

**PROGRAM**



# MEMBER

**IN THE 1980s, SYDNEY GANGS FOUND  
A NEW BLOOD SPORT — HUNTING GAYS.**

**A Fairly Lucid Production**

Written by Ben Noble

Composed by Simone Seales

Directed by David Wood

Additional Words by Ro Bright, Meg Courtney, Björn Deigner,  
Dan Giovannoni, Elise Esther Hearst & Finegan Kruckemeyer

Based on true events



# MEMBER

A FAIRLY LUCID PRODUCTION

**WRITTEN BY** BEN NOBLE

**ADDITIONAL WORDS BY** RO BRIGHT, MEG COURTNEY,  
BJÖRN DEIGNER, DAN  
GIOVANNONI, ELISE ESTHER  
HEARST, FINEGAN  
KRUCKEMEYER

**DIRECTED BY** DAVID WOOD

**PERFORMED BY** BEN NOBLE & SIMONE SEALES

**COMPOSED BY** SIMONE SEALES

**SET & COSTUME DESIGN** RYAN WEBSTER

**LIGHTING DESIGN** KATHARINE WILLIAMS

**STAGE MANAGER** FINLEY DICKINS

**PRODUCER** FAIRLY LUCID PRODUCTIONS

**PROMOTION  
PHOTOGRAPHY** LUKE CADDEN

**PUBLICITY** STORYTELLING PR

**GRAPHIC DESIGN** NAOMI HAWKER







Stories don't dignify human activity. Human activity dignifies stories. In June 2013, when Russia announced their anti-LGBTIQ propaganda law, I was angry, hurt and upset. The world felt like it took a giant step back in equality. In researching the issues that came out of that new law, and the hate crimes that were being committed I stumbled across stories cemented in Australian History, where, not long ago, those views were in my own backyard, and potentially still are today.

I asked friends and colleagues to write a response to that material, specifically relating to the case of Scott Johnson for our companies 10th anniversary. They were given case notes, police statements & news articles. Thirteen Writers contributed from five countries at that time.

Where we began and where we are now, feels like a world apart. Those artists work still provide the blueprints to this show. Some of their dialogue is still there, some of it isn't. But they are here, with us, in some way shape or form. And we are lucky to collaborate with them in this way. The ones whose words are still here, are listed as the contributors in our play.

Some of the words you will hear are actual quotes. They are taken from testimonies or statements from victims or perpetrators. These cases are ongoing and we have taken elements from all those cases to create this story here for the audience.

I've longed to have a musician on stage with me whilst telling this story and I am beyond thrilled that I have one of the best, led by another extraordinary artist at its helm, all hailing from RCS from varying years. This is an exciting collaboration of queer artists. I feel very special that we are reclaiming a horrific history lesson in our own way.

For our audience – I invite you to listen. Observe. Think. Discuss.

Let's start talking after the show. Whether it's amongst your group, or the wider community or just with a stranger at the bar after, let's continue to talk about acceptance, acknowledgment, awareness and equality and never forget the people we have lost.

To those voices that can't be heard, to the families awaiting justice for their loved ones and to those waiting for answers, we dedicate this show to you.

Ben Noble - Writer

*Writers Note*



# UNVEILING THE SHADOWS

Sydney, the vibrant and diverse city known for its welcoming spirit, experienced a dark chapter in its history during the 1980s and 1990s. This period saw a wave of targeted violence against the LGBTQ+ community, with a series of brutal hate crimes casting a shadow over the city. Through examining these incidents, we uncover the resilience, activism, and ongoing struggle for justice that marked this turbulent era.

During the 1980s, Sydney became a focal point for a series of hate crimes aimed at the LGBTQ+ community. Perceived as an expression of homophobia and intolerance, these crimes were characterised by violence, aggression, and a deep-seated prejudice against individuals based on their sexual orientation.

