

VCE Drama and VCE Theatre Studies 2021 Playlist (updated March 2021)

The following plays have been selected for study in 2021. This playlist should be used in conjunction with requirements set out in the *VCE Drama Study Design 2019–2024* and *VCE Theatre Studies Study Design 2019–2024*. Teachers should select plays as required for VCE Drama and VCE Theatre Studies Unit 3 and Unit 4, and make bookings in a prompt and timely manner. Teachers should also be aware that, for 2021, some flexibility will be possible in the time that they can choose to see a performance from the list.

The VCAA is committed to upholding live performance as a core feature of the current study designs; however, theatre companies have been less certain of their conditions of operations and funding capacities for touring in 2021. To allow for a variety of theatre styles and forms to be accessed by students in case of further interruptions to theatres, the lists have been formulated in a more flexible manner.

For VCE Drama, students see a professional performance in order to become familiar with the key knowledge and key skills in Unit 3 Outcome 3. Performances relating to this unit will be available from February to September, and teachers will have the flexibility to undertake the school-assessed coursework relating to this outcome at a later time, with the due date for all graded assessment scores for VCE Drama to be entered into VASS by the [Unit 4 submission date](#).

For VCE Theatre Studies, students engage with a professional performance in conjunction with Unit 3 Outcome 3, and Unit 4 Outcome 3. In 2021, there will be one list of VCE Theatre Studies plays taking place between February and September. Students will be required to study two separate plays from that list, one to address the key knowledge and key skills (which also entails studying the script) for Unit 3, and one for the separate key knowledge and key skills for Unit 4, regardless of when the play performance takes place during the year. School-assessed coursework for those outcomes can take place at a convenient time for the school, with the due date for all graded assessment scores for VCE Theatre Studies to be entered into VASS by the [Unit 4 submission date](#).

A webinar will be held to explain this more flexible approach to the playlist for 2021. Teachers will be given the opportunity to ask questions.

The playlist selection panel has taken into account the requirement for texts to be appropriate for study by students in senior secondary schooling, and for texts to reflect community standards and expectations. Teachers and school leaders are advised to carefully consider the information provided about each of the plays on the 2021 playlist.

For VCE Drama Unit 3 and VCE Theatre Studies Unit 4, students are not required to study the script of selected performances. However, the script can be a valuable learning resource in these units. Theatre companies are not obliged to provide copies of these scripts.

For VCE Theatre Studies Unit 3, students must study the script and the performance identified in this playlist. The only version of the script that students are required to study for VCE Theatre Studies Unit 3 is the one used as the basis for the performance that students will attend. In some cases, this script will be a 'working' or 'rehearsal' script.

Teachers should be aware that plays may be added to, or withdrawn from, the playlist. Further updates will be provided during 2021 via the *VCAA Bulletin* and Notices to Schools as, for example, production details are confirmed and/or as final scripts become available.

All financial arrangements regarding attendance at playlist performances are a matter for schools and the theatre company/organisation responsible for the production.

Selecting plays for study

While the VCAA considers all plays on this playlist suitable for study, teachers should be aware that, in some instances, sensitivity might be needed where particular issues or themes that may be challenging for students are explored. The information provided about each play will allow teachers and schools to make an informed decision about the play/s that is most appropriate for study by their students. The entry for each play includes:

- information about the play and the season, including, as appropriate, the play title, the playwright/s, detail of works the play is adapted from, the production company, season details (dates, venues, performance times and duration, booking details and script availability)
- annotations (background information about the play and personnel involved in the production, a description of the work's dramatic merit and features of the production that are relevant for study)
- advice to schools (identifies any aspects of the play/production that teachers and others should be aware of in reviewing the play/production prior to selection).

The following strategies are suggested to assist teachers to select a play/s from the playlist:

- Take note of the advice provided about specific plays.
- Consult the school calendar and the teaching and learning plan for the relevant unit, and ensure sufficient planning time will be available for attendance at specific plays.
- Familiarise yourself with the themes, context and world of the play, with particular attention paid to matters identified in the advice.
- Read the script and, if available, information such as the director's vision or creative concept for the production.
- Research the script, the work of the playwright, the director and/or the company.
- Discuss issues of concern with the theatre company.
- Discuss with colleagues at your school aspects of the script or performance that may be challenging for your students.
- If possible, attend a preview performance.
- Identify any issues that may require additional resources, such as information about different perspectives on controversial historical, social, cultural or political themes in particular plays.
- Make your selection/s in consultation with school leaders.

VCE Drama Unit 3 playlist

The following plays have been selected for study in 2021. This list should be considered in conjunction with the requirements set out in Unit 3 Outcome 3 in the *VCE Drama Study Design 2019–2024* and the advice provided at the start of this document. Students will undertake an assessment task for Unit 3 Outcome 3 based on the performance of a play on this playlist. One or more questions will also be set on the performances of these plays in the end-of-year VCE Drama written examination.

For some plays, further dates and venues may be added once details can be confirmed.

Two Gents

adapted by Scott Middleton from Shakespeare's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*

Theatre company: That's Classic Entertainment

Season: 1–20 March 2021

Venues, performance times and bookings:

- 1–13 March 2021

Fairfield Amphitheatre, Fairfield Park Drive, Fairfield 3078

1 March: 7.30 pm

2–6 March: 2 pm and 7.30 pm

8–13 March: 2 pm and 7.30 pm

Tickets: adults: \$35; students/concession: \$28 (one complimentary ticket for a teacher per 10 students)

Bookings: bit.ly/2XwaZp5

Go Tix 5434 6100

- 15–20 March 2021

Garden for the Future, Bendigo Botanic Gardens, Bosquet Street, White Hills 3550

2 pm and 7.30 pm

Tickets: adults: \$35; students/concession: \$28 (one complimentary ticket for a teacher per 10 students)

Bookings: bit.ly/2XwaZp5

Go Tix 5434 6100

In the event of inclement weather, an alternative venue close to the original venue will be arranged and schools will be notified with as much notice as possible.

Duration: 100 minutes

Scott Middleton adapts the Arden edition of Shakespeare's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* to present a production in the traditional commedia dell'arte performance style, recontextualised and set in the roaring 20s of Hollywood – 'the decade of optimism'. Much of the text remains unchanged where possible, with a view to maintaining Shakespeare's intended rhythms. Some scenes have been shortened to reduce the overall length of the piece and some characters have been cut or are represented by puppets, objects, mask or, sometimes, audience members. The names of some places have been changed to set the piece in 1920s Hollywood; however, the adaptation maintains all the original plot lines and character development. This new setting will be more relatable to a contemporary audience and will allow contextual exploration of the play's themes of gender roles, identity, infidelity, mistaken identity, love and forgiveness. The production will be particularly engaging for young adults.

