

VCE Drama and Theatre Studies 2009 Playlist

Drama Unit 3

The following plays have been selected for study in 2009. This list should be considered in conjunction with the requirements set out in Unit 3 Outcome 3 in the *VCE Drama Study Design (2007–2011)*. Students will undertake an assessment task based on the performance of a play on the Playlist. Question/s will also be set on the performances of the plays in the end-of-year Drama written examination.

Notes

1. Schools should note that in *The Glass Threshold* a variety of suggestive and potentially offensive words and phrases are used. They occur with intermittent frequency. However, this language may invite adverse comment from some areas of the community.
2. While the VCAA considers all plays on this list suitable for study, teachers should be aware that in some instances sensitivity might be needed where particular issues or themes are explored. Before selecting plays for study teachers should make themselves aware of these issues and themes prior to students viewing the play and/or studying the playscript, for example by reading the playscript, talking with the theatre company and/or attending a preview performance. Information provided in this notice about themes and/or language used in specific plays is a guide.

1. *Odyssey* by Andreas Litras and John Bolton

Anthos Theatre in conjunction with Nexus Arts
Season: In-schools tour available throughout Terms 1 and 2, 2009.

Scripts: PDF provided with each school booking.

Performance duration: 55 minutes plus Q & A

Tickets: \$17.00 per student + GST with minimum of 43 students. (For larger groups, price per student may be reduced, contact Nexus Arts for details.) Schools may combine at a single venue to reach minimum fee.)

Bookings and enquiries: <nexusarts@netspace.net.au> or (03) 9528 3416 (metro schools) or Freecall 1800 675 897 (regional schools)

A bilingual solo performance constructed through improvisation and experimentation *Odyssey* weaves stories of the Litras family and their migration from Greece to Australia through Homer's epic poem. The play explores themes home, identity and belonging, racism and the stigma of difference. The minimalist production elements focus attention on the performer's use of voice, body, gesture and rhythm to create four main characters and a host of minor characters with little or no costume changes. *Odyssey* features use of a wide range of non-naturalistic performance styles including storytelling, clowning and slapstick and puppetry. Theatrical conventions used include song, mime, direct address with transformation of time, place, character and object and use of heightened language.

2. *Big Sky Town* by Amelia Roper

St Martins Youth Arts Centre Actors Ensemble
Metropolitan season at The Black Box at The Arts Centre and touring to The Courthouse Youth Arts Centre Geelong, Cube 37 at Frankston Arts Centre, Old Fire Station Bendigo and The Upper Yarra Performing Arts Centre Warburton
April 27 – May 22

Script will be published in late March, watch <www.stmartinsyouth.com.au> for details.

Performance duration: approximately 70 minutes

Tickets: \$10 per student

Bookings: via each venue

Enquiries: <info@stmartinsyouth.com.au> or (03) 9867 2477

Big Sky Town blends absurdity, wit and pathos in a tale of human behaviour at its most vulnerable and grotesque. The play dissects and comments on political and personal issues including the price of technological advancements. Yesterday the world cheered as the space shuttle Genesis shot to sky; today the shuttle has crashed onto a Scout camp. Dead adventurers haunt the living as they attempt to hide the accident from the world. This ensemble production will use a range of performance styles including Absurdist comedy, satire and physical theatre with each actor transforming into several characters.

3. August Strindberg's *A Dream Play* in a new version by Caryl Churchill based on the literal translation by Charlotte Barslund

iGNITE for Schools

Season: 5–17 May, Tuesday 6.30 pm, Wednesday–Saturday 7.30 pm, Sunday 6 pm, Wednesday and Saturday 1 pm matinees

Venue: New Ballroom @ Bella union, trades hall, corner of Lygon and Victoria Sts, Carlton South (enter off Lygon street)

Script: *A Dream Play* by Caryl Churchill, August Strindberg, Charlotte Barslund, Nick Hearn Books, ISBN 1854 598 511, 9781 54598 51 6

Performance duration: approximately 1 hour 40 minutes

Tickets: \$17 students, \$25 full price (One free teacher ticket for booking of 20 or more students)

Bookings and enquiries: igniteprods@yahoo.com.au

In 1902 Strindberg introduced *A Dream Play* saying 'everything can happen, everything is possible and probable. Time and place do not exist; the imagination spins'. Churchill's adaption translates the imagery and dialogue into a contemporary mindset while maintaining the non-naturalism. *A Dream Play* follows the logic of a dream in which characters merge, locations change in an instant and a locked door recurs obsessively. There is no

central character in this exploration of the nature of reality and illusion, rather someone who is a combination of different professional men, all confused. Presented as an ensemble work for ten performers this production will use a range of performance styles including Absurdism, Naturalism, Surrealism, dance and puppetry.

