# DANGEROUS LASONS ADAPTED BY DEBORAH MULHALL FROM THE NOVEL BY PIERRE CHODERLOS DE LACLOS

27 MAY - 28 JUN 2025



# **DANGEROUS LIAISONS**

# CREATIVE TEAM

Director Set Designer Lighting Designer Costume Designer Sound Designer Dramaturg/Consultant Consent Consultant Fight Choreographers

Make-up Designer

#### CAST (in order of appearance)

Valmont Merteuil Belleroche Cecile Sophie/Azolan Volanges Danceny Tourvel Rosemonde Tasha O'Brien Patrick Kennedy Holly Nesbitt Lily Moody Erica Lovell Jess Zlotnick Shondelle Pratt Diego Retamales James Shepherd Ruby Dollin

Chad Traupmann Melissa Jones Ben Dewstow Bronte Price Ella Morris Beth Champion Harrison Collis Oates Megan Elizabeth Kennedy Suzann James

# PRODUCTION TEAM & CREW

Production Coordinator Stage Manager/Operator Technical Support Set Construction/Bump-in Chad Traupmann Bianca Dreis Paris Bell Patrick Kennedy Rodger Wishart Mehran Mortesaei Marc Monnet-Demarbre Cast and Crew of *In the Next Room* Robert Hoang Bob Seary

Rehearsal Photographer Production Photography

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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.



#### PIERRE CHODERLOS DE LACLOS, WRITER, OFFICIAL, ARMY GENERAL (French, 1741-1803)

After reaching the rank of Captain in the artillery, Lacros became bored and turned his hand to writing. In 1788, Laclos left the army, entering the service of Louis Philippe, Duke of Orléans, for whom, after the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789, he carried out intense diplomatic activity. He later rejoined the army in 1792 and ultimately rose to the rank of general under Napoleon, serving in the Rhine and Italian campaigns.

Laclos was for a long time considered to be as scandalous a writer as the Marquis de Sade. His literary style was shaped by earlier epistolary novels, incorporating elements of passion and social realism, while also providing a critical lens on the moral complexities and hypocrisies of 18th-century French society.

Les Liaisons Dangereuses was first published in four volumes on March 23, 1782. It came a widespread success with 1000 copies sold in a month, exceptional at the time.

The novel has been seen as depicting the corruption and depravity of the French nobility shortly before the French Revolution, and thereby attacking the Ancien Régime, despite having been written nearly a decade prior to those events. The author aspired to "write a work which departed from the ordinary, which made a noise, and which would remain on earth after his death".



#### DEBORAH MULHALL, ADAPTER/PLAYWRIGHT

Deborah has written nine full length plays – which have enjoyed seasons in Australia and overseas. There have also been five adaptations of classic novels to the stage, including *Les Liaison Dangereuses*. She has also produced and directed over 20 plays, including most recently, *Much Ado About Nothing* (Genesians), and for New Theatre, *The Lieutenant of Inishmore, Pygmalion, The Lovely Bones* and *Hangmen*.

Deborah has, at times, practised what she preached. Early roles included 'Raina' in Arms and the Man, 'Kate' in Taming of the Shrew and 'Titania' in A Midsummer Night's Dream. And much later, she sank her teeth into 'Martha' in Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf.

Believing that writing, like life, is a never-ending learning experience, Deborah is involved in many aspects of artist development. From The International Playwright's Symposium in Italy, to

successfully training actors for auditions to Stella Adler in New York and NIDA in Sydney, there has been involvement with international groups (Cambridge University Footlights and La Mama New York) and national groups. Once president of The Illawarra Council for the Performing Arts, a founding member of Parramatta Theatre Company and Education Officer for New Theatre, she has lived and breathed theatre in some form for most of her life.

Says Deborah: The process of adapting a novel to a stage-play (or filmscript) involves strategic challenges, including the need to condense complex narratives, create visual elements where the novel relies on descriptions, and balance faithfulness to the source material with the demands of the new medium. For me, an adaptation is most successful when it is true to the original author's intent. We must serve the writer.

