

Hansard comes to The Baxter

Theatre luminaries Fiona Ramsay and Graham Hopkins are starring in Simon Woods' witty and devastating portrait of the British ruling class, *Hansard* at The Baxter.



Image supplied: Fiona Ramsay and Graham Hopkins in *Hansard*

The new play premiered at London's National Theatre in 2019 and following its hugely successful season at Theatre on the Square in Johannesburg, now transfers to The Baxter in early 2023.

Theatre critic, Robyn Sassen, said, "... with Whitehead, Ramsay and Hopkins, this production stands among the best of the best of this level of theatre-making, as it sweeps you ineluctably through its ebbs and tides of language and politics. If you plan to see one play this year - this decade - see this one."

This intriguing and devastating portrait of the British ruling class, although set in 1988, is written with today in mind. It's a summer morning and Tory politician Robin Hesketh (played by Hopkins) has returned home to the idyllic Cotswold house he shares with his wife, Diana (played by Ramsay).



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Robin is strongly right-wing and contemptuous of identity politics, while Diana's liberal attitudes are excitingly critical of Tory rule and entitlement. Their personal relationship of 30 years is also not as blissful as it seems. She has a stinking hangover; a fox is destroying the garden and secrets are being dug up all over the place. As the day draws on, what starts as a gentle ribbing and the familiar rhythm of marital sparring, quickly turns into a blood sport.

This is playwright and actor, Simon Woods' first play. He is well known for his performances in the hit movie, *Pride and Prejudice*, and on television in *Rome*, *Cranford* and *Spooks*. While enjoying a successful career as an actor, he also turned to write. This gave birth to this touching and original play in 2019, *Hansard*, which got its title from the official record of proceedings in the British parliament.

Ramsay and Hopkins have collaborated on several productions and, once again, team up on stage, having appeared in *Life X 3*, *Honour*, *Talking Heads* and *As You Like*, and together, the two were directed by Robert Whitehead in *Six Degrees of Separation*.



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In recent years Ramsay has wowed Cape Town audiences with her performances in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *The Glass Menagerie* and *Sweet Bird of Youth*. This a welcome return for her to *The Baxter*, where she last performed in 2007 in the classic, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

Hopkins has appeared in several Paul Slabolepszy plays, perhaps most notably, the highly acclaimed cricket comedy *Life's a Pitch*. Other theatre highlights include *Vigil*, *Tuesdays with Morrie*, *Freud's Last Session* and at *The Baxter*, in *Scenes from an Execution*.

Hansard is presented by *The Baxter*, in association with *Troupe Theatre Company* and *Theatre on the Square*. It runs at the *Baxter Golden Arrow Studio* from 25 January to 11 February at 8pm, with Saturday matinees at 2pm.

Booking can be made [online](#) or at *Pick n Pay* stores. Ticket prices range from R150 to R200 and there is an age restriction of 14 years.

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