

REGIONAL ARTS VICTORIA

EDUCATION & FAMILIES



BOY OUT OF THE COUNTRY
Written by Felix Nobis
A Larrikin Ensemble Theatre Production

On Tour
11 May–18 June
2016

Ideal for VCE Playlist
Theatre Studies Unit 3

The 2016 Education and Families Program is
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CREATIVE VICTORIA



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ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

This resource has been created to provide teachers and students with some preliminary ideas as to how to extend their experience of *Boy out of the Country* beyond the stage and into the classroom. The activities are designed to be open-ended and multi-ability. They may need differentiation for your specific cohort.

The performances and workshops included in the Education & Families program are designed to offer students engaging performing arts experiences with strong links to the Victorian Curriculum and to VEYLDF, and VCE subjects where appropriate. Each Education & Families performance varies in its content and as a result the scope for integration across the curriculum varies. Please feel free to contact the Education and Families team on [\(03\) 9644 1808](tel:0396441808) or at education@rav.net.au if you have any questions about this resource, its content or its implementation within your classroom.

ABOUT REGIONAL ARTS VICTORIA

Regional Arts Victoria inspires art across the state. Through creative facilitation, touring, education, specialised resources, artistic projects and advocacy, we develop and sustain creative communities and artistic practice all over Victoria.

Regional Arts Victoria is an independent, not-for-profit, membership-based organisation working in long-term partnerships with every level of government, fostering contemporary and innovative regional cultural practice across five decades. We advise and impact on decision-making across multiple portfolios and levels of government.

Regional Arts Victoria is the peak body for regional artists and arts organisations, and the leading organisation for regional creative practice in Victoria.

Our artistic program

Regional Arts Victoria inspires creative communities, creative places and creative catalysts.

CREATIVE COMMUNITIES	CREATIVE PLACES	CREATIVE CATALYSTS
Regional Arts Victoria stimulates and connects our state's communities of practice.	Regional Arts Victoria champions the places where art is made, experienced and discussed.	Regional Arts Victoria fosters current and next generation creative capacity and practice.
<p>Members and membership services: fostering active and engaged artists and arts organisations across the state; supporting arts professionalism through specialised resources and professional insurance Resources, workshops and events program of forums and activities through our Regional Cultural Partnerships Program Networks: hosting specialised state-wide and national networks (including Regional Cultural Network, Festivals Network, Arts Teachers); participating actively in regional development networks; accessing and developing New Networks at membership and organisational level Strategic partnerships with governments, universities, tourism, planning and development bodies as well as arts and cultural organisations</p>	<p>Performing Arts Touring: opportunities, tools and support for regional and remote touring across Victoria and Australia Education & Families: performances, workshops and projects in schools, accompanied by AusVELS aligned teacher resources State-wide place-making projects including – Home is where the hall is: November's month-long celebration of arts events in regional community halls Eco-Cubby: promoting the principles of sustainable design and architecture in schools, hands-on Small Town Transformations: innovative projects of significant local and regional impact, combined with state-wide thought leadership on "How can art transform your town?"</p>	<p>Advocacy and leadership: leading state-wide arts conversations; creating exposure for regional artists; providing strategic advice Creative Leadership Program: annual program for emerging arts and thought leaders Creative Arts Facilitators: our regional staff team work directly with artists and communities, in close partnership with local and federal government Access and diversity including Indigenous engagement and cultural exchange Grants programs: facilitating and supporting high quality applications to quick response, presentation and project grants, administered on behalf of state and federal government</p>

CURRICULUM LINKS – VICTORIAN CURRICULUM VCE DRAMA

VCE Theatre Studies Unit 3	Key Knowledge and Key Skills
Unit 1: Dramatic Story Telling	Creating, sustaining and developing a role/character How experiences and stories can be given form and meaning Ways stimulus material can be researched, given meaning and shaped into a performance Naturalistic and non-naturalistic performance styles Dramatic elements, theatrical conventions Playmaking techniques Analysing devised performance
Unit 2: Non-naturalistic Australian Drama	Using Australia as inspiration Playmaking techniques Non-naturalistic performance styles Processes for documenting playmaking How story is given form and meaning Manipulate dramatic elements Incorporate stagecraft Analysing a devised performance
Unit 3: Devised Non-naturalistic Ensemble Performance	Analysing non-naturalistic performance Exploring the ways in which non-naturalistic performance styles and conventions are used in performance The ways in which characters are represented The ways in which expressive skills are used The ways in which dramatic elements, conventions and stagecraft are manipulated

Please note: VCE Theatre Studies – UNIT 3

Drama Victoria have devised comprehensive notes specifically for VCE Theatre Studies available online or contact them directly: www.dramavictoria.vic.edu.au

INTRODUCTION: BOY OUT OF THE COUNTRY

Touching, funny, raw, bittersweet, the play is at once uniquely Australian and thematically universal
Australian Book review

There's more to land than real-estate. There's more to family than DNA! Jane Clifton leads a stellar cast to tell a story about family, love, loyalty and property prices in regional Australia.