Thirty years ago, with three classic novel adaptions under my belt, I was approached by a theatre company to try my hand at 'Les Liaisons Dangereuses', a period novel by Pierre Choderlos de Laclos. It is a novel completely composed of letters so the challenge is to turn those letters into dialogue. Letters were an important literary device historically ('Pride and Prejudice' has 43 of them) and in shaping them as dialogue, the play tends to have more immediacy, if less subtlety. With this novel, I was very aware that Hollywood had changed the ending – following their "bad girls must be punished" rhetoric, But this was not the ending of de Laclos' novel.

The resultant script now resides with APT and not having viewed it myself in all these decades, director Tasha O'Brien and I had a sit down with the adaptation and tweaked it a little – only a very little. Nothing really has changed. People with power and money still abuse the vulnerable and if anything, laugh about it. Very little updating needed, really ....

#### **DIRECTOR'S NOTES**

This is a play that many people will know a version of, so the biggest challenge was always going to be how to stage a seemingly straightforward period drama in an interesting and new way. From the outset I wanted this production to be ambitious but not unachievable.

Deb Mulhall's version has gone back to the source text and included elements lost in the Hampton version which I wanted to bring back. She allowed us creative freedom and liberties to make changes to the script and highlight the themes we wanted to touch on, namely that this is a play all about power and games, and to highlight the novel's epistolary structure.

What's fascinating is to see what was controversial in 1782 that isn't controversial by modern standards, but things that weren't controversial back then that have since come to be. This is why we've opted for a timeless space to pay homage to both the context it was meant for and the world we live in today. We wanted all the design elements (set, costume, sound and lights) to blend elements from the past and the present, to make it deliberately not set in any specific time period. I hope people dig deeper into the meaning of the play and leave realising it's a great feminist text that questions society's norms and values, gender stereotypes, and that power can come in many different forms, one of which is sex, but it isn't necessarily the most interesting or manipulative.



#### TASHA O'BRIEN DIRECTOR

Tasha is an actor/director based in Sydney. She graduated from the University of Wollongong with a Bachelor of Performance (Major: Acting).

For New Theatre: actor, A Very Expensive Poison.

This production will be her directing debut for New Theatre. Other directing credits include: *Hot Mess* (The General Public), *The Sorry Mum Project* (National Theatre of Parramatta) and *Mums Tell Dad Jokes Too* (Shopfront Arts Co-op). Her acting credits include: *I Hate People; or Timon of Athens* (Sport for Jove), and *Playlist* (PYT Fairfield and Sydney Opera House). In 2023 she toured nationally and internationally with Poetry in Action. She is a proud member of the Ninefold Ensemble.



#### PATRICK KENNEDY SET DESIGNER

Patrick originally trained as an acting teacher under the Globe Theatre's Jacqueline Bessel and began producing and creating experimental theatre in 2009. Hailed as "one of the UK's most fascinating theatre practitioners" (British Theatre), he is an Offie Award nominated director and producer recognized as one of the leading European avant garde figures. For New Theatre: director/designer, *The Flea*.

Patrick made his Australian debut as director/designer of *Sophia=(Wisdom): The Cliffs* which he produced at New Theatre in January 2024. Other theatre credits include: Eugene Ionesco's *The Lesson* (Edinburgh Fringe); since then he has almost exclusively directed and produced the work of Richard Foreman, the doyen of the American avant garde. Highlights include the Offie Award nominated *Zomboid!* (New Wimbledon Theatre) and the critically acclaimed occult opera

*Elephant Steps* at Arcola Theatre's Grimeborn Festival. In 2012, Kennedy co-created a new Weimar era musical *Halbwelt Kultur*, which played a sold out run in London's West End at the Jermyn Street Theatre in Nov/Dec 2013.



#### HOLLY NESBITT LIGHTING DESIGNER

Holly is an emerging lighting designer from NIDA, who has worked professionally in the industry for just over a year.

