favourite projects include *The Rivals* for Blackbird Theatre in Vancouver and *The Gravitational Pull of Bernice Trimble* in Saskatoon.

As a dramaturg and director, Johnna has supported the development of dozens of new Canadian plays. She also works as an editor for writers of fiction and memoir.

Patty and Johnna's next play, *The Three Musketeers*, is in development. Johnna also wrote *The Suspect*, an adaptation of her mother's award-winning novel of the same name.

After the challenges of the last few years, Johnna believes more than ever in the power of theatre to change the way we see the world, and in the need for audiences to have that experience together.



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## CREATIVES

### PATTY JAMIESON • Co-writer



Patty's career as an actor, singer, dancer, musician and teacher has taken her to theatres across Canada, the U.S and Germany. Notably, she has been a member of the Acting Ensemble at the Shaw Festival, Canada's second largest repertory theatre in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, for 26 seasons. There she has played roles in over 60 plays including *Ragtime*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *The Light in the Piazza*, *The Sea*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Rope*, *Happy End*, *Cabaret*, *The Women*, *Major Barbara*, and *Pygmalion*.

Patty works with many local arts organisations in her hometown as producer, writer, and performer, and teaches arts, music and theatre for Brock University, Music Niagara, and Yellow Door Theatre Project. She received her M.Ed. in 2018 and has seen first-hand the power of supporting arts education for students at all levels, teaching in both of Canada's official languages.

Patty and Johnna continue to collaborate on various writing projects with an interest in bringing out voices that have often not been heard. They are extremely grateful for the support of their families, Playwrights Guild of Canada, Shaw Festival Artistic Director, Tim Carroll, and their hardworking literary agent, Colin Rivers.

### LEE LEWIS • Director



Lee Lewis is the Artistic Director of Queensland Theatre and one of Australia's leading directors. For Queensland Theatre she has directed: *First Casualty*, *Bernhardt/Hamlet*, *Return to the Dirt*, *Prima Facie*, *Our Town*, *Mouthpiece*, *Rice*. For Griffin she has directed: *Prima Facie*, *The Almighty Sometimes*, *Kill Climate Deniers*, *The Homosexuals or Faggots*, *Rice*, *Gloria*, *The Bleeding Tree* (three Helpmann Awards), *8 Gigabytes of Hardcore Pornography*, *Masquerade* (co-directed with Sam Strong), *Emerald City*, *A Rabbit for Kim Jong-il*, *The Serpent's Table*, *Silent Disco*, *The Bull The Moon and the Coronet of Stars*, *The Call*, *A Hoax*, *The Nightwatchman*, and; for Griffin and Bell Shakespeare:

*The Literati*; for Bell Shakespeare: *The School for Wives*, *Twelfth Night*, for Belvoir: *That Face*, *This Heaven*, *2000 Feet Away*, *Half and Half*, *A Number*, *7 Blowjob*s and *Ladybird*; for Melbourne Theatre Company: *Gloria*, *Hayfever*, David Williamson's *Rupert*, which toured to Washington DC as part of the World Stages International Arts Festival and to Sydney's Theatre Royal in 2014; for Sydney Theatre Company: *Mary Stuart*, *Honour*, *Love Lies Bleeding* and *ZEBRA!*; for ATYP: *Battlegrounds and Citizenship*; for Darwin Festival *Highway of Lost Hearts*; for NIDA: *After Dinner*, *Big Love*, *Shopping and Fucking*, and *The Winter's Tale*; and for WAAPA: *As You Like It*. She directed the revival of Max Lambert's and Katharine Thompson's musical *Darlinghurst Nights* for The Hayes.

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## CREATIVES

### RENÉE MULDER • Set and Costume Designer



Renée Mulder is an award-winning set and costume designer.

Renée works with Australia's leading directors including Jessica Arthur, Sarah Goodes, Lee Lewis, Paige Rattray, Imara Savage, Shari Sebbens, Sam Strong, and Kip Williams. Renée was Design Director at Queensland Theatre 2020-2021, was a member of Queensland Theatre's National Artistic Team from 2016-2017 and Resident Designer at Sydney Theatre Company from 2012-2014. Renée won Best Stage Design of a Mainstage Production and was nominated for Best Costume Design at the 2019 Sydney Theatre Awards for her work on *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*. Renée won the 2018 Sydney Theatre Award for Best Costume Design for *Top Girls* and was nominated in the same category for her designs for *Harp in the South*, both with Sydney Theatre Company. She also received a Helpmann Award nomination for Best Costume Design for *Harp in the South*. Renée has won three Matilda Awards for Best Design for *Edward Gant's Amazing Feats of Loneliness* (Sydney Theatre Company/La Boite), Best Design - Set and Best Design - Costume for *First Casualty* (Queensland Theatre).