Five actors will transform and multi-role all the characters, with the physicalities of all stock characters to be fully utilised. The production will also include the use of traditional leather masks and even a *battocchio*, or 'slapstick' as it is more commonly known. The stagecraft will be minimal and used in creative ways. The performance will be staged in outdoor venues to reflect the touring style of traditional commedia dell'arte

troupes; the cast will arrive with road cases and set up in an introduction sequence and then pack it all up at the end of the performance before moving on. The rehearsal process will be very collaborative, with the actors heavily involved in the creation of character, scenes and physical sequences. *Two Gentlemen* intends to be delightfully punchy, with sharp physicality, improvised sequences, hilarious physical comedy and beautifully dynamic characters exploring themes of love and loss in a highly engaging and interactive way that will leave the audience uplifted and full of joy.

Every show will include a Q&A session with cast and creatives. Educational support material will be available upon request.

Advice to schools: Some sexual innuendo, as expected from Shakespeare's work.

Man Up!

by Jeremy Ives

Theatre company: Purely Pensive Productions

Season: 19 April – 16 May 2021

Venues: Shenton Theatre East Geelong; Marymede Catholic College, South Morang; Mount Lilydale Mercy College Lilydale; Fab Nobs Theatre Inc. Bayswater.

If schools located in metropolitan Melbourne would like to host a performance for their region (subject to minimum numbers and availability), they are welcome to contact the producers via: manup-education.com/

The performance will be professionally filmed and available to purchase later in the year for examination revision.

Performance times and bookings:

Performance times vary from venue to venue. Please check the bookings website for performance times and ticket details.

Tickets: teachers/students: \$27 (one complimentary ticket for a teacher per 15 students)

Bookings: manup-education.com/

Duration: Approximately 55 minutes, no interval

Man Up! explores current societal views and norms regarding the way men behave and questions where men and masculinity are headed. Based on countless interviews with real people, the script is woven to reflect the way people have perceived men in their lives and what the future holds for our young boys as they become men. This production offers a fascinating insight into what people are currently thinking and feeling, and presents a touching performance that explores the social issues of domestic violence, aggression, homophobia and dominance, balanced by nurturing, vulnerability and sensitivity that we do not always see.

Man Up! was previously performed at the Melbourne Fringe Festival (2019) and the Midsumma Festival (2020). The playmaking process involved interviewing over 170 participants using different prompts to get a sense of how masculinity is represented within society. This material was then curated into distinct chapters that make up the story. A small ensemble of actors presents these voices. The performance presents many different cultural backgrounds, different ages and genders based on a series of prompts given by the playwright. The creative intention of this performance is to open up community dialogue around gender roles within society. It examines multiple stories and viewpoints about masculinity within society. The voices reflected in the text include all genders, all sexual orientations, ages 16–75 and a variety of cultural backgrounds, including Indigenous Australian and migrant voices.

Man Up! is presented in an eclectic performance style, incorporating the conventions of Poor Theatre, Epic Theatre, verbatim theatre and biomechanics theatre.

Advice to schools: Recommended for ages 16+, moderate language, adult content *Man Up!* contains real stories and the themes explored in this play may be challenging for some students. The themes include bullying, mental illness, abuse and self-harm (primarily through use of fact and stylised movement).

Jekyll and Hyde

adapted from the novella by Robert Louis Stevenson

Theatre company: A Slightly Isolated Dog

Season: 21–30 April 2021

Venues, performance times and bookings:

- 21–24 April 2021

Chapel off Chapel, 12 Little Chapel St, Prahran 3181, 7.30 pm and 2 pm (24 April)

Tickets: \$25 (students)

Bookings: Nic Clark (nic@nicholasclarkmanagement.com or 0422863692) with details and ticket numbers to add to the Wait List prior to tickets going on sale at chapeloffchapel.com.au/

- 26 April 2021

Forge Theatre, Forge Theatre and Arts Hub, 80 McKean Street, Bairnsdale 3875, 1.10 pm

Tickets: \$10 (students)

Bookings:

eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/Arts_and_Leisure/Forge_Theatre_and_Arts_Hub/Whats_On_and_Buy_Tickets

- 28 April – 1 May 2021

Drama Theatre, Geelong Arts Centre, 81 Ryrie Street, Geelong 3220, 7.30 pm

Additional performance: 30 April, 1 pm, 1 May, 1pm.

Tickets: \$25 (students)

Bookings: geelongartscentre.org.au/

Duration: 75 minutes

Jekyll and Hyde by A Slightly Isolated Dog, created in 2016, is based on the classic tale by Robert Louis Stevenson and retells it in a contemporary, absurd and irreverent way. The show takes the thrill and horror from everyday lives and amplifies them to epic proportions, blending contemporary experiences with a distinctly Victorian morality tale. Audience interaction is pivotal to the structure of the show and *Jekyll and Hyde* is designed to feel spontaneous and alive: the actors seem to make up text on the spot, responding to audience interaction, though the show contains a highly structured artistic backbone that ensures a complete experience every night.

The intention is to challenge the notion of passive theatre by placing the excitement of live action in and around the audience, and making them part of the story. Using a cabaret structure, short acts follow each other rapidly and audience members are enlisted to participate in numerous, easy ways. With coaching, the actors play different characters in the show and help to create the locations. *Jekyll and Hyde* toured extensively in New Zealand in 2018 and was greeted with enthusiasm by secondary school students and teachers. Most recently it received excellent reviews at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

This production includes multiple performance forms – clown, character, melodrama, transformation of place, stand-up comedy, improvisation, music, direct address storytelling and guided audience participation.

Advice to schools: Occasional coarse language.

Voyage

written and composed by Helen Begley

Theatre company: The Good Girl Song Project

Season: performances range from March – August. More times and venues will be announced as they are confirmed.

Venues, performance times and bookings (subject to change depending on COVID-19 guidelines):

Tickets: \$30 (one complimentary ticket for a teacher per 10 students) unless stated otherwise

- Old Engine Room, The Capital, Bendigo, 3–4 May
Bookings: bendigoregion.com.au/arts-culture-theatres/space/the-capital
- Fortyfivedownstairs. 14–22 May, Evening performances (except Mondays) 7.30pm.
PLUS Friday 14, 10.30am, Saturday 15, 4pm, Sunday 16 and 23, 5pm,
PLUS Tuesday 18, Wednesday 19 and Friday 21 at 10.30am with VCE Forum following
fortyfivedownstairs.com/event/voyage/
- Potato Shed, Drysdale, 11–13 May eventbrite.com/e/voyage-tickets-140051442635
- Shirley Burke Theatre, 64 Parkers Rd, Parkdale 3195, Wednesday 18 August, 7.30 pm
Bookings: kingstonarts.com.au/PERFORMANCE/All-Performance/Voyage-by-the-Good-Girl-Song-Project

Extra offerings/school bookings:

- *Voyage* is also available as a school incursion and is suitable for performance in a large room, school hall or theatre. contact: Penny Larkins thegoodgirlsongproject@gmail.com
- A discussion forum with the cast is an optional part of each show (both theatre and school bookings).
- A full script/education package available.
- A talk with writer and historian Dr Liz Rushen is available as part of a school booking.