One of the most prominent cases during this period was the tragic death of American student Scott Johnson. In 1988, Johnson's body was discovered at the base of a cliff in Sydney's eastern suburbs. Despite indications of foul play, the initial investigation concluded it was a suicide. However, after relentless advocacy by Johnson's family and renewed scrutiny, the case was reopened decades later, ultimately

***The death of men remain shrouded in mystery, leaving their families and loved ones longing for justice and closure.***



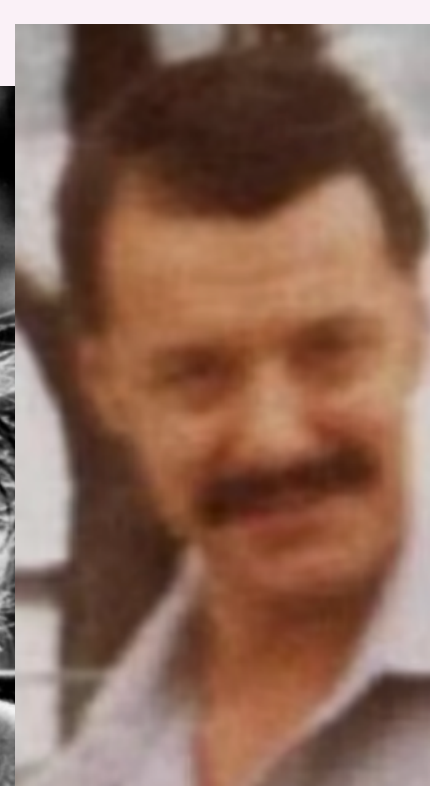




resulting in the conviction of Scott Phillip White for his murder in 2021

The murder of Scott Johnson was not an isolated incident. Several other unsolved cases plagued the LGBTQ+ community during this era. The deaths of men such as John Russell, Ross Warren, and others remain shrouded in mystery, leaving their families and loved ones longing for justice and closure.

The prevailing societal attitudes towards homosexuality during this period exacerbated the violence against the LGBTQ+ community. Prejudice and discrimination were deeply ingrained, permeating institutions such as the police force. This institutional homophobia often resulted in inadequate investigations, misclassification of crimes, and a lack of empathy and support for victims.

The wave of violence spurred an outpouring of activism and advocacy from the LGBTQ+ community and its allies. Organizations like the Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby fought tirelessly for justice, equality, and societal change. Activists held rallies, protests, and awareness campaigns, demanding an end to violence and discrimination.






The profound impact of these hate crimes on Sydney's LGBTQ+ community cannot be overstated. Fear, grief, and a pervasive sense of vulnerability became an unfortunate reality. Yet, in the face of adversity, the community united, forming support networks and safe spaces, and refusing to be silenced.

The struggle for justice and recognition for victims of these hate crimes continues to this day. The belated investigation and subsequent convictions in cases like Scott Johnson's demonstrate that progress is possible. However, the pain and anguish experienced by families and friends of victims remain a poignant reminder of the enduring fight for equality and the need for a vigilant and inclusive society.

Sydney's gay hate crimes during the 1980s and 1990s were a tragic period in the city's history. These acts of violence perpetrated against the LGBTQ+ community cast a dark cloud over Sydney's reputation as a progressive and accepting city. However, through activism, perseverance, and the pursuit of justice, these crimes are gradually being addressed and acknowledged. By remembering this painful chapter, we honour the victims, support their loved ones, and renew our commitment to creating a more inclusive and compassionate society for all.





**BEN NOBLE (HE/HIM)**  
PERFORMER, WRITER, PRODUCER

Ben is a queer disabled Australian based actor, writer, creative producer and teacher. He is the founder of Fairly Lucid Productions.

Ben received his Masters from Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and studied at RADA (UK), Atlantic Theater Company Acting School (USA), Brave Studios & 16th Street Actors Studio (AUS).

Theatre highlights include: Playlist 21 (Red Stitch Actors Theatre) The Campaign (Gavin Roach Productions), Doctor Faustus, Little Light (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland), As You like It (Shakespeare's Globe) Two Gentlemen of Verona (RADA), Bed & Breakfast, MEMBER, Raton Laveur, Something From Nothing, interrogation (Fairly Lucid Productions), Wind in the Willows (Australian Shakespeare Company), The Subtle Art of Falling (Tunks Productions) Scrooge (Stage West Canada), Phaedra's Love (Abstract Chaos), One Last (SummerWorks).

Film & TV highlights: Underbelly (Screentime Australia), Quiz (Nobull Productions), BJ Fletcher Private Eye (Bee Charmer Productions).

As the writer, Ben received the Arch and Bruce Brown Foundation Playwriting Award for MEMBER and St Martins Best Play Award (Short Trip - Winner, Pick A Card - 3rd Prize, Go, Fish - Finalist).