### PAUL JACKSON • Lighting Designer



Paul Jackson APDG is a multi-award-winning lighting and set designer, dramaturg and theatre maker whose practice encompasses theatre, opera, dance, music theatre, concerts, and live events.

Paul has designed lighting for The Australian Ballet, Royal New Zealand Ballet, Berlin Staatsballett, West Australian Ballet, Victorian Opera, West Australian Opera, Sydney Theatre Company, Melbourne Theatre Company, Gordon Frost Organization, TML, The Production Company, Bell Shakespeare, Playbox, Malthouse, Belvoir, Queensland Theatre, Circa, Ballet Lab, Lucy Guerin, Chunky Move, World of Wearable Art New Zealand, Opera Australia, Kage, Black Swan, Australian Art Orchestra, La Mama, Taylor/Keene, not yet it's difficult performance group, Chamber Made and many others.

Paul has won a Helpmann Award, two Sydney Theatre Awards, seven Green Room Awards, a Critics' Award for Theatre in Scotland, and four Australian Production Design Guild Awards. In addition, he has also received a further four Helpmann Award nominations, thirty-two Green Room Award nominations, four APDG nominations and four Sydney Theatre nominations. Paul is accredited with the Australian Production Design Guild.



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## CREATIVES

### PAUL CHARLIER • Original Music and Sound Design



Paul Charlier has composed and sound designed for approaching 200 productions across theatre, dance, physical theatre, film, television, radio and audio-visual installations in Australia and overseas. He started out with industrial noise outfits SoliPsiK and SPK and since then his works include: Lee Lewis and Suzie Miller's *Prima Facie*, Priscilla Jackman's *RBG: Of Many, One*, Liv Ullman's *A Street Car Named Desire*, Stephen Soderberg's *Tot Mom*, Judy Davis' *Faith Healer* and *Dance of Death*, Gale Edwards' *Buried Child*, and a lot of plays with Neil Armfield at Belvoir Street Theatre back in the day including *Aftershocks*, *Hamlet*, *The Blind Giant Is Dancing*, *The Lieutenant of Inishmore* and *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*; Michael Blakemore's *Copenhagen* at STC plus his *Deuce* on Broadway and *Afterlife* at the National Theatre, London; Marrugeku's *Jurrungu Ngan-Ga (Straight Talk)*, Nigel Jameson and Legs On The Wall's *Honour Bound*; Kate Champion's *Already Elsewhere*, and Lloyd Newson's *The Cost Of Living (DV8)*. He also scored the films *Aftershocks*, *Candy*, *Last Ride*, *The Final Quarter*, *Suzy And The Simple Man* and *Rachel's Farm*, was Music Supervisor for *Holding The Man* and Sound Designer for *The Projectionist*, *Looking for Alibrandi* and *Paul Kelly: Stories of Me*.

### RODNEY RIGBY • Producer



Rodney Rigby founded Newtheatricals; a producing group operating across Australia and on Broadway.

CURRENT BROADWAY: *Water For Elephants* a new musical.

ON BROADWAY: *Good Night, Oscar* starring Tony Award Winner Sean Hayes, *Come From Away* (also Australia, North American tour, London – Winner of four Olivier Awards including Best Musical, Toronto), *Diana*, *Summer: The Donna Summer Musical*, *Children Of A Lesser God*, *Rocky*, *Catch Me If You Can* and *Lend Me A Tenor*.

OFF BROADWAY PRODUCTIONS: David Byrne's *Joan of Arc: Into the Fire*, *Here Lies Love* and *Helder Guimarães: Verso*. Regional: *Marie (Little Dancer)*.