Amid the departure of convict boats each week from Britain, a different cargo ship leaves for Australia. On board are 287 single and free women. They have been promised good wages, good work and good marriage prospects in the new colony. To claim this promising new life, they must first survive the voyage ... and then the colony.

Blurring the lines between theatre, opera and song cycle, *Voyage's* songs bring to life the work of renowned Australian historian Dr Liz Rushen. Using both contemporary and traditional folk elements to showcase a fresh female perspective of early Australian immigration, the songs are key to discovering the inner world of these early immigrant women.

Voyage's themes of leaving and arrival, journey, class conflict, gender power structures and historical representative perspectives are brought to life by two actors giving voice to 11 different characters. Prior to its development as a scripted work, *Voyage* has been performed over the past five years as a theatrical song cycle throughout Australia's folk festival circuit.

Until now, there has been little crossover between modern playmaking techniques and traditional folk music elements in Australian contemporary theatre practice. This piece incorporates conventions of heightened language and verse. Dramatic elements, including sound and rhythm, are inherent in the musical composition. Mood is manipulated through the combination of vocal choices and musical accompaniment along with lighting design choices. Both actors on the stage must employ a full range of expressive skills (voice, gesture and movement) in order to successfully show transformation of character. They are also required to signal transformation of time and place as the piece takes place in several different settings.

Advice to schools: There are mentions of male-to-female abuse.

The Mermaid

adapted by Cassandra Fumi from Hans Christian Andersen's *The Little Mermaid*

Theatre company: La Mama Theatre

Season: 14–25 July 2021

Venue: La Mama Courthouse, 349 Drummond Street, Carlton 3053

Performance times:

- Wednesday and Thursday, 6.30 pm
- Friday and Saturday*, 7.30 pm
- Matinees – Wednesday and Thursday, 1 pm; Friday, 11 am; Sunday, 4 pm

Tickets: VCE concession ticket packages for students and teachers: \$36 pp (includes show, after-show forum and published copy of script with production notes); \$38 pp (for postage of scripts)

Non-VCE concession tickets for students and teachers: \$25 pp (includes show and after-show forum)

Pre-bookings (email only): maureen@lamama.com.au

School bookings open: Tuesday 15 December 2020

Further information and enquiries: maureen@lamama.com.au

Script: La Mama's VCE concession ticket package option will include a published script. Scripts will also be available at the box office at each performance.

Duration: Approximately 60 minutes, plus 20-minute after-show forum (*no forum on Saturday nights)

The Mermaid is an original, devised piece of contemporary theatre created with and for secondary school students. The work is a reimagining and reclamation of Hans Christian Andersen's fairytale *The Little Mermaid*. This adaptation has been developed collaboratively through a year-long creative development with Melbourne-based teenagers, and involved a combination of research, story sharing and physical improvisation, where the ideas were brainstormed, clarified and refined through practical experimentation, then scripted, rehearsed and performed.

The performance text operates on two key levels. In terms of language, it splits the written text between the voice of the young Mermaid and her older selves, played by adult performers Emily Goddard and Margaret Mills. It uses a blend of source texts, such as Hans Christian Andersen's *The Little Mermaid*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, poems, Tumblr posts and YouTube videos. Further contrast in the performance text is created through the presence of the all-knowing teenage chorus, who create a physical 'language' and image-based score.

The contemporary commentary counterpoints the behaviours and ideas present in Hans Christian Andersen's fairytale. The work uses the form of Greek tragicomedy, which blends aspects of both tragic and comic form to engage its audience in this conversation about myths and the impact these myths have on our perspectives on socialised gendered behaviour.

The audience is complicit in the story from the beginning and, as the fourth wall is opened up immediately, this allows for an active audience experience that transports audience members under the sea. This is a work without mermaid tails, water or shells and, therefore, requires the activation of the audience's imagination.

A world under the sea is created through the physicality of the performers, an original score written over the year-long development process, lighting, and the use of symbolic objects and props.

The Mermaid is a show about voice and the power that comes with using it.

Advice to schools: Suitable for a wide range of audiences.

The Merger

by Damian Callinan

Theatre company: Regional Arts Victoria

Season: 29 April – 23 May 2021

Venues, performance times and bookings:

- 29 April, 7.30pm
Williamstown Town Hall
hobsonsbaytickets.com.au/
- 30 April, 8.00pm
The Potato Shed, Drysdale
geelongaustralia.com.au/potatoshed/default.aspx
- 1 May, 7.30pm
Birregurra Mechanics Hall
eventbrite.com.au/o/birregurra-community-arts-group-6226565981
- 6 May, 7.30pm
Portland Arts Centre
glenelg.vic.gov.au/performances
- 7 May, 7.30pm
Hamilton Performing Arts Centre
hamiltonpac.com.au/
- 8 May, 7.30pm
Clunes Community Centre
clunesnh.org
- 9 May, 7.30pm
Rex Theatre Charlton
rextheatre.org.au
- 13 May 8.00pm
West Gippsland Arts Centre
wgac.com.au
- 14 May, 8.00pm
Wyndham Cultural Centre
wyncc.com.au/
- 15 May 7.30pm
Yea Hall
facebook.com/yeaartscarnivale/
- 19 May, 7.30pm
Bunjil Place, Narre Warren
bunjilplace.com.au/
- 20 May, 7.30pm
Latrobe Performing Arts Centre, Traralgon
latrobe.vic.gov.au/Our_Services/Arts_Recreation_and_Leisure/Latrobe_Performing_Arts/Whats_On
- 22 May, 7.30pm
Ararat Town Hall
www.ararattownhall.com.au

Duration: 75 minutes (10 minute Q&A may be made available at some venues)

Script: The script is published as an e-Play on Australian Plays australianplays.org/script/ASC-2188

A professionally filmed version of the stage show, filmed at Wagga Civic Theatre, will be available for revision purposes.

The mill has closed; the Tidy Town sign has fallen into the long grass and the weir has dried up. This struggling town is poised to claim its next victim – the Bodgy Creek Roosters Football Club. Unable to field a side, the footy club will either have to fold or merge with their arch rivals, The Hudson’s Flat Cougars. But prodigal son coach Troy Carrington has other ideas. To save the club and serve his socially aware agenda, he embarks on a program to recruit locally based refugees to make up the numbers.

In recognition of his ability to appeal to country audiences and create multi-layered performances, Damian Callinan was commissioned by Regional Arts Victoria and Vic Health to write a show that might subtly deal with issues of racism in regional communities. The result was *The Merger*.

The show premiered at the Adelaide Fringe (2010) before going on to earn Damian his third Barry Award nomination at the Melbourne International Comedy Festival. *The Merger* continued to tour around Australia as momentum built towards a film adaptation.

Funded by Screen Australia and Create NSW, Callinan adapted the solo show into a multi-award-winning feature that was shot on location in the NSW Riverina, with Callinan in the lead role. The dual AACTA nominated film, premiered as the Gala Centrepiece at the Melbourne International Film Festival (2018), went on to win Best Film and Best Screenplay at the Ozflix Independent Film Awards and was the touring feature film for the Dublin, Glasgow and Global Migration Film Festivals (2019). The film has now been screened in 27 countries.

