

PROMPT PACK / EDUCATION RESOURCE

AWAY

BY MICHAEL GOW



THE COOPERS MALTHOUSE
Merlyn Theatre
3 – 28 MAY

MALTHOUSE
PROMPT

A co production with

**SYDNEY
THEATRE
CO**

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and Education program.

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ABOUT MALTHOUSE THEATRE

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

At Malthouse Theatre we collaborate with local and international artists to create inventive performances that cut to the core of the human experience.

Theatre has the power to interrogate, disrupt and to be an agent of change—and we think it always should. At Malthouse Theatre the work we produce explores the world personally, socially and politically.

Based in a dedicated venue, The Coopers Malthouse in Melbourne, we are a home for live experiences that entertain and provoke a dialogue with and within audiences.

Welcome to Malthouse Theatre.

VIDEOS RESOURCES

[Director Matthew Lutton discusses Away](#)

[Set and Costume designer Dale Ferguson discusses Away](#)

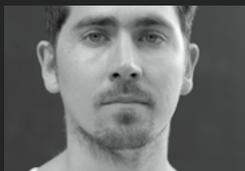
[Natasha Herbert and Heather Mitchell discuss Away](#)

[Naomi Rukavina and Liam Nunan discuss Away](#)

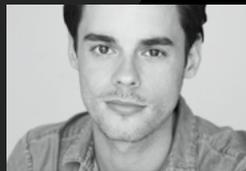
CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM



Michael Gow
WRITER



Matthew Lutton
DIRECTOR



Liam Nunan
TOM/RICK



Naomi Rukavina
MEG / LEONIE



Heather Mitchell
GWEN



Natasha Herbert
CORAL



Julia Davis
VIC



Wadih Dona
HARRY



Marco Chiappi
JIM



Glenn Hazeldine
ROY



Dale Ferguson
SET & COSTUME
DESIGNER



Paul Jackson
LIGHTING DESIGNER



J. David Franzke
COMPOSER &
SOUND DESIGNER



Stephanie Lake
CHOREOGRAPHER

PROMPT / CUE, INDUCE, MAKE, MOTIVATE, PERSUADE, ENCOURAGE, STIMULATE, IMPEL, INSPIRE.

Welcome to the Malthouse Theatre Prompt Pack for *Away*. When an actor forgets a line in rehearsals they may call for a prompt to provide a clue or a cue so that they can keep telling the story. This document aims to provide just that—a next step, a reminder, a series of provocations. It is full of information, but also poses many questions and discussion points for the audience. The Prompt Pack invites us to see how relevant and exciting contemporary theatre can be.

As a resource, these pages are by no means definitive, but we hope they'll take you on an interesting journey and keep you travelling through the world of the play well after the curtain call.

We encourage you to make particular use of the in-depth video interviews with members of the cast and creative team, as well as our recent interview with playwright Michael Gow, and a range of articles about this much loved Australian classic. Many of the questions and discussion points outlined in this resource are a direct response to these interviews and articles. We hope that this Prompt Pack will help you to engage deeply with the Malthouse Theatre and Sydney Theatre Company co-production of *Away*.



Vanessa O'Neill /
Youth & Education Manager

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

MATTHEW LUTTON



#AWAY

Speaking a painful truth

Michael Gow's *Away* is a deeply beloved play because through it we are able to see Australia. We see our own families, our own peculiarities, and our own summer rituals. However, we also see a troubled country, and families that are being stretched to the point of tearing.

Behind the veneer of holiday fanfare, Gold Coast glitz, and high school theatrics are three families that are scared, angered, and fracturing. All three families are wrestling with grief; a grief that can drive one away from those they love.

Away is also a portrait of a country struggling to come to terms with who it is and who to include. It paints an Australia with a distinct awareness of class divisions, that is struggling to empathise with others and is choosing to repress what is difficult and complex to say.

However, *Away* is a play in which, from out of this muck, the possibility of change starts to arrive. There is no radical moment of transformation

or epiphany, as the mythical beach where all three families gather does not provide concrete answers. Instead it is a place where the real work begins. It is a place where listening begins, where curiosity is ignited, where repressed thoughts are put into words and tentative steps are taken forward—the beginning of empathy.

The full-blooded theatrics of *Away* are also part of why it is so beloved. It is a play where fantasias and dreams erupt from a domestic veneer and where nature is epic and engulfing. And it is a play that recognises how much we love to 'play'—that by donning a disguise and creating a fantastical story we can sometimes liberate ourselves to speak a painful truth.

Away is therefore beloved because it moves us, because below its summer surface is turmoil, and because it unearths our shared ambition to begin pulling ourselves out from the muck.

Matthew Lutton /
Artistic Director/Co-CEO



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#AWAY

THE PERFORMANCE HISTORY OF AWAY

Michael Gow's *Away* was first performed on 7 January 1986 at the Stables Theatre for Griffin Theatre Company in Sydney. In the 31 years since, the play has become widely regarded as an Australian classic, and one of the most frequently staged plays in Australia.

Away was Michael Gow's second play (following *The Kid*). In the essay, *Robin Shall Restore Amends—A Response to Away by Michael Gow*, Hilary Bell recounts how the play was written in a remarkably short period of time:

*Peter Kingston, Griffin's Artistic Director at the time, needed something to fill a slot for a show that had fallen through. Gow proposed the idea of Away, then spent three weeks writing, starting with the end-of-year play and the packing scenes. Kingston liked what he saw, assembled a cast based on these scenes, and started rehearsals. And he told me recently that 'there was virtually no rewriting, in fact the one and only typescript of the play is pretty much what Currency published.'*¹

After the Griffin season, *Away* played at the Drama Theatre at the Opera House for the Sydney Theatre Company, and a Playbox season also took place in the Fairfax Theatre at the Arts Centre in Melbourne, which then toured regionally throughout Victoria. The play went on to receive a number of major awards and enthusiastic responses from audiences and critics in all of the state capitals. *Away* had its US premiere at the 1988 International Festival of Performing Arts in New York before it returned to the Sydney Opera House.

When Playbox Theatre Company moved into the Malthouse building in 1990, Neil Armfield's production of *Away* (featuring Helen Morse, Evelyn Krape and John Wood) was part of the Playbox premiere season in the Merlyn Theatre (the very theatre where you are seeing the play 27 years later!)

When Michael Gow directed *Away* in 1992 for the Sydney Theatre Company, he decided to

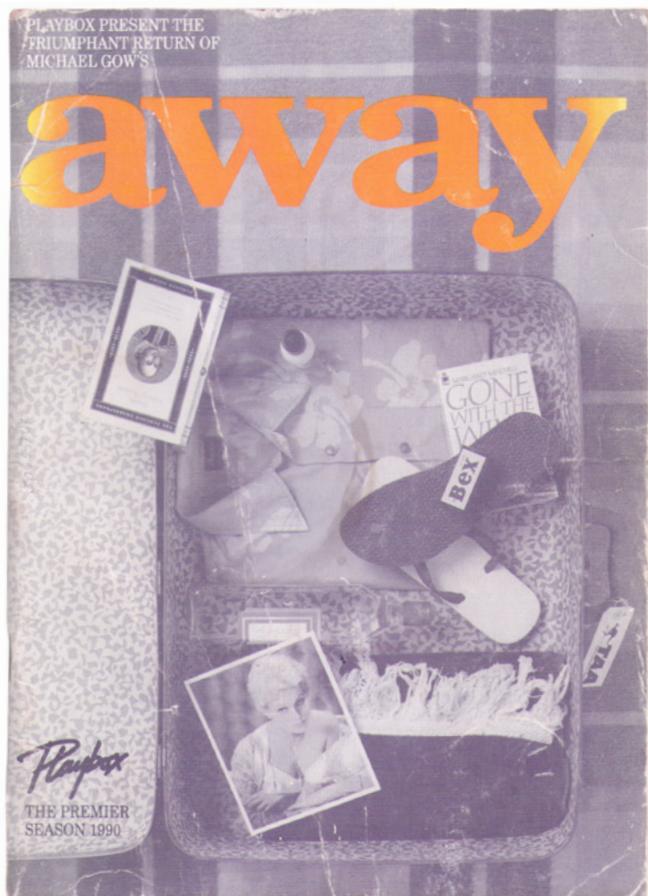
give Meg, rather than Tom the final lines of the play—from Shakespeare's *King Lear*. Here is how Michael Gow explains this decision:

*When I did the play in 1992 I asked myself a lot of questions such as—when Tom has done his play on the beach is his function over and is his reading of King Lear redundant? I decided to give the reading to Meg. Tom is there, but in another kind of present that's all his own.*²

Away was published by Currency Press in 1988 and has been reprinted almost every year since, with current sales exceeding 100,000 copies. For a complete list of all of the professional productions of *Away* over the last thirty years, go to: ausstage.edu.au

¹ Hilary Bell, *Robin Shall Restore Amends*, Currency Press (for full transcript see page 61)