Boy out of the Country tells an Australian story that is timeless, but also as immediate as the stories we read in our daily papers: stories about family disputes, love, real estate; stories about urban sprawl, lost traditions, and people making a quick buck. The play asks how we as a society can balance the values of tradition with the potential of development. It asks questions about what gets lost between the cracks when farmland turns to housing estate: the loss of traditions, a sense of community ... the elderly. It is also a play about language, embracing the Australian idiom and mining the Australian vernacular for all its humour, majesty and poetry. Using naturalistic and non-naturalistic performance styles, the play features use of idiom, verse, storytelling and direct address. The set design is minimalist and live music serves as a 'character'. The lighting design features an image of dead trees to symbolise the destruction of the rural landscape and mirror the lives of the characters. Tension is inherent in the plot and this enhances interpersonal tension between the brothers as the key protagonists.

VICTORIAN TOUR DATES:

11th May 2016	Burrinja, Upwey
12th May 2016	Potato Shed, Drysdale
13th May 2016	Potato Shed Drysdale
14th May 2016	Hawthorn Arts Centre, Hawthorn

15th May 2016	Dunolly Town Hall, Dunolly,
17th May 2016	Ararat Performing Arts Centre, Ararat
18th May 2016	Colac Otway Performing Arts & Cultural, Colac
19th May 2016	Portland Arts Centre, Portland
20th May 2016	Hamilton Performing Arts Centre, Hamilton
21st May 2016	Horsham Town Hall, Horsham
24th May 2016	Kyneton Town Hall, Kyneton
25th May 2016	Wyndham Cultural Centre, Werribee
26th May 2016	Esso BHP Billiton Wellington Entertainment, Sale
27th May 2016	Forge Theatre and Arts Hub, Bairnsdale
28th May 2016	Forge Theatre and Arts Hub, Bairnsdale
31st May 2016	Mansfield Performing Arts Centre, Mansfield
7th Jun 2016	Kingston Arts Centre, Moorabbin
8th Jun 2016	Wangaratta Performing Arts Centre, Wangaratta
9th Jun 2016	Benalla Performing Arts and Convention Centre, Benalla
10th Jun 2016	The Memo, Healesville
14th Jun 2016	Clocktower Centre, Moonee Ponds
15th Jun 2016	Frankston Arts Centre, Frankston
16th Jun 2016	Frankston Arts Centre, Frankston
17th Jun 2016	Whitehorse Centre, Nunawading
18th Jun 2016	Whitehorse Centre, Nunawading

For further information go to our website:

Please contact individual venues for booking enquiries.

<http://www.rav.net.au/whats-on/performing-arts-touring/boy-out-of-the-country-by-larrikin-ensemble-theatre> Contact Regional Arts Victoria for details of post-show forums.

* Advice to schools some students may find some of the language in this play confronting.

AUTHOR'S NOTES: FELIX NOBIS

In many ways the play brings together three fields that have influenced my entire life: theatre, poetry and stories of Australian family and Australian life. The play operates in a kind of nexus of these influences. Theatre, poetry and a sense of Australianness sit in me deeply and probably influence my every artistic output. In this play, I feel they have come together cohesively and constructively, bringing out new things in each other.

