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**IN THE  
NEXT ROOM,  
OR THE VIBRATOR PLAY<sup>™</sup>  
BY SARAH RUHL**

22 APRIL - 17 MAY 2025

# IN THE NEXT ROOM, OR THE VIBRATOR PLAY

## CREATIVE TEAM

Director  
Set Designer  
Lighting Designer  
Costume Designer  
Sound Designer  
Assistant Set Designer  
Props, Set & Costume  
Coordinator  
Dramaturg  
& Intimacy Coordinator

Emma Whitehead  
Tom Bannerman  
Alicia Badger  
Hugo Fraser  
Jay Murrin  
Paris Bell

Annette van Roden

Sonya Kerr

## CAST (in order of appearance)

Mrs Catherine Givings  
Dr Givings  
Annie  
Mrs Sabrina Daldry  
Mr Dick Daldry  
Elizabeth  
Mr Leo Irving

Sarah Greenwood  
Riley Thomas  
Alyona Popova  
Lisa Kelly  
Lewis McLeod  
Ruva Shoko  
Luke Visentin

## PRODUCTION TEAM & CREW

Production Coordinator  
Stage Manager / Operator  
ASMs / Operators

Lighting Programmer & Tech  
Set Construction/Bump-in

Production Photography

Chad Traupmann  
Jade Dunleavy  
Bianca Dreis  
Sophie Aloï  
Atlas Andrews  
Tom Bannerman  
Paris Bell  
Adriana Borseý  
Jade Dunleavy  
Peter Gormly  
Jacob Greenhow  
Will Lenehan  
David Marshall-Martin  
Adrien Stark  
Annette van Roden  
Rodger Wishart  
Bob Seary

Hero image: © Carlos Neto/Shutterstock

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the country on which we meet today, the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.



#### SARAH RUHL, PLAYWRIGHT

Sarah Ruhl (b 1974) is an American poet, playwright and essayist. She had intended to become a poet, but after she studied under acclaimed playwright Paula Vogel (*How I Learned to Drive*) at Brown University, she switched to playwriting.

Her first play was *The Dog Play*, written in 1995 for one of Vogel's classes. She has won multiple, prestigious playwrighting awards and was a Pulitzer finalist for *The Clean House* (New Theatre, 2017) and *In The Next Room, or The Vibrator Play* which also received a Tony Award nomination for Best Play. Other plays include *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, *Stage Kiss* and *Euridice* which she adapted as a libretto for an opera, staged at the Los Angeles Opera and Metropolitan Opera.

She currently teaches at the David Geffen School of Drama at Yale University and lives in Brooklyn with her family.

These are edited extracts from some interviews with Sarah Ruhl about *In The Next Room* --

*The play is not a sex farce about vibrators. It's about wet nurses; it's about the body. It's misleading to say it's purely about the object. So I changed the title to In The Next Room, with 'or the vibrator play' as the subtitle.*

*The play is set in the 19th century, so there are some (historical) details I want to get right, at least suggestively. When I'm writing the play, I want to have a firm sense of where and how these characters might have lived. But I'm a contemporary woman writing with subsequent knowledge that informs my view of the period. In terms of the sexuality, I was aiming less for self-consciousness than for a kind of innocence. In some ways, people then were innocent of sexuality compared to the biological knowledge we've acquired about the subject since. I didn't want the play to be too knowing.*

*But I've always been fascinated by what 19th-century novels pointedly left out: No one has sex, no one goes to the bathroom and, certainly, no one uses a vibrator. I was amazed to find, after reading Rachel Maines' revelatory book, *The Technology of Orgasm*, that many women (and a few men) were treated with electric vibratory massage to ameliorate the symptoms of hysteria. What perhaps stunned me even more was that gynaecologists and psychiatrists had used the "manual treatment" before this remarkable new invention came out, at the dawn of electricity.*

*The play In the Next Room takes this historical fact as a leaping-off point—that many women were treated for hysteria with vibrators at the turn of the century—and moves into other terrain. Though the vibrator may have been the play's starting point, ultimately I'm more interested in the relationships that expand around the device, and the whole notion of compartmentalization, of what goes on "in the next room"—literally, in the room next to the living room where the vibrations take place, but also in the next room of other people's minds and bodies. To what extent does marriage imply a "next room?" Or relations between employers and employees—particularly the very intimate and difficult relationship of a mother and her wet-nurse, who, tragically, lost her own child and is now nursing another's? To what extent was there a mind/body split in the 19th century?*

*Ultimately it is the silence between people, and how they manage to shatter it, that draws me to these characters. And I think as sophisticated as we moderns are, we certainly understand silence between people—and the comedy (or tragedy) that results when two people in adjacent rooms are unable or unwilling to speak.*

NB. Vibrators were advertised alongside electric kettles and irons in publications like *The Ladies Home Journal*.