² Murray Bramwell, *Coming Home to Away*: murraybramwell.com. 2006



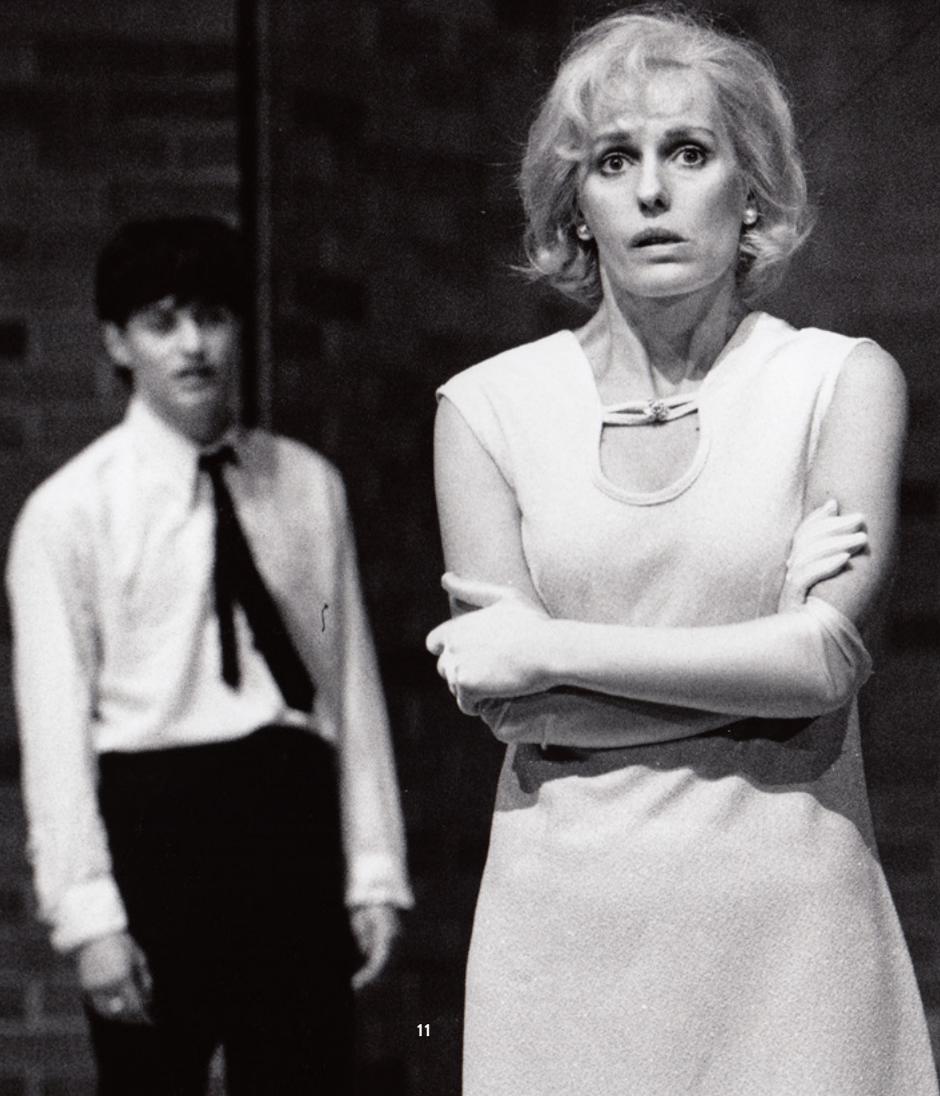
1990 Playbox season program for *Away*

John Wood and Helen Morse, Playbox
production of *Away*, 1990. © Jeff Busby



#AWAY

Michael Allen and Helen Morse, Playbox
production of *Away*, 1990. © Jeff Busby





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THE SHAKESPEAREAN FRAMEWORK OF AWAY

What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?

While *Away* explores the lives of three families who go ‘away’ for the summer holidays, it is framed by two Shakespeare plays: opening with lines from (and a school production of) *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and concluding with lines from *King Lear*. There is a wild and destructive storm, reminiscent of both *The Tempest* and *King Lear* and there are resonances with *As You Like It*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *Twelfth Night* throughout the play.

Michael Gow was performing in *King Lear* when he began to imagine *Away*:

*I was an actor in a production of King Lear at Nimrod. I was playing Oswald and various other spear carriers and I got to know the play backwards because I listened to it every night. I had already written The Kid, which was an urban, gritty kind of piece and I remember thinking—‘How do you get to the level where you have the kind of freedom to go anywhere and say anything that Shakespeare had?’ And I thought—you just do it by ditching the rules. If I want to write a scene here, or there, I can. But in Shakespeare there’s also this amazing form which he has complete control of.*¹

While Michael Gow was writing *Away* he was also performing the title role in *Hamlet* at the Adelaide Festival:

*I was so obsessed getting Hamlet right that I wrote the play at nights and on the weekends. Then I went to opening night and people said, ‘Well, this is good.’ It seemed as though it happened without me.*²

Given the context within which the play was conceived and written, it is no surprise that there are so many Shakespearean resonances and references throughout *Away*.

Shakespeare’s work also influenced the style of the play. Gow chose to ‘ditch the rules’, to move beyond the confines of naturalism—beyond the literal—and to play with a range of theatrical styles and settings. Matthew Lutton’s production of *Away* highlights the shifts between different realms in the play; from the domestic to the poetic, from the intimate to the epic. This production begins with a particularly dark version of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and the *Dream* set remains until the wild storm causes the entire stage to be completely transformed.

Here are further thoughts from Gow about Shakespeare in relation to *Away*:

*Away uses a ‘pastoral’ genre, where people leave their familiar lives and go somewhere wild, untamed, and discover truths about life. This is like As You Like It, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, The Tempest, Twelfth Night, Cymbeline. That was the basis for the play I think, putting Aussie families into this theatrical and literary genre. It has echoes of those plays all the way through: the shipwreck, the local rustic types (the campers), the coincidences of all ending up in the same place.*³

¹ Murray Bramwell, *Coming Home to Away*: murraybramwell.com. 2006

² *ibid*

³ For the full transcript of this interview with Michael Gow, go to page 21

THE SOCIAL, HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT OF AWAY

AUSTRALIA IN THE LATE 1960s

The year 1968 was marked by student protests in Paris, anti-Vietnam-war demonstrations across the world, and the birth of the civil rights movement in the US. Australia at this time was on the cusp of major change. From 1944 to 1966 Australia had the same conservative leader, Robert Menzies. Over the next six years, Australia had three different Prime Ministers, with Gough Whitlam leading Australia's Labor government to victory in 1972, marking a period of significant reform in the areas of education, healthcare, women's rights, immigration and land rights for Indigenous Australians.

At the time that the play *Away* is set, Prime Minister Harold Holt had just drowned, his body never to be recovered. The year 1968 is sometimes referred to as the 'Summer of Love', but in Australia it was also the year when escalating numbers of young men were being sent to the Vietnam War, and the Immigration Minister declared that his government 'did not want a multi-racial society.'¹

Consider how the view of the then Immigration Minister reflects the views of the campers on the beach in *Away*. The playwright Michael Gow was 13 in 1968. Here are some of his thoughts on the late 1960s of his childhood:

*As a kid I had no friends my own age, they were all older. Because I was an only child I was already on my way to being a writer because I spent so much time observing everything. I found older kids more interesting because they were facing the call-up of the Draft and the expectations on them were enormous—of girlfriends and engagement and marriage. There were all kinds of cultural patterns to fit in to.*²

Consider this description in the light of the character of Rick in *Away*—a young man who is confused about whether he really wants to be married—and is all too aware of how narrowly he missed out on being sent to Vietnam.

The tensions that we see between some of the characters—particularly the inter-generational conflict between daughter Meg and her mother Gwen—represent some of the tensions that

Australia was facing in the late 1960s. Gwen is haunted by her childhood in Depression-era Sydney and is desperate to avoid change and maintain a comfortable middle class existence at all costs. But Meg is looking to the future, keen to have the chance to explore her independence.

WOMEN IN 1960s AUSTRALIA

Here are some of Michael Gow's thoughts on the female characters in *Away*:

GWEN

*There were an enormous number of suburban housewives in the '60s and early '70s who were addicted to aspirin powders, to Bex. Because the suburban happiness that they all lived in was lonely, empty, monotonous, and it was very difficult for them to resolve those things. You know these women, they wanted more out of life but they weren't getting it at that stage and I think, to me, Gwen sums up a whole generation of Australian suburban women who, if you finally dig down deep enough, there is pain and sadness there, and I hope she comes out of it, in a way, with some sense of maybe there's a better way to deal with things*³

CORAL

*She also is based on a lot of women from my life in the '60s, who appeared terribly together and glamorous and capable, but were falling to bits inside because they weren't allowed to deal with a lot of stuff because their husbands were determined to keep moving forward in their career or their social positions. So it's very much based on that. And it's also one of the original images of Coral, Zara Holt, as she was then, Harold Holt's widow, because this is the summer Harold Holt disappeared in the ocean. And that image of her in a kaftan on the beach looking for her husband was a powerful one, and it seems somehow to sum up, to me, that period in my life, that there was this woman grieving with dark glasses and a kaftan, standing on Portsea Beach, and her husband was gone. So it does have that sense of solitude and you have to face the universe all by yourself at some stage.*⁴

Neither Gwen nor Coral have jobs, and Gwen makes it very clear that she disapproves of Tom's mother Vic having to work:

They both work, don't they? In a factory isn't it? I'm sure that's what I heard.

Changes were about to take place in late 60s Australia, as women's participation in the workforce began to significantly increase and the case for equal pay began to be fought in the courts from 1969 onwards. In 1970, Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch* became an international bestseller, challenging male and female stereotypes as well as the notion of the traditional suburban nuclear family. With the election of the Whitlam government in 1972, major reforms were beginning to be made including women's access to childcare, contraception, single mother benefits, no fault divorce and equal pay.⁵

AUSTRALIA IN THE MID-1980s

Michael Gow has said that although the play itself is set in the 1960s, that it is very much about the 1980s, when it was written. For Gow, it was only in retrospect that he understood that he had written a play that reflected the tragedy of watching young friends die during the AIDS crisis. In 1986 HIV diagnoses and AIDS related deaths were rapidly increasing in Australia, and the virus itself was a source of significant alarm with the 'grim reaper' advertisements appearing on television.

*The notion of children dying before their parents is huge and someone at STC once said to me—you know you have written an AIDS play, because 1985-86 was the worst of the epidemic.*⁶

This theme of young people dying before their parents—reflected in the death of Roy and Coral's son in Vietnam and Tom's impending death—is central to *Away*. In Matthew Lutton's production Tom is onstage for almost the entire production, either within the scene itself or watching from the side. Tom's role shifts

between being an actor, director and observer. He occupies a place somewhere between life and death. He is connected to all of the characters onstage and is a catalyst for the transformations that many of them will undergo throughout the play.

Richard Wherrett who directed *Away* in 1987 said:

*Tom is imbued with a sense of his own mortality, and he is inspired despite his pain to lead others out of theirs. Puck-like, he is the play's protagonist, mentor, engineer, lifeline and radiance.*⁷

¹ naa.gov.au/collection/explore/cabinet/by-year/1968-events-issues.aspx

² Murray Bramwell, *Coming Home to Away*: murraybramwell.com. 2006

³ splash.abc.net.au/home#!/media/1912894/michael-gow

⁴ *ibid*

⁵ whitlam.org/gough_whitlam/achievementswomenandsocialreforms

⁶ Murray Bramwell, *Coming Home to Away*: murraybramwell.com. 2006

⁷ Richard Wherrett, Introduction to the 1988 edition of *Away*, published by Currency Press



PROMPT PACK

WRITER MICHAEL GOW



Plays include *The Kid*, *On Top of the World*, *Europe*, *Sweet Phoebe*, *Live Acts on Stage*, 17 (for the Royal National Theatre of Great Britain), *Toy Symphony* and *Once in Royal David's City*. Michael's work has been performed in Poland, the Czech Republic, Vietnam, Japan and all over the US and he has been Associate Director of STC and Artistic Director of QTC. He has directed for all the major Australian theatre companies and for Opera Australia, ATYP and the Lincoln Centre's New Visions New Voices program. Awards include two NSW Premier's Literary Awards, two Sydney Theatre Critics Circle Awards and an AFI Award for writing the ABC miniseries *Edens Lost*. In 2016, Michael directed the critically acclaimed productions *Voyage to the Moon*, for which he also wrote the libretto, (Victorian Opera/Musica Viva) and *The Pearlfishers* (Opera Australia.) In 2017 his play *Once in Royal David's City* will enjoy Brisbane and Perth premieres at Queensland Theatre and Black Swan State Theatre Company.

