

### March-July 2024 season at the Finborough Theatre

The European premiere

## BANGING DENMARK

by Van Badham.

Directed by Sally Woodcock. Set Design by Katy Mo and Leah Kelly. Lighting Design by Richard Williamson. Sound Design and Composition by Edward Lewis. Costume Design by Leah Kelly.

Presented by Toby Parsons for MESH Theatre Company in association with Neil McPherson for the Finborough Theatre.

Cast: Rebecca Blackstone. James Jip. Tom Kay. Maja Simonsen. Jodie Tyack.

*"Have you ever encountered a woman you don't inflate?"*

International Danish model **Maja Simonsen** (*Harpers Bazaar*, *Vogue*, *Costume*, *L'Officiel*, campaigns for Piaget and many others) makes her stage acting debut in the European premiere of Van Badham's acclaimed black comedy ***Banging Denmark*** opening at the multi-award-winning Finborough Theatre for a four-week limited season on Tuesday, 16 April 2024 (**Press Nights: Thursday, 18 April 2024 and Friday, 19 April 2024 at 7.30pm**).

A biting and hilarious new "rom-com" by one of Australia's leading social commentators (and former Literary Manager of the Finborough Theatre), Van Badham.

Feisty feminist academic Ishtar is so broke she's living in the photocopy room, following a hefty out-of-court settlement to a toxic male 'troll'. All she has left is her pride.

Management consultant Jake is high on life, with a lucrative side gig as a misogynist podcaster and pick-up artist. Until his latest crush – gorgeous Danish librarian Anne – fails to fall for his usual 'game'.

Undeterred, he makes Ishtar a cash offer she surely can't refuse to advise him how best to infiltrate Anne's no-nonsense feminist mind.

But for Ish to accept such a deal from Jake – of all people – she would be selling her soul. Wouldn't she?

This explicit and badly behaved satire of modern manners sees Ish, Jake, their friends and a stranger navigate the battle-of-the-sexes (and the sexless).

No one will emerge unscathed...

Sydney Theatre Company's acclaimed 2019 production at the Sydney Opera House Studio was shortlisted for the 2020 NSW Premier's Literary Awards Nick Enright Prize for Playwriting.

Playwright **Van Badham** makes a long-overdue return to the Finborough Theatre where she was previously Literary Manager. Van is an internationally award-winning writer, theatre-maker and broadcaster from Australia. She is a featured columnist for *The Guardian*, and has also written for *The New York Times*, *Bloomberg*, *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Age*. She was a Walkley finalist for her non-fiction book debut, 2021's best-selling *QAnon And On: A Short and Shocking History of Internet Conspiracy Cults*, and Van was the first Australian to win Britain's Harold Hobson prize for Theatre Criticism at the National Student Drama Festival. As a theatremaker, Van's most recent plays include *A Fool in Love* (Sydney Theatre Company), *Animal Farm* (Black Swan State Theatre Company of Western Australia,

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e-mail [admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk](mailto:admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk) [www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk](http://www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk) Artistic Director Neil McPherson

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# PRESS INFORMATION

Perth), *Banging Denmark* (Sydney Theatre Company), *Big Baby* (Terrapin Puppet Theatre, Hobart), *The Bloody Chamber* (Malthouse Theatre, Melbourne) and *The Bull, the Moon and the Coronet of Stars* (Griffin Theatre Company, Sydney). Van was writer in residence at LAMDA in London for two years, and was subsequently the first Australian included in the New York Summer Play Festival. Her plays have had professional productions in Canada, the US, across the UK (including *The Gabriels* at the Finborough Theatre), Germany, Switzerland, Austria and Iceland. She is a former Literary Associate for Malthouse Theatre, Melbourne. Van is currently writing a second non-fiction book for Hardie Grant, as well as being under commission for new work at Melbourne Theatre Company and developing episodic television with Jungle Entertainment in Sydney. Her new musical *The Questions* – co-created with composer Richard Wise – premieres in July 2024 at the State Theatre Company of South Australia at the Adelaide Festival Centre.

