

JONATHAN MILLS

EUCALYPTUS

THE OPERA

EDUCATION RESOURCE

BY LISA GRIGG, TIM RYAN & CLAIRE WEARNE

Victorian Opera respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the unceded land on which we work and live: the people of the Eastern Kulin Nation. We acknowledge these original owners and custodians of the lands and waterways and their enduring cultural practices of caring for Country. We pay respect to their Elders past and present.

ABOUT US

Victorian Opera is the state opera company of Victoria. Your state company. We make creative, accessible and relevant work for everyone while acknowledging the traditions and evolving our artform.

Recognised for our unique contribution to the country's operatic landscape, Victorian Opera joined the National Performing Arts Partnership Framework in 2021. Alongside other companies, Victorian Opera holds its rightful position in the national performing arts arena.

Commitment to the development and presentation of new Australian opera and musical theatre is forefront to our mission. We identify relative and topical material, commission and workshop new scores and librettos, and ultimately produce new productions. Victorian Opera premieres at least one new Australian opera or music theatre work each year, and have commissioned 36 new works since the company's formation.

The next generation of talent is developed from the ground up through our Emerging Artists Programs – The Victorian Opera Youth Chorus Ensemble (VOYCE), our VO Emerges project and our Emerging Artists Opera Prize scholarship. Creating future pathways for artists, artisans and technicians has become a driving

focus for our organisation. We employ hundreds of people across the creative industries, recruit some of the finest local and national singers, and collaborate with Australia's leading companies, venues and learning institutions.

We embrace the new normal and continue to perform in exceptional theatres and concert halls to give you the best and safest experience. Join us to experience the human voice, the indefinable power of music and storytelling at its finest.

And please, come as you are.



**"This is the story of Ellen,
beautiful daughter of Holland,
running away with her man.**

**Finding what all of us want to find,
and sometimes some of us can"**

– Eucalyptus, Finale

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MEET THE CREATIVES



SIR JONATHAN MILLS AC
Composer



TAHU MATHESON
Conductor



MICHAEL GOW
Director



SIMONE ROMANIUK
Set and Costume Designer



TRUDY DALGLEISH
Lighting Designer



RICHARD MILLS OA
Cover Conductor

To learn more about our Creative Team, take a look at our [electronic program](#).

MEET THE CAST

LEAD ROLES



DESIREE FRAHN
Ellen



SIMON MEADOWS
Holland



MICHAEL PETRUCELLI
The Stranger



SAMUEL DUNDAS
Cave



NATALIE JONES
Sprunt Sister



DIMITY SHEPHERD
Sprunt Sister

To learn more about our Cast, take a look at our [electronic program](#).

MEET THE CAST

CHORUS

Diana Simpson
Rebecca Rashleigh
Shania Eliassen
Kirile Blythman
Juel Riggall
Rebecca Crabtree

Shakira Dugan
Olivia Federow-Yemm
Paul Biencourt
Paul Batey
Irving Dekterev
Alastair Cooper-Golec

Nick Cowall
Kiran Rajasingam
Eamon Dooley
Jerzy Kozlowski

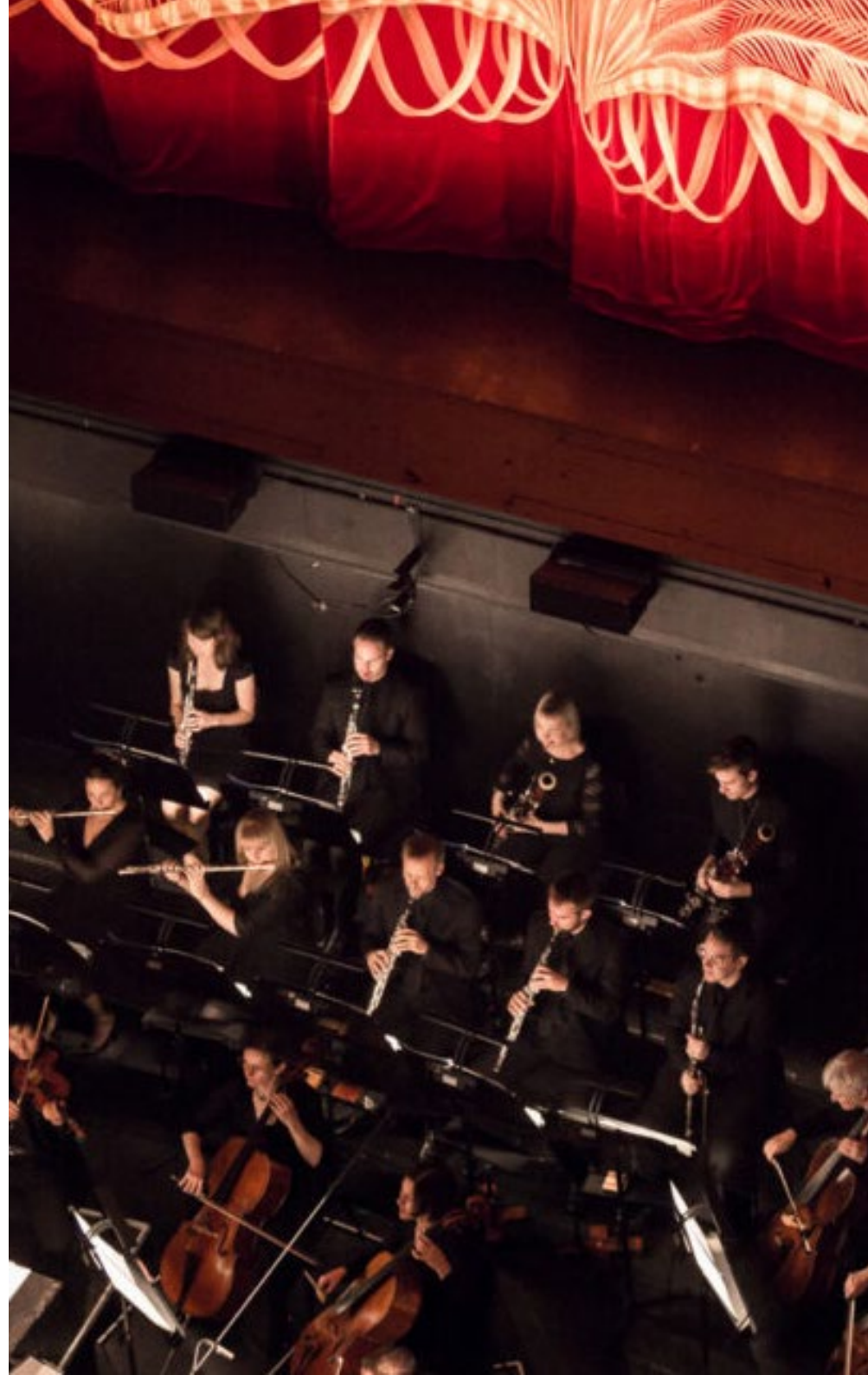
MEET THE PRODUCTION TEAM

Stage Manager
Lucie Sutherland
Assistant Stage Manager
Tiah Bullock
Costume Manager
Mel Serjeant
Wig Build
Deb Müller
Props Maker
Alex Donnelly

MUSIC STAFF
Head of Music
Phoebe Briggs
Repetiteur
Tom Griffiths

SEASON STAFF
Costumiers
Nicole Serjeant
Simon Doe
Fiona Holley
Elizabeth Gooden
Olivia Peters

The full production list is
viewable in our [electronic
program](#).



MEET THE ORCHESTRA



Violin

Concertmaster

Sulki Yu

Chair supported by Lady Southey AC

Deputy Concertmaster

Yi Wang

Chair supported by Susan & Leith Campbell

Section Principal First Violin

Tony Zhai

Section Principal Second Violin

Monica Naselow

Chair supported by Peter Griffin AM & Terry Swann

Associate Principal First Violin

Tomomi Brennan

Associate Principal First Violin

Erica Kennedy

Acting Associate Principal

Second Violin

Matt Hassall

Chair supported by Mr Russell & Dr Jenni Jenkins

Tutti

Binny Baik

Chair supported by The Fielding Foundation

Alyssa Conrau

Chair supported by Leanne Menegazzo

Rachel Gamer

Rachael Hunt *Chair supported by The Fielding Foundation*

Philip Nixon

John Noble

Christine Ruiter[§]

Rebecca Shirley
Chair supported by Mr Andrew Fairley AM

Lucy Warren

Edwina Kayser⁺

Lynette Rayner⁺

Sophia Shaw⁺

2024 Richard Bonyngge Fellow

Viola

Section Principal

Paul McMillan

Chair supported by Ms Linda Herd

Associate Principal

Thomas Higham

Tutti

Jason Bunn

Nadine Delbridge

Phoebe Green⁺

Beth Hemming⁺

Matthew Laing⁺

Cello

Section Principal

Melissa Chominsky

Associate Principal

Diane Froomes

Tutti

Sarah Cuming

Chair supported by Angela Kayser

Tania Hardy-Smith

Andrea Taylor

Double Bass

Section Principal

Stuart Riley

Chair supported by Don & Angela Mercer

Associate Principal

Kylie Davies

Tutti

Matthew Thorne

Flute

Section Principal

Lisa-Maree Amos

Chair supported by Peter Griffin AM & Terry Swann

Associate Principal

Jessie Gu

Principal Piccolo/Tutti Flute

Melissa Doecke⁺

Alyse Faith⁺

Rebecca Johnson⁺

Oboe

Acting Section Principal

Joshua de Graaf

Associate Principal

Jasper Ly⁺

Principal Cor Anglais

Dafydd Camp

Chair supported by Ms Linda Herd

Tutti

Rachel Bullen⁺

Clarinet

Section Principal

Paul Champion

Associate Principal

Justin Beere

Principal Bass Clarinet/Tutti Clarinet

Robin Henry⁺

Tutti

Aaron Klein⁺

Bassoon

Section Principal

Hugh Ponnuthurai[§]