Now Callinan returns to the original script, deftly playing every role, and ‘proves that he is one of Australia’s finest character-comedians’. (Herald Sun).

Advice to schools: This production contains some coarse language, and a very brief hint of bare bum after a 360 degree wearing a hospital gown. Racist views are aired by one of the characters, however the turn-around of the narrative is the point of the show.

VCE Theatre Studies Unit 3 and Unit 4 playlist

The following plays have been selected for study in 2021. This list should be considered in conjunction with the requirements set out in Unit 3 Outcome 3 and Unit 4 Outcome 3 in the *VCE Theatre Studies Study Design 2019–2024* and the advice provided at the start of this document. Students will undertake an assessment task for Unit 3 Outcome 3 and Unit 4 Outcome 3 based on the performance of plays on this playlist. The play used for Unit 4 **must** be different from the one used for Unit 3. One or more questions will also be set on the performances of these plays in the end-of-year VCE Theatre Studies written examination. For Unit 3, students **must** study the script identified for their selected play and the interpretation of that script in performance to an audience.

Confirmation is pending for another play, which may be added to this list in late January.

For some plays, further dates and venues may be added once details can be confirmed.

Macbeth

by William Shakespeare

Theatre company: Australian Shakespeare Company

Season: 30 January – 20 March 2021

Venues, performance times and bookings:

- 30 January – 6 March 2021
Southern Cross Lawn, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, South Yarra
Monday–Tuesday: 7 pm
Wednesday–Saturday: 8 pm
Tickets: \$25 (one complimentary ticket for a teacher per 10 students)
Bookings: shakespeareaustralia.com.au/
- 21 March 2021
Kilmany Park Estate, Sale
7.30 pm
Tickets: \$25 (one complimentary ticket for a teacher per 10 students)
Bookings: shakespeareaustralia.com.au/

Duration: 150 minutes with a 15-minute interval

This new production of *Macbeth* by the Australian Shakespeare Company, directed and designed by Glenn Elston, was first staged on the Southern Cross Lawn of the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne from December 2018 to February 2019. The work aspires to embrace and intensify the play's inherent darkness, amplifying key themes of leadership, choice and gender politics, while oscillating between macro and micro. This is in keeping with the duality of the piece: its focus on appearances versus reality and public versus private personas. Drawing on the largesse of the outdoor setting for the play's more epic scenes, the set and stage design also allow a focus on the work's more intimate and psychological elements.

The performance style of the production accordingly flows between heightened/expressionistic and more nuanced, which makes for a dynamic and engaging study. The built stage and playing space itself is deep and comprises several levels to create a sense of space and distance when needed. A small thrust stage forms the lowest of these levels, allowing the actors to get closer to the audience for private moments and soliloquies. This stage design also provides for fluid transition between diverse locations. Nature plays a major role in *Macbeth* and the majestic trees that form a backdrop for this production are a powerful reminder of this.

With a 21st-century audience in mind, Glenn Elston puts the clarity of the heightened language and performance style first, while the tone of the production references the play's historical setting of a Dark Ages Scotland that is on the brink of political and social upheaval: a primitive/dystopian vibe colours costuming, sound design and properties. The production also draws on the style of expressionism in its lighting design – the use of projection and the interplay of stark light and shade as we move from twilight into the darkness of night, conjure up the play's supernatural tones and evoke the environment of this psychological thriller.

Shakespeare's intensely dark and relentless tragedy, which focuses on Macbeth's downward spiral from noble warrior to psychopathic dictator, is perhaps more relevant today than ever before. The play's investigation as to what constitutes good leadership, the destruction and disease that is powerfully reflected in the natural world when humanity breaks down, as well as the play's meditations on the futility of existence, seem to serve as a mirror for our times.

Students will be able to analyse the theatrical styles intrinsic to a Shakespearean work in tandem with a production designed for a contemporary audience, such as the larger-than-life characters based on a wide range of archetypes, the heightened language of blank verse, the Witches' trochaic tetrameter and the Porter's comedic prose, and the dramatic poetry of the soliloquies. Students will also be able to look out for the classic elements and conventions of Shakespearean tragedy, such as the noble hero with the fatal flaw, the role of fate and the consequences of choice, the fall into chaos, the deaths of the protagonists, the ultimate return of social order.

Advice to schools: Stage combat/violence, supernatural themes.

Lamb

by Jane Bodie

Theatre company: Red Stitch Actors' Theatre and Critical Stages Touring

Season: 25 February – 16 March 2021

Venues, performance times and bookings:

Performance times vary from venue to venue. Please check the venue websites for performance times and ticket details.

- Frankston Arts Centre: [Lamb \(frankston.vic.gov.au\)](http://lamb.frankston.vic.gov.au)
- Portland Arts Centre: glenelg.vic.gov.au/Performances
- Shirley Burke Theatre: [Lamb \(kingstonarts.com.au\)](http://lamb.kingstonarts.com.au)
- The Screening Room: [criticalstages.com.au/screening-room/ \(online\)](http://criticalstages.com.au/screening-room/)

Script: *Lamb* by Jane Bodie has been published by Currency Press (currency.com.au/books/drama/lamb/) and is available from Australian Plays (australianplays.org/script/CP-3555).

Duration: 130 minutes, including interval

Lamb by Jane Bodie is a contemporary naturalistic drama that tells a very Australian story with themes that resonate universally. Featuring three performers playing five roles between them, the play tells the story of two generations of an Australian sheep farming family. *Lamb* features new songs by Mark Seymour (Hunters and Collectors) performed live on stage by the cast throughout the production. Conveyed with subtlety and humour, *Lamb* tells an intimate story of one family's experience of rural life. The story explores lies told, secrets kept, loves lost and opportunities missed. It is a play about family, the land and being the one who stays.

Lamb premiered at Red Stitch Actors' Theatre in November 2018. The play was developed through Red Stitch Actors' Theatre's INK playwriting program and was first presented in association with Playwriting Australia's Ignition program. The premiere season received excellent reviews.

The design creates not only two different time periods but also two different physical worlds that coexist in the playing space. The play begins in an old-style country pub, with a bar, some bar stools, a TV and a commercial fridge. The historical scenes in the second act are set in the same pub but with different prop and set elements to accurately reflect the era. Other contemporary scenes take place in the family farmhouse kitchen. It is a play with songs but it is not a musical. The songs allow the character to reveal things that we otherwise would not know. Character transformation, non-linear narrative style and production elements are used to assist in the jumps between different eras and between different times of day.

Education resources will be developed and made available to teachers at the beginning of the school year, allowing students to examine why the playwright has chosen to tell the story in a non-linear structure and how the production elements help establish the jumps between different eras and between different times of day.

Advice to schools: Recommended for ages 15+, moderate language, use of herbal cigarettes, consumption of alcohol.