For New Theatre: Debut.

Most recently, Holly flew to Adelaide to be Lighting Designer for a musical in the Fringe festival. She has lit productions for the Sydney Opera House, Mandylights, The Parks Theatre and Qtopia, and is looking forward to further work at Qtopia and New Theatre in the coming months.



#### LILY MOODY COSTUME DESIGNER

Lily is a Sydney- based Costume Designer, who graduated from Whitehouse Institute of Design with a Bachelor of Fashion Design in 2021.

For New Theatre: Debut.

Her previous theatre productions include *Children of Elsinore* (Old Barker Association), *Nell Gwynn* (SCEGGS), *The Government Inspector* (Fingerless Theatre Company), *Girl Band* (New Ghost Theatre Company), *Tough Titties 22 & 23* (Queen Hades Productions), *Labyrinth* (Dream Plane Productions), *I Hate People; or Timon of Athens, Othello, Macbeth 22 & 23, As You Like It, Romeo and Juliet* (Sport For Jove) and *Julius Caesar* (Little Spirits). She has just finished working on the mammoth *Player Kings* (2025) with Sport For Jove where she costume designed Chapters 1, 2 and half of 3. Lily has gained a love of being backstage and behind the scenes, taking on assistant stage

manager roles as well as working in the costume department.

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#### ERICA LOVELL SOUND DESIGNER

Erica is a multidisciplinary theatre maker, director, producer, educator, and sound designer based in Sydney, with a background in music, voice, and over twenty years of experience as a vocal coach and performer. She currently serves as Executive Director of Operations & Art in Education at Poetry in Action, a national touring educational theatre company delivering curriculum-aligned performances to schools across Australia and internationally. She is also Co-Executive Producer at Rogue Projects, an award winning independent theatre and film company based in Sydney. For New Theatre: Debut.

As a director, Erica's credits include *The Female of the Species* (Old Fitz Theatre), *Gravity Guts* (Sydney Fringe), and several educational works for Poetry in Action, including *Elements of Rhyme, The Poet's Quest* and *International Anthem*. She co-wrote *Herstory 101* with Lizzie

Schebesta for Poetry in Action, showcasing the writing of women and their impact on the literary landscape. Erica has designed sound for her own productions, including *The Female of the Species* and Poetry in Action's full touring repertoire.



#### JESS ZLOTNICK DRAMATURG/CONSULTANT

Jess is a writer, artist, musician, and theatre maker. She lives and works on the unceded land of the Gadigal people, in Sydney. She graduated from the University of Sydney in 2019 with a double major in Gender Studies and Theatre and Performance Studies. She was a recipient of the Denis Diderot Artist-in-Residence award at the Chateau d'Orquevaux, France, and of the Lighthouse Arts Residency through the Hunter Writer's Centre Newcastle. Jess is passionate about diversity and challenging stereotypes through storytelling. She has written, directed, designed, and produced theatre in Sydney for the last ten years.

For New Theatre: Set Designer, One Man, Two Guvnors; Assistant Director & Mask Maker, A Very Expensive Poison.

Other credits include: Producer, *Furious Mattress* (Legit Theatre Co./25A) and *Pride & Prejudice* (The Artist Experiment, Dream Plane Productions/Old Fitz); Props Master, *Posh* (Queen Hades Productions/Old Fitz); Associate Director and Set Designer, *I Hate People, or Timon of Athens* (Sport for Jove); Co-Author, Dramaturg, and Set Designer, *Not Now: Not Ever, or A Parliament of Women* (Queen Hades Productions/25A); Assistant Director, *Labyrinth* (Dream Plane Productions).

Her unpublished manuscript *Searching for Shamansky* is currently under consideration with both local and international literary agents. It is the first book in a romantasy trilogy; the second book is currently in draft form.

Jess is the author of *Lady*, a speculative backstory for Lady Macbeth. This was produced for the Sydney Theatre Society in 2016, and development with support from Queen Hades Productions is ongoing.