Theatre has been influential in my life since I was 15 or 16. Like many young people I went to weekend drama classes. Mine were at the Q Theatre in Penrith, the western suburbs of Sydney. The theatre had a tiny little stage and I must have seen a hundred shows there. I loved how that same tiny space could become completely different places again and again and again. In *BOOTC* (both in the writing and directing) I was keen to have places flow in and out of each other without big set changes or even blackouts. I wanted the scenes to flow into each other and so the 'vignette' scenes (in which the boys tell stories of their childhood, or the women reflect on particular moments of their lives played out amidst a male environment) are designed to prevent the action becoming too naturalistic and to prevent the cast and the audience from getting too comfortable in a certain kind of 'theatrical storytelling'. It is a Brechtian device in so far as that it draws attention to its own theatrical artifice and invites the actors almost 'sing' these poetic little interludes (the interludes have more precise metrical demands placed on them). I've worked a lot on TV and also some film but I am always drawn to the theatrical form (as an actor and as a writer) because there are fewer structural limitations. It is counter-intuitive in some ways in so far as that films can recreate a sunset or a car accident or a dinner in a way that is more realistic than they will ever be on stage, but in the theatre we can just so effortlessly create our own rules: if the rules are well established, the audience will follow. In *BOOTC*, the rules are that the characters speak in a kind of heightened verse dialogue that almost sounds naturalistic but is littered with rhymes and rhythms which are used in different ways (see below); as well as the verse, the rules allow some characters to speak to themselves (mostly Hunter and Walker), to speak directly to the audience; the rules also allow for the location to be established simply with the placement of a chair or

the carrying of a prop. The audience has to do some of the work here, figuring out where the characters are or who they are talking to. When audiences are figuring things out they are engaged in the play. That's one of the things I love about theatre!

Poetry has been part of my life since I was a kid and heard Banjo Patterson's Clancy of the Overflow recited at a scout camp. I am deeply interested with rhythms of speech and how those rhythms can be toyed with and heightened to communicate a sense of situation and character. I am also drawn to poetry that tells a story: narrative verse. I'm not so big on verse that 'stands still' and looks around it and spends a lot of words explaining a sunset or an emotion. I like poetry that moves, and that uses the verse as an engine for that movement. I was very influenced by the Anglo-Saxon poem Beowulf (I wrote a translation of that poem and spent several years touring the translation around the world as a one-person who) because I was attracted the way the poetry tells this huge epic story. It does occasionally 'stand still' and describe something esoteric, but when it picks up again it just takes you with it. I like ending up somewhere different to where I started when I read a poem, not only emotionally, but narratively (maybe that's why I'm more drawn to Tennyson than I am to Blake). In Australia we have a great tradition of poetry that tells a story, from Banjo Patterson, to Henry Lawson, C. J. Dennis and Adam Lindsay Gordon. In its own way, BOOTC tries to use verse to tell a story as well. The play employs verse in different ways and some of them are quite subtle. In fact it's often easy to miss that the language is versified at all and a reader would need to sit down and look at the writing line by line (as the actors have to do) in order to identify the versification and to work out what the verse is doing. I think the verse works in several ways in the play: it works as an 'engine' in so far as that once a rhythm is started then the dialogue just keeps flowing until the rhythm ends. There is no room for actors to put in long pauses for instance, which would hold up the flow. The rhyme works in a similar way. It tells the actors which words to emphasise, but also adds a sense of 'inevitability' to some of the dialogue: a sense that only a certain word can be spoken now because the rhyme needs to be completed. With this come some really interesting questions for a playwright to toy with: what does it mean, for instance, when one character finishes off another character's rhyme? When Hunter and Rachel speak, for instance, even when they are arguing, they are in tune with each other and complete each other's rhymes in a way that suggests a deeper connection. When Hunter and Gordon tell stories of their childhood they are much more in poetic synch with each other than they are in the 'adult' scenes. It just gives the playwright, and the actors so much to play with. The actors love speaking the dialogue too. They love getting their mouths around the words and challenging each other when they speak this verse. As I say, often the audience doesn't even notice what is going on and they get to the end of play hardly having noticed that they just heard a play in a verse. But it's there. Like Paul Kelly said after he saw the play 'its there, if you listen for it, it's all the way through it'.