Hell's Canyon

by Emily Sheehan

Theatre company: Regional Arts Victoria

Season: 3–14 May 2021

Venues, performance times and bookings:

Hell's Canyon is touring in Regional Arts Victoria's Arts and Education Program. Regional Arts Victoria can offer a subsidy on ticket prices for eligible schools.

In addition to the venues listed below, *Hell's Canyon* is also available as an incursion to all schools in Victoria. Bookings for school incursions are open at:

rav.net.au/whats-on/education-and-families/hell-s-canyon-by-emily-sheehan

- Geelong Platform Arts
Date: Tuesday 4 May 2021
Performance time: 12.00 pm
Tickets: details to be announced soon
Bookings: platformarts.org.au/whats-on
- Wangaratta Performing Arts Centre
Date: Thursday 6 May 2021
Performance time: 11.30 am
Tickets: \$15 per student for school groups (one complimentary ticket for a teacher per 20 students and one complimentary ticket for a carer if required)
Bookings: wangerattapac.com.au
- Ararat Performing Arts Centre
Date: Thursday 13 May 2021
Performance time: 11.00 am
Tickets: \$12 per student for school groups
Bookings: ararattownhall.com.au

Script: *Hell's Canyon* by Emily Sheehan has been published by Currency Press (currency.com.au/books/plays-by-women/hells-canyon/) and is available from Australian Plays (australianplays.org/script/CP-3542).

Duration: 65 minutes, and 10 minutes Q&A

Caitlin and Oscar used to be mates but not any more. For six months since the death of Oscar's brother, who was Caitlin's boyfriend, Caitlin and Oscar have not spoken. These days, Caitlin texts boys to meet her in public parks, while Oscar eats his lunch in the teacher's staffroom. But when Caitlin sends Oscar a text message, he comes running. After receiving a medical diagnosis that morning, Caitlin is scared. She convinces an unsuspecting Oscar to run away with her. To go 'full-on missing'.

Hell's Canyon is a new Australian drama about friendship, grief, loss and rebellion that directly connects to a young audience. The play comically depicts the challenging journey of adolescence from childhood into adulthood, shows how friendship and empathy overcome challenging circumstances, and celebrates the tenacity of teenage adventure and of the human spirit.

A winner of the Rodney Seaborn Playwrights Award and the Melbourne Fringe Market Ready Award, shortlisted for the Patrick White Playwrights Award and developed by Playwriting Australia, *Hell's Canyon* has had critically acclaimed seasons in both Sydney and Melbourne.

For most of the length of the play, *Hell's Canyon* is presented in a realistic style that invites the audience to observe through a fourth wall. The audience is provoked into empathising with each of the two characters, switching its loyalty back and forth as new information is drip-fed over the hour of the play. Later sections of the play become more heightened and poetic, and could be described as examples of magic realism or of an eclectic theatre style overall. This happens when the characters' emotional worlds, which they are trying to conceal, become too big to hide from one another, so the play explodes with poetic language and vivid imagery, complemented by a provocative and pulsating sound design that takes the audience on the journey.

The education team at Regional Arts Victoria will provide resources for teachers to encourage discussion about performance styles, production areas and design elements used, and post-show Q&A sessions with cast and creatives will take place.

Advice to schools: This production contains sexual references and occasional coarse language. The production deals with sensitive themes such as death and grief. These are contextualised through considered script writing and direction of the work, reflecting a modern-day representation of adolescents and young adults in Australia today.

Three Sisters

by Anton Chekhov, adapted by Laurence Strangio from a literal translation by Adam Pierzchalski and Laurence Strangio

Theatre company: La Mama Theatre with Laurence Strangio

Season: 2–13 June 2021

Venue: La Mama Courthouse, 349 Drummond Street, Carlton 3053

Performance times:

- Wednesday and Thursday, 6.30 pm
- Friday and Saturday*, 7.30 pm
- Matinees – Wednesday and Thursday, 1 pm; Friday, 11 am; Sunday, 4 pm

Tickets: VCE concession ticket packages for students and teachers: \$36 pp (includes show, after-show forum and published script with production notes); \$38 pp (for postage of scripts); non-VCE concession tickets for students and teachers: \$25 pp (includes show and after-show forum)

Pre-bookings (email only): maureen@lamama.com.au

School bookings open: Tuesday 15 December 2020

Further information and enquiries: maureen@lamama.com.au

Script: La Mama's VCE concession ticket package option will include a published script. Scripts will also be available at the box office at each performance.

Duration: Approximately 150 minutes, plus 20-minute after-show forum (*no forum on Saturday nights)

'Life is a raspberry, one bite and it's gone!'

This production features a brand new, made-to-measure version of Chekhov's play *Three Sisters* by Laurence Strangio. This text has been specially created during the 2020 lockdown from a literal translation by Adam Pierzchalski and Laurence Strangio. It offers a leaner, more accessible, contemporary language idiom to suit the production style – a sparse and sharp Beckettian approach to Chekhov's text, an absurdist counter-staging that highlights and questions the inertia of its central protagonists.

The thesis of this production lies in its exploration of *Three Sisters* as a precursor to the form and themes of the Theatre of the Absurd. Chekhov's intent and dramatic structure may be seen as a forerunner to the 'tragicomedy' of the Absurd and specifically in this case as a satirical critique of the play's 'tragic heroines' and their continual procrastination. The Prozorov sisters (and their brother, Andrei) bemoan their lives while the people around them get on with theirs: – soldiers come and soldiers go, local girl Natasha Ivanovna overcomes her shyness and eventually rules the household, great calamities take place – a fire, a duel ... Life happens while Olga, Masha and Irina wait for theirs to begin.

Three Sisters presents a panorama of idiosyncratic characters orbiting its central, 'inactive' protagonists, in a town where 'knowing three languages is like growing a sixth finger'. This custom-made translation by Strangio and Pierzchalski offers a freshness of expression without seeking to modernise the time and circumstances of the original play. The dexterity of Chekhov's comic intent remains visible and sharp, allowing this new production to focus on the 'absurdity' of the characters and their situation. With its deteriorating sequence of scenes and repetitive and meaningless actions, it is reminiscent of Beckett. With its comical side characters and dialogue full of clichés and nonsense it evokes Ionesco. There are shades too of Pirandello in the compulsive behaviour of its characters, who carry on cyclically in spite of their diminishing plot circumstances.

'To Moscow!'

Advice to schools: Social and marital/romantic relationships within the bounds of 19th-century convention and morality.

THEM

by Samah Sabawi

Theatre company: Lara Week, La Mama Theatre and Critical Stages Touring

Season: 27 July – 10 August 2021

Venues, performance times and bookings:

Performance times vary from venue to venue. Please check the venue websites for performance times and ticket details.

Bookings:

- Arts Centre Melbourne: (28–30 July) for enquiries please email: schools@artscentremelbourne.com.au
- Riverlinks Westside, Shepparton: riverlinksvenues.com.au/ (3–4 August)
- Bunjil Place, Narre Warren: bunjilplace.com.au/ (5–6 August)
- Capital Theatre, Bendigo: bendigoregion.com.au/arts-culture-theatres/whats-on (9–10 August)

Script: The script is to be published by Currency Press and will be available for purchase before the tour.