Helen Tonkin, New Theatre Literary Manager, 2025

## THE BEST SEATS - ON THE HOUSE!

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MANAGER@NEWTHEATRE.ORG.AU**



#### EMMA WHITEHEAD DIRECTOR

Emma is a theatre maker, director, and creative producer from London, grateful to be sharing stories on the unceded land of the Gadigal people. She is the artistic director of experimental company Lost Thought (@lost\_thought\_arts). Emma works with theatre, movement, opera, interactive work, and durational performance. She is a graduate of NIDA's MFA Directing course and the University of Warwick's devised theatre and performance laboratory. Emma takes an international view of society and the arts, having grown up in one of the most multicultural communities in the world. For New Theatre: *The Chocolate Roster*.

Recent projects include the development of two performance works at The Ethics Centre in 2024 during a two-week residency; and an interactive promenade experiment called YAMA with Atharv Kolhatkar as part of KXT/bAKEHOUSE's Vault residency in 2023.

Lost Thought's debut shows at Sydney Fringe Festival 2023 were both nominated for 'Best in Genre' awards: *in/finite SOL*, a live devising performance lasting 12 hours (finalist), and *One Who Wants To Cross*, her new ensemble adaptation of a French monologue about the global refugee and migrant crisis.

Other work includes: criminal justice drama *Shook* (Qtopia Sydney), doxing thriller *The Dragonfly* (Old Fitz), site specific opera *Track Works* (Mortuary Station), rehabilitation drama *SIMPLE* by Maeve Hook (Radical Acts, Theatre Works Melbourne) and eco-magical jaunt *Trash Wizard* (KXT Storytellers).

Upcoming projects in 2025 include durational installation *The Juliet Cycle*, and dark comedy *First, Do No Harm*.



#### TOM BANNERMAN SET DESIGNER

Tom is a Sydney-based set-designer. His body-of-work is considerable, this being his 294th production in that capacity, 82 of which have been for New Theatre.

For New Theatre: he was the associate set designer on *The Flea*. Other recent productions include *Fighting, Ink, The Ballad of Maria Marten, Chimerica, Jumpers for Goalposts, Glengarry Glen Ross, Pygmalion, My Night with Reg, The Lieutenant of Inishmore, Marat/Sade, That Eye/The Sky, When the Rain Stops Falling* and *Jerusalem*.

For other theatres: *Isolde & Tristan* (Sport for Jove at Old Fitz), *Stories from the Violins of Hope* (Bondi Pavilion), *The Wasps, Just Macbeth!* and *Tales of the Wild Bush* (NSW Public Schools Drama Co, The Studio, NIDA), *Eight Gigabytes of Pornography* and *Mark Colvin's Kidney* (Drill Hall, Mullumbimby), and *Endgame* (Civic Playhouse, Newcastle.)



#### ALICIA BADGER LIGHTING DESIGNER

Alicia is a Lighting Designer, Stage Manager and Production Manager who has worked with the independent scene, student theatre scene and everything in between for a decade. She completed a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Theatre Studies at The University of Notre Dame, and more recently completed a Diploma of Live Production and Technical Services at NIDA.

For New Theatre: Debut.

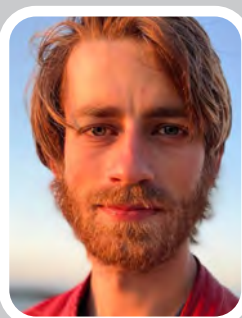
Some of the most recent productions she has been a part of include: ASM on *Track Works* (BBT Productions), LX Programmer on *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *Stags and Hens* (ACA), performer and Lighting Designer on *Hemlines* (Moon Bureau), and Production Manager and Lighting Designer on *Wally* (Moon Bureau/KXT on Broadway),



#### HUGO FRASER COSTUME DESIGNER

Hugo is a multidisciplinary artist and designer living on unceded Gadigal land. Their work considers bodily ornament in all its forms as a document of living history, animating memory through physicality on an individual and collective basis. Hugo completed their BFA in Photomedia from National Art School 2021, receiving the Harvey Galleries Graduate Prize the following year.