IN AUSTRALIA: *Come From Away* 2019-2023, *Darkness*, *Jersey Boys* 2009-13 and 2018-19, *Blue Man Group*, *The Addams Family*, *Rock of Ages*, *Boeing Boeing*, *Mum's the Word 2: Teenagers*, *Burt Bacharach and the Sydney Symphony*, *The Woman in Black*, *Jamie Oliver Live*, *Bryn Terfel – In Recital*, *David Campbell – Wild with Style*, *Anthony Warlow – Under the Stars*, *Stuff Happens*, *Leader of the Pack*, *Lesley Garrett and Anthony Warlow – The Magic of The Music*, *Via Dolorosa* (written and performed by David Hare), *La Fura Dels Baus XXX* and *The Helpmann Awards* (2001, 2004 and 2005). Awards include Live Performance Australia Life Member, Olivier Award for Best Musical 2019 (*Come From Away*), six Helpmann Awards including Best Musical 2010 (*Jersey Boys*) and Best Play 2006 (*Stuff Happens*), two Sydney Theatre Awards including Best Musical Production (*Jersey Boys*), eighteen Greenroom Awards and three time Tony Award nominee.

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### CREATIVES

#### **QUEENSLAND THEATRE • Producer**

For more than 50 years, Queensland Theatre has created collective experiences that change lives, presenting an annual season of the best classic, contemporary, international and Australian works. Queensland Theatre are committed to championing new voices on Australian stages including supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to develop and share their stories, and encouraging a love of theatre through education and youth participation across Queensland.

# GASLIGHT

## MADNESS OR MANIPULATION?

### **GASLIGHT: *Madness or Manipulation?***

The term gaslighting is a fixture in modern language, even featuring in the Urban Dictionary, which describes it as when “*false information is presented to the victim, making them doubt their own memory, perception and quite often, their sanity.*” In fact, the term ‘gaslighting’ was the Merriam-Webster word of 2022. Google will deliver you endless definitions and associated behaviours, but the term itself has its origins in a play written in 1938 by the name of *Angel Street* by Patrick Hamilton, on which this adaptation is based. The play was made into a film in 1944 and given the new title of *Gaslight*, a title which no doubt no one predicted would become a mainstay in our everyday vernacular. The very common presence of this phrase in daily life today provides a hook for school-aged audiences to connect with a piece of what is, at its core, Victorian Gothic theatre. But in this adaptation published in 2022 the audience is asked: *Is gaslighting a cruel act or a cue to act?*

#### **SUITABILITY**

Recommended for audiences 14+. Contains adult themes, the use of a gun and depictions of psychological abuse (‘gaslighting’). Britney Spears sang “You drive me crazy” eight years before she shaved her head and attacked a paparazzo with an umbrella. Women have been maligned, misjudged and misunderstood as ‘mad’ over time. This version of the play delivers a new perspective on the notion of ‘she’s crazy’ and offers many opportunities for fruitful theatrical and social discussions with both 1901 and 2024 as comparable contexts.

#### **CURRICULUM LINKS**

The play explores the theatrical styles of Victorian Gothic, Realism (including, at times, Heightened Realism) and draws on the film genres of Film Noir and Psychological Thriller. It utilises the conventions of Realism (fourth wall, protagonist’s journey, three-dimensional characters) and Heightened Realism (to create the impact of ‘madness’ through the elements of drama and design aspects).

#### **THEMES**

Psychological abuse, mental health, gender politics, the patriarchy, isolation, control, socioeconomic status and class, self-doubt, deception, betrayal and revenge.

# GASLIGHT

## MADNESS OR MANIPULATION?

### PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES

- Google It

Put 'gaslight' or 'gaslighting' into your search engine and sift through the many definitions, descriptions, and explanations out there. Spoiler alert: there are many. As you read these, select aspects that appeal or are clear to you and have a go at creating your own succinct definition to share with your peers. The more you understand this concept before seeing the show, the more you will engage with it and its story.

- AI is AOK

Use your research from the task above and your newly created definition as a prompt in ChatGPT to create a synopsis for gaslighting – it will draw on what you have discovered as well as many sources from across the internet and may just boost your understanding of this complex concept. Speaking of manipulation or madness, manipulate AI to be your friend and see what it can add to the conversation; you would be mad not to.

- Get Moody

Consider the colour palette you might expect in this production based on its title, subject matter, and themes. Extend that into a mood or vision board. Create your own Pinterest page or Instagram account, collecting images of people, places and objects that resonate with the information you know of the play before viewing. Try to identify commonalities or key aesthetic motifs.