Acting Section Principal

Jack Schiller⁺

Associate Principal

Colin Forbes-Abrams⁺

Tutti

Jack Cremer⁺

Horn

Section Principal

Andrew Young

Associate Principal

Evan Williams

Principal Third Horn

Linda Hewett

Tutti

Sharon Hatton⁺

Benjamin Messenger⁺

Trumpet

Section Principal

Mark Fitzpatrick

Associate Principal

Timothy Francis

Tutti

Sarah Henderson⁺

Sophie Spencer⁺

Trombone

Section Principal

Scott Evans[§]

Acting Section Principal

Kieran Conrau

Associate Principal

Iain Faragher⁺

Principal Bass Trombone

Benjamin Anderson

Principal Bass Trombone/

Tutti Trombone

Robert Collins⁺

Tuba

Principal Tuba/Cimbasso

Karina Filipi⁺

Timpani

Section Principal

Guy du Blêt

Chair supported by Mr Jim Cousins AO & Mrs Libby Cousins AM with Igor Zambelli

Associate Principal Timpani/
Tutti Percussion

Scott Weatherson⁺

Percussion

Section Principal

Mathew Levy

Associate Principal

Robert Allan⁺

Tutti

Stephen Falk⁺

Alexander Meagher⁺

Hugh Tidy⁺

Harp

Section Principal

Julie Raines⁺

Associate Principal

Melina van Leeuwen⁺

KEY

+ Denotes guest musician

§ Denotes on leave

For a complete listing of Orchestra Victoria's musicians and staff, visit: orchestravictoria.com.au

To learn more about the people responsible for bringing this production to life, take a look at our [electronic program](#).



SIR JONATHAN MILLS AC

BORN: MARCH 21, 1963



Mills is an Australian composer who studied under Peter Sculthorpe. He has directed festivals across Australia, internationally, and most notably the Edinburgh International Festival from 2006 to 2014.

The following interview extracts were taken from Victorian Opera's *Beyond the Stage* secondary schools program and were conducted by educator, Tim Ryan.

TIM: Why compose for opera?

JONATHAN: Composing for opera goes back to the basics. Opera is in pursuit of another agenda, not always a musical one, it's about drama, it's about life, it's about relationships. Music used to be in the service of religion, or the court, or a great patron, and composing for opera is using your musical skills in the pursuit of a bigger ideal, where drama, music, scenography, and character and life come together.

TIM: Can you outline some of the influences on your writing?

JONATHAN: Rather than influences on my writing, like I've really fallen in love with this phrase by Beethoven, or this texture by Tchaikovsky, writing for opera requires you to think about musical archetypes. Bartok and Stravinsky are guides for me, not that either of them wrote many operas, but everything in their operatic output, which is exceptional, is absolutely them, and uses ancient and very powerful archetypes to illustrate their point. So, when Stravinsky writes his Mass based on Gesualdo, every bar of it is Stravinsky but there's another model. What I tend to do in opera, rather than get influenced by a particular composer writing a particular harmonic progression, I look to a particular solution that a composer might have had to a similar dramatic challenge that I have in the opera I'm writing; sad, sweet, happy, ferocious, melancholy, two characters on stage, five characters on stage, how do you manage that? I look to those simple archetypes that everyone, but most particularly Stravinsky in *The Rake's Progress*, and Bartok in *Bluebeard's Castle* and *The Miraculous Mandarin* have actually provided us.

TIM: What drew you to this story?

JONATHAN: As I reflect on it, my three operas are very much based in Australia, not about Australians, but in the landscape. My first opera, *Ghost Wife* is about a woman isolated in the middle of nowhere, [and my second opera] *The Eternity Man*, is a nocturnal kind of meandering around the back streets of Sydney. So, every time I think about a project for an opera, I'm wondering how it will evoke the unique sound, smells, and light of an Australian landscape. *Eucalyptus* is such a story because it tells a story about a father and a daughter. But where does it tell it? In the unique circumstances of a eucalyptus forest.

TIM: What is your intention in using the chorus to create soundscapes with Eucalyptus names?

JONATHAN: *Eucalyptus* is a story about telling stories. Holland (the father) offers the hand in marriage to his daughter (Ellen) - she doesn't particularly like the idea - to whom so ever will name all the species of eucalyptus tree on his property. Where are the trees? In my opera, they're in the chorus. From beginning to end, the chorus

sing hundreds of names of trees. I split the chorus, there's the off-stage chorus and the onstage chorus. The onstage chorus will be familiar to you, it's the sort of business that happens in every opera, they're townspeople, they're gossips, they're the suitors - the people in the competition. They play multiple parts in any one moment. But the trees, they are ever present, they're consistent and they sing from the beginning to the end of the opera the names [of different species] that almost make forest from beginning to end of *Eucalyptus*. It is in the creation of these soundscapes, through the off-stage chorus, that the forest of eucalyptus trees is invoked simply through singing their names.

TIM: Why did you decide to use conventional instruments in non-conventional ways?

JONATHAN: It is very much about what are you trying to achieve? Where is this? I sat in a eucalyptus forest, and I just sat there, silent, listening to the forest, listening to the breeze rustling the leaves, listening to a person passing by, disturbing the forest brush and the leaves which have fallen on the forest floor. Thinking about the acoustics of those big trunks against each other, what does it

do to your head, and your sense of soundscape? So, I started to experiment with playing different instruments in slightly different ways to evoke some of these scratchy atmospheric sounds.

You'll be able to hear a rubber ball stuck onto a wooden skewer that dragged across the membrane of the bass drum. We bow the cymbal, and we play it as well, but we bow it [the cymbal] as well as the vibraphone. We play the timpani with fingertips as well as with mallets. We have a slide whistle played by the clarinet player to evoke a kind of owl or a kind of distant plaintive bird at night - for a particular scene we are in the forest at night and there's no one else there, you are alone, that sort of slightly eerie sound that you would hear, it's very evocative. It's about taking a conventional ensemble that you devised for very practical reasons and then say 'okay but this is not a European orchestra playing and evoking the lovely rolling green hills of the English countryside, or the peaks of the Austrian Alps', this is a different landscape, it's haunted, it's eviscerated, its austere, and it smells quite different, it's really pungent, eucalyptus oil smells different. How do you evoke that? What does the light look like? How is the light reflected? Those are considerations that you bring to bear when you're thinking about these slightly less conventional ways of playing quite conventional instruments.

MEREDITH OAKES

BORN: SEPTEMBER 18, 1946

Oakes is an Australian playwright, poet and librettist who was educated in Sydney before pursuing a career in the United Kingdom.

The following interview extracts were taken from Victorian Opera's Beyond the Stage secondary schools program and were conducted by educator, Lisa Grigg.

LISA: Could you elaborate on the collaboration process between you and composer Jonathan Mills?

MEREDITH: Jonathan contacted me when he knew he wanted to base an opera on "Eucalyptus". I read it and saw it could be done. We talked quite a lot about his feelings for things the novel expresses, and also about one or two things he definitely wanted to do: to give a musical presence to the trees, for instance. I went away and sketched the first two scenes, I think it was, and sent them to him. He wrote some of the music for them, and we met and he played (and sang!) the music through. This is something wonderful, when you hear the first music and start to see how it will grow and how it might shape the next steps you take in writing the libretto.

And that's how it went on, with me writing a bit, then Jonathan

deciding what he could and couldn't use, and playing me more music. It was a slow process. He let me make most of the structural decisions, with some reshuffles. We continued talking about the novel's qualities, and atmospheres, that were important to him and to me. If he asked for specific changes, it was mainly when he wanted words that would fit with a particular musical phrase.

LISA: Which elements of the fairytale genre did you decide to magnify and why?

MEREDITH: The novel definitely is a fairytale for instance, with the Sprunts' role as fairy godmothers. The idea of a public contest to win a bride is a classic fairytale idea. I didn't really need to magnify this side of the story; it's all there. In this fairytale, the nature of the contest – the person who is the best at putting names to things being outdone by the person who never directly names anything – also happens to reflect the duality in all our brains between the left half that specialises in word-and-theory-making, and the right half that encompasses our whole field of perception. There is a wonderful book on this subject, *The Master and his Emissary*, by Iain McGilchrist, exploring the way the naming-things part of us is increasingly keen to behave as if it were the whole of us, which it is not. Fairytales have quite a habit of touching on deep realities.

LISA: I enjoyed that the Ellen in the libretto has a more active voice than Bail's Ellen. Can you tell me what inspired that?