For New Theatre: Debut.



#### PARIS BELL ASSISTANT SET DESIGNER

Paris is a Sydney-based creative and tech, with a passion for writing, building, and all things electrical. They studied Animation at JMC, and completed a Diploma of Live Production Design at TAFE Enmore. Professionally, they work as a tech at Monkey Baa Theatre Company, at FlightPath Theatre and in Staging at the Sydney Opera House.

For New Theatre: Lighting Designer, *Shakespeare in Love, Homos, or Everyone in America, Loot*; Sound Designer, *Chimerica, The Other End of the Afternoon*.

Other credits include Set Designer, *Rhomboid* (KXT), as well as writing and directing *Alan Turing, Joan of Arc*, and *Vincent van Gogh Walk Into A Bar* (SUDS).



#### ANNETTE VAN RODEN PROPS, SET & COSTUME COORDINATOR

Annette has freelanced as a creative for many years, co-developing and managing several of her own production companies including an animatronic display company and a children's entertainment company. Fourteen years ago she developed a business specialising in diversional therapy entertainment which she performs for residents in aged care facilities. She also works as an actor specialising in emotionally complex, immersive improvisational role play as part of an education team focusing on difficult conversations and dealing with bad news.

For New Theatre: actor, *Marat/Sade*, *Collaborators*; director, *Sunset Strip*.

Actively involved in community theatre both as an actor and director, Annette has appeared in *The Addams Family Musical*, *Dangerous Liaisons*, *Stepping Out*, *Steaming* and *Things I Know To Be True*, as well as directing *The Sum of Us*, *Proof*, *And Then There Were None*, *The Bible: The*

*Complete Word of God (abridged)*, *Calendar Girls*, *Dark Voyager* and *A Few Good Men*.



#### SONYA KERR DRAMATURG & INTIMACY COORDINATOR

Sonya is an actor, voice over artist and intimacy director.

For New Theatre: as intimacy director, *Banging Denmark*, *The Ballad of Maria Martin*, *Atlantis*, *Homos*, or *Everyone in America*; as actor, *Hangmen*, *August: Osage County*, *The Angry Brigade*.

Although new to the world of intimacy directing, Sonya has worked on *Ophelia Thinks Harder* (Fingerless Theatre/KXT Broadway), *Much Ado* (Attractive, Not Model Attractive/Flight Path), *Ninety* (Actors Pulse Theatre), and the short film *Cherry Pie* (UTS).

Other acting credits include *Dungeons & Dragons - The Twenty Sided Tavern* (Sydney Opera House/Showpath/David Carpenter Productions), *In Their Footsteps* and *The Sweet Science of Bruising* (Theatre Travels), *Seed Bomb*, *A Quiet Night in Rangoon*, and *Shut Up & Drive* (subtlenance), *As You Like It* and *Macbeth* (SheShakespeare).

Sonya is also an historian with a strong interest in the 19th century, particularly focussed on women's history, queer history, and the history of fashion. She is currently completing her Masters of History, and like all historians, is writing a book. She is a proud member of MEAA/Equity.

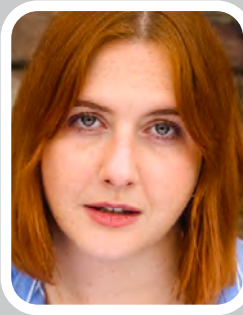


#### SARAH GREENWOOD MRS CATHERINE GIVINGS

Sarah is an actor and playwright from Meanjin (Brisbane), and trained at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA), graduating in 2016.

For New Theatre: *Banging Denmark*.