[@BENNOBLEOFFICIAL](#)



**SIMONE SEALES (THEY/THEM)**  
PERFORMER, COMPOSER

Originally from Florida, Simone Seales is a Glasgow-based cellist who completed their postgraduate studies at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in 2021. They focus on free improvisation (both tonal and atonal) and devising music for theatre. Simone is passionate about exploring sound, how sound can reflect emotional states of being and how emotions are embodied. Their creative influences come from Black feminist leaders such as Audre Lorde, Assata Shakur and bell hooks. Within Simone's creative work, they centre Blackness, sexuality, intersectional feminism and anti-racism. They believe Western Classical musicians are capable of making meaningful social change. Passionate about reaching new audiences and increasing access to arts education, Simone is a Mentor and Ambassador Programme Assistant for the Benedetti Foundation. They focus on trauma-informed teaching practices.

Simone is a recipient of the Sphinx MPower Artist Grant, former Young Artist in Residence for Chamber Music Scotland, and they are the co-artistic director of 'demo theatre collective'. Demo put on a show at the Fringe entitled 'we just need to get through this', which combined text and musical language to convey the inner worlds of the characters. Recently, Simone has received grants from Chamber Music Scotland and National Theatre Scotland in partnership with NEUROSTAGES.

[@SIMONE.CELLO](#)













**DAVID WOOD (HE/HIM)**  
DIRECTOR

David is a director, facilitator and theatre-maker, and a graduate of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. He has a particular focus on ensemble-driven work which is queer in both form and content and, as an Ayrshire-born, Glasgow-based artist, he is keen to make work that explores our place, both geographically and societally.

Most recently, he has been developing *I V Effigy*, a solo show exploring fertility, family and queerness.

Directing credits include: *Once a Catholic* (West College Scotland);

His recent projects include development of *I V Effigy*, a solo show exploring legacy, family and queerness, (Overlap Theatre Company); *A Ladder to the Stars* (Visible Fictions); and *Untitled 2009* (Queen Jesus Productions)

David is delighted to be back for his third Fringe, and his second in a row at Gilded Balloon.

[@DAVETHEMUSICAL](#)



**FINLEY DICKINS (THEY/THEM)**  
STAGE MANAGER

Finley is a stage manager and technician based in Glasgow.

Credits include:

Technical Stage Manager, *Sex Education Xplorers* (Independent Arts Projects);

Technician, *Super Special Disability Roadshow*; Associate Production Manager, *Don't. Make. Tea.* (Birds of Paradise);

Technical Operator, *Raymond Briggs' Father Christmas* (Lyric Hammersmith);

Stage Manager, *God's Only Child* development;

Stage Manager, *Queen Jesus* mini-season (Queen Jesus Productions);

Company Stage Manager, *PUBLIC* (Ockham's Razor).



**KATHERINE WILLIAMS (THEY/THEM)**  
**LIGHTING DESIGNER**

Katharine Williams is a lighting designer, writer, and leader of projects.

Their recent lighting designs for theatre include: The Doncastrian Chalk Circle for National Theatre Public Acts at CAST Doncaster; Hedwig and the Angry Inch at Leeds Playhouse and HOME, Manchester; Oh Mother, Look at Me, Don't Look at Me and Two Man Show for RashDash; Drag Me To Love for Bonnie and the Bonnettes, and The Enemy for the National Theatre of Scotland.

Projects include Love Letters to the Home Office, which used art, words, and theatre to campaign against the UK's immigration policy; Crew for Calais, which mobilised people in creative industries to work with refugees; and People Powered, which lent support to the NHS and frontline services during the early part of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Katharine Williams directed and lit These Hills Are Ours on UK tour. Their plays as a writer include Walk with Me at VAULT Festival; and These Are Our Neighbours in Glasgow Southside.

[@THE SAME SKY KATHARINE](#)



**RYAN WEBSTER (HE/HIM)**  
**SET & COSTUMES**

Ryan Webster is a Queer, Neurodivergent Set and Costume Designer and creative who trained at Middlesex University, London– to whom he would like to extend a special thank you to the tutors & staff for their support and guidance to this point.

Credits Include: -

As Designer: - Mermaid (Theatre 503, Battersea); My Sister is Missing (Kings Head Theatre, Islington); A Murmuration of Starlings (Middlesex University, Hendon); The Ant Experiment (Camden Peoples Theatre, Camden); Five Guys Named Moe (Ovation Productions, Upstairs at The Gatehouse, Highgate); OUT, Hope for Holloway and Making Home (Mountview MA Site Specific Performance, HMP HOLLOWAY); Death Steps Back (Mountview MA Site Specific Performance, HMP HOLLOWAY); Greenland (The Grove Studios, Hendon).