MEREDITH: Giving Ellen a more active voice was partly practical: she is the pivot of the story, so we need to hear her. Without a musical presence, how could she be central to a musical work? For an operatic character, musical presence means singing. So, I made some things for her to sing, about what she was thinking and feeling. Maybe I bought into this particularly because of being female myself, and of a certain vintage. Ellen is inclined just to let things happen to her, which is actually common in young people, even though it has often been attributed to (and used to be specifically encouraged in) women. Perhaps the mistake our culture has made is to assume that women have these tendencies all to themselves. As far as I can see, men have them too. In the story, this passive aspect is part of the young Ellen: these are real recognisable feelings and why should there not be words for them? The book actually shows us Ellen "growing into herself" but in a quiet way. It needed to be a bit louder if it was to come across on the stage.

LISA: The Sprunt Sisters in your libretto are wonderful vehicles for the narrative flow. What was it about these characters that you wanted the audience to connect with?

MEREDITH: I'm afraid I wasn't thinking about what the audience would connect with. I just liked the Sprunts (although it's also true that gossips are great for narrative). Theirs is a kind of Australian gossiping style which is quite laid-back, even kindly, despite being as nosy, and as inclined to Schadenfreude, as gossip anywhere. I enjoy the accepting, quite wise, almost benevolent tone of gossip like that. The Sprunts are benign spirits who have brought the lovers together. Also, I was glad they could be there to voice one of the more delicate and less "narrative" parts of the novel's atmosphere: the great Australian silence between men and women – something that was very much part of my childhood (and of the era the novel is set in), though maybe things have changed by now.

TERMINOLOGY

OPERA

This style of theatre is completely sung with minimal to no dialogue and generally covers stories of high emotion and serious themes. In the European tradition, it has an orchestra playing the music in a pit in front of the stage, and singers would not use microphones to amplify their voices. Grand operas would generally be three to four acts long.

FAIRY TALE

A short story originating from oral tradition. The story often ends with a happy ending and teaches a moral truth. Characters are simple and archetypal and the genre creates a sense of wonder.

ADAPTATION

The process of taking an existing story and giving it new life either through re-setting the era and/or setting or by focussing on character arcs that are often overlooked.

RE-TELLING

An existing story being told in a different way that allows the teller to emphasise what is important to them about the embedded values of the narrative.

PATRIARCHY

A system by which males hold power to the exclusion of females.

MISOGYNY

A form of sexism that is a prejudice against women, whether intentional or not, which maintains patriarchal standards.

MOOD

The combination of dramatic and musical elements to create an overarching emotional atmosphere for the audience.

TERMINOLOGY

PRELUDE

Similar to an overture but shorter. An introductory piece of music to a larger piece, often played on a keyboard instrument. Preludes include motifs and ideas from the larger piece.

CHROMATICISM

The use of all 12 available pitches within an octave used by the chromatic scale rather than just the 7 used in a diatonic scale.

THROUGH COMPOSITION

A continuous piece of music that has no repetition. No material is reused and new ideas are constantly introduced.

LEGGIERO E ONIRICO

An instruction for the music to be played *lightly and dreamlike*.

DA LONTANO

An instruction for the music to be played as if *from far away*.

CON FANTASIA

An instruction for the music to be played with *imagination*.

LIBERAMENTE

An instruction for the music to be played *freely*.

SCENE SYNOPSES

PRELUDE

(Chorus: A eucalyptus forest predawn)

The opera opens with the chorus creating a soundscape on the word eucalyptus. The sounds start in low registers of the lower voice types slowly annunciating the word. Gradually this builds in dynamic level and the higher voice types join the soundscape, reminiscent of the eucalyptus forest growing and anchoring its roots into the ground. Eventually we begin to hear the names of the individual species in a display of partly spoken improvisation.

SCENE 1

(Sprunt Sisters: Observing Holland's property)

We meet the Sprunt Sisters who introduce us to the setting and to Holland, a father who has planted many species of eucalyptus on his property. They live on the neighbouring property and provide us their observations of how Holland, and his daughter Ellen live. They inform us that Ellen is a beautiful young woman who loves reading and dreaming, and that Holland is an overprotective father who keeps his daughter shielded from the world.

SCENE 2

(Ellen: By the river)

Ellen is by the river that flows through the property and sings words that describe the landscape and its flora and fauna, evoking this unique Australian setting for the audience.

SCENE 3

(Ellen, Holland, Stationmaster, Male Chorus: Train station)

Ellen and Holland arrive at the local train station to collect goods, occupied by their own thoughts. Holland provides insights into why he is fixated with eucalyptus trees whilst also sharing his fatherly concern for his daughter's future. Ellen is focused on the constricting life in a small regional town, with its desert hues and judgmental eyes. Throughout these soliloquies the male chorus lurks, competing for her attention and sizing up her beauty as a prize to be won.

SCENE 4

(Sprunt Sisters: Observing Holland's property)

Holland has received labels to identify every species of eucalyptus on his property. He shares with Ellen a warning about men and wishes her mother was still alive so that she could protect their daughter. He shares his memories of his wife with Ellen, who never knew her mother. Ellen has come of age, and Holland's aim is for her to marry well.

SCENE 5

(Ellen, Holland, Chorus: various locations around the property)

The town is buzzing with the news that Holland has announced a competition to decide who Ellen will marry. In Holland's mind, the only way to find someone worthy of marrying his daughter, is for a suitor to name every species of eucalyptus on his property. The female chorus is shocked and tuts, whilst the male chorus relishes the opportunity and prepares themselves for battle. Ellen is dismayed by the announcement that diminishes her voice and autonomy.

SCENE 6

(Ellen, Holland, Sprunt Sisters, Chorus, Cave: Holland's property)

Holland has received labels to identify every species. Suitors begin arriving not only from the local areas, but also from across the nation and the world. The male chorus drone through the names of different species whilst the female chorus and the Sprunt Sisters narrate the action with contempt. Ellen is in despair by what she witnesses and turns her father's warning about men into a warning about fathers. As the complexity of the task becomes apparent, a long list of suitors is knocked out of the competition, but then a suitor named Cave enters the race.

SCENE SYNOPSES

SCENE 7 and 8

(Ellen, The Stranger, Cave: Early evening among the trees)

Ellen mourns the loss of sanctuary on the property now that she's the object of desire for strange men competing for her hand in marriage. As she wanders among the trees repeating her warning about fathers, she has a chance meeting with The Stranger. He can see her sadness and despair and begins to tell stories in an effort to build her self-esteem. These stories outline the challenges faced by people following their fate in the pursuit of love and freedom.

SCENE 9

(Ellen and Holland: At home)

The distance between Holland and his daughter are apparent. Both sing about finding a Golden Boy, however both have different interpretations. Ellen is fixated by The Stranger whose storytelling displays concern for her. Holland is impressed by the suitor named Cave, who in his eyes, understands the value of the competition and its outcome.

SCENE 10

(Ellen, The Stranger: By the river)

The Stranger continues to tell stories but becomes aware of Ellen's frustrations. He challenges her to be stronger and to stand-up to her father. Ellen is offended by his assertion, defending her father and contesting the value and truth of the stories.

SCENE 11

(Ellen, Sprunt Sisters, Holland: A storm on the property)

Finally, Holland becomes aware that Ellen is not her usual self and begins to reminisce of happier times. During this, the Sprunt Sisters observe and recall memories of their own father. As a storm brews, Ellen regrets losing her temper with The Stranger; and when the storm breaks, she resolutely addresses her father with her disappointment about the competition and how he has misrepresented her.

SCENE 12

(Cave, Stationmaster, Chorus: In town)

The talk of the Town is how Ellen has taken to her bed and all agree the competition is to blame. Cave announces that he is close to victory having named over 500 species of eucalyptus - the talk of the Town quickly moves to the pending nuptials.

SCENE 13

(Holland, Cave, Doctor, Ellen, The Stranger: Holland's house)

Whilst Ellen fades away in her bedroom, Holland, Cave and The Doctor Discuss how the competition may have brought on her condition. The Stranger reappears and continues to tell stories imploring Ellen to wake up.

FINALE

(Company: Holland's house)

Cave is victorious; however, The Stranger informs Ellen that he engraved all of the labels that name each species of eucalyptus on Holland's property. Therefore, he completed the challenge well before Cave, but wanted the decision to marry to be hers. Ellen and The Stranger leave the property together, leaving Holland behind with his eucalyptus trees.

CHARACTERS

In this section, the costume designs by Simone Romaniak are on display which help to reinforce the Australian context for the story. They also help to guide us as we learn more about the characters in *Eucalyptus*.

ELLEN



The beautiful daughter of Holland. She has no real friends, but loves to read and dream whilst walking amongst the beauty of the eucalyptus trees on her father's property. After her mother died giving birth, Ellen was raised by her father on the isolated property, hidden away and protected from the world.