- The Playlist of the Play

Create a playlist of songs that you would associate with the play - include both instrumental and vocal pieces, as well as songs from across eras. Include at least one song released in the last 12 months that resonates with the show to capture your perception of the show's relevance to today.

- Pitch It

Imagine that you have been tasked with creating the promotional poster for the 2024 tour of *Gaslight*, but you have not yet read the play. Choose an image and a tagline (for example, 'Madness or Manipulation') and compose your poster (use an original photo or image or one you find or have created through AI) to sell the show.

- Painting a Picture of the Past

As a class, source facts, primary sources, images, anecdotes and more to create a sense of what London was like in the Victorian era of 1901, especially for the middle to upper class. Be sure to include images of Victorian homes from the time and do not forget gaslights.

# GASLIGHT

## MADNESS OR MANIPULATION?

### POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES

The Elements of Drama are utilised purposefully within the play to achieve a desired dramatic meaning. See below for some ideas on how to unpack the presence of the key elements within the play to further understand how the director and playwright's vision was achieved onstage by the ensemble of four actors.

ELEMENTS	SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES
<b>Role</b>	There are four characters in the play: Bella Manningham, her husband Jack, their head maid Elizabeth and the new maid Nancy.
<b>Character</b>	Create a relationship map that draws the connections and allegiances to characters at both the start of the play and the end of the play. Note when, where and how relationships are forged and broken. Try to find a line from the play that indicates this change or the situation that led to the change. For example, when Nancy says to Bella in Act II, Scene 6: <i>"No! I've been waiting for this. This is my chance, finally"</i> it signifies a shift in their dynamic.
<b>Relationships</b>	
<b>Situation</b>	
	Select a situation that occurred in the play that you think resonates with the present day and devise a short scene that places the action in 2024. For example, Bella thinks that Jack is texting another woman. It is this that contributes to her seeming 'madness' or paranoia as Jack consistently denies this and shows her his messages. Eventually, she chooses to look through Jack's phone only to find out she is right and that he has been communicating using a more secure messaging app. Rehearse this scene on your feet before performing it.
<b>Voice</b>	Consider the accent and delivery of the heightened text throughout the play. Does this contribute to the stylistic realisation of the play as Victorian Gothic? Take a short extract of text and play with the accents and vocal delivery as demonstrated in the play as well as using a conversational tone that you would adopt today. What impact does this have on the meaning or impact of the text? Use the excerpt below and have a play with a range of vocal techniques.  <b>From Act I, Scene 2</b> JACK: Have you got the mail? BELLA: Oh, no. I didn't think of it yet. Are you expecting something? JACK: Nothing special. Ring for Nancy to bring it up. BELLA: Oh, that's all right. I can get it from Elizabeth. JACK: Bella, this is precisely why we hired that girl. To take these little errands off your hands. Ring the bell. BELLA: I can do it. JACK: Bella: you are the mistress of this house. Show the staff that you are in charge. <i>Beat. BELLA rings the bell.</i> JACK: Well done.

# GASLIGHT

## MADNESS OR MANIPULATION?

ELEMENTS	SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES
<p><b>Movement</b></p> <p><b>Space</b></p>	<p>Think about the gait or walk of Bella compared to Jack – how do they show status in the way they carry themselves and move? Stand in a typical ‘pose’ for each of the characters and morph into the other over ten seconds, noting the change in posture, eyeline and more as you move. Layer a piece of music to this (try using one of Max Richter’s instrumental pieces or any from the suggested list in the resources section of these notes) and you have the start of a short physical theatre piece that captures the polarity between the two leads.</p> <p>What role do you think movement played in contributing towards the development of tension in the narrative? Consider the stage directions in the extract below (from just before the interval) and recreate the moment in several ways to explore how varied manipulation of movement can influence the dramatic meaning communicated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- As seen in the play (replicate the action)</li><li>- Playing with extremities of pace or tempo</li><li>- Using the full depth and breadth of the stage and playing with levels</li><li>- Introducing music to inform the movement (consider one of the suggested artists in the resource list below)</li></ul> <p><b>From Act I, Scene 5</b></p> <p><i>Thunder crashes. BELLA looks desperately about the room. Her gaze falls on Jack’s desk. Terrified, she rushes to it and struggles to open a drawer. It is locked. She finds the letter opener and uses it to pick the lock. With the drawer open, BELLA pulls out Jack’s revolver. The noises from above continue. She holds the gun out to protect herself from the unseen enemy.</i></p>
<p><b>Focus</b></p>	<p>Discuss how the play drew focus to a moment, prop, or character throughout the play. List as many techniques as you observed and identify those you think were most significant in directing focus. Consider whether you were aware of them in the moment or whether this was achieved more subtly. Were they more effective by being implicit?</p>