As Associate Designer: -Bacon (Riverside studios London, Edinburgh Fringe, Bristol Old Vic London). As Assistant Designer: - Grindr The Opera (Design Assistant, The Union Theatre, Southwark); Nul Points (Design Assistant, The Union Theatre, Southwark); ANIMAL (Assistant Designer, Hope Mill Theatre Manchester, Tobacco Factory Bristol, The Park Theatre London) Much Ado About Nothing (Design Assistant, Duke of York's Theatre, London); Providencia – Electric Picnic (Scenic Assistant/ Set Dresser, Stradbally Hall, Ireland); UNCHAIN ME (Scenic Assistant, DREAMTHINKSPEAK, Brighton Festival).

[@RWEBSTERDESIGN](#)



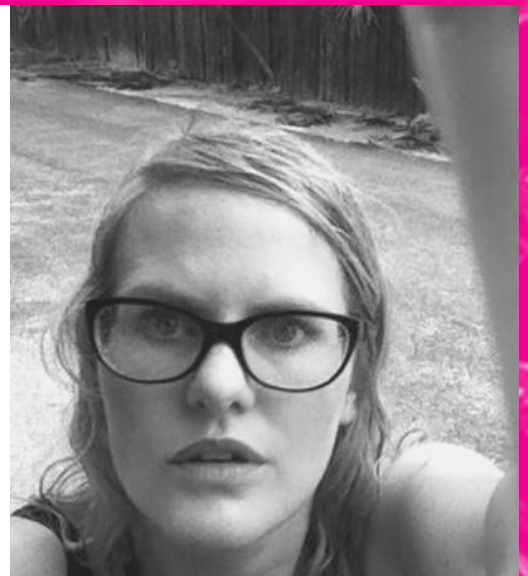
**RO BRIGHT (THEY/THEM)**  
CONTRIBUTOR

Ro is a kiwi writer based in Australia. After graduating with a Masters from Tisch (New York University), Ro returned to NZ to establish Bullet Heart Club with Kitan Petkovski. Their debut work, Daffodils has toured New Zealand and Australia, as well as seasons at the Salisbury International Arts Festival (UK) and Edinburgh Festival Fringe at the Traverse Theatre. Daffodils has received a Scotsman Fringe First and an Auckland Theatre Award and is now a Feature Film.



**MEG COURTNEY (SHE/HER)**  
CONTRIBUTOR

Meg has a BA (Professional Writing/Media) and an Advanced Diploma Professional Screenwriting. She is currently a Script Assessor for Short+Sweet International Festival of short plays. She has interned as Script Editor on Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries, written a Neighbours episode and her play Pendulum was performed as a part of Explorations at La Mama (dir. Petra Kalive), and read in Adelaide by five.point.one. Her short plays include Blue (Short + Sweet Top 20 2008), Gopastami (Emerging Writers Festival 2008), Fine Lines (Concrete Cloud 2006), A Black Cat Kind of Day (Audience Choice Award Short + Sweet Top 30 2005) and Turn (WWIT 2001, RMIT Snatches 2002, Dancing with Strangers 2005).



**BJÖRN DEIGNER (HE/HIM)**  
CONTRIBUTOR

Björn is a german writer, director and composer for theatre. Deigner studied at the Institute for Applied Theatre Studies (Gießen) and Interplay Europe in Athens (2004) and World interplay in Townsville/Australia (2005). His radio plays were played by different german radio stations. His last play sich abarbeiten was honored by Akademie der Darstellenden Künste and was also selected for ARD Hörspieltage. Deigners compositions for theatre have featured in many theaters throughout Germany (SchauspielFrankfurt and Deutsches Theater Berin). Deigner is also part of an off-theatre group, called huRRa!!, that holds a residency at the city theater in Leipzig.







**DAN GIOVANNONI (HE/HIM)**  
CONTRIBUTOR

Dan Giovannoni writes plays for families, young people, and adults. Recent credits include *Loaded* (Malthouse Theatre) *Air Race* (Arena Theatre Company), *Merciless Gods* (Little Ones Theatre), *Bambert's Book of Lost Stories* (Barking Gecko Theatre Company), *Turbine* (Malthouse Theatre), *Jurassica* (Red Stitch Actors' Theatre), and with Amelia Chandos Evans, *Cut Snake and Mad as a Cute Snake*. Dan was an inaugural writer in residence at Melbourne Theatre Company as a part of the NEXT STAGE program, and is currently under commission from Barking Gecko, Malthouse Theatre, and Melbourne Theatre Company.