Duration: 80 minutes

Written by Palestinian-Australian-Canadian playwright Samah Sabawi and directed by Bagryana Popov, *THEM* was presented at La Mama Theatre in 2019 and was scheduled as a work for Arts Centre Melbourne's Big World, Up Close program in 2020.

Sabawi's previous play, *Tales of a City by the Sea*, enjoyed two sell-out seasons at La Mama Courthouse in 2014 and 2016, was selected for the 2016 VCE Drama Playlist, won two awards from Drama Victoria, was nominated for Best Independent Production at the Green Room Awards and toured to Sydney, Adelaide and Kuala Lumpur.

In 2018, *THEM* was selected for the Melbourne Theatre Company's Cybec Electric program. The work won the Independent Theatre Award for Best Writing at the 2020 Green Room Awards, where it was also nominated for Best Ensemble, Best Direction and Best Production.

Set in an unnamed city at war, *THEM* tells the story of five people in the days before their boat leaves to seek refuge. Developed in consultation with people living in conflict zones and displaced by war, the play explores the reasons and conflicts people may have when faced with the choice to flee or to stay in the place they call home.

The language of the play is colloquial dialogue with some moments of more poetic direct address to the audience. The director, Popov, has opted for a symbolic staging of the play and will not include scenic elements that define its location. An abstract set and Popov's injection of music, song, sound design and physicality will lift the play up from realism with poetic moments that interrupt and heighten the acting. Students will notice elements of Brechtian drama, such as actors working to transform the set and the direct address to the audience used for the poem at the end of the play. The characters in the play are complex and faced with making impossible choices. The actors were challenged to prepare for their roles by learning songs in Arabic (a language most of them do not speak) and working with accent. Students will be able to explore and interrogate the function and purpose of the characters as well as the way in which the actors have interpreted their roles. The play uses subtext as characters mask their feelings of fear and vulnerability in different ways – some through humour and song, some through being practical.

The team of creatives and actors includes both recently arrived migrants and Australians whose families immigrated several generations ago, from diverse cultural heritages (including Palestine, Bulgaria, Chile, Lebanon, Afghanistan and Greece) and religious backgrounds (including Muslim, Jewish and Christian).

THEM is a play about people who are trying to create happy and fulfilling lives under extraordinarily difficult circumstances, while remaining true to their values and committed to their families and communities. It explores a range of perspectives and viewpoints about the question whether to flee war and become a refugee or not, without engaging in political ideologies. *THEM* will support students to gain a richer understanding of the complex decisions made by people who eventually become the asylum seekers they hear about in the media and whom they may meet in their own schools and communities. While it explores the painful realities of life in a war zone, *THEM* also encourages hope for the future.

Advice to schools: Recommended for ages 14+, mild coarse language, references to the existence of a sexual relationship, references to sexual violence during war (acknowledged but not graphically described).

A reimagined classic*

adapted by Melbourne Theatre Company

*Due to the impacts of COVID-19 on season launch dates, the Melbourne Theatre Company will reveal the title of this play in March 2021. More detailed information will also be made available at that time.

Theatre company: Melbourne Theatre Company (MTC)

Season: 9 August – 4 September 2021 (some dates may be unavailable for school groups due to the impacts of COVID-19 on seating arrangements; more information will be available in 2021)

Venue: Southbank Theatre, The Sumner

Performance times: Monday–Tuesday, 6.30 pm; Wednesday–Saturday, 8 pm; Wednesday, 1 pm; Saturday, 2 pm

Tickets: students: \$28; one complimentary ticket for a teacher per 15 students; additional teachers: \$46

Bookings: Bookings will open in Term 1 2021

Contact: schools@mtc.com.au

Phone: 8688 0963

Script: The script for the MTC adaptation will not be available prior to the performance season, so it is only suitable for study for Unit 4. Students and teachers will be able to access the original text on which this production is based once the play title is announced.

Duration: Approximately 90 minutes, no interval

The MTC presents a fresh and exciting reimagining of a much-loved classic. This production will be a joyful reimagining of the classic text, with music to propel the romantic comedy to its happy conclusion. The abundance of previous stage and screen adaptations provides a wealth of entry points for exploring context. Packed to the gills with songs and jokes and self-referential joy, this new adaptation is theatre that celebrates theatre. This is a love letter to language and to triumph in the face of unwinnable odds.

The themes of this play are universal and accessible – love, identity, community, relationships – but will belie a much deeper exploration of what it is to be human. The play will be presented as a contemporary romantic comedy with a feminist twist, incorporating conventions such as song, narration, direct address, actors playing multiple roles and disjointed time. The poetic nature of the text will see a heightened use of language, reflecting the theme of communication/miscommunication and the power of words, aspects which students will enjoy debating and analysing.

Extended study of the production will be supported by MTC education packs, webinars, revision activities and a range of digital resources that interrogate the key knowledge of VCE Theatre Studies.

Advice to schools: Recommended for ages 15+ (Year 10+), contains sexual references and occasional coarse language.

My Brilliant Career

adapted by Christine Davey from Stella Miles Franklin's novel

Theatre company: Skin of Our Teeth Productions in association with La Mama Theatre

Season: 3 August – early September 2021, in several venues

Venues, performance times and bookings:

- 3–8 August 2021

Venue: La Mama Courthouse, 349 Drummond Street, Carlton 3053

Performance times: Wednesday and Thursday, 6.30 pm; Friday and Saturday*, 7.30 pm; Matinees – Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, 1 pm; Sunday, 4 pm

Duration: Approximately 120 minutes, plus 20-minute after-show forum (*no forum on Saturday night)

Tickets: VCE concession ticket packages for students and teachers: \$25 pp (includes show and after-show forum)

School bookings open: Tuesday 15 December 2020 via email only: maureen@lamama.com.au

Further information and enquiries: maureen@lamama.com.au

- 14–29 August 2021

Venue: Waurin Ponds Hall, 225 Waurin Ponds Drive, Waurin Ponds 3216

Performance times: 14 August, 8 pm; 15 August, 5 pm; 19–21 August and 25–28 August, 8 pm; Matinees – 21 and 28 August, 2 pm; Twilight shows – 22 and 29 August, 5 pm

Duration: Approximately 120 minutes, plus 20 minute after-show forum after matinees and after twilight performance of 22 August

Tickets: VCE concession ticket packages for students and teachers: \$20 pp

School bookings open: Tuesday 15 December 2020

Bookings: trybooking.com/BMVLO

Further information and enquiries: Christine Davey (artistic director, Skin of Our Teeth Productions), chriskppd@westnet.com.au

Additional regional performances, contact Christine for bookings: chriskppd@westnet.com.au

- 4 September 2021 Venue: Ballarat Mechanics Institute:
Performance times 1pm followed by Q and A; 7.30pm
- 11 September 2021 Venue: The Potato Shed 29-41 Peninsula Drive, Drysdale
Performance time: 5pm (followed by Q and A)
- 12 September 2021: Birregurra Mechanics Hall, Main Street Birregurra.
Performance times: 1pm (followed by Q and A); 7.30pm.
- 17 September 2021: Warranambool Lighthouse Theatre 7.30pm (followed by Q and A)
Contact chriskppd@westnet.com.au

Script: The script is available at \$15 per PDF download at Australian Plays (australianplays.org/script/ASC-2178).