WRITER'S NOTE

MICHAEL GOW

Peering into the Shadows

My parents and I went on all of the holidays in the play. In our first car, we drove from Sydney to Lakes Entrance in Victoria, down the Hume Highway and back up the coast. All we had was a lean-to tent, some blow up mattresses and an ancient Primus stove, just one burner. It was the best holiday ever.

We graduated to a much bigger tent and every other year, for about six years, we went to a place called Mystery Bay, on the far-south NSW coast, near Narooma. A lot of what's in the play was there: a cave, a headland, and beyond the headland a seven-mile-long beach.

Out on Montague Island there's a lighthouse. People from Melbourne were starting to go there, buy land and build houses and there was a strong push to regulate camping, tame the landscape and basically make it a suburb. I went back a few years ago and, fortunately, the development was curbed and the place is still very beautiful.

In the summers we weren't at Mystery Bay we went to Queensland to stay with friends. They had a house in Caloundra. That house has gone and the whole area is blocks of apartments.

One summer, a cyclone came in and smashed all the windows and caused damage all over town. The camping area near the beach was destroyed.

We'd go on outings to places that were pretty flash for a kid from The Shire. Lennon's Broadbeach Hotel was the pick; it had a big pool and a very upmarket restaurant. It looked like the set for Viva Las Vegas.

We stayed in a caravan once but hated it, it was too much like being at home.

All of my childhood holidays were happy and comfortable, but I was always aware of underlying tensions. Everyone was stuck together for weeks. People pretended a lot and some of the fun seemed forced. Even as a kid I was taking note of fraying tempers and the façades people put up.

And I was always aware that there was a war going on that Australia was involved in. The adults would talk about it sometimes, when they thought the kids were out of earshot, and it would be mentioned on the nightly news, which was quickly turned off.

When I was 16 my best friend died and that really undermined my faith in the endless sunny happiness of life in the suburbs. This sense of unease beneath the shiny surface of Australian life found a voice in this play.

Away is often called a classic, which can be an unwanted burden. If 'classic' has any meaning it's that, though now 30 years old, it's worth revisiting. In fact, though it's set in the 1960's, it was very much about the 1980's when it was written.

A man called Hedley Richards, who was the men's cutter in the STC wardrobe department told me, when he saw Richard Wherrett's 1987 STC production, that I'd written a wonderful *AIDS* play. It hadn't occurred to me until he said it, but it was true. It's about the pain of children dying before their parents. Hedley died 18 months later from an HIV-related illness. I always think of him when I see *Away* now.

And here's Matthew Lutton and a great cast peering into the dark shadows that haunt this supposedly sunny, restorative play. Watching someone from a younger generation asking questions about our lives and our country makes the label 'classic' not so much of a burden.



#AWAY



IN CONVERSATION WITH MICHAEL GOW

Following the 2017 season of *Away* at the Sydney Opera House, we asked playwright Michael Gow for his response to Matthew Lutton's direction and vision of his play.

When speaking about his reasons for staging *Away*, Matthew Lutton has referred to the fact that the play is frequently misremembered. It is perceived as sentimental and domestic, whereas for Matthew it is an angry, deeply moving and highly theatrical play. Do you agree that the work is often perceived as sentimental and domestic?

Yes, it's seen as a generally fun piece with a few dark sections that are dispelled by a general sense of things turning sunny again by the end.

Why do you think this might be?

I think it's partly to do with it being in the 1960s. For a lot of people it's usually an excuse for a bit of retro kitsch with clothes and music and a bit of nostalgia. The use of 'pastoral' as a genre means that people assume that when people return to the everyday, things will be better. There's also an assumption, because we live in an age of therapy and confession, that once you've got things off your chest life will be better. Because the characters are at once familiar and yet larger-than-life, people often play them as caricatures to get laughs but the characters are in pain and suffering.

How did you respond to Matthew Lutton's vision of *Away*?

I've always said that basically it's a play about death and loss and how that changes you forever. There's no closure, no back to normal, life is how you proceed from loss to loss and disaster to disaster. That's seen as being negative and a 'downer' but I think unless you can face those big questions life stays pretty inane. Our culture expects everything to turn out fine and doesn't prepare us for the basic conditions of existence. That doesn't mean you can't have a laugh though. Matthew's production descends into the maelstrom of

grief and despair, and shows how it leaves lasting effects. It also shows how expressing that despair is damaging, as well as liberating, but not liberating into a happy shiny life just like the old one. He's also found a way to depict people tearing off masks and the roles we try to play to hide from what's difficult, which is very powerful.

Can you discuss your response to the design of this production—with its shifts between the set of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the gold curtain of the Gold Coast setting and the complete transformation of the stage for Act 4?

At first I was thrown by the beach set. It's very harsh and almost sterile. It's like the characters are thrown under glaring lab lights, so we see what happens when everything's stripped away. But once I'd seen the whole thing it worked for me.

The design of the first half I already thought wonderful, I think because it's very theatrical, there's nothing realistic, but adaptable and evocative. It also supports the idea that the whole play is Tom's version of events, as if he's directing it. I've always thought that was the case but this is the most explicit expression of that.

This production makes frequent use of dance and movement sequences. What do you feel they add to the play?

It's theatre and theatre means dance and physical expression as well as text. The script is quite clear about the need for non-verbal elements, it's up to the director to create these sequences. In this production I love the way elements of the high school *Dream* production echo through the whole first half and how what's meant to be a fun time at the Gold Coast, is just one more nightmare, which becomes progressively chaotic and terrifying. The whole production is like a horror movie up to the storm and that's great. There's also a sense of ritual or ceremony in this production, building on the rituals of Australian summers, and rituals are often quite scary and unnerving, not simply a fun time.

In this production, we are very aware of the two Shakespeare plays that bookend *Away*—with the shift from the set of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to the dramatic storm scene that has echoes of *King Lear*. Can you discuss the significance of Shakespeare in relation to *Away*?

Away uses a 'pastoral' genre, where people leave their familiar lives and go somewhere wild, untamed, and discover truths about life. This is like *As You Like It*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Tempest*, *Twelfth Night*, *Cymbeline*. That was the basis for the play I think, putting Aussie families into this theatrical and literary genre. It also has echoes of those plays all the way through, the shipwreck, the local rustic types (the campers), the coincidences of all ending up in the same place.

King Lear is my favourite play, it's got everything in it, from stupid jokes to cosmic disaster and despair. I put it at the end, in a way to counter the sense of everything being ok. It's as though, even though the school kids don't know it yet, there's a storm coming, there's always a storm coming and it's called Life. Edgar's last lines are so ambiguous but the ambiguity is important to *Away*:

*The weight of this sad time we must obey.
Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.
The oldest hath borne most. We that are young
Shall never see so much, nor live so long.*

You have seen and directed a number of different productions of *Away*. Is there anything about this production that was particularly striking and offered new ways of understanding the play?

Matthew has really stressed the idea of Tom directing his own play, which Tom thinks will culminate in a great love scene on the beach, but which he ruins through his anxiety and fear. I really like that. At the end, when the characters come home, he really doesn't leave the audience with a sense that the relationships are healed. There's even a sense that Coral and Roy, for example, stay together. That's a very hard eyed view of the play, that they'll all go on their own individual journeys, at least for a while. I guess there's a degree of wish fulfilment fantasy in the play for me, that we could all have the holiday we really need, not the one we think we want.

Finally, Matthew Lutton is directing *Away* at almost the same age as you were when you wrote it. Do you think there is a significance to this?

I think it's great that a director who's a couple of generations younger than me has directed it. He has a different experience of the world to mine. It's also a turning 30 play and, I don't know if this is true, but Matthew being at that first big adult mark, the play has a lot of what he thinks about life and theatre in it.

ACTIVITY / DISCUSSION



After you have read this interview with Michael Gow, respond to the following:

- Michael Gow refers to the fact that people tend to ‘play the characters in *Away* as caricatures to get laughs, but the characters are in pain and suffering.’ Do you feel that the actors successfully avoid playing caricatures? Do you believe that the pain and suffering of each one of the characters was conveyed effectively? Consider the actors’ use of focus, timing, facial expressions, gesture, voice (accent, tone, pitch, pace, rhythm), movement, stillness and silence.
- Michael Gow says that this production clearly explores the idea ‘that the whole play is Tom’s version of events, as if he’s directing it.’ Do you agree with this interpretation of *Away*? Do you believe that having Tom onstage for almost the entire play enhanced your experience of the production?
- What do you think Michael Gow means when he says that the Gold Coast sequence is ‘just one more nightmare which becomes progressively chaotic and terrifying’? How was this ‘nightmare’ quality created? Consider the use of sound, music, dance and movement in the Gold Coast scenes leading up to the storm. Consider also the use of lighting, set and costumes during these sections of the play.
- Michael Gow says that it is his wish that ‘we could all have the holiday we really need, not the one we think we want.’ In what ways might the characters in *Away* have had the holiday they needed—rather than the holiday they wanted? Which characters do you think this is particularly true for?

For further insights, watch the ABC’s Tom Tilley interviewing Michael Gow in 2015 about *Away*: splash.abc.net.au/home#!/media/1912894/michael-gow



DIRECTOR MATTHEW LUTTON



#AWAY

Matthew Lutton is Malthouse Theatre's Artistic Director and Co-CEO. Prior to this, he was Malthouse Theatre's Associate Director, and the Artistic Director of ThinIce in Perth. For Malthouse Theatre, he has directed *Edward II*, *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, *I Am a Miracle*, *Night on Bald Mountain*, *The Bloody Chamber*, *Dance of Death*, *Pompeii*, *L.A.*, *On the Misconception of Oedipus*, *Die Winterreise* and *Tartuffe*. For STC he has directed *The Trial*, *The Mysteries: Genesis*, and *The Duel*. Other directing credits include *Love Me Tender* for Belvoir and *Don't Say the Words* for Griffin Theatre Company. His opera directing credits include *Make No Noise* for the Bavarian State Opera, Strauss's *Elektra* for Opera Australia and West Australian Opera, and Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman* for New Zealand Opera.

ACTIVITY / MEET MATTHEW LUTTON

In this interview Matthew Lutton shares his vision for this production of *Away* in great detail. He discusses what drew him to the play; its Shakespearean references; the three mothers; the use of music, sound, dance and movement; his choices regarding set design; his interpretation of the character of Tom and the range of theatrical styles in the play.

vimeo.com/210862900

Throughout this interview Matthew refers to his vision for the design of this production as being 'epic'. By epic, Matthew means highly theatrical, grand, and poetic. It should not be confused with Brecht's Epic Theatre – which is not one of the theatrical styles used in this production.