**4. *The Glass Threshold*, Dramaturg – Ross Mueller and
Composer – Enio Pozzebon**

Machination Theatre at The Cromwell Road Theatre, Cromwell Road, South Yarra

Season: 19–28 March, two shows daily 1 pm and 7 pm

Script: will be available through Machination Theatre as part of the ticket package for this production.

Performance duration: approximately 60 minutes

Tickets: Students \$20 with script included and teachers \$22

Bookings: machination_ensemble@hotmail.com

Information: www.machinationtheatreensemble.com

The Glass Threshold is a rite of passage story which draws its inspiration from *Great Expectations*, *Cinderella* and the work of Portuguese artist Paula Rego. Lily (18) and Augusta live in a cocoon, a ‘butterfly house’ that Augusta has constructed to protect them from the brutality of the outside world. Oliver, Lily’s cousin arrives unexpectedly and exposes hidden family secrets. The play uses interlocking vignettes created in non-linear time by layering physical ensemble montages, live song, film, puppetry, ensemble, song and gestural language. The performance style focuses on magic realism with two actors playing the ‘spider’ and ‘butterfly’ aspects of mother’s character. Fabric and paper transform to create inner and outer worlds embellished by an evocative original musical score. Lighting, sound and design elements all have equal significance in the telling of this story of identity and personal empowerment.

Schools should note that this play uses a variety of suggestive and potentially offensive words and phrases. They occur with intermittent frequency. However, this language may invite adverse comment from some areas of the community.

5. *The Shape of a Girl* by Joan MacLeod

Fairfax Studio at the Arts Centre

Season: 26–29 May

Script: is available through online suppliers.

Performance duration: 70 minutes

Tickets: \$14/student with subsidy available for disadvantaged schools upon application through ‘First Call Fund’.

Bookings: (03) 9281 8582

The Shape of a Girl is a non-naturalistic monologue. In 1997 a 14-year-old girl was murdered by her peers in Canada. As the case goes to trial ‘Brydie’, through the conventions of monologue and flashback, communicates her thoughts and concerns about her own teenage world in a text that deals with the social hierarchy of adolescent girls and their search for identity. This reflection causes her to confront own involvement in the escalating bullying of a girl in her group of friends.

Schools should note that some students may find the themes of this play confronting.

Theatre Studies Unit 3 Playlist

The following plays have been selected for study in 2009. This list should be considered in conjunction with the requirements set out in Unit 3 Outcome 3 in the *VCE Theatre Studies Study Design* (2007–2011). Students will undertake an assessment task based on the performance of a play on the Playlist. Question/s will also be set on the performances of the plays in the end-of-year Theatre Studies written examination. Teachers should note that this outcome requires analysis and evaluation of ways a written playscript is interpreted in production to an audience.

Notes

1. Schools should note that in the plays *Optimism*, *A Stretch of the Imagination* a variety of suggestive and potentially offensive words and phrases are used. They occur with intermittent frequency. However, this language may invite adverse comment from some areas of the community.
2. While the VCAA considers all plays on this list suitable for study, teachers should be aware that in some instances sensitivity might be needed where particular issues or themes are explored. Before selecting plays for study teachers should make themselves aware of these issues and themes prior to students viewing the play and/or studying the playscript, for example by reading the playscript, talking with the theatre company and/or attending a preview performance. Information provided in this notice about themes and/or language used in specific plays is a guide.

1. *Optimism* by Tom Wright

Merlyn Theatre at The CUB Malthouse, 113 Sturt Street, Southbank

Previews 22–26 May and Season 27 May – 13 June

Script: will be available through Malthouse Theatre Education from the beginning of Term 2 2009

Duration: approximately 2 hours with interval

Tickets: \$19 regional students, \$21 metro students, 1 comp. teacher ticket for each 10 students. Additional adults/teachers \$25.50

Optimism is a major re-interpretation of Voltaire’s Enlightenment satire *Candide* with the play reset into the twenty-first century but still exploring the myth of positive thinking. In this non-naturalistic production, *Candide*, is on a round-the-world adventure maintaining his optimistic outlook despite worries of climate change, third-world exploitation, wasteful consumerism and the threat of ideologically inspired terrorism. The design suggests an aeroplane interior open to the skies and at the same time providing an imaginary stage for the travellers. The two performers will use performance styles of comedy, slapstick, farce, satire and elements of Music Theatre and the production will feature pop songs.

Schools should note that this play uses a variety of suggestive and potentially offensive words and phrases. They occur with intermittent frequency. However, this language may invite adverse comment from some areas of the community.