HOLLAND



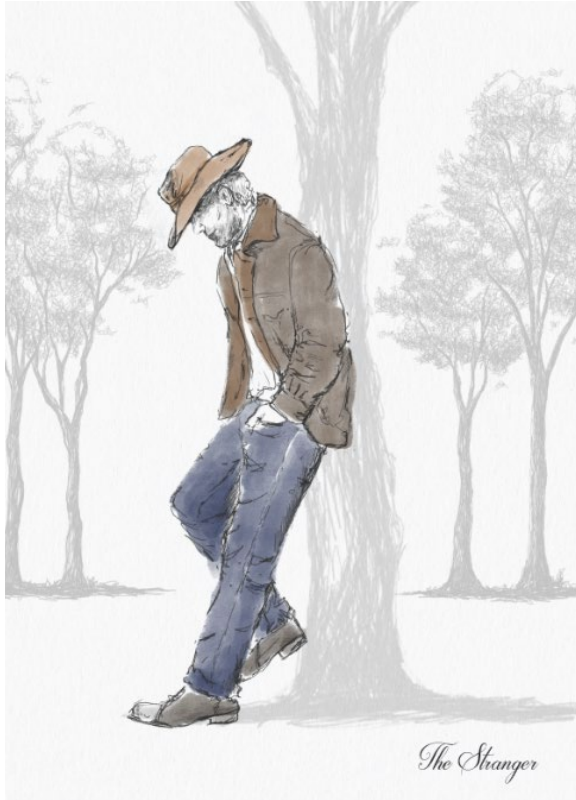
After losing his wife and Ellen's twin brother in childbirth, Holland cashes-in on a substantial insurance policy to buy an isolated property in rural New South Wales. On this property he plants every species of eucalypt he can find, creating a sanctuary for himself and his young daughter.

CAVE



The only suitor in Holland's competition to hold the knowledge which will lead to success. He is a man who does not understand love and has failed in this endeavour in the past. At the end of the opera, he acknowledges that "marriage should begin a story, not end one".

THE STRANGER



This mysterious character emerges from the eucalyptus trees. He has been observing Ellen as the competition unfolds. He is a storyteller and uses this medium to open Ellen's eyes to the possibilities of her destiny. In the end, it is revealed that he engraved the labels that name all the eucalyptus species on Holland's property.

THE SPRUNT SISTERS



Living on the neighbouring property, these sisters are in a prime position to observe and recount the lives of Holland and his daughter. They act as narrators endowing the story with wisdom from their own lived experience.

THE MUSIC

Sir Jonathan Mills AC has created an immersive acoustic experience for the audience, using conventional instruments in unconventional ways to evoke the unique characteristics of an Australian eucalyptus forest. Before coming to the show, listen to the songs in the list below to get a taste of what's to come.

<u>PRELUDE</u>	The opera opens at pre-dawn among the eucalyptus plantations on Holland's property. We start with the lower voices slowly enunciating the word eucalyptus and as day breaks the high voices join, reminiscent of the eucalyptus forest growing and anchoring its roots into the ground. The haunting and mysterious characteristics of this landscape are evoked through the creation of this soundscape.
<u>SCENE 2</u>	Ellen is by the river on the property and sings about the characteristics of the landscape. Singing in her lower register, a uniquely Australian setting is evoked.
<u>SCENE 4</u>	Ellen is curious about her mother who she never knew. Holland shares his memories of his wife creating an intimate moment between father and daughter.
<u>SCENE 11</u>	After a storm has lashed the property and its many eucalyptus trees, we encounter Ellen who is in despair about the situation she finds herself the centre of - the object of men's desires in a competition. She regrets losing her temper at The Stranger and sending him, and his stories away.
<u>FINALE</u>	The townspeople join with Ellen and The Stranger in recounting the story of Ellen and the importance of finding love in our own way. The voices soar into the upper registers as the opera concludes.

These recordings are courtesy of ABC Perth from the concert performance of Eucalyptus as part of The Perth Festival.

SUPPORT YOUR EXPERIENCE

BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

Take some time to get familiar with the operetta by reading through the synopsis and character descriptions. Don't forget to listen to the music.

Copies of the programme will be available on the night, but save some trees and access a digital copy through our [production page](#).

DON'T BE LATE

It's best to get to the theatre around 15 minutes early so you can find your seat and get settled into the atmosphere.

Being early also gives you time to go to the candy bar and the toilet.

If you've got bags or large coats that you don't want to wear in the theatre, allow time to attend the cloak room.

If you're late, you'll miss the atmospheric prelude performed by the chorus and orchestra.

DO YOU REALLY NEED YOUR PHONE?

By all means take selfies in the foyer and of course the mandatory pre-show social media post of the set or front curtain. Don't forget to tag us: #victorianopera @victorianopera #voeducation

Allow yourself, and those around you, to be immersed into the magical world of theatre by turning off your phones and notifications to your digital watches.

SHOW YOUR RESPECT

Be aisle kind and thank people who make room for you as you find your seats.

Eat before you attend the theatre, that includes those noisy lolly and chip wrappers.

Save your thoughts about the show for the foyer, no talking or calling out during the show please.

Feel free to express your feelings as the performers display their talents and be sure to clap loudly when you are impressed.



CONTENT WARNING

This production contains mature themes around gender equality and the silencing of female voices.

Parental guidance is recommended.



IN REHEARSAL
(L-R) Desiree Frahn and
Michael Petrucelli
Photo by Sarah Jackson



BEYOND THE STAGE

Beyond the Stage is a range of dynamic and immersive education workshops and performances designed to ignite curiosity about the wonder of opera and theatre.

In Semester 2, 2024, Beyond the Stage will focus on Victorian Opera's commission of an Australian opera, *Eucalyptus*, as a foundation for the workshops as we discuss with the composer, librettist, creative team and performers, their work and process. This will be paired with an exclusive opportunity for your students to view the final Stage Orchestral Rehearsal of the acclaimed musical, *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*. Combined, this offering provides your students with a comprehensive insight into the process of bringing productions to life, from their initial concept through to performance.

"I have gained a lot of insight into the world of opera and theatre making throughout watching the workshops... Overall, I feel the step-by-step instruction and advice from professionals were super helpful for all interested in theatre making, not just when it comes to opera."

– Fyonn, Year 11
Southern School of Creative Arts

"I love getting to know more about the show we watch, and also having the director and the writer give tips about creating an opera."

– Jaylah, Year 8
Southern School of Creative Arts



WORKSHOP 1

The Portrayal of Women in Opera & Musicals

In this workshop we challenge the traditional portrayal of women in opera and musical theatre. You'll hear from performers about the roles they have played and what these characters say about the construction of gender.

Workshop Contents:

- Hear from performers about the roles they have played
- Explore gender roles, the importance of consent, and giving voice to silenced perspectives
- Deep dive into two Victorian Opera productions, *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* and *Eucalyptus*
- Framed discussion topics and reflection activities

*This Workshop has been designed for Year 10 and VCE students and contains spoilers for both *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* and *Eucalyptus*.*

CONTENT WARNINGS

This workshop include references to self-harm, oppression, sexual assault and suicide. The intention is not to offend but to educate and illuminate.

ACTIVITY 1

Our first activity is designed to get you reflecting on your own opinions. You are encouraged to hold your opinions lightly and be open to hearing others' thoughts.

Step 1: Create your opinion continuum

IMAGINE that there is an invisible line across the classroom. This line is your OPINION CONTINUUM, where one side of the room symbolises STRONGLY AGREE and the opposite wall represents those who STRONGLY DISAGREE.

Step 2: Consider a statement

LISTEN to your teacher reading out a STATEMENT (found at the bottom of this document). Think about the statement carefully and consider how strongly you agree or disagree with it. Remember to hold your opinions lightly and be open to hearing others' thoughts in a respectful way.

Step 3: Take a stand

WALK to wherever your opinion fits on the invisible line of the opinion continuum. Wait for everyone to find a position and then your teacher will lead a discussion where each student is invited to share their reasons and thoughts for why they chose that particular place.

Step 4: Reflection

REFLECT on what you have heard from other people and decide if you need to adjust where you stand on your level of agreement - it is perfectly fine if you wish to hold your ground, do not feel pressured to change your opinion. Allow 30 seconds for people to relocate themselves on the continuum if they have altered their opinion.

Step 5: Consolidation

LISTEN to those people who moved as they explain what changed their mind as well as those people who did not change their mind.

STATEMENT

It is entirely positive for women to be aligned with nature in stories

ACTIVITY 2

Your task is to annotate the lyrics to Johanna's song *Green Finch and Linnet Bird*.

Step 1: Gather your resources

You will need:

- i) A hardcopy of the lyrics,
- ii) At least one colour highlighter/texta/coloured pencil,
- iii) a pencil or pen.

Step 2: Analyse the lyrics

IDENTIFY the use of the literary techniques listed below that can be found in the lyrics of *Green Finch and Linnet Bird*. Highlight the relevant word or phrase in different colours and then annotate in pencil/pen a possible impact of this technique.

LITERARY TECHNIQUES:

- Repetition,
- Imagery,
- Symbolism,
- Rhyme,
- Alliteration,
- Onomatopoeia.

Step 3: Annotate meanings

ANNOTATE possible meanings of the following lines:

- 1) 'Have you decided it's safer in cages
singing when you're told'
- 2) 'Teach me to be more
adaptive'
- 3) 'If I cannot fly...
Let me sing.'

Step 4: Present your findings

SHARE your ideas as a class, or with your teacher. Once you have shared your ideas and are happy that you are on the right track, write a short paragraph (100-200 words) using at least 4 quotes that responds to the prompt:

"If left to choose, I'd relinquish freedom of the body before freedom of the mind."