ACTIVITY / DISCUSSION



1 / THE CONTEXT OF AWAY

Nearly everything that you see explored within the play are dynamics that you still see in families today. Particularly with the way that grief operates... All of those ideas are things that we wrestle with all of the time—no matter what period we are in.

– MATTHEW LUTTON

- Even though this production retains its 1960s setting, Matthew Lutton has said that his particular interest is in how the play speaks to us today. As you watched the play, were you aware of the 1960s context—or were you more focused on the key ideas within the play and the resonances within contemporary society?
- Do you think that the families we see on stage (and the challenges that they face) are similar to families today? What might be some of the key differences?
- Discuss the differences and similarities between the contexts suggested in the playscript, and those that you saw in the production at Malthouse Theatre.

2 / THE THREE MOTHERS

The three mothers in the play are part of the heartbeat of the show. All of them have an extraordinary sense of love, but at the same time a deep sense of wrestling with grief and being trapped.

– MATTHEW LUTTON

- What are the key characteristics of the three different mothers (Gwen, Vic and Coral)?
- How did each of the three actors use movement, gesture and voice to convey their characters?
- How did each of the actors convey the status of their characters?
- Consider how each one of actors communicated their character's grief, as well as the sense of being trapped, through their use of the space and their use of physicality.

3 / THE SHAKESPEAREAN REFERENCES

Very early on we wanted to create a production that shifted between the intimate and the epic. There was a very clear sense that nature, which comes from a lot of the Shakespearean references has a great purging effect in the play and a great transformative effect.

– MATTHEW LUTTON

- How successfully do you feel that this production moved between the ‘intimate’ (the domestic, family situations) and the ‘epic’ (the wilder, highly theatrical moments)?
- Analyse and evaluate how the lighting and set design were used to enhance the shifts between the intimate and the epic scenes. What are some key examples?
- Discuss the use of Shakespearean references—with the use of movement, music, set and lighting in particular.
- Consider what examples there are in *Away* of characters being transformed through their experiences of nature.

4 / THE SET DESIGN

The set design for this production came from the idea of embracing the epic... There was always a stage design that was designed to have two parts —with a very big rupture in the middle.

– MATTHEW LUTTON

- Did you feel that the set design created a sense of the epic? How did this enhance the play as a whole?
- Consider the major transformation of set that takes place as a result of the wild storm. How did this create new meaning for the final scenes of the play?
- Consider how the mood of the play shifted as a result of key set changes.

5 / THE MUSIC AND SOUND DESIGN

There will be a lot of music and sound design all the way through the production... We are not using all of the music that Michael Gow suggests throughout the text. A lot of the time, we looked at the references that he used and interpreted them differently.

– MATTHEW LUTTON

- Consider how effectively the music and sound design helped to create mood and location throughout the production.
- In the instances where different sound and music was chosen from that specified by the playwright, do you think this was effective in enhancing the key themes and ideas of the written playscript?
- The storm scene weaves together sounds and music from the previous hour in the play. How does the sound design help to create the chaos and wildness of the storm?

6 / THE USE OF DANCE AND MOVEMENT

When we get to the storm we have a real mash-up on stage theatrically. We've managed to bring together Coral's hallucinogenic dance, we've got A Midsummer Night's Dream coming back, the actual storm at the campsite, all playing simultaneously. It's like the dreams of the three families get overlaid on top of each other.

– MATTHEW LUTTON

- How do the dance and movement sequences help to illuminate the key ideas and themes of the written playscript?
- Matthew Lutton has described Coral's dance as 'hallucinogenic.' What aspects of Coral's character were conveyed throughout her dance sequences?
- Analyse and evaluate the use of dance and movement throughout the storm scene. How effectively did it work in creating the wild storm?

7 / INTERPRETATION OF TOM

Tom, is our guide and our narrator... I wanted to create a production that felt at times that it could be a manifestation of Tom's.

– MATTHEW LUTTON

- Discuss the effect of having Tom onstage for most of this production.
- Analyse and evaluate how having Tom as our 'guide' onstage throughout this production enhanced the themes and ideas of written playscript.
- How do you respond to the interpretation that the play is Tom's imagined version of his summer?

8 / THE RANGE OF THEATRICAL STYLES AND CONVENTIONS

One of the very attractive things in the play is that there are a lot of different theatrical modes and lots of different theatrical styles.

– MATTHEW LUTTON

- How effectively do the shifts in the theatrical styles and conventions work in this production?
- How does the use of theatrical styles and conventions in this production—naturalism, montage sequences, dance, dumbshow, heightened movement and the use of tableaux—correspond with the theatrical styles suggested by the written playscript?
- How do the actors vary their use of movement, gesture and voice, as well as their use of space according to the different theatrical styles and conventions?

PROMPT PACK





#AWAY



PHOTO: P. P. P. P. P.

SET AND COSTUME DESIGNER DALE FERGUSON



#AWAY

Malthouse Theatre: *Timeshare, Night on Bald Mountain, The Riders, Dance of Death*. STC: *Les Liaisons Dangereuses, Don's Party* (with MTC), *Summer Rain, Howard Katz, Great Expectations* (MTC, presented by STC), *A Cheery Soul* (with Belvoir St Theatre), *The Girl Who Saw Everything, Sylvia* (MTC, presented by STC). Belvoir: *The Blind Giant is Dancing, Radiance, Brothers Wreck, Summer of the Seventeenth Doll, Neighbourhood Watch, The Seagull, Measure for Measure, The Power of Yes, Antigone, Peribanez, Exit the King, The Marriage of Figaro*. West End: *The Judas Kiss*. MTC: *Skylight, The Weir, The Speechmaker, The Crucible, Top Girls, Don Parties On, Life Without Me, August Osage Country, The History Boys, The Drowsy Chaperone, The Seagull*. Lyric Opera Of Chicago: *The Magic Flute*. Welsh National Opera: *Ariadne Auf Naxos, Marriage Of Figaro* (With Opera Australia.) Houston Grand Opera: *A Midsummer Nights Dream*. Awards: Tony Award Nomination in 2009 for *Exit the King*, 2010 Helpmann Award (*August Osage Country*), four Green Room Awards (*Night on Bald Mountain, A Cheery Soul, The Seagull, Molly Sweeney*).

DALE FERGUSON COSTUME DESIGNS



NOT A WALK DOWN MEMORY LANE

Matthew Lutton's vision for *Away* is neither sentimental nor nostalgic. Although the costumes are firmly placed in the late 1960s, it is a light, restrained rendering of the period rather than a detailed study of 1960s fashion. The still-authentic hairstyles and clothing are more like your mum and dad's old photos than a parodic costume party.

P R O M P T P A C K



A PLAY WITHIN A PLAY

Away begins with a school production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Often depicted in a romantic setting, this is a sophisticated interpretation with the character of Tom at its centre. This play-within-a-play production might be a schoolboy's dream of theatrical magic. The fairies are very much of scorched earth, reduced to bone and dust in a bleak forest.



THREE MOTHERS

At the heart of the play are three mothers and their families, occupying separate levels of society. The costumes work to highlight the divisions and class tensions. Through their clothing we get a sense of these women—from the simplicity of Vic's dress to the more exquisite fashion of Coral.



IN THE BALLROOM

Act 3 is partly set at a luxury hotel on the Gold Coast complete with a pre-dinner dance. In order to capture the glamour of the 1960s Gold Coast, there is a big shift in the clothing. Filled with aspiration and hinting at a sense of hollowness some of the characters are feeling, the costumes add colour, texture and a little sparkle.



ACTIVITY / MEET DALE FERGUSON

In this interview, Dale Ferguson shares his vision for the set design of this production of *Away*. He discusses the key ideas behind his set; the influences of the two Shakespeare plays; the transformation of the set; the minimal use of props and the 1960s costumes.

vimeo.com/210858822

ACTIVITY / DISCUSSION



Set Model Box: ACT ONE



Set Model Box: ACT THREE

1 / THE VISION FOR THE SET DESIGN

My very first instinct was to have a very theatrical beginning and to make the storm highly theatrical because the play is framed and bookended by A Midsummer Night's Dream and King Lear.

– DALE FERGUSON

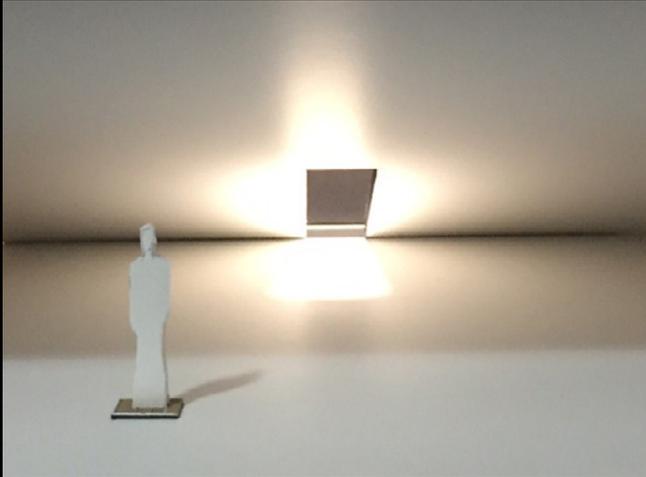
- As you watch the production, consider the influence that these two Shakespeare plays had on the set design.
- Dale speaks about a 'portal' and a 'doorway' from one world into another that the characters go through in *Away*. How do you think that this design concept helps to illuminate the key themes and ideas in the play?
- How does the written playscript compare with the set design for this production? What are some examples of the similarities and differences?

2 / THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE SET CAUSED BY THE STORM

We set up a very bleak forest—an environment almost as if after a fire ... and from that very dark, bleak world it is lifted up and underneath it is completely white—the white world of transition.

– DALE FERGUSON

- The version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the start of this production is quite a complex and dark one—how did you respond to this version of the *Dream*?
- Consider how this transformation from a dark, bleak forest to the white starkness of the beach corresponds with the key themes and ideas of the playscript.
- Dale describes the idea of a 'clearing away after a storm—the washing away of debris' as inspiration for the set change following the storm. How does this concept correspond with your understanding of Act 4?



Set Model Box: ACT FOUR



Costume Mood Board

3 / CAPTURING THE EPIC AND THE DOMESTIC WITHIN THIS PRODUCTION

Away is very Shakespearean in that it makes very few demands on the scenery. Every environment that you are in is described within the text... So therefore the words and the language can be said standing within an open stage, much in the way as Shakespeare wrote for his time...