2. *A Stretch of the Imagination* by Jack Hibberd

HIT Productions at Athenaeum Theatre and touring to Dandenong, Horsham, Portland, Warrnambool, Nunawading, Sale, Traralgon, Bayswater, Werribee, Moorabbin, Ringwood, Bendigo, Echuca, Shepparton and Benalla.

Season: 12 March – 31 May

Script: Currency Press

Performance duration: approximately 2 hours including interval

Tickets: vary according to venue pricing structure but in approximate range of \$17–\$29.

Bookings: <nava.c@hitproductions.com.au> or (03) 9599 0899

A Stretch of the Imagination is an Absurdist monologue about what Australia once was and what it could become. The audience is invited to share a day with Monk O'Neill, at his bush hut on One Tree Hill as he acts out his memories and fantasies while fighting against his own physical decline and the depredations of his environment. Monk encourages us to 'stretch our imaginations' and come to new ways of thinking about Australia and ourselves.

Schools should note that this play uses a variety of suggestive and potentially offensive words and phrases. They occur with intermittent frequency. However, this language may invite adverse comment from some areas of the community.

3. *Realism* by Paul Galloway

Melbourne Theatre Company

Sumner Theatre, Cnr Southbank Boulevard and Dodds Street, Southbank

Season: 4 April – 17 May with a possible extension.

Check <www.mtc.com.au> closer to the date to confirm

Bookings: <schools@mtc.com.au> or (03) 9684 4500

Script: will be available through Melbourne Theatre Company and is scheduled for publication by Currency Press.

Performance duration: approx. 2 hours 30 minutes including a 20-minute interval

Tickets: \$22 metro students, \$20 regional students.

Realism is a comedy of manners set in a small Moscow theatre in 1939. Using the conventions of a 'play within a play' and a range of performance styles including realism and physical comedy the play incorporates references to the work of Meyerhold and its contrast to Stanislavski's naturalism within a linear plot. The performance style at the end of the play transforms to an exhibition of Meyerhold's performance technique including elements of circus, pantomime, burlesque and mime.

4. *Travelling North* by David Williamson

HIT Productions touring to Nunawading, Traralgon, South Morang, Moonee Ponds and Bendigo

Season: 6–18 February

Script: Currency Press

Performance duration: approximately 2 hours 20 minutes including interval

Tickets: vary according to venue pricing structure but in approximate range of \$17–\$29.

Bookings: <nava.c@hitproductions.com.au> or (03) 9599 0899

Travelling North is an iconic Australian story about renewal, growth and moving on. Frank and Frances find new life in a twilight love affair. They travel north but no sooner do they find

'their place' than signs of mortality beset Frank. A heightened naturalistic production will emphasise the relationships, issues and ideas of this play set in the Australia of the 1970s. Some scenes will be presented conceptually using recorded dialogue and projected images.

Theatre Studies Unit 4 Playlist

The following plays have been selected for study in 2009. This list should be considered in conjunction with the requirements set out in Unit 4 Outcome 3 in the *VCE Theatre Studies Study Design* (2007–2011). Students will undertake an assessment task based on the performance of a play on the Playlist. Question/s will also be set on the performances of the plays in the end-of-year Theatre Studies written examination.

Notes

1. Schools should note that in the plays *Marie Antoinette: The Colour of Flesh* and *Embers* a variety of suggestive and potentially offensive words and phrases are used. They occur with intermittent frequency. However, this language may invite adverse comment from some areas of the community.
2. While the VCAA considers all plays on this list suitable for study, teachers should be aware that in some instances sensitivity might be needed where particular issues or themes are explored. Before selecting plays for study teachers should make themselves aware of these issues and themes prior to students viewing the play and/or studying the playscript, for example by reading the playscript, talking with the theatre company and/or attending a preview performance. Information provided in this notice about themes and/or language used in specific plays is a guide.

1. *Marie Antoinette: The Colour of Flesh* by Joe Gross

Red Stitch Actors Theatre at St Michael's Grammar School
25 Chapel Street, St Kilda 3183

Season: 5–22 August. Season may be extended to 29th August. (watch Red Stitch website for confirmation)

Script: Dramatists Play Service Inc.

Duration: approx. 2 hours with a 15-minute interval

Tickets: \$19 regional students, \$21 metro students, 1 comp. teacher ticket for each 10 students. Additional adults/teachers \$25.50

Bookings: <boxoffice@redstitch.net> or phone (03) 9533 8083

Written in a naturalistic style *Marie Antoinette: The Colour of Flesh* challenges political ideologies of governance and motivations for social revolution through the imagined relationships between Marie Antoinette, her portraitist Elisabeth Vigée le Brun and a fictitious, radical, leftist, playboy-aristocrat Count Alexis de le Brun. The production uses an abstract design with projected images and text used to signal changes of time and place. The set design features the illusion of a chessboard to emphasise the social manoeuvring and formality of King Louis XVI's court just prior to the French Revolution. Suspended props suggest the instability of this society.

