



The Maids play out elaborate revenge fantasies at Bakehouse

Ewart Shaw, The Advertiser

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NO man is a hero to his valet, said Napoleon, and in Jean Genet's *The Maids*, the servants embroider their lives with elaborate revenge fantasies, that take a tragic twist in this short and tightly focused production.

Cats and the mice that play when the cat's away have nothing on this household of hate and subservience.

Director Tony Knight has chosen a naturalistic approach the female parts are taken by women, though they are often played by men. Knight has cast carefully and his three performers bring energy and depth to their roles.

Kate Bonney is the beautiful blonde Claire and Peta Shannon the brunette Solange, possibly older sister, though they might be lovers, or just good friends who have bonded together in their attic room.

Bonney's impersonation of Madame is aided by a very convincing accent and Shannon is gripping as she stands, in her underwear, delivering the long soliloquy about her execution.

Madame, their elegant employer, is Angelika Bailey, who captures the vanity of the character, and her brittle sophistication.

The maids' murderous plans are entirely comprehensible. The women discover that Madame's boyfriend has been released, and fearing that he will take revenge on them, they move towards making fantasy reality.

Thirteen long wardrobe mirrors hang behind the action, reinforcing the dress-up games, and, by reflecting the audience, turn the Bakehouse stage into an arena.

Can we next expect *Huis Clos* by Sartre, another three hander that would fit well in the claustrophobic atmosphere that the Bakehouse provides so well?

The Maids

Bakehouse Theatre June 14 to 23