Other credits include: *Three Sisters* (Virgina Plain/Flight Path Theatre), *The Kingdom of Eucalypts* (Maira Blumenthal Productions), *Possum Magic* (Monkey Baa/Sydney Opera House/national tour), Cassie Hamilton's *Daddy Developed a Pill* (KXT), Grace Davidson-Lynch's *Hydrarchos* (NIDA's Festival of Emerging Artists), *Torn Apart by War* (Maira Blumenthal Productions), *Much Ado* (Attractive, Not Model Attractive/Flight Path Theatre), *Twelfth Night: Heads or Tails* (Virginia Plain) and *Kindertransport* (Darlinghurst Theatre Co).



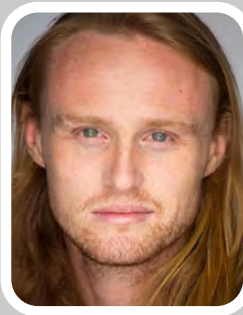
#### LISA KELLY MRS SABRINA DALDRY

Lisa is an actor and playwright based on Gadigal Land. She graduated from Actors Centre in May 2022 with a Bachelor of Performing Arts.

For New Theatre: *Pygmalion*, *Atlantis*.

For other companies: *The Female of the Species* (ACA Company), *Hamlet*, *Arcadia*, *A Mouthful of Birds*, *A Doll's House* (ACA). Lisa's debut full length written work for the stage, *Bear Hug*, was presented at the Old Fitz Theatre New Works festival in October 2024, and she is currently a member of the KXT bAKEHOUSE Playwrights Laboratory for 2025.

Lisa is a proud member of MEAA/Equity.



#### LEWIS MCLEOD MR DICK DALDRY

Lewis is a multi-disciplinary actor hailing from Aotearoa, New Zealand. Lewis completed his Bachelor of Fine Arts at NIDA in 2019 where he was awarded the Keith Bane Scholarship for movement. His performative interests lie in Eastern-based theatre practices which are reflected in his ongoing affiliation with leading Australian physical theatre companies such as ZenZenZo (Brisbane) and Legs On The Wall (Sydney).

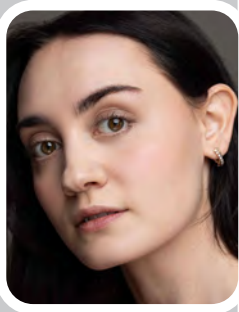
For New Theatre: Debut.

Other work includes: *Yama, Sol., Sol Infinite* (Lost Thought), *Macbeth*, *the Installation* (Barestage Theatre) and appearances in TV commercials and film projects.

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#### ALYONA POPOVA ANNIE

Alyona is a Russian actress with a background in classical piano. She completed her training in the BFA at NIDA in 2021. Alyona has always enjoyed the great (and rather serious) works of Shakespeare, Chekhov, Pinter, and Hare, but during the dark times of COVID found a strong love for comedy.

For New Theatre: *Atlantis*.

Her most recent theatre credits include 'Kezia' in *Jane Franklin and the Rajah Quilt* (Lost Voice Productions), 'Sherlock Holmes' in *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (Genesian Theatre), and 'Agnes' in *Nothing* (NTofP). On screen, she was recently seen at the Sydney Film Festival as 'Maria-Anna Mozart' in the new documentary *Mozart's Sister*.



#### RUVA SHOKO ELIZABETH

Ruva is a Zimbabwean-Australian actor who recently completed her Diploma of Stage and Screen Performance at NIDA.

For New Theatre: Debut.

Other theatre credits include: *A La Carte* (Festival of Emerging Artists), and understudy on productions of *An Octoroon* and *Frankenstein* (NIDA). Film/TV/Web credits include: *Little Sista* (Chabing entertainment), *The Unlisted* (Netflix), and the music video *I Just Wanna Dance* by Denzel Kennedy (Triple J).



#### RILEY THOMAS DR GIVINGS

Riley completed his BFA Acting at NIDA, graduating in 2021, and since then has appeared on several Sydney stages in various plays and readings.

For New Theatre: *Control*.

Riley produced and was assistant director for Kittyhawk Theatre's inaugural show, *Wolves are Coming For You*, at Sydney Fringe Festival in 2023. Other theatre credits include *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Genesian Theatre), *Jane Franklin and the Rajah Quilt* (Lost Voices), *Dragonfly* (Old Fitz Theatre). Screen credits include *Dreams of Nothing* (JMC Academy) and *What Happens Next?* (The Company Theatre).



#### LUKE VISENTIN MR LEO IRVING

Luke is an actor and director, with a BFA in acting from NIDA.