– DALE FERGUSON

- How did you respond to the open space within this production and the choice to have a highly theatrical set rather than a naturalistic set?
- Dale Ferguson refers to the 'magical wardrobe'. Consider the range of ways in which the wardrobe is used onstage in this production.
- There are very few props used in this production—with the exception of the suitcases and clothes. How effective was the choice to have different styles of suitcases representing the different social class of each of the three families as they pack to go away?

4 / CAPTURING THE LATE 1960s IN THE COSTUME DESIGN

Matthew wanted to tread very lightly over the period... I wanted to avoid it seeming like the characters were in a 1960s costume party... I was looking for truthful depictions of what people actually wore.

– DALE FERGUSON

- While this production is set in the late 1960s, it is a light rendering of the period, with authentic hairstyles and clothing. How well do you feel that the costumes convey the period and the contexts of the play?
- How effectively did costume, hair and make-up help to convey particular characters throughout the production?
- Dale Ferguson talks about wanting to avoid 'sentiment and nostalgia' in capturing the period of the 1960s—do you believe that this production manages to achieve this? Consider the reasons why this choice was made in relation to *Away*.



#AWAY

ACTING AND CHARACTERISATION



Liam Nuan
TOM / RICK

Analyse and evaluate Liam's use of his voice, gestures and facial expression to convey Tom's characteristics throughout the play.

Consider Liam's use of the stage and how he shifts between setting scenes up, to observing them, to being in scenes.

Take note of how Liam uses his voice, gestures and posture differently when playing Rick.



Naomi Rukavina
MEG / LEONIE

Consider Naomi's use of movement, gesture and voice in conveying the character of Meg.

Analyse how Naomi's use of facial expressions and physicality help to convey the youth of Meg.

Contrast this with Naomi's use of voice, gestures and posture when playing the character of Leonie.



Heather Mitchell
GWEN

Analyse and evaluate Heather's use of voice, movement and gestures in conveying the characteristics of Gwen.

Consider how Heather uses her facial expression, focus and gestures to convey Gwen's internal emotional states throughout the production.

How does Heather make use of movement and space to convey her character's status and class?



Natasha Herbert
CORAL

Analyse and evaluate Natasha's use of voice, movement and gesture to convey the characteristics of Coral.

Consider how Natasha uses silence, facial expression and physicality to communicate Coral's grief.

How does Natasha's use of rhythm, space and stagecraft shift throughout the play?



Julia Davis
VIC

Analyse Julia's use of rhythm, gesture and movement to convey the character of Vic.

Consider how Julia uses her voice (accent, pitch, pace, tone) to convey Vic's characteristics.

How does Julia make use of the space and physicality to convey Vic's concerns for other characters in the play?



Wadih Dona
HARRY

Analyse and evaluate Wadih's use of voice (accent, pitch, pace, tone) and movement to convey the characteristics of Harry.

Consider how Wadih uses his posture, facial expression and gestures to convey the class and status of Harry.

How does Harry make use of silence and space?



Marco Chiappi
JIM

Analyse and evaluate Marco's use of voice and movement to convey Jim's characteristics.

Consider how Marco uses his facial expression, posture, and gestures to convey Jim's inner thoughts.

How does Marco make use of space?



Glenn Hazeldine
ROY

Analyse and evaluate Glenn's use of voice, facial expression and movements to convey Roy's characteristics.

Consider how Glenn varies his use of posture, tone of voice and use of the space as Roy in public and private settings.





ACTIVITY / DISCUSSION

AFTER SEEING THE MALHOUSE THEATRE PRODUCTION OF AWAY DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING:

- How did the actors use their expressive skills (facial expressions, voice, movement, gestures) to convey different characters?
- How did each of the actors use their performance skills (focus, timing, energy, actor-audience relationship) throughout the production?
- How did the actors use the acting space—both through their use of movement and their use of stillness and silence?
- What sort of a relationship was established between the actors and the audience?
- What are the key similarities and differences between the written playscript and this production?
- What was the effect of having Tom onstage as an observer during many of the scenes in this production?
- How were lighting and sound used and how did their use correspond with your understanding of the written playscript?
- How did the use of costume, make-up, set and props correspond with your understanding of the written playscript?
- Here is a list of some of the theatrical styles and conventions that you may have been able to identify throughout this production:
 - Naturalism
 - Heightened and stylised movement
 - Dance
 - Use of montage sequences
 - Use of tableaux
 - Use of a ‘dumbshow’

If any of these terms are unfamiliar, research them further and identify where they may have been made use of in this production. How did they correspond with your understanding of implied theatrical styles of the written playscript?

ACTIVITY / MEET THE CAST: NATASHA HERBERT AND HEATHER MITCHELL

In this interview, Natasha Herbert (Coral) and Heather Mitchell (Gwen) share their thoughts on the three mothers in *Away*; the particular challenges and pain that each one of them face in regards to their children; the late 1960s context, and the transformative impact of the storm.

vimeo.com/210863474

ACTIVITY / DISCUSSION

1 / UNDERSTANDING EACH OF THE MOTHERS IN AWAY

Coral is in another state because she has lost her son, because of her grief and she can't really do the surface stuff—I find that really interesting ... she sees what is happening behind the veneer. She is hyper-sensitive and hyper-aware.

– NATASHA HERBERT

Gwen hasn't lost her daughter, but she has a fear of losing her daughter—not literally—but it is the anticipation of what could happen to her daughter... that she could do the wrong things, go with the wrong person...

– HEATHER MITCHELL

The play for the mothers is about what they will and will not allow...

– HEATHER MITCHELL

- Roy describes Coral as being like a 'ghost', but Natasha sees her as 'hyper-aware' and 'hyper-sensitive'. How does Natasha convey these aspects of Coral? Does this correspond with your understanding of her character?
- Heather describes Gwen as someone who is systematically ordered in her thinking, with a very definite sense of how things should be done. How does Heather convey this through her use of movement, gesture and voice?
- Both actors describe Vic and Harry (by contrast) as living in the moment and making the most of every moment. How is this conveyed in the production by the two actors playing these characters?
- Consider the idea that the play for the mothers is about what they will and will not allow. What are some of things each mother will allow and what are some of the things each mother will not allow? What are the differences and similarities between them?

#AWAY

2 / THE CONTEXT OF 1968 IN AUSTRALIA

What this production focuses on are the things that trigger all people, and the idea that these emotional states are universal. And regardless of the period, it explores the dynamic between individuals and the idea that these events that could happen at any time.

– HEATHER MITCHELL

- Natasha points out that one of the key differences between Gwen and Coral in the late 1960s and women today is that neither of these women work. What do you consider to be the key differences between the women in the 1968 setting and women in Australia today?
- Heather says that she believes that this production is more focused on the underlying feelings and emotions of the characters—rather than the late 1960s context. Is this your experience of this production? How does this interpretation correspond with your understanding of the written playscript?

3 / THE EFFECT OF THE STORM ON EACH OF THE THREE MOTHERS

Everything that Gwen has fought so hard to maintain, that lifestyle and status is destroyed ... For Gwen the storm is like being pulled out into a rip, and you feel out of your depth, in the turmoil of being sucked up and thrown around. And for Gwen, she is experiencing emotions that she doesn't know what to do with.

- HEATHER MITCHELL

For Coral it feels really necessary. It was brewing in her, and the storm liberates her and takes her where she needs to be, which is away from Roy, away from everyone, into nature to restore herself.

- NATASHA HERBERT

As Coral is being liberated, for Gwen it is just the beginning of something that is a long way off yet. It is her destruction, before she can rise again...

- HEATHER MITCHELL

- How does Heather convey that Gwen is 'out of her depth' in Act 4, and experiencing emotions that she doesn't understand? How does Heather use her expressive skills to demonstrate the turmoil that Gwen is experiencing?
- Do you agree with Natasha's interpretation of Coral, that the storm has been brewing for some time and that when it comes it is liberating? How is this liberation demonstrated in the production?
- Heather points out that Vic and Harry avoid the storm completely. It doesn't hit them. They were sheltered. Why do you think that is? What is your interpretation of the different ways that the storm impacts upon each of the three families?
- Natasha compares the effect of the storm to *King Lear*, in that the storm strips them back to something essential. This is very similar to Dale's description of the set design as 'clearing away the debris'. How do the elements of lighting, sound and set correspond with the impact and after effects of the storm on the characters?



ACTIVITY / MEET THE CAST: NAOMI RUKAVINA AND LIAM NUNAN

In this interview, Naomi Rukavina (Meg) and Liam Nunan (Tom) share their thoughts on playing Meg and Tom; the intergenerational divide in the play; the relationship between the two characters and for Liam, the experience when playing Tom, of moving between being a character onstage to being an observer throughout this production.

ACTIVITY / DISCUSSION



1 / THE GENERATIONAL DIVIDE BETWEEN MEG AND TOM AND THE ADULTS IN THE PLAY

The anxiety for Meg and Tom comes from not being able to experience the good and the bad for themselves. Their parents are saying, 'we won't let you experience this because it is awful.' But there is something really important about experiencing the bad as well as the good.

-LIAM NUNAN

All that Meg thinks is; I want my live own life. Why are you on my back the whole time? Let me be, let me have a go

-NAOMI RUKAVINA

Tom is being prevented from being able to mourn for his own life... he is being robbed of something that will help him grow.

-LIAM NUNAN

- How do you perceive the generational divide between Meg and Tom and their parents? Do you agree with the idea that their parents are trying to prevent them from experiencing the difficult aspects of life? How is this conveyed in the production?
- Do you agree with Liam's suggestion that Tom's parents are not allowing him to grow by facing up to his impending death? Why might they have made that choice? How is this denial played out in this production?
- Were Liam and Naomi's portrayal of Tom and Meg different to your reading of them in the playscript? Consider both the similarities and the differences.

2 / THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TOM AND MEG

For Tom, Meg encapsulates and symbolises everything about life that he won't get to experience. He looks to her as life. He knows how his story is going to end. He wants to be part of her story.

– LIAM NUNAN

For Meg, Tom is life. Meg has been quite a 'cotton woolled' girl by Gwen. She is just on the verge of coming into her own and making her own adult decisions.

– NAOMI RUKAVINA

- Both Liam and Naomi describe Meg and Tom as representing 'life' for the other person. For Meg, this is because she has felt so constrained by Gwen, and for Tom this is partly because he knows that he does not have very long to live. Is this how you understand the relationship between Meg and Tom? Is this consistent with your reading of the written playscript?
- How do Liam and Naomi convey the attraction that Tom and Meg have? Consider their use of movement, gestures, voice and facial expressions during their two scenes together.
- How convincing were Liam and Naomi in their portrayal of teenagers? How did their characterisations of Tom and Meg contrast with their portrayal of Rick and Leonie?