PRINTABLE WORKSHEET

WORKSHOP 1 ACTIVITY 2

Analysis of the lyrics to *Green Finch and Linnet Bird*

Green finch and linnet bird
Nightingale, blackbird
How is it you sing?
How can you jubilate sitting in cages
Never taking wing?
Outside the sky waits
Beckoning, beckoning
Just beyond the bars
How can you remain staring at the rain
Maddened by the stars?
How is it you sing anything?
How is it you sing?
Green finch and linnet bird
Nightingale, blackbird
How is it you sing?
Whence comes this melody constantly flowing?
Is it rejoicing or merely hallooing?
Are you discussing or fussing
Or simply dreaming?
Are you crowing?

Are you screaming?
Ringdove and robinet
Is it for wages
Singing to be sold?
Have you decided it's safer in cages
Singing when you're told?
My cage has many rooms
Damask and dark
Nothing there sings
Not even my lark
Larks never will, you know
When they're captive
Teach me to be
More adaptive
Ah-h-h-h-h-h-h-h
Green finch and linnet bird
Nightingale, blackbird
Teach me how to sing
If I cannot fly
Let me sing

Lyrics from:

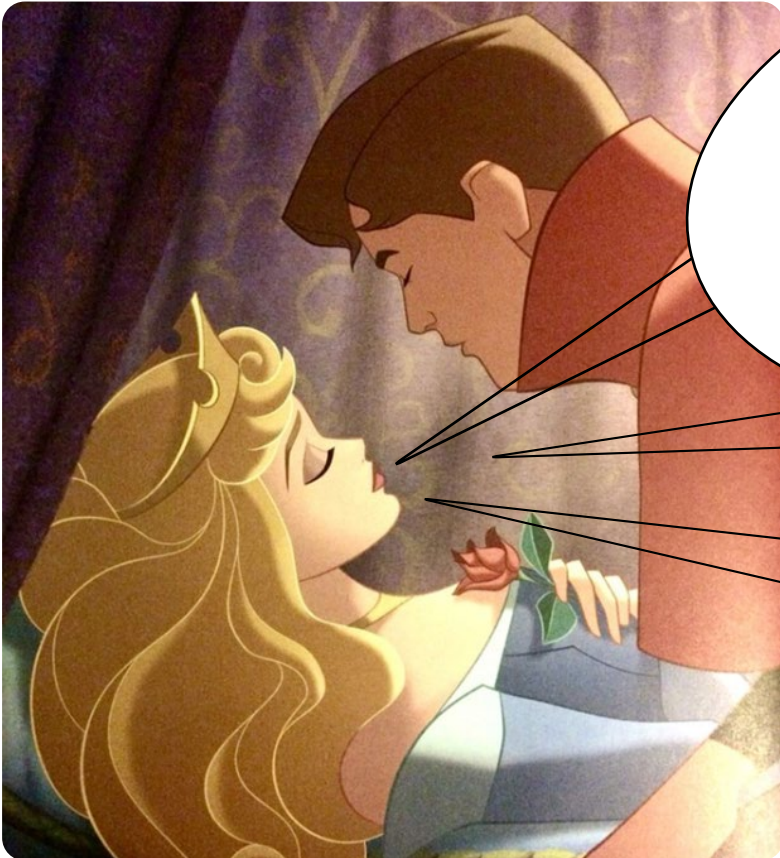
Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street - A musical thriller
Music and Lyrics by STEPHEN SONDHEIM, Book by HUGH WHEELER
Licensed exclusively by Music Theatre International (Australasia).

ACTIVITY 3

SHE'S SLEEPING? YOU BEAUTY!

Despite being traditionally framed as 'romantic', a contemporary and critically engaged audience identifies that sexual advances upon an unconscious person are not just unethical, but criminal. Through the lens of our contemporary context, let's reconsider what the traditional fairy tale Sleeping Beauty suggests about [consent](#), [gender roles](#) and the [silencing of women](#).

After visiting those hyperlinks, write three lines of dialogue for Sleeping Beauty exploring what she might think, feel and say upon being 'awoken'. Using the dialogue bubbles below, give voice to our passive female protagonist either directly before, during or after this pivotal plot point in the narrative.



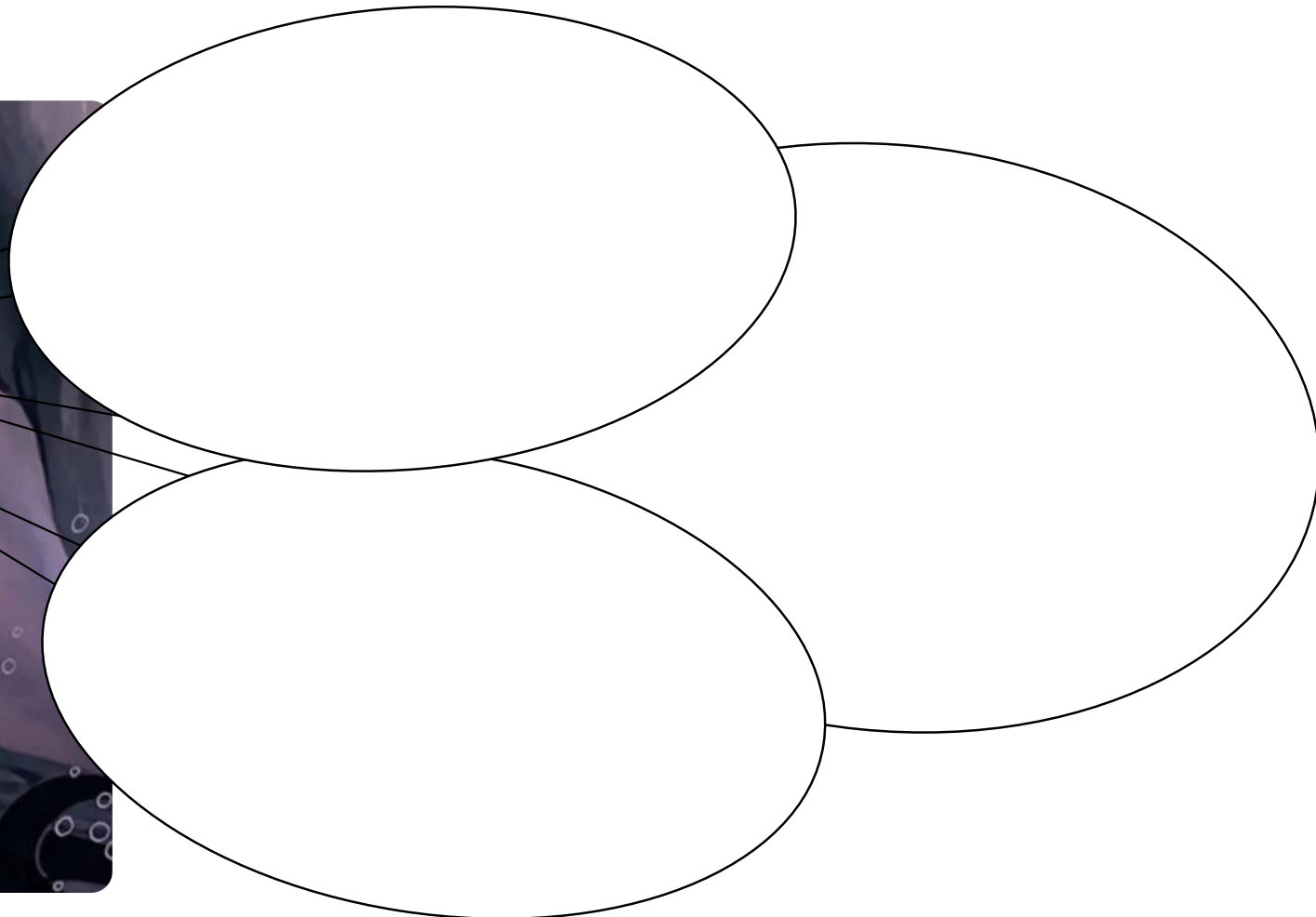
Sleeping Beauty, 1959, Wolfgang Reitherman, Clyde Geronimi, Eric Larson, Les Clark

WHICH WITCH?

