

MEDIA RELEASE

THE
COURT
THEATRE

22 September 2017

For immediate release

Venus in Fur

By David Ives

Directed by Lara Macgregor

21 October - 11 November 2017

Tonkin & Taylor Main Stage at The Court Theatre

Show supported by Pub Charity

50 Shades of Play

50 Shades of Grey swept the world into a fluster and kicked kink culture into the mainstream. Now, to sweep Christchurch into a fluster, The Court Theatre is bringing David Ives' *Venus in Fur* onto the mainstage.

Ives' lead character, Thomas Novacheck, is hoping to cash in on the wave of fetishism when he adapts an 1870 erotic novel for the stage. However, finding a leading lady is proving difficult. Then Vanda arrives – uncouth and unprepared with an uncanny connection to the role. What starts as an increasingly disastrous audition quickly turns into a game of dominance and desire which blurs the lines between fantasy and reality.

Venus in Fur is as intellectually stimulating as it is an act of seduction. Much like Vanda herself, the play is chameleon-like; shifting effortlessly from sexy to smart, intense to playful, comedic to mysterious.

The New York Times called Ives' play a "psychodrama", and a French reviewer described it as "a black comedy". When asked which description was more accurate, Ives was quoted as saying "take your pick". With its intriguing ambiguity, *Venus in Fur* found widespread appeal among audiences and critics alike; the "hot ticket" for theatres worldwide.

Director of *Venus in Fur*, Lara Macgregor, most recently directed the acclaimed season of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* at The Court Theatre. Going from a show with a large cast, extensive physical theatre components and stunning audio-visual elements, Macgregor is relishing "working with two actors, barely two costumes and one set" in "a play that celebrates the craft of acting".

Finding two actors who fit the roles was no easy feat, and the audition process for *Venus in Fur* was a long one. "Connection and chemistry between the leads is crucial," says Macgregor. "This play puts them to the physical and emotional test."

Daniel Watterson and Jessie Lawrence recently appeared together as lovers in Q Theatre's *The Effect*. Their on-stage chemistry made them the perfect pair to play Thomas and Vanda. "Ironically, Jessie and Daniel were the standout actors in the first round of auditions last December," says Macgregor, "but it took many months and various combinations of personalities to come full circle back to casting them."

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The Court Theatre

PO Box 268

Christchurch 8140

New Zealand

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Artistic Director of The Court Theatre, Ross Gumbley, chose *Venus In Fur* for The Court's 2017-18 Season because "it's a piece of contemporary theatre that's on the edge. It's intellectually smart, undeniably sexy and at its heart it looks at how the lines between acting and identity can be blurred. It's a very exciting play for us to bring to the stage."

The 1870 novel *Venus in Furs* follows a man surrendering himself to a woman to be dominated and abused; the author's name, Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, coined the term "masochism". Ives set out to do a straightforward adaptation of the novel but found the idea of setting it around an audition – itself something of an exercise in submission and control – much more intriguing. Using the device of a play within a play allows Ives to explore the power struggle that can exist between prospective sexual partners.

Find out who ends up on top when *Venus in Fur* opens at The Court Theatre on 21 October 2017.

Contains adult content.

Cast:

Daniel Watterson	Thomas
Jessie Lawrence	Vanda

Production Team:

Lara Macgregor	Director
Nigel Kerr	Set Designer
Aimee Reed	Costume Designer
Henri Kerr	Sound Designer
Giles Tanner	Lighting Designer/Operator
Christy Lassen	Properties Manager
Jo Bunce	Stage Manager

Ticket Prices:

- Adult: \$54-\$62
- Senior 65yrs+: \$47-\$52
- Group 6+: \$44-\$52
- Court Supporter: \$45-\$53
- 30 Below: \$30

Bookings: phone 03 963 0870 or visit www.courttheatre.org.nz

Show Times:

- 6.30pm: Monday & Thursday
- 7.30pm: Tue/Wed/Fri/Sat
- Forum 6:30pm Monday 23 October – Discuss the play with cast and creative team after the performance
- 2.00pm: Matinee Saturday 4 November

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For more information or to arrange an interview please contact:

Samantha McConnell, Marketing & Communications Manager

The Court Theatre, 03 963 0884, 0275 22 9700

samantha.mcconnell@courttheatre.org.nz

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