For New Theatre: actor, *Control*, *Atlantis*; assistant director, *The Flea*.

At NIDA he played 'Konstantin' in *The Seagull* and 'Sir Andrew' in *Twelfth Night*. Other credits include *Sophia=Wisdom* (Patrick Kennedy), *Hamlet* and *Cinderella* (Opera Australia), *Manic Pixie Meltdown* (Shopfront Arts Co-op), *Chasing Dick* (Melbourne Fringe), *Come Again* and *Rhomboid* (KXT), *Morning to Midnight* (the Opera Centre), puppet shows for Horizons Theatre, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Hamlet* tours (Such Stuff), *Wind in the Willows* and school incursions of all the major Shakespeare plays (the Australian Shakespeare Company), and short films *Icarus*, *Puncture*, *Lady May* and *Death Drive*. Last year, Luke assistant directed *The Pigeons* (KXT).



#### JADE DUNLEAVY STAGE MANAGER / OPERATOR

Jade is an emerging theatre technician and stage manager with a background in musical theatre and acting performance. She is currently in her first year at NIDA completing a BFA in Technical Theatre and Stage Management.

For New Theatre: Debut.

Upcoming shows she is working on include ASM for *Checklist for An Armed Robber* (NIDA).

#### BIANCA DREIS ASM / OPERATOR

Bianca is an emerging theatre practitioner, who graduated from the University of Notre Dame in 2023 with a double degree in Theatre Studies and Film and Screen Production.

For New Theatre: Debut.

Bianca's other credits include: ASM for *Macbeth. Isolde & Tristan*, and *Much Ado About Nothing* (Sport for Jove Theatre) and Set Designer for *Old Times* (UNSW Theatrical Society). Performance credits include: *The Passport* (University of Notre Dame), *The Switchblade Sisterhood* and *Mothers, Lovers & Others* (Davo Hardy Productions), and upcoming projects include SM for *Who's Play Is It Anyway* and Set Designer for *Nightfall* (UNSW Theatrical Society).

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# **DANGEROUS LIAISONS**

**ADAPTED BY  
DEBORAH MULHALL**

**27 MAY - 28 JUN**



## **WHO'S WHO AT NEW THEATRE 2025**

### **STAFF**

**THEATRE MANAGER &  
PRODUCTION COORDINATOR**  
Gemma Greer (on leave)

**A/THEATRE MANAGER &  
PRODUCTION COORDINATOR**  
Chad Traupmann

**PUBLICIST**  
Alice Livingstone

**TECHNICAL MANAGER**  
Mehran Mortezaei

**FRONT OF HOUSE MANAGERS**  
Eddy S Dharmadji (Coordinator)  
Marica Fumanti  
Harlee Timms

**PLAY ASSESSORS**  
John Keightley (Coordinator)  
Annie Bilton  
Michael Briggs  
Doug Cairns  
Susan Jordan  
Sahn Millington  
Raymond Patman (Administrator)

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Rosane McNamara

**VICE PRESIDENT**  
Chad Traupmann

**TREASURER**  
Mathew Sigmund

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Louise Fischer

**ARTISTIC ASSOCIATE**  
Margaret Thanos

**LITERARY MANAGER**  
Helen Tonkin

**MEMBERS & VOLUNTEERS  
COORDINATOR**  
Sahn Millington

**LICENSEE**  
Dr David Marshall-Martin JP

**SECRETARY (EX-OFFICIO)**  
Gemma Greer

**EMERITUS THEATRE CAT**  
'Mouse'

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## SPECIAL THANKS FROM THE 'IN THE NEXT ROOM' DIRECTOR AND TEAM

Brightholly Nininahazwe, Sandi Tutt, Castle Hill Players, Susan Carveth and Genesian Theatre, Helen Tonkin, Marie Deverill, Mark G Nagle, Louis Regan, Malek Domkoc, Maddy Withington, Jonathan Lim, Amy Victoria Brooks, Geita Goarin, Rose Mulcare, all those wonderful actors that auditioned for this mammoth project, and New Theatre Management Committee, staff and volunteers.

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- Use theatre facilities at discounted rates
- Participation in *Hold Cold Reads* – our series of 'cold reads' cast on a first-come basis
- *Spotlight*, the regular members' newsletter

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