Check out [Mama Lulu's hot take](#) on why Ursula could be seen as the victim of *The Little Mermaid*, and then research her origin story. (not Disney). What do you think Ursula the Cecaelian Sea Witch would say about any or all of the following:

– That cruelty to other women does not compensate for cruelty at the hands of men

- What does the stereotype of 'goodness' that is most often associated with 'beauty', and 'evil' being synonymous with 'ugly', teaches young people?
- How much Eric looks like a toothpaste
- And that perhaps her attempt at uniting the voices of fellow women has been callously misunderstood



The Little Mermaid, 1989, John Musker, Howard Ashman

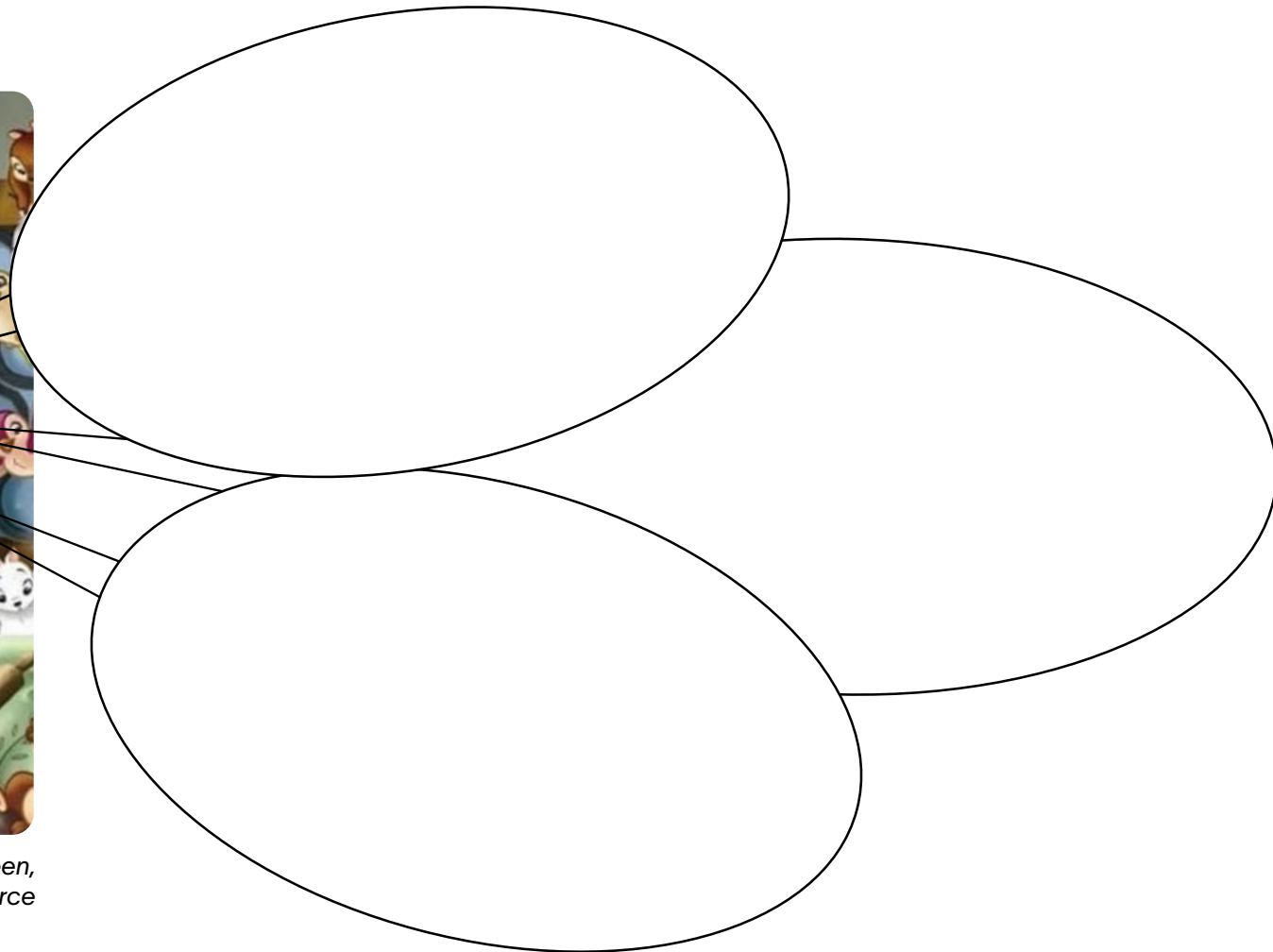
WHISTLE WHILST YOU WONDER WHERE YOUR LIFE WENT WRONG...

Originally released in 1938, Snow White provided women who had enjoyed the opportunity to work and earn independent income during World War 1 with a timely reminder of their rightful place: the kitchen, and their rightful duty: supporting others. Using these three

speech bubbles, give voice to an overworked and under-appreciated modern-day Snow White, whose best bet for any support comes in the form of a litany of woodland creatures.



Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, 1937, David Hand, Ben Sharpsteen, Wilfred Jackson, Larry Morey, William Cottrell, Perce Pearce



WHO'S NOT HELPING HERE..?

(There are 7 right answers.)

Despite giving the old 'Imagining that the broom is someone that you love' a goodly nudge, Snow White might just feel a little lonely and taken for granted when left to make sense of this mayhem. Instead of whistling whilst she works, let's give voice to her inner thoughts about:

- The pressure upon women to achieve the perfect 'work-life balance'
- Disparity between the distribution of housework based on gender
- The seemingly irrepressible gender pay gap which still exists 86 years after this cartoon was first released

...quickly, before the guys get home!



Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, 1937, David Hand, Ben Sharpsteen, Wilfred Jackson, Larry Morey, William Cottrell, Perce Pearce

WORKSHOP 2

Adapting Literature for the Opera Mainstage

Hear from Librettist Meredith Oakes about how she adapted Murray Bail's novel, *Eucalyptus* for the opera mainstage. Also hear from Antoinette Halloran about how she has retold classic female roles.

Workshop Contents:

- Understanding the difference between adaption and re-telling
- Critical thinking focused on storytelling conventions
- Creative writing through adaptation exercises

This Workshop has been designed for Year 10 and VCE students and contains spoilers for both Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street and Eucalyptus.

ACTIVITY 2

Step 1: Defining the difference

RESEARCH what is the difference between an adaptation and a retelling

WRITE out definitions for each in your own words below:

Adaptation is...	Retelling is...
Is there a difference between these terms? Explain your answer in 1 or 2 sentences	
Reflect on how these terms can be somewhat interchangeable.	

Step 2: Identifying examples

CONSIDER some adaptations that you have encountered. They might be books, films, plays, musicals or even a pop song. (HINT: all of the 'classic' Disney movies are adaptations of old fairy tales)

LIST as many adaptations you have encountered.

Set a timer for 2 minutes...and GO!

This list will be used in the final activity so hang on to it.

ACTIVITY 2

Due to the time difference between the United Kingdom and Australia, educator Lisa Grigg conducted an interview with librettist Meredith Oakes via email to discover the process she follows when writing for the opera mainstage and how she approaches adaptation.

Part 1: READ through Meredith's responses to Questions 1 and 2 then follow the instructions below.

QUESTION 1

LISA: What was the extent of the collaboration between you and author Murray Bail?

MEREDITH: Murray and I met and became friends quite a long time after Jonathan and I had started work. I had a permanent sense of a kind of collaboration with Murray because I was living with his very subtle and engaging novel. But my main objective was to find the best way the novel could become Jonathan's opera. This is rather different from doing full justice to the original. The writer has already done everything. A composer reads and responds and starts imagining an opera, but the opera will be a free-standing musical creation. It will live or die on its own terms, and those terms are musical and theatrical. A librettist is looking for what might be fruitful for the composer and is not trying to make a faithful "translation". That's why it's rare for librettists to collaborate with the writers of the texts they are adapting. With luck, the composer and the librettist will be able to hit on essential qualities in the writer's work that fired the composer's imagination in the first place.

QUESTION 2

LISA: Could you elaborate on the collaboration process between you and composer Jonathan Mills?

MEREDITH: Jonathan contacted me when he knew he wanted to base an opera on "Eucalyptus". I read it and saw it could be done. We talked quite a lot about his feelings for things the novel expresses, and also about one or two things he definitely wanted to do: to give a musical presence to the trees, for instance. I went away and sketched the first two scenes, I think it was, and sent them to him. He wrote some of the music for them, and we met and he played (and sang!) the music through. This is something wonderful, when you hear the first music and start to see how it will grow and how it might shape the next steps you take in writing the libretto. And that's how it went on, with me writing a bit, then Jonathan deciding what he could and couldn't use, and playing me more music. It was a slow process. He let me make most of the structural decisions, with some reshuffles. We continued talking about the novel's qualities, and atmospheres, that were important to him and to me. If he asked for specific changes, it was mainly when he wanted words that would fit with a particular musical phrase.

RECONSTRUCT the process of collaboration using dot points, a timeline, OR a Venn Diagram. Your aim is to try to visually capture the relationship between the 3 creatives and the three forms - novel / author (Murray Bail), librettist / author (Meredith Oakes), musical score / composer (Jonathan Mills)

In your own words, write a few sentences explaining why Oakes had to be more faithful to the music than the novel.

Part 2: READ through Meredith's responses to Questions 3 to 6 then follow the instructions below.

CONSIDER what is said below about active voices and silences. Highlight the parts of Oakes' answers that suggest reasons why women and men are sometimes quiet. Use 2 different colours.

MAKE ANNOTATIONS (notes in the margins) alongside your highlighted sections. Your annotations might include some additional/contradictory thoughts of your own, reference to other stories where it is also seen, questions/ideas that you would like to research further.

QUESTION 3

LISA: I enjoyed that the Ellen in the libretto has a more active voice than Bail's Ellen. Can you tell me what inspired that?