On Patreon, Jess shares behind the scenes and process insights about her current projects. You can follow Jess at www.patreon.com/SimplytheArt and read more about her past and upcoming projects at jesszlotnick.com



#### SHONDELLE PRATT CONSENT CONSULTANT

Shondelle is an intimacy director, choreographer, theatre maker, performer and educator. She holds degrees in acting, directing, education and theatre, with a focus on intercultural performance. She has 30 years of experience in the arts, working with award winning companies such as Opera Australia, Pacific Opera, Aquarius Films, Gordon Frost, The Really Useful Company, Monkey Baa Theatre Company, Squabbalogic, Ping Chong and Company in New York and Uk Theatre Company, Bamboozle. Shondelle has been mentored by Ita O'Brien and is a proud member of MEAA.

For New Theatre: Jumpers for Goalposts, One Man, Two Guv'nors, All My Sons.



#### DIEGO RETAMALES FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER

Diego is a Chilean-Australian actor and fight choreographer based in Sydney. Diego graduated with a B. Performance from Theatre Nepean's final graduating year in 2008. After spending a few years in Canada, Diego returned to acting (and subsequently fight choreography) in 2022. For New Theatre: A Very Expensive Poison, One Man Two Guv'nors.

Recent fight choreography credits include: *Posh* (Old Fitz), *Furious Mattress* (25A Belvoir), *I Hate People or Timon of Athens* (Sport for Jove), *Blood Wedding, Teenage Dick,* and *Labyrinth* (Flight Path), *SHOOK* (Lost Thought/Qtopia), *The Wasp* (Akimbo + Co), *Apocka-wocka-localypse* (Tooth and Sinew), *A Fortunate Few* (Something Wicked), and *U.B.U* (Tooth and Sinew/KXT).

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#### JAMES SHEPHERD FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER



James is a dynamic and versatile improviser, actor, and creative consultant. For New Theatre: Debut.

James has served as the Displays Coordinator for the St Ives Medieval Fair, the co-creative director of the Queer Medieval Faire and committee member for the Australasian Living History Foundation. He has performed for the Australian Shakespeare Company and led immersive pirate shows for Sydney Harbour Tall Ships. His most recent theatre production was *Turpentine* (Popular Playhouse).



#### RUBY DOLLIN MAKE-UP DESIGNER

Ruby is a Makeup Artist who specialises in makeup for theatre and film. She graduated from Gymea TAFE with a Diploma of Screen & Media in 2019 and has since worked on a variety of award winning theatre and film productions, including *Love Bites* and *When Sticks Become Snakes* by Fabio Caprarelli and *Quest For Steel* by Simon Roptell. Ruby has also volunteered are her local theatre, Horizon Theatre, since the age of 17 and remains there to this day. For New Theatre: Debut.



#### BETH CHAMPION VOLANGES

Beth's acting career began in high school in *Ratbags*, a group-devised community theatre project produced by Powerhouse Youth Theatre, performed in an almost derelict Casula Powerhouse. For New Theatre: *Henry IV Part I*.

Other theatre includes: *Away* (Sydney Theatre Company), *Redheads* (Old Fitzroy Theatre), *Macbeth* outside a 13th-century castle in Scotland and *Eating Pomegranates* in the Blue Mountains. Beth has also produced and directed several group-devised plays.

Her screen credits include: Secrets, alongside Noah Taylor and Dannii Minogue, Home and Away, Brides of Christ, All Saints, The Last Bullet, Police Rescue, Hey Dad!, Exile, The Secret Kingdom, and The Fall Guy, to name a few. She has also done numerous TV commercials, voice overs for radio and the Foxtel Network, amd she recently created a Blue Mountains-branded

fictional comedy podcast called Gone Bush.



#### BEN DEWSTOW BELLEROCHE

Ben studied Theatre at the University of Notre Dame, Sydney while completing his BA in Education (2010). Ben has completed short courses with Short Courses @ The Hub Studio, Chippendale, Chopt Logic, Screenwise Australia, and NIDA Open-Theatre Intensive.