Stories of Australian family and Australian life are particularly important to me. I'm not Australian! I actually came to Australia with my family when I was 4. We came from Lichtenstein of all places! Like many immigrants though, I think I was privileged to a certain kind of appreciation for Australian ways of speaking and going about things. I think it's partly because an immigrant doesn't take as much for granted: they are always listening out for the ways in which the world around them is different to the world of their own family (we spoke German at home and my parents had quite strong accents). So I have always been drawn to the Australian country, the accent, the humour partly as an insider and partly as an outsider. Many of the stories within the play come from real life. I have two older brothers and they fought like dogs (although they would deny this now). As the youngest boy I could stand back and watch them stir each other up and fight physically as well as emotionally. I really wanted to start the play with two brothers in full swing of a fight. There is something childish but at the same time terrifying in the way brothers can carry ancient battles into adulthood: it's dangerous and destructive but it's also very interesting and often really funny. We had a great childhood and we had a huge area of bush land to play in, just like the boys in the play have Etho (the name comes from our own 'idyllic place'). Many of the stories happened to us (Etho became developed for a housing estate) or are stories that I've been told over the years. Whenever I need fresh material for anything, a poem, a play, a story, I think back to my childhood or listen to friends speak about theirs it's a source of endless material! In the play I'm particularly interested in stories of ownership. For many of us ownership means nothing until the thing we own is threatened. Land is such a big theme in Australian because there is so much of it but at the same time we are only drawn to certain parts of it (around the coast or near water). When things we have always taken for granted take on value for outsiders, our concept of ownership becomes challenged in entirely new ways: its like 'grown-up' rules are suddenly applied to a more innocent sense

of ownership. In the play Hunter has an emotional connection to the land and Gordon has an economic connection. Neither of them are wrong. We live in a society where emotion only goes so far; we can't structure our world on what 'feels' right, sooner or later we have to acknowledge that the market and the banks and future all have a role to play. Margret says it best; even though you would expect her to represent an argument of how terrible all this change and development is, she just says; 'I suppose young people need somewhere to live too'. Often old people have a much deeper understanding of these things than we give them credit for. Margret has a lot of wisdom, but is pushed away into the fringes because that's what we often do with older people in our culture. When Hunter leaves again at the end of the play, his one legacy and his real achievement is not saving the land, but actually helping Margret re-establish her relevance in the family. At the end of the day, wisdom is a better contribution to the family than saving land through endless fights or lamenting!

I started writing this play many years ago. The first part of the first scene goes back about fifteen years. Sometimes you write something and have no idea what it might become, you just know it's not time for it yet. I tucked it away in a draw for quite a few years and I then left Australia and lived in Ireland for 8 years doing a BA and MA in Old and Middle English. I wrote a one-person show for myself through an Irish Arts Council grant called Once Upon a Barstool. It was a long epic poem about Irish / Australian immigration and I performed it all around Ireland. When I got back to Australia I performed it at La Mama Theatre and Julian Meyrick from Melbourne Theatre Co saw it, and he invited me to become part of the MTC Affiliate Writers program. I knew then that it was time to look in that draw again and find the start of that play. I had a better idea of what could be done with verse by then, and then the story started pretty much to write itself.

The script won the R. E. Ross Trust script development award, and then had a season at **fortyfivedownstairs**. I was really blessed to find such a great cast; they love performing the piece and they bring life to it with every performance. That's what the script needs, it needs actors to bring it to life. I hope those reading the play will read sections out loud. I hope they have fun with it and try different ways of delivering the lines it by focusing on the verse and the language. That's where the fun is. My advice? Get your mouth around the words!

CHARACTERS:

Character

Margaret Smeaton
Hunter Smeaton
Rachel Smeaton
Sergeant Walker
Gordon Smeaton

Cast

Jane Clifton
Martin Blum
Amanda LaBonte
Chris Bunworth
Matt Dyktynski

Mother of Gordon and Hunter
40 year old male
Gordon's wife
Local policeman approx. 58 years old
Hunters older brother, in his 40's

Creative Team

Playwright and Director
Design – Lighting and Set
Music
Producer

Felix Nobis
Rob Sowinski
Banjo Mango Cooks
Wolf Heidecker

BIOGRAPHIES

Felix Nobis:

Felix is an actor and writer.

Having trained as an actor at the Q Theatre, Penrith, his film work includes Flirting; television work spans from the ongoing roles of Dr Simon Lloyd in the second series of MDA (ABC TV), Rob Griffin in JANUS (ABC), and Paul Lang in Bodysurfers to more recent work in City Homicide and Barracuda (2015). Stage work includes The Tempest at Belvoir Street, A Midsummer Night's Dream and Revenger's Tragedy for Sydney Theatre Company, and Hellbent, for Red Stitch Theatre Company. In 2007 - 08 Felix toured Australia and then the USA as the palaeontologist / narrator of the arena spectacular Walking with Dinosaurs – the live experience.