Link to My Brilliant Career radio play: ggci.podbean.com

My Brilliant Career, adapted by Christine Davey, is an award-winning theatrical reimagining of this timeless Australian classic written in 1901 by then 18-year-old Stella Miles Franklin. The play is presented by award-winning, independent theatre company Skin of Our Teeth Productions in association with La Mama Theatre. This fast-paced, funny, thoughtful, rhythmic and absorbing theatrical adaptation explores the

journey of Sybylla Melvyn, a young woman defying the confines of her era and circumstances in order to reach for freedom and independence. This is not a traditional love story or hero's journey but it is the tale of a country coming to terms with itself and of a woman defying expectations and challenging traditions at a time when nationhood was forming and every socio-political aspect of life was being questioned. The work tells an old story in an innovative fashion, presenting an engaging theatrical endeavour.

Weaving fact with fiction, the play juxtaposes Sybylla's story with that of her creator, Stella Miles Franklin, investigating the journey of the burgeoning writer, traveller and suffragist as well as her ongoing relationships with authors and thinkers of the time, such as Banjo Patterson, Henry Lawson and Vida Goldstein. In this way, the play examines both character and creator and how one influences the other. It also encourages discussion about how theatre can be presented, enjoyed and experienced. This is an exploration of time, sensation, thematic intent and of how these elements are braided throughout the text and interpreted by cast members, inviting the audience to experience components of fact, fiction, biography and creativity.

The play is presented as minimalist theatre or Epic Theatre. All actors remain on stage throughout, changing roles, using suitcases as props and set pieces. The staging dispenses with notions of realism. The casting dispenses with notions of age, ability or gender in representing specific characters. Mood, pace and tone are explored through lighting, positioning on stage, live music (cello/violin) to accompany the story's moments and transitional beats. In this way, the piece exemplifies the idea of theatre as a heightened space of interpretation. We create what we see and we adapt what we create. Storytelling goes beyond the stage, powered by the imagination. *My Brilliant Career* is an inspection of language, love and landscape – translated through text and a reflection of text. Adaptation is a constant theme of the piece. The play embraces the overriding elements of the era in which the original novel was written – feminism, federation, votes for women, race, socio-economics, the mutating nature of nationhood, the post-Boer War experience. Our history makes our present and our present informs our future. The piece is ultimately a story of empowerment and independence in which the actors convey a sense of history and historical context to a contemporary audience.

The play also examines the nature of love. Do we expect such stories to end in a heteronormative marriage? What happens when we circumvent such presumptions and our hero chooses a career over love, the road less travelled? The play takes the idea further, examining the nature of self-love, self-worth and self-assurance.

The play will also be available as a radio play (from early 2021), so students and teachers are invited to investigate, contrast and compare the performative art of the radio play to that of the theatrical presentation.

Advice to schools: Social conventions within the bounds of an early 20th-century sensibility, notions of independence, notions of stigma along socio-economic and political lines, notions of love and marriage, notions of feminism, women's suffrage, federation, no warnings applicable.

Robot Song

by Jolyon James

Theatre company: Arena Theatre Company

Venues, performance times and bookings:

- Bowery Theatre, St Albans
22 July 2021 1pm
23 July 2021, 10am and 1 pm
Bookings: bowery@brimbank.vic.gov.au
- Chapel off Chapel, Prahran
26 July 7pm
27 July 11am and 7pm
28 July 11am and 7pm

29 July 10am and 1pm

Bookings: info@arenatheatre.com.au (this is temporary while the venue is closed)

- The Capital, Bendigo

4–6 August 2021, 10 am and 1 pm

Bookings: boxoffice@bendigo.vic.gov.au

Script: An Education Pack including script download is available by contacting info@arenatheatre.com.au

When eleven-year-old Juniper May receives a petition signed by her entire class stating that she is ‘the most hated person in the school’, her life is thrown into a complete meltdown. Juniper stops eating, she refuses to return to school and her parents become increasingly desperate. Finally, after exhausting all other avenues, her parents resort to the only thing they have left: a giant singing robot.

Based on a true story, *Robot Song* illustrates the profound, transformative nature of creativity that, when combined with unconditional love, becomes an unstoppable force. For Juniper, creativity opens doors to places she never knew existed, allowing her for the first time to be defined on her own terms.

Robot Song is a deeply personal story. It shares an honest, intensely funny and often unconventional window into writer and director Jolyon James’s experience of parenting a child on the autism spectrum. The show poses, and attempts to answer, the question of how to support, foster and celebrate difference in our children in the face of an increasingly rigid and homogenised world.

Robot Song is a genuine family show. It is joyful and full of hope. It is a show for any child who has ever felt isolated and for any parent who is desperate for tools to help. The show employs cutting-edge digital technology, startling animatronics and a beautiful, original musical score.

In 2019, *Robot Song* won the Helpmann Award for Best Production for Young People, as well as two Drama Victoria Awards for both High School and Primary School students.

Animal Farm

adapted by Elizabeth Brennan and James Jackson from the novel by George Orwell

Theatre company: The Bloomshed

Season: 15–22 July (Geelong) and 17–29 August (Melbourne)

Venues, performance times and bookings:

Performance times vary from venue to venue. Please check the venue websites for performance times and ticket details.

- Platform Arts, 60 Little Malop St, Geelong
Bookings: platformarts.org.au/
- Theatre Works, 14 Acland St, St Kilda
Bookings: theatreworks.org.au/

Booking form and further information: thebloomshed@gmail.com

Script: *Animal Farm*’s ticket package option will include a script, which will be available by March.

Duration: Approximately 90 minutes

Animal Farm is a brand new adaptation of George Orwell’s novel, which is one of the most powerful stories every told, written by one of the most incisive writers of the 20th century. A fierce critique of power, this work is an all-out assault on our political landscape, adapted through a series of workshops by writers James Jackson and Elizabeth Brennan with The Bloomshed ensemble.

The Bloomshed create radical political theatre, attempting to break away from traditional forms by exploding the definitions of what theatre can be. *Animal Farm* sees Orwell’s work funnelled through a contemporary

context. It is a high-octane mess of punk protest, political allegory and Epic Theatre, with a rhythm beaten out on abandoned grain silos. It is non-naturalistic, post-dramatic theatre, complete with dance breaks, hyper-spectacle and elements of the surreal.