**ELISE ESTHER HEARST (SHE/HER)**  
CONTRIBUTOR

Elise Esther Hearst is a Melbourne-based playwright and author, working and living on Boon Wurrung country. She studied Creative Arts at Melbourne University and playwriting at the Royal Court Theatre in London. Her work has appeared at Melbourne Theatre Company, Red Stitch Actor's Theatre, Arts Centre Melbourne, Griffin Theatre and Melbourne Jewish Book Week. In 2023, Elise's first novel, *One Day We're All Going to Die* will be published by Harper Collins Australia.



**FINEGAN KRUCKE MEYR (HE/HIM)**  
CONTRIBUTOR

Finegan has had 104 plays performed on six continents, translated into eight languages and studied at many international universities.

His work has received 42 awards, including eight Australian Writers Guild Awards, the David Williamson Prize for Excellence in Australian Playwriting, and an inaugural Sidney Myer Fellowship. He has spoken at conferences in ten countries, with papers and plays published. His first novel will be published in 2024.

# IN MEMORIAM

**William Allen**, 50, bashed at same gay beat as John Russell, Alexandria Park toilets, December 28, 1988

**John Bedser**, antique dealer stabbed in shop, Parramatta Arcade, December 2, 1980

**Kenneth Brennan**, 53, gay teacher stabbed in security unit, Elizabeth Bay, June 13, 1995

**Wayne/Wendy Brennan**, sex worker shot at Kings Cross home, April 1985

**Gerald Cuthbert**, 27, stabbed 64 times, Paddington unit, October 17, 1981

**William Dutfield**, 41, former jockey, struggled before bashed to death with a metal tape dispenser in his Mosman unit, November 19, 1991

**Crispin Dye**, 41, was bashed to death near Taylor Square in 1993.

**John Gordon Hughes**, 44, gagged and bound with electrical wire, throat slashed, bashed with lamp and bowl, pillow slip over head, in his unit in Greenknowe Avenue, Potts Point, May 4, 1989

**Scott Johnson**, 27, body found near base of North Head near Manly, December 9, 1988. Murderer sentenced 2023

**Raymond Keam**, 43, martial arts expert, savagely bashed in Alison Park, Randwick Park, January 13, 1987

**Gilles Mattaini**, 34, disappeared round Marks Park, Bondi-Tamarama, September 5, 1985 (coroner found in 2005 it was a likely murder)

**Cyril Olsen**, 64, bashed, then drowned in Rushcutters Bay, 22/8/92

**Graham Paynter**, 36, found at base of 50-metre cliff, with jeans around knees and jumper over his head, at Tathra Beach on the south coast, October 14, 1989

**Samantha Raye**, transexual, body found in cave at South Head, beneath the HMAS Watson naval base, March 20, 1989

**David Rose**, 41, cross-dresser, computer programmer, head wounds, Kensington unit, December 20, 1997.

**John Russell**, 31, thrown from cliff, Marks Park at Bondi, November 24, 1989. (originally dismissed as accident, coronial finding of murder in 2005).

**Peter Sheil**, 29, was not gay but his body was found in an area known as a gay beat, with his trousers removed, at the base of a cliff at Gordons Bay, north of Coogee, in April 1983. His family don't know why he died.

**Carl Stockton**, 52, bashed with blunt instrument, Cleveland and Bourke streets, Surry Hills,

**Ross Warren**, 25, WIN TV news presenter, disappeared at Marks Park, Tamarama, July 22, 1989. (Originally dismissed as an accident, coronial finding of murder in 2005.)





## *Fairly Lucid Productions*

Fairly Lucid Productions is an independent theatre company who invite their audiences to observe, think and discuss.

Run by Ben Noble & Sarah Ranken, we aim to push the boundaries with our performances, presenting work that is courageous, compassionate and embraces humility, with a strong focus on new work.

Our film production company has just filmed their first short film and are already onto their second piece.

In the theatre world, they are producing a new creative verbatim piece called, *The Dilly Dally of Death & Dying* which will debut in 2024 in Australia.

To stay in touch, follow us, tag us, like us, share our work.

@fairlylucid  
#MEMBERtheplay