MEREDITH: Giving Ellen a more active voice was partly practical: she is the pivot of the story, so we need to hear her. Without a musical presence, how could she be central to a musical work? For an operatic character, musical presence means singing. So, I made some things for her to sing, about what she was thinking and feeling. Maybe I bought into this particularly because of being female myself, and of a certain vintage. Ellen is inclined just to let things happen to her,

which is actually common in young people, even though it has often been attributed to (and used to be specifically encouraged in) women. Perhaps the mistake our culture has made is to assume that women have these tendencies all to themselves. As far as I can see, men have them too. In the story, this passive aspect is part of the young Ellen: these are real recognisable feelings and why should there not be words for them? The book actually shows us Ellen "growing into herself" but in a quiet way. It needed to be a bit louder if it was to come across on the stage.

QUESTION 4

LISA: The Sprunt Sisters in your libretto are wonderful vehicles for the narrative flow. What was it about these characters that you wanted the audience to connect with?

MEREDITH: I'm afraid I wasn't thinking about what the audience would connect with. I just liked the Sprunts (although it's also true that gossips are great for narrative). Theirs is a kind of Australian gossiping style which is quite laid-back, even kindly, despite being as nosy, and as inclined to Schadenfreude,

as gossip anywhere. I enjoy the accepting, quite wise, almost benevolent tone of gossip like that. The Sprunts are benign spirits who have brought the lovers together. Also, I was glad they could be there to voice one of the more delicate and less "narrative" parts of the novel's atmosphere: the great Australian silence between men and women – something that was very much part of my childhood (and of the era the novel is set in), though maybe things have changed by now.

QUESTION 5

LISA: Could you possibly expand on that idea, of the great Australian silence between men and women? Particularly situating it within the era of the novel?

MEREDITH: The feeling of silence between men and women was strong when I was young, and probably even stronger in the 1930s or 40s where I imagine the story is set (though I haven't asked Murray about this). In the 50s and 60s, people from other countries used to joke about the way men and women at Australian parties used to congregate at opposite ends of the room. They had different styles of speaking, too: the men quite taciturn and understated, with short sentences; the women fluent and chattery. Some of this might have been an echo of a pioneering past with its relative separation of tasks and concerns: the men hacking, burning, building and digging, the women cooking, sewing and caring for children. But it must

also have derived from old-world memories that perhaps got expanded and amplified in a cut-off, new, distant continent. There is certainly one European tradition that places strong, silent, proud men above emotional, unworldly, voluble women who are perhaps worth protecting but not on any account emulating or empathising with, let alone being acknowledged as equals. A man displaying "feminine" characteristics such as wearing his heart on his sleeve or having a strong wife used to risk losing status. These were the values back then. And part of being a man was that you refrained from baring your soul to women, and also refrained from showing too much affection. Put all this together and you can understand how communication between the sexes was not great, but in a quiet way. It needed to be a bit louder if it was to come across on the stage.

QUESTION 6

LISA: Could you share a little, please, about how you decided which parts of the narrative to allocate to the male chorus and which parts to the female chorus?

MEREDITH: This was straightforward, because the story is a courtship story, with males courting and a female being courted. So all the courting stuff is sung by men who are competing with each other. The women,

on the other hand, are not competing with each other, or indeed with Ellen. They share an understanding of what being courted is about, and they take Ellen's side and, in the circumstances, they feel sorry for her. They sing in identification with her. Men and women sometimes come together where there is gossip to be enjoyed or a little philosophical reflection to be done.

Part 3: READ through Meredith's responses to Questions 7, then follow the instructions below.

QUESTION 7

LISA: Which elements of the fairytale genre did you decide to magnify and why?

MEREDITH: The novel definitely is a fairy-tale for instance, with the Sprunts' role as fairy godmothers. The idea of a public contest to win a bride is a classic fairytale idea. I didn't really need to magnify this side of the story; it's all there. In this fairytale, the nature of the contest – the person who is the best at putting names to things being outdone by the person who never directly names anything – also happens to reflect the duality in all our brains between the left half that specialises in word-and-theory-making, and the right half that encompasses our whole field of perception. There is a wonderful book on this subject, *The Master and his Emissary*, by Iain McGilchrist, exploring the way the naming-things part of us is increasingly keen to behave as if it were the whole of us, which it is not. Fairytales have quite a habit of touching on deep realities.

RESEARCH to find fairytales, fables and myths where there is a contest and the prize is a woman. See how many you can find in 2 minutes.

What might be the 'deep reality' that this touches upon?

ACTIVITY 3

For your final activity in this workshop, it's time for YOU to be creative. Your mission is to reimagine an adaptation of a well-known classic novel, film, musical, or play. You are to reimagine it through a modern lens, updating the values of the original story to reflect contemporary societal values. Your piece will be more powerful if you choose to reflect values that you are passionate about. Include diversity in the voices of characters and consider different points of view. This activity aims to engage you in creative thinking, empathy, and critical analysis while fostering an appreciation for the evolution of storytelling and societal values.

Step 1: You will need

- Paper and pen or digital writing platform
- List of classic novels, films, musicals, or plays (see Activity 1)

Step 2: Choose your 'original' story

It's really important that you select a text that interests you (instead of one of your favourites) and that you believe can be adapted to reflect modern values. It is best to select a story that you don't really like because it's much easier to change those than to alter something you love or feel nostalgic about.

Step 3: The reimagining process

Begin by deciding what you want to change about the values conveyed by the original. Then, start reimagining the selected classic work by changing one or more of the following:

- Update the setting to a modern-day context
- Modify characters' identity, personality and actions to align with modern values
- Consider diversifying characters' backgrounds and viewpoints (NOTE: be careful to do this in a respectful and careful way and only where it adds to the narrative. Consider whether you will need to ask for cultural permissions.)
- Write a brief outline or synopsis of your adapted version

Step 4: Reflection and future work

1. Reflect on the changes you made and the reasons behind your choices
2. Articulate what your intention is – what do you want your audience to go away thinking, feeling, doing after digesting your text?
3. It's up to you – will you keep writing now?

As you work remember...

- The importance of respecting the original work while incorporating contemporary values.
- You need to think critically about societal issues and how they can be addressed through storytelling.

WORKSHOP 3

Creating Time and Place through Composition

Hear from composer Sir Jonathan Mills AC about his creative process and receive some helpful tips on how to start composing, as we explore how to create a sense of time and place with soundscapes.

Workshop Contents:

- Introduction to the composer of *Eucalyptus*, Sir Jonathan Mills AC
- Defining Soundscape, Time and Place
- Exploring instrumentation and scoring
- Create your own soundscape

This Workshop has been designed for Year 10 and VCE students and contains spoilers for both Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street and Eucalyptus.

LEARNING ACTIVITY: CREATING A SOUNDSCAPE

STAGE 1

Step 1: Choosing the story to tell

CHOOSE a story that features the natural environment. We gave you some examples in the workshop but think about the novels, poetry or plays you are reading at school. Remember that the natural environment should feature in the story almost as a passive character as this is what you will be turning into a soundscape. List different stories that you could choose from below:

-
-
-
-
-

Now select one story, poem, play or film from the list by using a highlighter or coloured pencil, where the natural environment plays a prominent role in defining the action.

STEP 2: Define the characteristics

THINK about what the defining characteristics of the natural environment are in the story you have chosen? Consider the following:

- The actions – does it stay still or does it move? If it does move, how?
- Is the light strong or subtle?
- Is there a smell?
- What emotions does the natural feature evoke?

STEP 3: Words

SELECT words to use as an anchor for your soundscape, based on how you defined the characteristics of the natural environment. The choice of words is entirely up to you and needs to make it obvious to a first-time listener what the natural environment is. Remember you can only use a maximum of three words.

What words will you use in your soundscape?

-
-
-

STAGE 2

Using the words and defining features of the natural environment from the story you choose in STAGE 1 of this learning activity, it's now time to create the soundscape. Remember you are creating an immersive sound experience for an audience to use their imagination to visualise the time and place.

Step 1: Choosing Instruments

THINK about how the different voice types can be used to not only create mood but a sense of time and place. Consider the following:

- What time of day is it?

You might use higher voices to mimic the birdsong at dawn or combine all of the voices slowly for sunrise and the reverse for sunset.

- What is the activity level?

Are there lots of things happening to use all voice types or is the action limited so that you will only use one or two?

Beyond the use of voice, do you want or need other instruments to help create the acoustic atmosphere? Sometimes a pedal note on a keyboard or guitar can help the voices stay in pitch whilst also adding to the atmosphere.

REMEMBER that in opera the vocal line needs to be the prominent line in the texture, so choose sounds to compliment, not complicate.

Step 2: Create the patterns and layer up

DETERMINE what your intended outcome is and use the natural contour of the words you have chosen, to create the sense of time and place. Think about how the words you have chosen can be manipulated to give a sense of time and place:

- If you are after a calming moment, the note values will be long and played at a slow to medium tempo
- If you are after turmoil or excitement, you might use short note values played fast against each other

EXPERIMENT with the words until you find patterns that work with your intended outcome.

Step 3: How will you write it down

VIEW the examples given in the workshop about how to write down your ideas so that other people can perform your soundscape. If your use of traditional notation is strong and you have definite ideas about how your soundscape should be performed, use this method. If you want a more improvised feel try graphic notation, but remember this method will result in a different performance each time as it is open to interpretation.

Remember you are creating a soundscape using words in different ways, to create a sense of time and place in your chosen natural environment. The intended outcome is for a first time listener to use your soundscape and their own imagination to visual the natural environment from the story you chose.