Felix published his poetic, performer's translation of the medieval epic poem Beowulf, which he toured for two years, as a one-person show (directed by Thomas Conway), around America and Europe. In 2006 the translation was adapted for radio and presented on ABC Radio National. His poetical narrative Once Upon a Barstool was commissioned by the Irish Arts Council and premiered in Cork, Ireland in 2002. He has performed his poetry around Ireland and Australia. He was Writer in Residence with Q Theatre, and held Affiliated Writer positions with Sydney Theatre Co. and Melbourne Theatre Co. In 2011 Felix completed a PhD on medieval storytelling at Monash University, where he now teaches in the Centre for Theatre and Performance.

<http://profiles.arts.monash.edu.au/felix-nobis>

Please Refer to the website for full biographies for all artists and creative team

<http://www.boyoutofthecountry.com/>

SYNOPSIS BOY OUT OF THE COUNTRY

Act I

Scene 1

The play begins in a country police station with two brothers **Hunter** and **Gordon** in the midst of a heated argument (a cut eye over Gordon's eye suggests the fight has already been physically violent) and with the local policeman **Sergeant Walker** trying to settle the boys down. By beginning the play at the height of this altercation, the playwright demands the audience's attention and challenges them to 'catch up' and to make sense of the situation. Over the course of the argument it becomes clear that **Hunter** has returned to Cradletown after a seven year absence to find his family house locked up and his mother re-located to a nursing home. **Hunter's** anger and suspicions are further fuelled by the confirmation that the property has been re-zoned for the building of a substantial housing estate and is suddenly valuable beyond anyone's imagination. The fight between the brothers calms down only with the arrival of Gordon's wife **Rachel**. After admonishing both brothers for the spectacle they have created in the town **Rachel** invites **Hunter** to a family barbecue that evening. After **Rachel** and **Gordon** leave, **Sergeant Walker** confirms that the proposed housing estate includes a section of land affectionately called 'Etho' by the brothers when they were boys. **Hunter** has heard enough and departs. Left alone **Walker** laments the impending developments of the town including the destruction of his old and beloved 'lock up' police station.

Scene 2

Structurally, the main naturalistic scenes are interspersed with shorter vignette scenes, addressed by the actors directly to the audience. These 'direct address' conversations usually reveal information about the past and allow the audience to deepen their understanding of character relationships. The language is often particularly heightened during these exchanges. In this scene the brothers tell the history of 'Etho', their beloved childhood bushlands, and how the name emerged through a childish misunderstanding.



Scene 3

The scene takes place in a small nursing home room occupied by the boys' mother **Margaret**. She has been visited by **Hunter** and chides her son for his long absence and lack of correspondence. **Hunter** tries to convince his mother that she does not belong in the nursing home and that **Gordon** has removed her from the old house for his own personal gain and profit. Although **Margaret** defends Gordon, **Hunter** does succeed in coaxing her into thinking about returning to the old house and even moving back. The scene ends with Hunter railing against his brother and proposing he will resist any change to the town, home and life he remembers!



Scene 4

This is another vignette scene in which the brothers recall an old car they used to drive. The scene provides an opportunity for the audience to see the brothers as they might have been when they were younger and the memories, humour and affection. It is interesting to look at the use of verse and rhyme in this scene; how they are used for humour and to communicate a sense of 'shared memory'.

Scene 5

Later that evening and **Hunter** is attending the barbecue at Gordon and Rachel's house. As **Gordon** shows off the various trappings of suburban life **Hunter** and **Rachel** find time to reflect on their shared history and it becomes clear that the two of them had enjoyed a 'fling' shortly before **Hunter's** departure. While **Rachel** is keen to put this flicker of the past completely behind them, **Hunter** remains stubbornly attached to the memory.

The tension rises when **Gordon** tries to talk 'man to man' about the current family situation. **Hunter** resists such a discussion and insists that their mother will move back to the old house and that the sale of the house is now in question. As **Gordon's** patience with his brother runs out, **Hunter** plays his trump card by questioning the paternity of Coralie, the older of Rachel and Gordon's two daughters. According to **Hunter** there is a chance that he is in fact Coralie's father and until the matter is resolved, **Gordon** does not have the right to make decisions on behalf of the entire family. As he departs **Hunter** demands the keys to the old house. **Rachel** is horrified, **Gordon** is furious.

Act I ends in a stale-mate for everyone.

Act II

Scene 1

Some days have passed. **Gordon** and **Sergeant Walker** are collecting DNA samples from Gordon and Rachel's two daughters Coralie and Gracie. The girls do not appear on stage and are 'imagined' into the scene. The scene is humorous but also a disturbing as **Gordon** feels compelled to subject his children to this process rather than believe his wife.