For New Theatre: Animal Farm, The Park, A Very Expensive Poison.

Ben's other theatre credits include: *Lurking* (Independent), *The Fairytale of my Life* (Sydney Fringe), *Love Addict* (Chippen Street Theatre), *The Gloveman* (Blood Moon Theatre), *Lady Windermere's Fan* (Bondi and Eastern Suburbs Theatre Company) and *Far From The Madding Crowd* (Genesian Theatre). Ben will next been seen in *Conscience*, produced by Joining the Dots TC at the Greek Theatre in July.

Film/TV: Ben has performed in several features and short films, worked as an extra on Australian television and featured in a number of commercials airing in Australia and abroad. Ben is represented by Sydney Creative

television and featured in a number of commercials airing in Australia and abroad. Ben is represented by Sydney Creative Management.



#### SUZANN JAMES ROSEMONDE

Suzann was first drawn to performance as a young dancer. In her early 20's in Hong Kong she segued into musicals, film, TV and theatre. Suzann studied at the National Academy of Singing and Dramatic Arts in Christchurch, New Zealand, and in Auckland co-founded The Unreal Theatre Company. As Artistic Director and performer for five years, she produced *Me and My Friend, The Baltimore Waltz, Betrayal, Kindertransport* and *Te Maunga*.

For New Theatre: Broadway Bound, The Merry Wives of Windsor, Off the Record.

Since arriving in Sydney in 2016, her other stage credits have included: A Murder is Announced, The Big Meal (The Depot), The Realistic Joneses (Limelight), The Cherry Orchard (Virginia Plain), A Deal (Flying House Assembly), A Delicate Balance (Sydney Classic Theatre Company), Fuente Ovejuna (Dream Plane Productions/Flight Path), In Their Footsteps (Theatre Travels, with touring

performances to Canberra and Adelaide), *Much Ado* (Attractive, Not Model Attractive/Flight Path), and *Hedda Gabler* (Secret House/KXT).



#### MELISSA JONES MERTEUIL

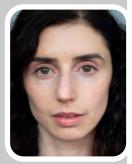
Melissa is an Australian actor, writer, director, producer. She trained intensively for three years in London's West End and has worked for over two decades across stage, television, and film. For New Theatre: A Clockwork Orange.

Other stage credits include: The House of Bernarda Alba (Flow Studios), Mercury Poisoning (KXT), Karolina Ristevski's STC Patrick White Award nominee Cate Fucking Blanchett (Flght Path Theatre), A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Crucible, Macbeth and The Tempest (Point Break), When Dad Married Fury (Hunter's Hill), and Radiant Vermin (Sputnik).

Screen appearances include the short film *The Method* (dir. Oren Lavie, prod. Farabee Kabir), which has been officially selected for the 2025 St. Kilda Film Festival, where it will premiere in June.

As a writer, Melissa has developed multiple screenplays currently in various stages of production, including a six-part series *A Second Spring*, and two short films: *Echoes* (in post-production), and *The Art of Diplomacy*. She is also in pre-production for a sci-fi short, *Dawn Protocol*.

A proud member of MEAA, Melissa is passionate about continuing to produce bold and compelling theatre through her company Frantic Muse @franticmuseproductions, collaborating with dedicated, like-minded creatives to provide more opportunities for female voices in the arts.



#### MEGAN ELIZABETH KENNEDY TOURVEL

Megan is a Newcastle and Sydney-based actress with a varied and extensive resume across stage and screen.

For New Theatre: Debut.

Recent stage credits include *Seen* (Short and Sweet), *Turpentine* (Popularplayhouse Theatre/ FlightPath), Low Level Panic (Her Productions/KXT On Broadway), Banging Denmark (The Very Popular Theatre Company/Civic Playhouse), and Take Me to Neverland (Bearfoot Theatre/The Lock-Up). Megan recently wrapped her first feature film *To The Tooth*.