STAGE 3

It's now time to consolidate your work on the learning activity by reviewing what you have achieved in Stage 1 and 2. If you are happy with what you have created, it's time for stage 3. If you are not entirely happy, keep experimenting with different pitches, rhythms or textures.

Step 1: Recording

USE a sound recording app to record you performing your soundscape. There should be no video, this is a soundscape, and the outcome is for the listener to use their imagination to create the visuals in their mind. You'll have multiple lines of voice so record each line and if you have instruments, record these as well. GarageBand is a great app to get the layers lined up and playing together.

Step 2: Share your work

Once you have finalised your recording, share your work with your class, or with the assistance of your teacher, why not create an installation where people can walk through and experience the soundscapes en masse!

We would also love to hear your work, so we invite you to send your completed work through to the Education Team at Victorian Opera by emailing education@victorianopera.com.au

WORKSHOP 4

From Page to Stage

Explore how direction and design create meaning for the audience as we hear from Director Michael Gow and Designer Simone Romaniuk. We will also learn from several performers how they record movement and blocking so they can perform confidently and consistently.

Workshop Contents:

- Learn about the important relationship between a Director and a Designer
- Explore the creative process of a designer
- Create a blocking map and mood board

This Workshop has been designed for Year 10 and VCE students and contains spoilers for both Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street and Eucalyptus.

ACTIVITY 1: EXPLORE AND APPLY

BLOCKING: The instructions a director gives performers for how and where they are to move in the performance space.

Using the advice and examples given in Workshop 4, play the role of director and mark-up the script below with a blocking map. Use the blank page to draw-up an aerial view of the performance space - you can use the design by Simone Romaniuk or create your own design. Use different symbols and colours for the different performers to communicate their movement in the performance space.



SCENE 3

*Ellen and Holland collecting trees from the local train station
(Ellen, Holland, Stationmaster, Male Chorus)*

Male Chorus:

Ready for you, here like a shot
Coming for you ready or not
No time at all, word gets around
When Holland's truck rolls into town.
Just her and me, that would be different
I think she likes me, just she can't say.
If she'd look at me, If she just knew;

Station Master:

All these blokes,
what can you do?

Holland:

All these blokes,
We can't go anywhere
Some kind of circus, that's what we are to them.
She's the most beautiful girl for miles around
That's what they see.
Why do they think they're good enough?
How could they be?

ACTIVITY 2: EXPLORE AND APPLY

After watching Workshop 4, take some time to review the design below from *Eucalyptus* by Simone Romaniuk - the opening sequence of the opera. Use the space around the image to annotate what the intended meanings Simone Romaniuk is trying to portray to the audience.



CURRICULUM LINKS

VICTORIAN CURRICULUM: DRAMA - LEVELS 9 AND 10 https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/the-arts/drama/introduction/scope-and-sequence	
RESPOND AND INTERPRET	
Structure drama to engage an audience through manipulation of dramatic action, forms and performance styles and by using design elements.	WORKSHOP 4
Analyse a range of drama from contemporary and past times, including the drama of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to explore differing viewpoints and develop understanding of drama practice across local, national and international contexts.	WORKSHOP 1 Learning Activity: 1, 2 and 3 WORKSHOP 2 Learning Activity 1, 2, and 3
Perform devised and scripted drama making deliberate artistic choices and shaping design elements to unify dramatic meaning for an audience.	WORKSHOP 1 Learning Activity: 1, 2 and 3 WORKSHOP 4
VICTORIAN CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION: THEATRE STUDIES - UNIT 1 https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/theatrestudies/Pages/Index.aspx	
AREA OF STUDY 3: ANALYSING AND EVALUATING A MODERN THEATRE PRODUCTION	
In this area of study students focus on analysis and evaluation of a professional theatre production of a script. They study the nature of theatre production analysis and evaluation, including the application of acting, direction and design and their effect on an audience. Students study the use of theatre technologies and elements of theatre composition in professional theatre performance. Where possible, for this area of study students should analyse a modern play in performance.	WORKSHOP 1 Activity 2 WORKSHOP 2 Activity 2 WORKSHOP 4 Activity 1 and 2 VIEWING PERFORMANCE

CURRICULUM LINKS

VICTORIAN CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION: THEATRE STUDIES - UNIT 1 & 2		www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/theatrestudies/Pages/Index.aspx
AREA OF STUDY 4: ANALYSING AN AUSTRALIAN DRAMA PERFORMANCE		
In this area of study students observe and analyse a performance by professional drama performers. Drama performances by students enrolled at a school may not be analysed for this outcome. Attending and analysing a performance by professional drama performers provides opportunities for students to make connections with their own work. They build their experience of how dramatic elements, conventions, performance styles, production areas, and expressive and performance skills can be manipulated to communicate meaning in performance. Students learn about ways of establishing, sustaining and manipulating actor–audience relationships and use appropriate drama terminology to explain, analyse and evaluate the performance.	WORKSHOP 4 Activity1 and 2	VIEWING PERFORMANCE

VICTORIAN CURRICULUM: ENGLISH		https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/english/english/curriculum/f-10#level=10
READING AND VIEWING - LEVEL 10		
Understand that people’s evaluations of texts are influenced by their value systems, the context, and the purpose and mode of communication.	Workshops 1 and 2	
LITERATURE - LEVEL 10		
Analyse and explain how text structures, language features and visual features of texts and the context in which texts are experienced may influence audience response.	Workshops 1 and 2	

CURRICULUM LINKS

EXAMINING LITERATURE - LEVEL 10	
Analyse and evaluate text structures and language features of literary texts and make relevant thematic and intertextual connections with other texts.	Workshop 1 Learning Activity 1, 2 and 3
Identify, explain and discuss how narrative viewpoint, structure, characterisation and devices including analogy and satire shape different interpretations and responses to a text.	Workshop 2 Learning Activity 3
LITERACY - LEVEL 10	
Analyse and evaluate how people, cultures, places, events, objects and concepts are represented in texts, including media texts, through language, structural and/or visual choices.	Workshop 1 and 2
Identify and analyse implicit or explicit values, beliefs and assumptions in texts and how these are influenced by purposes and likely audiences.	Workshop 1 and 2

CURRICULUM LINKS

VICTORIAN CURRICULUM: MUSIC - LEVELS 9 AND 10		victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/the-arts/drama/introduction/scope-and-sequence
EXPLORE AND EXPRESS IDEAS		
Improvise and arrange music, using aural awareness and technical skills to manipulate the elements of music to explore options for interpretation and developing music ideas.	WORKSHOP 3 Learning activity: Stage 1	
Manipulate combinations of the elements of music in a range of styles, using technology and notation to communicate music ideas and intentions.	WORKSHOP 3 Learning activity: Stage 1	
MUSIC PRACTICES		
Plan, develop, and notate compositions with an understanding of style and convention.	WORKSHOP 3 Learning activity: Stage 1 and 2	
PRESENT AND PERFORM		
Perform music applying techniques and expression to interpret the composer's use of the elements of music and compositional devices.	WORKSHOP 3 Learning activity: Stage 3	

CURRICULUM LINKS

VICTORIAN CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION: MUSIC - UNIT 1		www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/music-performance/Pages/unit1-2.aspx
OUTCOME 2: CREATING		
On completion of this unit the student should be able to create short music works/responses that demonstrate their understanding of different approaches to musical organisation, and reflect on the creative process.	WORKSHOP 3 Learning activity: Stage 1 to 3	
VICTORIAN CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION: MUSIC - UNIT 2		www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/music-performance/Pages/unit1-2.aspx
OUTCOME 2: CREATING		
On completion of this unit students should be able to create short music works/responses that exhibit their understanding of different approaches to musical effects and reflect on the creative process.	WORKSHOP 3 Learning activity: Stage 1 to 3	
VICTORIAN CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION: MUSIC COMPOSITION - UNIT 3		www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/music-performance/Pages/unit1-2.aspx
CREATING: OUTCOME 1		
On completion of this unit the student should be able to develop creative responses to works studied and document the creative process.	WORKSHOP 3 Learning activity: Stage 1 to 3	

CURRICULUM LINKS

VICTORIAN CURRICULUM: CAPABILITIES - LEVELS 9 AND 10 victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/personal-and-social-capability/introduction/scope-and-sequence	
ETHICAL CAPABILITY: UNDERSTANDING CONCEPTS	
Investigate the connections and distinctions between and the relative value of concepts including fairness and equality, and respect and tolerance	WORKSHOP 1 and 2
INTERCULTURAL CAPABILITY: CULTURAL PRACTICES	
Analyse the ways in which intercultural relationships and experiences have contributed to the development of attitudes, beliefs and behaviours, and how they are manifested in various contexts	WORKSHOP 1 and 2
PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITY: SOCIAL AWARENESS AND MANAGEMENT (RELATIONSHIPS AND DIVERSITY)	
Analyse how divergent values and beliefs contribute to different perspectives on social issues	WORKSHOP 1 and 2
Investigate personal, social and cultural factors that influence the ability to experience positive and respectful relationships and explore the rights and responsibilities of individuals in relationships	WORKSHOP 1 and 2



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