Schools should note that this play uses a variety of suggestive and potentially offensive words and phrases. They occur with intermittent frequency. However, this language may invite adverse comment from some areas of the community.

2. *Embers* by **Campion Decent**

HotHouse Theatre with support of Sydney Theatre Company touring:

Riverlinks Shepparton, The Drum Theatre Dandenong, The Capital Theatre Bendigo, The Clocktower Centre Moonee Ponds, The Arts Centre Warragul and Geelong Performing Arts Centre.

Season: 13–29 August

Script: Playlab, Studio 3.8 Metro Arts, 109 Edward Street, Brisbane QLD, 4000, info@playlab.org.au or (07) 3220 0841

Performance duration: approximately 2 hours

Tickets: will vary from venue to venue

Bookings: through venues

General enquiries: info@hothousetheatre.com.au

Using the multiple genre conventions of verbatim theatre, *Embers* tells the story of the January 2003 bushfires in Victoria's Northeast and Gippsland regions. Based on interviews with residents and emergency service workers, the play uses a range of performance styles including dramatic use of monologue, comedy and the stagecraft features sound, lighting and projection. Seven actors each play multiple roles to portray 75 characters in an exploration of issues surrounding the nature of natural disasters and the ongoing political discussion concerning the needs of emergency volunteer services.

Schools should note that this play draws directly on the experiences of community members and emergency service workers during the 2003 bushfires in Victoria.

3. *The Killer* by **Eugene Ionesco** in a new version by **iGNITE** iGNITE for Schools

Season: 4–16 August, Tuesday 6.30 pm, Wednesday - Saturday 7.30 pm, Sunday 6 pm, Wednesday and Saturday matinee at 1 pm

Venue: The Ballroom @ Bella Union, Trades Hall, corner Lygon and Victoria Sts, Carlton South, (enter from Lygon Street).

Script: Exit the King, *The Killer* and *Macbett*, 1960, John Caler Publishers Ltd, London, ISBN 0394621999

Performance duration: approximately 1 hour 40 minutes

Tickets: \$17 students and \$25 full, one free teacher ticket for each 20 or more students

Bookings and enquiries: igniteprods@yahoo.com.au

In *The Killer*, Bérenger tracks down an elusive murderer who murders for the sake of destroying in a perfect neighbourhood. At the end, Bérenger is unable to escape the menace that has overtaken the town. Using a range of production styles including Absurdism, Naturalism, illusion, cartoon/film and puppetry this production poses questions about how a playwright constructs absurd dialogue with underlying themes and story, how a director

interprets an Absurdist text, how actors approach such texts and the world of the play.

4. *Happy Days* by **Samuel Beckett**

Merlyn Theatre at The CUB Malthouse, 113 Sturt Street, Southbank

Previews 3–7 July and Season 8–25 July

Script: is available from most libraries and bookshops

Performance duration: approximately 2 hours 20 minutes with interval

Tickets: \$19 regional students, \$21 metro students, 1 comp. teacher ticket for each 10 students. Additional adults/teachers \$25.50

Happy Days is a solo performance interrupted only by another presence in the final moments of the work. In this production the playscript will become a eulogy for the twentieth century and a glimpse of a future wasteland in which the world eats its young. 'Winnie' is a gentle and insistently optimistic voice despite all the potents of doom around her including an unfired gun. The vastness of the performance space will be exploited in the design with the actor lying half-buried in a mound of the debris of history. The performance style of tragic clowning will be used to interpret the repetitions, reiterations and rhythms of the script.

5. *The Taming of the Shrew* by **William Shakespeare**

The Bell Shakespeare Company

Touring to Arts Centre Mildura, Westside Performing Arts Centre Shepparton, The Capital Bendigo, Whitehorse Performing Arts Centre Nunawading, Drum Theatre Dandenong, West Gippsland Arts Centre Warragul, Wellington Entertainment Centre Sale, Frankston Arts Centre and Karralyka Centre Ringwood.

Script: is available from most libraries and bookshops as well as online at: www.william-shakespeare.info/act1-script-text-taming-of-the-shrew.htm

Performance duration: approximately three hours including interval.

Tickets: \$15–\$26 for students depending on the venue

Bookings: contact individual box offices. For venue contact details see <www.bellshakespeare.com.au>

The Taming of the Shrew is one of Shakespeare's more controversial comedies with a focus on the sexual politics of marriage. This interpretation will feature an all-female cast in a post-modernist pseudo-domestic romp. The production will use diverse performance styles in contemporary ways and will explore Shakespeare's language in a highly theatrical manner. The production elements of design, sound, lighting and text will be treated as complementary and essential elements of the production.

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