# GASLIGHT

## MADNESS OR MANIPULATION?

ELEMENTS	SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES
<p><b>Tension</b></p>	<p>As a psychological thriller, the creation of suspense is crucial to the success of the play. How was suspense created onstage? Consider the types of tension (relationship, task, surprise, and mystery) and the theatrical devices used to develop this – you may find that you are referencing other elements as contributing to the creation of tension. See the extract below and identify the many ways in which tension could be established and manipulated effectively. This could be through annotating the script or activating the scene in the space.</p> <p><b>From Act II, Scene 3</b>            ELIZABETH: I'll confess, ma'am: I don't know. It was all very strange.            BELLA: What was?            ELIZABETH: Well, the whole story. About the safe. Miss Alice, she didn't keep things in there. Not jewellery. She never did, until that night.            BELLA: Oh.            ELIZABETH: She didn't believe in locking things away, where no one could enjoy them. "What's lovely is lovely, Elizabeth dear," she said. "It doesn't matter if it costs a million pounds or a shilling." (<i>ELIZABETH rises to go.</i>) I've always wondered why she locked them away that night. Perhaps she suspected that someone was coming to steal them.            BELLA: Perhaps she did. Or....            ELIZABETH: Or what, ma'am?            BELLA: Or everything was as usual, and the rubies weren't in the safe. The killer thought they would be, but they weren't.            ELIZABETH: I see. That's very clever, ma'am, if I may say so. I just thought what the police said must be right.  <i>For a moment they are both lost in thought. Then ELIZABETH turns to the task at hand.</i>            ELIZABETH: So we're to go on ahead, are we, Mrs.?            BELLA: (<i>still thinking</i>) Oh, yes. I suppose that is the plan.</p>
<p><b>Place</b></p> <p><b>Time</b></p>	<p>Refer back to what you discovered in 'Painting a Picture of the Past' in the Pre-Show Activities and reflect on how accurately the show depicted London in 1901. Reference stage design and how the time period is depicted through props, set and the colour palette.</p> <p>What if you transformed the play and set it in a new place or time – where or when would you relocate the action to and more importantly, why? Think about how you would pitch this reimagined version of the play and consider design choices, casting, theatre venue and other significant choices that would influence the production and most importantly, the intended dramatic meaning – what would this transformation or reinvention say? You may also wish to revisit the 'Pitch It' task from the Pre-Show Activities with the experience of seeing the play and your new vision in mind.</p>

# GASLIGHT

## MADNESS OR MANIPULATION?

ELEMENTS	SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES
<b>Language</b>  <b>Audience</b>	<p>Language or the scripted text of the play is very much of its time, but still relatable and accessible today. In keeping with the conventions of Realism, the characters speak to one another, except for Bella who speaks to herself occasionally as she questions her sanity and the noises she hears. The text is often fast-paced and at times, due to Jack's questioning of Bella, almost circular in form with hints of absurdity. But what if the language conventions of Realism were challenged? Consider what impact breaking the fourth wall and introducing direct address would have – who would speak to the audience, when, and what would they say? Select a moment in the script where you could fracture the reality and have one of the characters address the audience. Write a monologue for one or more of the characters to deliver in this style. Once written, work with your own or another's script and rehearse it to perform for your peers.</p> <p>The role of gender is central to the premise of the play and captures the time and place authentically. So how would the play change if the gender roles were to be swapped? How would this impact history and our understanding of the 'mad' or 'crazy' woman as a familiar trope in real life, pop culture and literature? Read the play aloud as a group through the lens of Bella as a male and Jack as a female and see what new themes or conversations emerge. Does the narrative still work? Are there aspects that are problematic when reading it through this lens? Perhaps go one step further and consider the Elizabeth and Nancy roles and whether they could be played as a different gender (male, non-binary) and how this influences the lead roles.</p>
<b>Symbol</b>	<p>There are many significant symbols in the play that hold importance and meaning in their very presence, with the most obvious one being that of the gaslight itself. Select one of the key symbols (the gaslight or light in general, rubies, pearls, noises, or the attic) and unpack its meaning in the play – what does it represent? What does it tell the audience by its mere presence? Think about whether it could be embellished or restricted for greater impact. If a symbol had to be added to the play (this may be something existing within the script or that could be added to the live production) what would it be and where would it appear? What would its key message be?</p>
<b>Mood</b>  <b>Atmosphere</b>	<p>Gothic Victorian or Film Noir-inspired styles are known for their ability to create a luscious, moody landscape and to evoke a sinister and haunting atmosphere against which the action can take place and the suspense can unfold. Access the production images online or through the play's social media platforms and create a carousel of up to ten images that best capture the mood of the play and write suitable captions for each of these which, in ten words or less, summarise the atmospheric qualities being conveyed in the image. Try to explicitly reference the other dramatic elements that have been manipulated to create the mood.</p>