Drawing inspiration from an array of theatre pedagogy and styles, including those of Augusto Boal, Jacques Lecoq, Bertolt Brecht and Jerzy Grotowski, this production is informed by a theatre style that blends complex political activism with theatre. This style of theatre aims to shock, disrupt and overwhelm the audience through fast-paced hyper-spectacle.

Not only are the horrors of 20th-century totalitarianism recounted, history shows itself repeated in the 21st century. This version of *Animal Farm* is broken into two acts. The first act, with which the audience will be familiar, recounts the rise of Napoleon the pig and the death of freedom. The second act explores what happens years after Orwell's novel ends, when Napoleon, 'the Great and Glorious Leader of Animal Farm', has died. The second act tells the story of Animal Farm after *Animal Farm* – Animal Farm's transformation into a capitalist free-market enterprise: when Animal Farm becomes Animal Fair.

This Animal Farm is built of the detritus of post-paradise capitalism, of oil spills and mass extinctions. Of a present where everything is simultaneous, where individuals and institutions are atomised, isolated and fragmented. Where anxiety and chaos reign. Where politics has become reality television.

Animal farm is a contemporary parable about the misuse and abuse of power, told as if by a political cartoonist. It is a gut-wrenching horror story that describes things that are all too familiar, made strange because the story is played out through the lives of naive farmyard animals. It is a cautionary and brutal story that uses archetypal characters as symbols, which makes the story universal. What we learn from *Animal Farm* can be applied to any political context but especially to our own.

Animal Farm is a cautionary tale for anyone trying to make sense of power – and of its abuses.

Advice to schools: Some coarse language and references to violence, depicted in a stylised/symbolic almost cartoonish manner.

Because the Night

An immersive theatre adventure by Malthouse Theatre

Theatre company: Malthouse Theatre

Season: From March 23, with education matinees on Thursday at 1pm during Terms 2 and 3.

Venue: The Malthouse, 113 Sturt Street, Southbank

Duration: 90 minutes

Script: Available now

Tickets:

- Regional and low ICSEA school / \$35 (per student)
- Metro schools: \$39 (per student)
- Accompanying teachers: Free (up to 2 per group)
- Additional teachers: \$59 per ticket

Bookings available from Wednesday 20 January via malthousetheatre.com.au/discover/education/

Something is unfolding here in Elsinore. For weeks the strikes have been intensifying, the forest has been restless—but there's a new mood tonight as Carnival approaches. There's a vivid sense of an era ending—a new age opening up. The timber workers feel it... and the royals too. Inside the palace there are whispers... the King's death, the grinning Queen, the agitated Prince... And the ancient forest is wild again, groaning... It

seems to me that everything is part of a broader picture—that no matter where you look, it will tell the whole shocking story.

Malthouse Theatre launches an immersive theatre work on a scale never seen before in Australia. An entire world has been constructed for you to explore: follow the royals through the palace, roam the length of a town on the cusp of the digital age, or sift through the drawers of a single desk. Whatever you choose, a story will play out around you of a regime on the edge of collapse. You are a silent witness in the halls of power on a pivotal night in history. Move, venture deeper, listen closely, because the night will soon be lost—and all its secrets with it.

Malthouse Theatre will provide resources for teachers to encourage discussion around performance styles, production areas and design elements used. Schools will also receive a behind-the-scenes exclusive digital resource, following the journey of creating this ambitious work.

Content warning: *This production contains some coarse language, and simulated violence (Polonius is stabbed several times). There is no explicit drug use, but some rooms may allude to drug use in the palace. There is a room which has false doors indicating rooms where sexual acts occur, but there are no images of a sexual nature included in the design. There is reference to suicide in the text but not in the action (Ophelia's describes her mum who 'sacrificed herself to the forest' and 'hanging from a tree.')*

FANGIRLS

Book, music and lyrics by Yve Blake

Theatre company: Arts Centre Melbourne presents a Belvoir, Queensland Theatre and Brisbane Festival co-production in association with Australian Theatre for Young People (ATYP)

Season: 29 April – 9 May 2021

Venues, performance times and bookings:

- The Playhouse, Arts Centre Melbourne
- Evening performances (Tuesday through Friday), weekend matinee and evening shows (Saturday and Sunday) and school matinees (school specific shows scheduled for 29 April and 5 May 2021) – midday
- Bookings – emails schools@artscentremelbourne.com.au
- First Call Fund Partner Schools Program – for schools experiencing barriers of access due to location and / or socio-economic reasons, \$1 tickets to the show and full reimbursement of travel costs to and from Melbourne are available. Please email Arts Centre Melbourne's Schools Engagement team (schools@artscentremelbourne.com.au) for details.

Script: To be published by Currency Press and available for purchase before the season

Duration: 2 hours and 30 minutes (including interval)

Fascinated by the way that society can see a mob of screaming fans as 'embarrassing' if female and at a pop concert, but 'passionate' if male at a footy match, young Sydney-based writer Yve Blake set out to write the show she wished her teenage self could have seen: A comedy all about the ways that the world tries to convince young women that they're not as worthy as their brothers. It follows Edna, a plucky misfit scholarship girl who believes that she alone can win the heart of the world's biggest pop star; Harry. He does have 38 million other fans, but for Edna that's merely a hurdle, because there's nothing she won't do to meet Harry. *Fangirls* is a hilarious and heart-warming new musical about the underestimated power of teenage girls. The show premiered in 2019 Queensland Theatre and Belvoir to multiple five star reviews and sell-out crowds, before winning the 2019 Sydney Theatre Award for Best Mainstage Musical, the Matilda Award for Best Musical or Cabaret, and the 2020 AWGIE award for Music Theatre.

Fangirls will provide students much opportunity to analyse the conventions of musical theatre style and elements of theatrical composition. Inherent in the musical theatre is the use of rhythm and motion, however students will find rich examples of all the elements as the work moves from natural dialogue to fantasy to multimodal communication through texts and screens to a full, immersive pop concert.

The design uses audio-visual content as part of the set and story design. At times the content played on screen is weaved into the story and other times is used to create atmosphere. Students will be able to analyse and evaluate how theatre technologies and design elements have been used to interpret the written script.

Nine talented performers play multiple roles. The transformation of the actors into these incredibly varied roles is supported through acting skills, and creative costume design. *Fangirls* is ultimately an exploration of relationships, and through the acting skills of each performer students will be able to analyse the status, motivation and characterisation of the characters. As a musical, movement and dance, and sound and music, play a vital role in the realisation of the work. There is scope to analyse and evaluate the interpretation of the original musical numbers, and the acting skills performers bring to this particular style of theatre.

Extended study of the show will be supported through Arts Centre Melbourne's Schools team; with a digital, online program including Q+As with the creatives, Theatre Studies specific resources and post-show forums scheduled.

Advice to schools: This production utilises strobe effects, theatrical haze and smoke. Suitable for 14+ audience, *Fangirls* contains language consistent with adolescence, including the occasional use of strong language. The production also contains some mild sexual references. *Fangirls* contains occasional references to self-harm and depression. On any occasion self-harm is mentioned, it is referred to as a cause for concern.