Director **Sally Woodcock** is a director, award-winning playwright and founder-director of MESH Theatre Company. Direction includes *Journey's End* (The Gunpowder Store, Ypres, Belgium and The Guards Chapel, Wellington Barracks), *The Soldier* (Salisbury Playhouse, Painted Hall, Greenwich; Macready Theatre, Rugby; Kings College, Cambridge; Great War Huts, Suffolk and St Georges Chapel, Ypres, Belgium), *Blue Whales* (Luton Hat Factory, RADA Festival and Soho Theatre), *Wedding Belles* (Gilded Balloon, Edinburgh, and 78th Street Theatre Lab, New York City), *All the Wrong Reasons* (Bridewell Theatre), *The Trousers Department* (Gilded Balloon, Edinburgh), *Yerma* and *Teechers* (Corpus Playroom, Cambridge Arts Theatre), and *Waiting For Godot*, *A Doll's House* and *The Caretaker* (Mumford Theatre, Cambridge). Half-Australian, Sally trained at RADA and Cambridge University. Writing includes her first full-length play *Fanta Orange* (also at the Finborough Theatre) which was co-winner of the International Playwriting Festival, won the National Association of Writers in Education Little Brother's Big Opportunity Award, and was nominated for an OffWestEnd Award for Best New Play.

The cast is:

**Rebecca Blackstone** | Ishtar Madigan

Trained at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art.

Theatre includes *The Sunshine Boys* (Savoy Theatre), *Cool Hand Luke* (Aldwych Theatre), *The Country* (Salisbury Playhouse), *Midlife Crisis* (Coalition Theatre for Old Vic New Voices), *Afraid of the Dark* (Charing Cross Theatre), *Victory at the Dirt Palace*, *Cleansed*, *La Dispute*, *A Bright Room Called Day*, *Man of Mode*, *Fear and Company* (Royal Academy of Dramatic Art), *Macbeth* and *Henry V* (Michigan Shakespeare Festival) and *Hot L. Baltimore* and *The Cradle Will Rock* (University of Michigan).

Television includes *Professor T* and *Red Dwarf*.

Video games include *Devil May Cry*, *Lego Star Wars: The Skywalker Saga*, *Ni No Kuni II: The Revenant Kingdom*, *The Drowning*, *Microsoft Lift – Echo Falls*, *Depth*, *Soma* and *Stagefright*.

**James Jip** | Toby Bello

Trained at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art and the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School.

Theatre includes *The Three Seagulls* (Bristol Old Vic) and *Hansel and Gretel* (Arnos Vale Cemetery).

Film includes *Bonnie and Clive*.

Television includes *Sex Education*.

**Tom Kay** | Jake Newhouse

Productions at the Finborough Theatre include *As Is*.

Trained at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art.

Theatre includes *The Soldier* (Salisbury Playhouse; Painted Hall, Greenwich; Macready Theatre, Rugby; King's College, Cambridge; Great War Huts, Suffolk; and St George's Chapel, Ypres, Belgium), *Journey's End* (The Gunpowder Store, Ypres, Belgium; and The Guards Chapel, Wellington Barracks), *Birdsong* (National Tour), *Five Guys Chillin* (King's Head Theatre), *Inigo* (White Bear Theatre), *American Psycho* (Almeida Theatre), *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (National Theatre), *The Taming of the Shrew* (National and International Tour), *The Tempest* (National and International Tour), *La Dispute*, *Cleansed*, *A Bright Room Called Day*, *The Man of Mode* and *Alcestis* (Royal Academy of Dramatic Art).

Television includes *The Children Next Door* and *Doctors*.

**Maja Simonsen** | Anne Toft

Trained at Oure Theatre Denmark and The Actors Centre.

Film includes *Love by Proxy*, *The King's Man* and *The Existence of Liberty White*.

Television includes *The Wheel of Time*, *Sexy Beast*, *Emily in Paris*, *Treadstone*, *Immortality* and *Turn Up Charlie*.

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e-mail [admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk](mailto:admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk) [www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk](http://www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk) Artistic Director Neil McPherson

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**Jodie Tyack** | Dr Denyse Kim

Trained at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art.

Theatre includes *Kindertransport*, *In Arabia We'd All Be Kings* and *The Bright and Bold Design* (Royal Academy of Dramatic Art).

Film includes *Odyssey* and *Rejoyce*.

Television includes *Wreck*, *Agatha Raisin*, *The Window*, *Noughts and Crosses*, *The Feed*, *Midsomer Murders*, *Prime Suspect 197* and *Unforgotten II*.