3 / TOM AS A CHARACTER ONSTAGE, AS WELL AS AN OBSERVER AND CONJUROR OF SCENES.

Tom is onstage the whole time. The whole experience should feel like it is a dream of Tom's, or possibly a memory looking back, or an imagining of how the other families could live.

– LIAM NUNAN

It frames the characters of Tom and Rick in a Puck-like sense—because Puck is a character who lives between heaven and earth, and Tom is similar, knowing that he is between life and death.

– LIAM NUNAN

- How did you respond to the directorial decision to have Tom onstage for almost the entire play—as both the characters of Tom and Rick, as well as an observer and a conjuror of scenes?
- Did you experience the play as being a dream of Tom's? Is this concept consistent with your reading of the written playscript?
- Do you agree with the suggestion, that Tom is very Puck-like—as someone who is between life and death? How successfully did Liam convey this idea throughout the production?



#AWAY

ACTIVITY / CLOSE SCENE ANALYSIS

Read the following three excerpts from the written playscript of *Away* and respond to the questions about how each of these scenes were staged.



PROMPT PACK

ACTIVITY / CLOSE SCENE ANALYSIS

EXCERPT ONE: ACT ONE, SCENE THREE

Outside. CORAL, alone.

CORAL: When that woman woke up and saw that donkey at her feet I thought my heart would break. I had to wipe away tears. To wake up and find something you want so badly. Even an animal. And then she woke up again and saw her husband and loved him. That boy! In that blue light the shadows on his face and neck were like bruises. He looked so sick yet so wonderful, so white, so cold and burning. ‘What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?’ I kept saying it over and over in the dark. All these children, having fun, playing and me sitting there in the dark wiping away tears. I could hardly watch them. Their legs and arms painted gold. And that boy’s hair, so black. And his smile. ‘What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?’ Is it better for them to die like that? Looking like gods? Burning, gold, white. What’s that word they always say in those plays? Alas?

[She sighs.]

Alas.

[ROY comes in.]

ROY: I thought I told you to wait in the car.

CORAL: I was hot. Just walking.

ROY: Let’s get home.

CORAL: I’m hot.

ROY: We’ll have a drink when we get home.

CORAL: I was just walking.

[They go.]

- The stage direction specifies that Coral is outside, alone. In this production Coral is onstage on the set of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (after the show has finished). How does the different location change the scene? How does this new context help to enhance our understanding of Coral at this point in the play?
- This is the first time that Coral has spoken. Why could she not speak in the previous scene? Why might her speech be so animated in this scene?
- Coral is the only character in the play to have a soliloquy. What is the significance of this? Why might Michael Gow have made this choice?
- How does this scene develop the actor-audience relationship?
- Some of the other adults in the play—Gwen in particular—did not enjoy the production. Why has it resonated so deeply with Coral? What insights does this give us into these two women?
- Consider how Natasha Herbert makes use of the space throughout this scene.
- How does Natasha Herbert use her voice, movement and gestures in this scene? How do these change once Roy enters?
- How does Matthew Lutton’s direction of the scene correspond with your understanding of the written playscript? What are the main similarities and differences between the written playscript and the scene?
- What is the effect of having Tom watch Coral from upstage in the shadows?
- How did the set design, costume design and lighting design contribute to your understanding of the scene?
- How was sound used in this scene?



EXCERPT TWO: ACT TWO, SCENE THREE

CORAL: Do you still think I look like Kim Novak?

ROY: Jesus Christ.

CORAL: You did once.

ROY: There's no point packing clothes. We won't go.

CORAL: We need a break. We need a change.

ROY: I don't need a break with you. I can stay home and read a book and be more relaxed. I'm not wasting time and money on airfare and room service if you're going to spend all your time staring at people.

CORAL: I'll be good! I'll improve. Watch me get better.

ROY: I can't take it, Coral.

CORAL: I won't think about death, about—

ROY: I'm not asking you to forget, I won't forget.

CORAL: I'll be calm, interested, aware of people. I'll look after myself. I'll get up at a proper time. I'll have fun.

ROY: You can sit by a pool all day if you like. But like a normal human being.

CORAL: We won't mention helicopters, or jungles, or mines—

ROY: I'll tear up the tickets. I'll give them away. I'll send someone else who'll enjoy it.

CORAL: I'll be silent on all controversial topics. Will that do? I won't bring up anything upsetting or worrying. Death, war, loss—



- At this point in the scene (see full image on pages 30-31) Coral is lying on the ground and Roy is standing. How did these directorial choices help further our understanding of the dynamic of their relationship at this point in the play?
- Coral was in her underwear and Roy was fully dressed. How does the contrast in costume reflect their emotional states in this scene?
- In the punctuation in the written playscript there are two examples of Coral not finishing her sentence. In both instances she was about to mention their son. What is the effect of her stopping mid sentence? Did the way that Natasha spoke these lines correspond with the way they appeared in the written playscript?
- Consider how Glenn Hazeldine uses his voice in this scene as Roy (pace, pitch, tone, volume). How does it contrast with his use of voice in previous scenes in the play?
- Consider Natasha Herbert's use of her voice (including the sounds of anguish that she makes in the scene). How does her use of voice in this scene contrast with her use of voice in the previous scene?
- How do the actors use the space throughout the scene?
- How do each of the characters use movement, gesture and facial expressions in the scene?
- How does Matthew Lutton's direction of the scene correspond with your understanding of the written playscript? What were the main similarities and differences between the written playscript and the scene?
- How did the set and lighting design contribute to your understanding of the scene?
- What was the effect of having Tom seated downstage throughout this scene?



EXCERPT THREE: ACT FOUR, SCENE ONE

HARRY: Yes, you were very lucky.

VIC: And you got here in time for the campers' amateur night. It's how we end our holidays. It's a great night. You'll laugh till you're sick.

HARRY: It's a great way to end a holiday.

VIC: And it's been a wonderful holiday this year.

[CORAL enters in a flowing kaftan, dark glasses a huge straw hat over a scarf.]

Look, there she is, the artist.

[She waves. CORAL goes out without seeing them.]

Isn't she an interesting looking woman? She's been here a few days now. She just arrived one morning, all by herself. I think she might be an artist or something, so that's what I call her. She goes and sits on the rock ledge for hours and stares into the sea. She keeps to herself, right away from everyone. The world is full of interesting people.

GWEN: *[violently]* The world is full of mad people. Everywhere, mad people. Why do they have to live like that? Mad people, weird, sick, sordid people. How do they bear having no worthwhile aim? I'm tired of people who don't want to improve. I'm sick to death of people who are happy to just stay in the mud, in the swamp, just thrashing about, who don't try from a better life, to fight their way out with their bare hands. I hate—they're happy in their filthy little holes like that motel—that was a nightmare!—I hate them. They're everywhere. Like ants, swarming everywhere, no direction, no ambition—

[She stifles herself. Silence]

VIC: I think we should go for a walk.

GWEN: No.

VIC: Us girls. Along the water.

GWEN: No.

VIC: Just a stroll. Come on.

JIM: Go on. Breath some sea air.

[The women go. Silence for a while.]



- Michael Gow set this scene on the beach. How well does the stark white set represent the beach? How did the choice of a clear, white, open space impact upon your understanding of the scene?
- How did you as an audience member respond to the transformation of the set following the storm?
- How did the lighting design enhance your understanding of this scene?
- How did you respond to Matthew Lutton's directorial decision to have Coral walk across the stage in this scene upstage of the actors?
- How were each of the characters dressed in this scene? How did their costume, make-up and hair contribute to the meaning of the scene and their roles in this scene? How did it contribute to understanding the contexts?
- How did Gwen communicate her rising anger prior to speaking in this scene? How did she use her facial expressions, gestures, posture and focus?
- Michael Gow uses very few stage directions, but Gwen's mode of speech is described here as *[violently]*. Does this correspond with how Heather Mitchell performed this speech?
- There is only one exclamation mark in the excerpt, after 'that was a nightmare!' Did those words have a particular force? How did the actor use her voice in this speech?
- How was the silence used in this scene?
- Consider the effectiveness of having Gwen and Vic stand upstage in a tableau in this scene—rather than leave the stage (as specified in the stage directions).
- How does Matthew Lutton's direction of the scene correspond with your understanding of the written playscript? What were the main similarities and differences between the written playscript and the scene?
- What was the impact of the sound design throughout this scene? How did it affect the mood of the scene? How did it help to suggest the context of the beach?
- What was the effect of having Tom upstage throughout this scene?



LEARN MORE

MICHAEL GOW

[Interview about *Away* with Michael Gow and Matthew Lutton for Radio National's Books and Arts Daily in February 2017](#)

[Michael Gow's Keynote Address at the 2016 National Play Festival](#)

[Watch the ABC's Tom Tilley interviewing Michael Gow in 2015 about *Away*](#)

[Coming Home to *Away*—Michael Gow discusses *Away*](#)

REVIEWS OF THIS PRODUCTION (AT THE SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE)

[Daily Review](#)

[Sydney Morning Herald](#)

[AussieTheatre.com](#)

ADDITIONAL EDUCATION RESOURCES:

[Sydney Theatre Company's 2017 On Cue Education Resources, compiled by Lisa Mumford, offers further insights into this production](#)

[Sydney Theatre Company's *Away* Resources page](#)

[Production Images](#)





PROMPT PACK



ROBIN SHALL RESTORE AMENDS: HILARY BELL

Hilary Bell, a former Patrick White Playwrights' Fellow at Sydney Theatre Company, considers *Away's* impact and resonance three decades after its premiere.

When *Away* premiered at Griffin Theatre in January 1986 I was nineteen and just embarking on a career as a playwright. I'd been part of the inaugural Interplay Young Playwrights' Festival six months earlier, and had recently begun my first theatre job as Shopfront Theatre's playwright-in-residence.

I clearly remember sitting in the audience with the growing awareness that this play was a game-changer. The bar had been raised. We baby playwrights were being shown that Australian plays could still be, as they had been hitherto, comic, political and broad to the point of caricature, and at the same time elegiac, lyrical, nuanced, superbly crafted, local while referencing a bigger world. *Away* both inspired and threw down the gauntlet.