#### ELLA MORRIS SOPHIE/AZOLAN

Ella is a multi-faceted performer from Sydney, Australia. Ella trained at the Academy of Film, Theatre & Television (AFTT), graduating in 2024.

For New Theatre: Debut.

Ella has worked on several classical and contemporary plays, as well as roles in student films. Most recently Ella was seen in *The Watsons* (Downstairs Belvoir), *Henry the Sixth. Part 3* and *Lungs* (JMC). Ella will next be seen in the upcoming production of *Henry the Sixth, Part 3* with the Sydney Shakespeare Company at Flow Studios.



#### HARRISON COLLIS OATES DANCENY

Harrison trained at Charles Sturt University under Dominique Sweeney and Robert Lewis. For New Theatre: Debut.

Last year, Harrison toured Tasmania in Nathan Maynard and Rob Braslin's critically acclaimed new work *The Box* (Mudlark Theatre), receiving a 2025 Tasmanian Theatre Award nomination for Best Performance Professional Theatre. Other credits include *Cloudstreet* (Lane Cove Theatre) and *The Government Inspector* (Fingerless Theatre).

Harrison has been a proud member of MEAA since 2016.



#### BRONTE PRICE CECILE

Bronte is a stage and screen actor, raised on the Gold Coast, now based in Sydney. She graduated from the Queensland University of Technology with a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Acting). For New Theatre: Debut.

Other credits include: *The Anonymous Miss J* (Short n Sweet Finalist 2024). You may have seen her in the AACTA nominated TV show *One Night* (Netflix, Paramount+), and she appears in the feature film *Strange Nights* which is currently in post-production.

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#### CHAD TRAUPMANN VALMONT

After 20 years climbing the corporate ladder, in 2023 Chad committed himself to the Creative Arts full-time. He trained at the Sydney Acting Studio.

For New Theatre: Shakespeare in Love, Ink and Off the Record.

Other theatre credits include: as actor, *Wally* (Moon Bureau/KXT), *The First Council* (Deadhouse), *Othello* (Streamed Shakepheare), *The Hollow* (Genesian); as producer, *The Human* (Mophead/Old Fitz), and *Between The Streetlight and The Moon* (Mophead/KXT). Film work includes *To The Tooth* and *Welcome to My Channel*.

In 2025, Chad launched his new production company Mi Todo Productions, which has its inaugural production *Mary Jane* at the Old Fitz in May. He was recently Acting Theatre Manager/Production Coordinator at New Theatre while Gemma Greer was on her long deserved Long Service Leave, and

in April he joined the New Theatre Management Committee as Vice-President.



#### BIANCA DREIS STAGE MANAGER/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: ASM/Operator, In the Next Room, or The Vibrator Play.

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) and ASM on *Hir* for New Theatre.



# **COMING NEXT**

# HIR by taylor mac

# 8 JUL - 2 AUG

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

#### STAFF

THEATRE MANAGER & PRODUCTION COORDINATOR Gemma Greer

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) COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESIDENT Rosane McNamara

VICE PRESIDENT Chad Traupmann

TREASURER Mathew Sigmund

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR 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 'DANGEROUS LIAISONS' TEAM

Tom Bannerman, David Marshall-Martin, Nicholas Price, Margaret Thanos, Paris Bell, Chris Johnson, Sport for Jove, Robert Hoang, Sam Cheng, Katherine, SHEIN, New Theatre Management Committee, staff and volunteers.

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If you want to join the New Theatre family, why not become a member? For \$30 a year you receive the following benefits:

- Notice of all auditions via email plus a guaranteed audition if the part is right for you
- \$25 (+ bf) tickets to all productions
- Discounts at the bar
- Voting rights at company meetings and the eligibility to stand for Management Committee positions
- Use of theatre facilities (including rehearsal room) at discounted rates
- Participation in *Hold Cold Reads* our series of 'cold reads' cast on a firstcome basis
- Spotlight, the regular members' newsletter

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