## The press on Sydney Theatre Company's production of *Banging Denmark*

"Extremely funny...A Much Ado for a social media age." ★★★★★ *Sydney Morning Herald*

"Van Badham's eyebrow-raising new play is a hilarious look at modern dating" ★★★★★ *Time Out*

"Crackles with joy...tangos comfortably with the politics of pick-up artists and feminism without being didactic."

★★★★★ *The Guardian*

"Will have anyone who has dealt with toxic men roaring with laughter" ★★★★★ *Broadway World*

"Gutsy and hilarious." ★★★★★ 1/2 *Audrey Journal*

"Van Badham may have one of the biggest and quickest minds in Australia, but it's her her huge heart that takes the stage. Not unlike Van, *Banging Denmark* is a play that speaks its mind with edge, wit and heart. By the end of it you can't help but feel enraged, endeared and ultimately, empowered. Van Badham has created the ultimate political rom-com, a battle of the sexes that's an entertaining aphrodisiac." Playwright Nakkiah Lui

## The press on playwright Van Badham

"Van Badham is one of the leading voices of her generation." *Time Out London*

"Badham has made modern politics into a visceral, heartfelt experience." *The Telegraph*

"Van Badham is a courageous and funny playwright." *ABC News*

"Van Badham is a major talent," *The Guardian*

"The brilliant Australian playwright Van Badham." *The Independent*

## The press on director Sally Woodcock

"Director Sally Woodcock's painstaking attention to detail takes this play to another level... See it and weep."

★★★★★ *The Daily Telegraph* on *Journey's End*, Ypres (WWI Centenary production)

"A moving and precise reflection that still haunts the imagination." ★★★★★ *The List* on *Journey's End*

"Spine-tingling." *The Times* on *Journey's End*

"Woodcock's attention to detail is subtle and delicious." ★★★★★ *The Scotsman* on *Wedding Belles*

"Sparkling ... skilfully uncovers quiet, hurting corners so that we want more" ★★★★★ *The Stage* on *Wedding Belles*

"Funny and bittersweet, capturing all the hopes and fears of young women," ★★★★★ *The Daily Mail* on *Wedding Belles*

"Deft direction, magnificent cast... Every aspect of this fine production deserves praise." ★★★★★ *Varsity* on *The Caretaker*

"An evening of pure professionalism in an intimate gem of a theatre," ★★★★★ *Cambridge Evening News* on *The Caretaker*

"Thoroughly entertaining" ★★★★★ *The Stage* on *The Trouser Department*

"A great laugh with endless twists and turns" *One4Review* on *The Trouser Department*

"Slick, snappy and strangely loveable," *The Scotsman* on *The Trouser Department*

## PRESS NIGHTS: THURSDAY, 18 APRIL 2024 AND FRIDAY, 19 APRIL 2024 AT 7.30PM

## PHOTOCALL: TUESDAY, 16 APRIL 2024 AT 1.00PM-1.30PM

Finborough Theatre, 118 Finborough Road, London SW10 9ED

Book online at [www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk](http://www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk)

Box Office 020 7244 7439

No booking fees

## Tuesday, 16 April – Saturday, 11 May 2024

Tuesday to Saturday evenings at 7.30pm. Saturday and Sunday matinees at 3.00pm.

**Prices until 28 April 2024** – Tickets £20, £18 concessions, except Tuesday evenings £18 all seats, and Friday and Saturday evenings £20 all seats. Previews (16 and 17 April) £15 all seats.

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£10 tickets for Under 30s for performances from Tuesday to Sunday of the first week when booked online only.

£15 tickets for residents of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham on Saturday, 20 April 2024 at 7.30pm when booked online only.

**Prices from 30 April 2024** – Tickets £23, £20 concessions, except Tuesday evenings £20 all seats, and Friday and Saturday evenings £23 all seats.

Group Bookings for all performances – 1 free ticket in every 10 purchased.

Performance Length: Approximately 100 minutes.

**Covid Safe performance – Masks are mandatory at the first Sunday matinee performance.**

For more information, interviews and images, please contact

**Finborough Theatre** on e-mail [press@finboroughtheatre.co.uk](mailto:press@finboroughtheatre.co.uk) or **020 7244 4739**

Download press releases and images at <http://www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk/press-resources.php>