I wrote my first play, *Conversations with Jesus*, a few months later and upon reading it now, *Away's* influence is immediately apparent. *Conversations with Jesus* revolved around the amphitheatre built at Balmoral Beach by Theosophists anticipating the Second Coming. Its characters were broadly Aussie (ten-year-old Kylie sang, 'Hallelujah, leap from your beds! / The Saviour's walking through the Heads'), and it combined whimsy, intergenerational bitterness, death, and tap-dancing. While my own DNA as a playwright is apparent in that early play, I can't help but wonder what it might have looked like without *Away*. Michael Gow was performing in *King Lear* (Nimrod, 1984) when he first began to conceive of the play—he admired Shakespeare's refusal to be literal, his ability to transport the audience to any place or time. During the writing of *Away* he was playing Hamlet (Thalia Company, 1986): it's no wonder Shakespeare hovers over the play like a benign spirit. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* features, of course: excerpted and quoted frequently, with its fairies wreaking havoc. Tom conjures a storm which, like that

in *The Tempest*, acts as a catalyst for crisis and reconciliation. And the last word is Lear's, as the old king divests himself of responsibilities in preparation for death.

It's interesting to note that while attempts have been made to adapt the play for the screen, none so far have succeeded, and I think this speaks to *Away's* inherent theatricality. Its emotional power relies on the memories we bring to it of our own school plays, first loves, summer holidays. We project these onto the abstract space and our own lives intertwine with those of the characters.

This theatricality is of enduring significance to Gow's writing. A look at his other work, especially two recent plays, *Toy Symphony* and *Once in Royal David's City*, shows how the actual stuff of theatre, the elements that combine to make drama, intrigues him. He plays with them consciously, commenting on them, recruiting them to his service, inverting them. And while *Away* is about many things, to me it's about the power of theatre to restore, to make right. This is what theatre can do—make the impossible possible, the unbelievable feasible. It has the ability to give words to the unspeakable. It lets us slip into other people's lives and see the world from their perspective, engendering understanding and compassion. Its communal nature unites fractious relationships and fractured souls. Its very artifice is a device for telling the truth. Some plays are refined over years, the writer chiselling and revising. Others owe their power to having been written in a white heat, but after a long mental gestation period: such is *Away*. Peter Kingston, Griffin's Artistic Director at the time, needed something to fill a slot for a show that had fallen through. Gow proposed the idea of *Away*, then wrote the end-of-year play and the packing scenes. Kingston liked what he saw, assembled a cast based on these scenes, and started rehearsals. Gow delivered the final draft just before the first

dress rehearsal. And he told me recently that ‘there was virtually no rewriting, in fact the one and only typescript of the play is pretty much what Currency published’. It’s remarkable how fresh Michael Gow’s play, written over thirty years ago, still feels. In terms of both themes and dramaturgy, it could have been written yesterday. The young writer’s second play displays maturity, there’s a balance between passion and craft. It has a profound sense of assuredness and a lightness of touch. It’s also fascinating to look at the play in 2017, knowing that there were only 18 years between its period setting and the time of writing; 1968 to 1986. The parents—Jim and Gwen, Vic and Harry—recall their own youth: the rubble of post-war London; the desperation of Depression-era Sydney. There’s a kind of leapfrogging from past to present, and beyond the writer’s control, to the future, that illustrates where we’ve come from and who we might become.

So 30 years on, why is this play so enduring? Why is it perennially on the education syllabus, a favourite of amateur companies, consistently produced? Why is it considered an ‘Australian classic?’ A classic is a play that speaks across the specifics of time and place, that still resonates decades (sometimes centuries) later, not because the world hasn’t changed, but because human nature hasn’t. This doesn’t mean that every ‘classic’ is able to be radically reinterpreted—*Away* relies on its Vietnam War period setting and beachy suburban Australianness—but even if one day we become a nation more compassionate towards those who aren’t ‘regulars’, as Gow’s Campers call themselves, our human distrust of difference is unlikely to have vanished, and it is that which keeps *Away* relevant. In 2017, as in 1986, one cringes at the Campers’ sense of entitlement, their hostility towards newcomers. A classic is a work that is forever modern in its themes, and that is constructed in such a way that these themes unfold seamlessly before our eyes. Theatre opens our eyes, it wakes us up. The play’s third line, ‘That you have but slumbered here’, and later quoted by Roy, introduces the motif of awakening—to the facts; to one’s own

truth—which threads through the action. Coral, with no other desire than to resurrect her lost son through Rick, reveals to him the life he’s unthinkingly chosen—‘I feel like I’m asleep all the time’. Vic and Harry share their heartbreaking secret with Jim and Gwen—Gwen in particular is transformed, her eyes opened to how blessed she is, and in how much danger she’s been of destroying what matters most. And Tom awakens Coral, bringing her back to life by telling her of his imminent death.

Theatricality is there in the writing’s playfulness, combining soliloquy, dumbshow, dialogue, a Greek chorus of Campers, the literal with the fantastical. The most devastating drama—youth cut down—is juxtaposed with the silly and comedic. It’s important that the dark heart of the play is not overlooked in favour of the broad comedy. It is, after all, a play about death—of parents clinging to dead or dying sons; of a boy trying to reconcile himself with his brief measure of time. We are put through the emotional wringer, but are finally released through the act of theatre—Australian schoolkids speaking Shakespeare’s words.

Theatre is again invoked through the little performances-within-the-play, all significant moments. The school production of the Dream brings Tom and Meg together; it provokes Coral to tears (she is also able to see Tom’s mortality, though she doesn’t know it); it provides a background onto which the parents’ attitudes towards their children are in stark contrast: Harry and Vic’s pride in Tom; Gwen’s dissatisfaction and Jim’s ineffectualness.

Then of course *The Stranger on the Shore*, Tom and Coral’s performance for Amateur Night, allows Tom to relinquish his own hold on life and encourage others to embrace it. In all its crudeness and naïveté—or because of it—we are deeply moved: like the sailor, Tom uses his one wish not to ‘return to human life’ but to help others live.

The play ends with Meg reading from *Lear*:

Meantime we shall express our darker purpose. / Give me the map there. Know that we have divided / In three our kingdom; and 'tis our fast intent / To shake all cares and business from our age, / Conferring them on younger strengths, while we / Unburden'd crawl towards death.

These weary words, spoken by the aging king and put in the mouth of a teenager, allow us to see life reconciled with its own brevity. The beginning of one play is the end of another. In a play that celebrates the power of theatre, form and content are beautifully interlaced. In the script from the original production, and in the play's published form, it is Tom who speaks the final lines. In 1992, for a production for Sydney Theatre Company, Gow revised the scene. In an interview, he said, 'When I did the play in 1992 I asked myself a lot of questions such as—when Tom has done his play on the beach is his function over and is his reading of *King Lear* redundant? I decided to give the reading to Meg. Tom is there, but in another kind of present that's all his own.'¹ With the passage of time (and the benefit of seeing the play in production), Gow found a more dramaturgically economic, and an even more resonant way, to end the play. This divergence from the published version has caused consternation among some teachers. However, it must be remembered that a script is not an educational text, it's a blueprint for a living, three-dimensional experience. Rather than posing a problem, the revision should instead be embraced as a point for discussion, an insight into the workings of the writer's mind and the nature of writing for live performance.

One final word about what constitutes a 'classic'. A classic is capable of being open to a variety of interpretations. According to the zeitgeist of the times, or the politics of the director, or the experiences of the audience member, it can be about any number of ideas. Despite *Away* having clear themes, it will strike different notes for a parent, a refugee, someone newly bereaved, a child. What I take away, 30 years after its first performance, is the play's examination of theatre's restorative powers, its ability to awaken.

¹ Coming Home to *Away*, murraybramwell.com, 2006

This essay first appeared as part of the Cue the Chorus series, published by Currency Press and funded by the CAL Cultural Fund. It has been abridged and updated with the author.

CAST AND CREATIVES BIOS



Liam Nunan
TOM/RICK

Malthouse Theatre: debut. STC: *The Golden Age*. QTC: *25 Down*. La Boite Indie: *Machina*. Griffin Independent: *MinusOneSister*. Mad March Hare Theatre Company: *Shivered*. Unhappen: *A Butcher of Distinction*, *Details Unknown*. Seeker Productions and Red Line: *Orphans*. Twisted Tree Theatre Company: *The Bald Soprano*. Film: *Dartworth*, *The Rise of a Tom Boy*. TV: *Puzzle Play*, *Toasted TV*. Training: The Actors Workshop, NIDA. Proud member of Actors' Equity.



Naomi Rukavina
MEG / LEONIE

Malthouse Theatre: *Normal*, *Suburban*, *Planetary*, *Meltdown*, *Vampirella*. STC: debut. MTC: *The Crucible*, *Yellow Moon*. The Hayloft Project: *Arden V Arden*, *The Seizure*. Complete Works: *Medea*. La Mama: *Quick Death/Slow Love*. fortyfivedownstairs: *Romeo & Juliet*. Elbow Room: *Now More Than Ever*, *As We Mean To Go On*, *Kassandra*, *After All This*. Real TV: *War Crimes*. The Street Theatre: *The Faithful Servant*. Film: *Pawno*, *EMO the Musical*, *Save Your Legs!* TV: *Newton's Law*, *It's a Date*, *Wentworth*, *Offspring*, *No Strings Attached*. Radio: ABC: *Vampirella*, *Women of Troy*. Splendid Chaps: *Night Terrace*. Training: VCA. Proud member of Actors' Equity.



Heather Mitchell
GWEN

Malthouse Theatre: debut. STC: *Hay Fever*, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, *True West*, *Henry IV*, *Macbeth*, *Fields of Heaven*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, *Blood Relations*, *All My Sons*, *The Homecoming*, *Two Weeks with the Queen*. Global Creatures: *Strictly Ballroom*. Bell Shakespeare: *Hamlet*, *The Winter's Tale*. MTC: *Scenes from a Separation*, *Uncle Vanya*, *Morning Sacrifice*, *Hayfever*. Film: *The Great Gatsby*, *The Eye of the Storm*, *The Wedding Party*, *Griff the Invisible*, *Love Story*, *Romulus My Father*, *Thank God He Met Lizzie*, *Muriel's Wedding*, *Proof*, *Malcom*. TV: *Newton's Law*, *Power Games*, *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries*, *Jack Irish*, *Crownies*, *Spirited*, *Killing Time*, *Rake*, *Rogue Nation*, *Snobs*, *Underbelly*, *Rain Shadow*, *To Catch a Killer*, *Kath and Kim*, *Loss*, *Day of the Roses*. Awards: 2015 Green Room Award and 2014 Helpmann Award for Best Female Actor in a Supporting Role in a Musical (*Strictly Ballroom*), NYCFF Best Actress (*Afterglow*), NYLA Best Actress (*Red Valentine*). Training: NIDA. Proud member of Actors' Equity.