# GASLIGHT

## MADNESS OR MANIPULATION?

### DESIGN ASPECTS

- *Lighting* – with the word ‘light’ in the play’s title it is no surprise that lighting plays a significant role in the play. From casting shadows to casting aspersions, consider the role that lighting plays in contributing to the film noir and gothic aspects of this production.
- *Sound* – Bella’s paranoia grows not only from the changing flame of the gaslight but from the sounds she believes she hears from the attic or elsewhere. How effective were the soundscapes in contributing to the suspense, creating the mood, the perceived madness, and the ultimate conceit of the play? Identify the distinct roles that music and sound played and how the two differ and contribute to the overall dramatic meaning of the play.
- *Set* – the set design including the stage layout, the objects and furniture with the space, and the decorative features bring the world of the play to life. The world is the only one that Bella knows and is also responsible for hiding both secrets and answers. Did the set serve the action of the play and help the narrative to unfold? Use set design sketches and production photos to assist you.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

#### FILM & TV

*Gaslight*, *Big Little Lies*, *The Truman Show*, *The Girl on the Train*, *Gone Girl*, *Shutter Island*, *Rebecca*, *The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart*, *The Woman in the House Across the Street from the Girl in the Window*

#### MUSIC

Max Richter, The Cinematic Orchestra, Lawrence English, Ludwig Goransson, Trent Reznor, Atticus Ross, Nils Frahm, Clint Mansell, Vitamin String Quartet, Loscil

#### PLAYS

*A Doll’s House* by Henrik Ibsen, *Angel Street* by Patrick Hamilton, *Two Ladies* by Nancy Harris, *Top Girls* by Caryl Churchill, *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare, *Saint Joan* by George Bernard Shaw

#### BOOKS

*Big Little Lies* by Liane Moriarty, *The Woman in Me* by Britney Spears, *The Gaslighting Effect* by Dr Robin Stern, *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte, *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte, *Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn, *The Girl on the Train* by Paula Hawkins, *Rebecca* by Daphne du Maurier, *The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart* by Holly Ringland

#### PODCASTS

*You’re Wrong About*, *Something Was Wrong*, *Gaslight*, *Wicked Women*

# GASLIGHT

## MADNESS OR MANIPULATION?

### WEBSITES

*The History of the Gaslight in London* - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHrg\\_3KIRew](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHrg_3KIRew)

*Merriam-Webster Word of the Year* - <https://www.merriam-webster.com/wordplay/word-of-the-year>

*The Most Maligned Women in History* - <https://medium.com/@HMHbooks/seven-of-the-most-maligned-women-in-history-ea1228cc160>

*Reconsidering Famous Women* - <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/31/arts/women-reconsidered-celebrities-90s-noughties.html>

*The Urban Dictionary Definition* - <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Gaslighting>  
*ChatGPT* - <https://chat.openai.com/auth/login>

### FURTHER RESOURCES FOR GASLIGHT

WEBSITE - <https://gaslightplay.com.au/>

INSTAGRAM - <https://www.instagram.com/gaslightplayau/>

FACEBOOK - <https://www.facebook.com/gaslightplayau>

YOUTUBE - <https://www.youtube.com/@GaslightPlayAU>

INTERVIEW - THE INSIDE STORY - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kMlgFVKkTf8>

GET TICKETS - <https://gaslightplay.com.au/tickets/sydney/>