

NEW THEATRE MEDIA RELEASE
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ANNOUNCING NEW THEATRE'S PROGRAM FOR JANUARY - MAY 2022

In 2022, New Theatre will be celebrating its 90th Birthday! Founded in 1932, our history of continuous production (despite Depression, wars, ASIO red-hunting, financial hard times, and a global pandemic) is indeed something to celebrate. And we're doing it in the best way we know how: by presenting a season of diverse, exciting theatre, designed to appeal to a wide audience, and providing quality entertainment at affordable prices.

New Theatre is thrilled to announce our program for the first half of next year, which features three Australian plays (two of which are world premieres), a poignant biographical drama, and a Shakespearean romp rewired to the 1980s.

Throughout the year, we'll continue to fulfil our mission statement to provide both emerging and established artists – actors, directors, designers and technical crew – with the opportunities to stretch their skills and have their talents seen and appreciated.

Our Play Assessors panel of six read and reported on around 100 plays, and advised our Artistic Director and Artistic Associate on those which might be suitable for production at New Theatre. Then it was a matter of creating a balance, securing rights and locking in directors, a process that has taken months. But it's worth it for the end result.

We look forward to seeing you at the New in 2022.

BRAND NEW THE PARK and THE CHOCOLATE ROSTER

When our Sydney Fringe Festival season was cancelled this year, we didn't want to lose the opportunity to present the two new Australian plays that we'd planned to premiere at that time, so January gave us the perfect time to reschedule.

It's with great pride that we are bringing to Sydney stages a new initiative: **Brand New, a season of new writing**. Consisting of the World Premieres of *The Park* by Simon Thomson and *The Chocolate Roster* by Brooke Robinson, each play will have a short season of six performances.

Both plays were originally entered in The Silver Gull Play Award in 2020, and bringing these two exciting examples of local contemporary playwriting to production is yet another step on New Theatre's commitment to seeking out and encouraging new theatrical voices.

The Park, directed by Jess Davis, plays 17 - 22 January, and *The Chocolate Roster*, directed by Emma Whitehead, plays 24 - 29 January.

Full details: <https://newtheatre.org.au/brand-new/>

BREAKING THE CODE

February/March means our Mardi Gras production, an annual event at New Theatre for over 25 years.

***Breaking the Code* by Hugh Whitemore** is the acclaimed 1986 biographical drama about the life of the WW2 code-breaker Alan Turing. A decade later he would become a victim of society's draconian anti-homosexuality laws, ending his life by his own hand at 41, humiliated, forgotten and alone.

This elegant and poignant depiction of the life of an extraordinary man examines his creativity, his eccentricity, his yearning for love and companionship, and his deep humanity.

***Breaking the Code*, directed by Anthony Skuse, plays 8 February - 5 March.**

Full details: <https://newtheatre.org.au/breaking-the-code/>

THE SPOOK

March/April sees us rescheduling another casualty of the COVID-19 lockdown, our cancelled production from 2021 of ***The Spook* by Melissa Reeves**.

Set in Ballarat in 1965, and based on true events, it's the story of Martin, a young and eager recruit to the local branch of the Communist Party of Australia. But Martin has a secret: he's been recruited by ASIO to spy on the comrades and he's about to get his new friends into serious trouble.

Winner of both the Victorian Premier's Literary Award – the Louis Esson Prize for Drama and the AWGIE Award for Best New Play, this whimsical study of small-town Australia, Cold War fear-mongering, friendship and betrayal, is laced with dry humour. In light of New Theatre's own fraught history with ASIO's 'spooks', it's rather fitting that this marvellous contemporary Australian political satire is being given its Sydney revival on our stage.

***The Spook*, directed by Rosane McNamara, plays 15 March - 9 April.**

Full details: <https://newtheatre.org.au/the-spook/>

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

The first half of the year ends up with a classic romp, ***The Merry Wives of Windsor* by William Shakespeare**.

It's the tale of the 'fat knight' Sir John Falstaff (described by Orson Welles as 'Shakespeare's greatest creation') and his attempts to seduce a pair of wealthy women away from their husbands, with the necessary plot twists and turns.

There is much mayhem, dodgy disguises, misdirected letters, a duel and a midnight denouement, before the tangle is unraveled, the men-behaving-badly get their comeuppances, and the good prevail.

After the horrors of the past couple of years, it's the perfect time to revive Shakespeare's bright and breezy comedy of sexual jealousy, where clever women are forced to put up with dull, ego-centric men, with the fun played out against a 1980s landscape of suburban aspirations and neon-hued bad taste.

***The Merry Wives of Windsor*, directed by Victor Kalka, plays 19 April - 21 May.**

Full details: <https://newtheatre.org.au/the-merry-wives-of-windsor/>

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