Natasha Herbert
CORAL

Malthouse Theatre: *On the Misconception of Oedipus, Happiness, Kitten, Still Angela, Love Child, Black Sequin Dress, Rapture, Honour, Wolf*. MTC: *Neighbourhood Watch, Dreamlife of Butterflies, The Balcony, I'm not Rappaport, God of Carnage, The Three Sisters, Hysteria, I Hate Hamlet*. Arts House: *Kitten*. Griffin: *The Unspoken Word is Joe, Inconsolable, Love Child*. TheatreWorks: *Anti-Hamlet, I Heart John McEnroe*. Red Stitch: *Extinction, The Village Bike*. fortyfivedownstairs: *Dreamers, Progress & Melancholy*. La Mama: *Portrait of Dora*. Back to Back: *Small Metal Objects*. Film: *The Menkoff Method, X, Lake Mungo, Corroboree, Boytown, Emo The Musical*. TV: *Neighbours, City Homicide, MDA, Dr Blake, Time of Our Lives, Stingers, All Saints, Blue Heelers*. Awards: 2015 and 2013 Green Room Awards for Best Ensemble (*I Heart John McEnroe, On the Misconception of Oedipus*), 2001 Green Room Award for Fringe Best Actress (*Portrait of Dora*). Training: VCA. Proud member of Actors' Equity.



Julia Davis
VIC

Malthouse Theatre and STC: debut. Bell Shakespeare: *Wars of the Roses, The Taming of the Shrew, Much Ado About Nothing*. Critical Stages: *A Day in the Death of Joe Egg*. Darlinghurst Theatre: *Men, Love & the Monkey Boy, A Day in the Death of Joe Egg*. B Sharp/Splinter Theatre Company: *Elling*. Live Theatre Productions: *Buddy! The Buddy Holly Story*. State of Play/B Sharp: *Wilde Tales*. Australian Shakespeare Company: *The Wind in the Willows*. Maelstrom Productions: *A Moment on the Lips*. Gary Ginivan Attractions: *The Magic Faraway Tree*. Musical Sprouts: *Musical Sprouts Concerts*. TV: *Wild Boys, The Cut, Home and Away, The Chaser Decides, Love My Way, Small Claims*. Radio: *ABC's Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries, Chrissie & Jules*. Training: WAAPA, Sydney Conservatorium of Music (Composition). Original Album: *Just (As Elvi Jean)* Proud member of Actors' Equity.



Wadih Dona
HARRY

Malthouse Theatre: debut. STC: *Pentecost and Playgrounds*. Bell Shakespeare: *A Midsummer Night's Dream, Othello*. Belvoir/Sidetrack Performance Group: *Country Love*. Railway Street Theatre: *Arms and the Man*. HotHouse Theatre: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Griffin Theatre: *Through the Wire*. Film: *Septembers of Shiraz, Thank God He Met Lizzie*. Short Film: *Hooper*. As Writer/Director/Actor: *Kranski*. TV: *Doctor Doctor, My Place, Underbelly 2, Grange, Wildside, Farscape, Police Rescue, Water Rats, G.P., Never Tell Me Never, Home and Away, Grass Roots, Blackjack, All Saints, Stingers, Blue Heelers, White Collar Blue*. Radio: *ABC's Poetica, Economy Class, Silent Sirens*. Positions: Artistic Event Advisor to events including the Doha Asian Games and Formula 1 races in Abu Dhabi. Co-director of 1,500 armed forces in the Military Parade segment for the UAE National Day Celebrations. Training: WAAPA. Proud member of Actors' Equity.



Marco Chiappi

JIM

Malthouse Theatre: *Love and Information* (with STC), *Edward II*, *Woyzeck*, *A Pacific Union*, *Jerusalem*. Bell Shakespeare: *Phedre*, *Hamlet*, *Merchant of Venice*, *Richard III*. STC: *Pygmalion*, *Jerusalem*. MTC: *This Girl Friday*, *Grapes of Wrath*, *Macbeth*, *The Rover*, *Dealer's Choice*, *A Doll's House*, *Closer*, *The Tempest*. Black Swan: *Popcorn*. TheatreWorks: *Reckless*. Griffin: *Torrez*. STCSA: *The Misanthrope*, *The Real Thing*, *Noises Off*, *The Goat or Who is Sylvia*. fortyfivedownstairs: *Dreamers*, *The Lower Depths*. As Director: *Antigone*, *A Wedding of the Member*, *Placebo*. TV: *Deadline*, *Gallipoli*, *Parer's War*, *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries*, *Upper Middle Bogan*, *City Homicide*, *MDA*, *After the Deluge*, *Bootleg*, *Short Cuts*, *Seachange*, *The Genie From Down Under 2*, *Small Tales & True*, *Blue Heelers*, *The Last of the Ryans*. Film: *Holding the Man*, *The Boy Castaways*, *Mr Reliable*. Training: Central School of Speech and Drama, London. Proud member of Actors' Equity.



Glenn Hazeldine

ROY

Malthouse Theatre: *Love and Information* (with STC). STC: *Disgraced*, *Arcadia*, *After Dinner*, *Perplex*, *Elling*, *Don's Party* (with MTC), *Julius Caesar*, *Victory*, *Love for Love*, *Two Weeks with the Queen*, *Mongrels*, *Dead White Males*. Ensemble: *Act One*, *All My Sons*, *Sanctuary*, *Face to Face*, *A Conversation*, *Charitable Intent*, *Birthrights*, *Happiness*, *Rapture*. Bell Shakespeare: *As You Like It*. Belvoir: *The Judas Kiss*. Griffin: *A Hoax*, *Porn.Cake*. Seymour Centre: *Transparency*. Marian Street Theatre: *Labour Day*. Darlinghurst Theatre: *Laurence and Holloman*, *Every Second*. The Old Fitzroy Theatre: *Last One Standing*. Film: *Last Train to Freo*, *Dripping in Chocolate*. TV: *Anzac Girls*, *Redfern Now*, *The Moodys*, *The Elegant Gentleman's Guide to Knife Fighting*, *All Saints*, *BlackJack*, *Water Rats*, *Backberner*. Positions: Member of Actors' Equity National Performers Committee, Deputy Chair of The Actors Benevolent Fund of NSW. Training: NIDA. Proud member of Actors' Equity.



Paul Jackson

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Malthouse Theatre: *I am Miracle*, *Blaque Showgirls*, *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, *Meow Meow's Little Mermaid*, *Edward II*, *Night on Bald Mountain*, *Hello*, *Goodbye and Happy Birthday*, *Little Match Girl*, *Die Winterreise*, *The Threepenny Opera*, *Vamp*, *The Tell-Tale Heart*, *Sleeping Beauty* (also co-creator) *The Odyssey*. STC: *Love and Information*, *The Histrionic*, *The Trial* (all with Malthouse Theatre), *True West*, *The Mysteries: Genesis*. Bell Shakespeare: *As You Like It*, *Phedre*, *Tartuffe*, *Julius Caesar*. Belvoir: *Seventeen*, *Nora*, *Oedipus Rex*, *Happy Days*, *It Just Stopped*. MTC: *Private Lives*, *Miss Julie*, *Endgame*, *Ghosts*, *The Crucible*. Victorian Opera: *The Magic Flute*, *Don Giovanni*. Chamber Made Opera: *Crossing Live*, *The Hive*, *Teorema*, *The Possessed*, *Recital*, *Walkabout*, *Corruption*. Awards: 2012 Helpmann Award for Lighting Design, four Green Room Awards for Lighting Design, one Green Room Award for Design, 2016 APDG Award for Lighting Design, Positions: Artistic Associate at Malthouse Theatre 2007-2013. Paul has lectured in design and associated studies at University of Melbourne, RMIT and VCA.



J. David Franzke
COMPOSER & SOUND DESIGNER

Malthouse Theatre: *Picnic at Hanging Rock, Night on Bald Mountain, Pompeii, L.A., The Odyssey*. STC: *Australia Day* (with MTC), *The Wonderful World of Dissocia, Venus & Adonis* (with Bell Shakespeare/Malthouse Theatre). Ranters Theatre: *Come away with me to the end of the world, Song, Intimacy, Holiday*. MTC: *The Odd Couple, The Beast, The Joy of Text, The Grenade, August: Osage County, Don Juan in Soho, Birthrights, The Recruit*. Balletlab: *Aviary*. Film: *X, Acolytes*. Awards: 2017 Green Room Award for Composition & Sound Design (*Picnic at Hanging Rock*), 2012 Green Room Award for Composition & Sound Design (*Pompeii, L.A.*), 2000 Green Room Award for Outstanding Contribution to Design & Technology (*Skin Flick*).



Stephanie Lake
CHOREOGRAPHER

Malthouse Theatre/STC: debut. As Choreographer: MTC: *The Effect, Birdland*. Queensland Ballet: *Chameleon*. Sydney Festival: *Double Blind*. Dancenorth: *If Never Was Now*. Sydney Dance Company: *Elektra, Dream Lucid*. Chunky Move: *Aorta, Mix Tape*. Melbourne Festival: *A Small Prometheus*. Dance Massive: *DUAL*. As Dancer: Lucy Guerin Inc: *The Dark Chorus, Motion Picture, Conversation Piece, Aether, Melt*. Chunky Move: *An Act of Now, Connected, Two Faced Bastard, I Like This, Tense Dave, Wanted*. BalletLab: *Upholster, Amplification*. Positions: Artistic Director of Stephanie Lake Company, Resident Director of Lucy Guerin Inc (2013), Sidney Myer Creative Fellow (2013–15), Dame Peggy Van Praagh Choreographic Fellow (2012), VCA Advisory Board Member. Awards: 2014 Helpmann Award for Best Choreography in a Dance or Physical Theatre Work, 2014 Australian Dance Award for Outstanding Achievement in Choreography, 2011 Green Room Award for Best Choreography, 2000 Green Room Award for Best Emerging Dancer. Training: VCA (Dance).



Lisa Osborn
STAGE MANAGER

Malthouse Theatre: *Blaque Showgirls, Meow Meow's Little Mermaid, The Shadow King, Love and Information* (with STC), *Calpurnia Descending* (with STC), *Baal* (with STC), *Blak Cabaret, Meme Girls, The Good Person of Szechuan, Night on Bald Mountain, Pompeii, L.A., Blood Wedding, The Wild Duck* (with Belvoir), *The Story of Mary MacLane by Herself*. Windmill Theatre: *Big Bad Wolf, Grug, Afternoon of the Elves, Two Weeks with the Queen, Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge*. Brink Productions: *When The Rain Stops Falling*. Patch Theatre Company: *Me and My Shadow Man*. Slingsby Theatre Company: *Man Covets Bird*. Australian Dance Theatre: *G, Devolution, Ignition*. State Theatre Company SA: *Three Sisters, Metro Street, Attempts on Her Life, The Female of the Species, Triple Threat, Noises Off* and *The Government Inspector*.



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