Scene 2

The scene takes place in Hunter's cheap hotel room above the local pub. **Rachel** is furious about **Hunter's** paternity claim. **Hunter** acknowledges that the claim was completely untrue and his actions unforgivable, but also communicates his sense of despair; his desire for things to return to how they were; his need to hold onto the past.

Rachel demonstrates some understanding but argues that **Hunter's** desire to hold back progress is simply impossible. Although it seems that **Rachel** has been able to talk sense into Hunter, the scene ends with him digging his heels in even deeper. Rachel leaves Hunter in even greater despair.



Scene 3

Another vignette scene in which **Hunter** and **Gordon** tell the history of the property and consider notion of possession and ownership.

Scene 4

Hunter has been called to the police station to find **Sergeant Walker** packing his belongings in preparation for the closing of the old station. Although **Hunter** has given up his claim to Coralie's paternity, **Gordon** is determined that the recently returned results of the DNA test be opened officially and the results made known. While they are waiting, **Walker** reveals that he is taking early retirement having sold on money he has made by selling property he himself has secretly owned. Gordon arrives and the DNA results are opened. The results confirm that Gordon is indeed the father of both girls but includes further information. The DNA has also revealed that **Hunter** and **Gordon** are not full biological brothers as they do not share a common paternal stem. With the property set to be inherited by their father's 'children and his grandchildren', the issue of paternity has become loaded and the brothers depart with a sense of urgency leaving **Walker** to reminisce about the police station –and those who have passed through it- one final time.

Scene 5

It is late evening and **Margret** is watching TV when **Hunter** arrives. He begins questioning her about their father when they are joined by **Gordon** and **Rachel**. Put on the spot, and faced with the evidence, Margaret acknowledges that there had in fact been an indiscretion, and she reveals (under pressure) that **Gordon** is the illegitimate son. **Gordon** storms off followed by **Rachel** leaving **Hunter** to revel in his newly discovered status as heir to the family home and property.

Scene 6

Rachel and **Margret** share a vignette scene in which they present a woman's perspective to the various stories which have presented themselves. **Rachel** tells of the deep contentment in creating a stable family in a country town. **Margaret** tells of the indiscretion that lead to Gordon's birth. Both women speak with pride and without regret.



Scene 7

Some months have passed. **Gordon** and **Rachel** are at the property which is ready to be cleared in preparation for development. It becomes clear over the scene that Hunter has left town again and that the sale has already gone ahead. We learn that Hunter has left town on the understanding that **Margaret** is allowed to play a larger role in the raising of the Coralie and Gracie. Margaret is at ease with the land development: "I suppose young people need somewhere to live too". The scene ends on a note of optimism as **Gordon** and **Rachel** invite **Margaret** to their house for dinner with the girls. In the background, the trucks prepare to tear down the house and clear the property.

Scene 8

The final scene of the play is a vignette between **Hunter** and **Gordon**. The two brothers reminisce on a time when they accidentally superglued themselves to each other and were stuck together for two days. While funny in its own right, the story also reflects on the powerful bond brothers have, even when they are at war with each other.

Please note: Some students may find some of the language in this play confronting.

SUGGESTED PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES for STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Look at these themes before the students see the production:

Themes

Rural vs Urban: This is a key theme throughout the play.

In what ways does the play negotiate terms such as 'rural' and 'urban' in its exploration of values and lifestyle?

<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/boom-towns-20121124-2a0im.html>

<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/sep/03/melbournes-urban-sprawl-just-how-big-can-the-city-get>

<http://www.news.com.au/lifestyle/real-life/news-life/our-government-is-ignoring-problems-of-our-growing-cities/news-story/5e3197ac90794dbfdc4b5e197fbc79b9>

Look at some of these articles and consider how words like 'urban' and 'urban sprawl' are used in news and commentary. How do **Gordon** and **Hunter's** views differ in relation to the nature of development and progress? What might be behind such attitudes? Why is this so important to both of them? Have you seen evidence of urban encroachment on rural land in your area? Where do you stand on this?

Change within the Family: Family relationships run deep throughout the play.

How does the play deal with concepts of aging and the elderly?

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/opinion/resources-for-elderly-strained-in-the-australian-wheatbelt/story-e6frg9jx-1227551249075>

<http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2015/s4196703.htm>

How does **Margaret's** situation change during the course of the play? What is the difference between the brothers' attitudes to their mother? Is one more morally justified than the other?

Tradition vs Development: In what ways does the play explore the tension between community tradition and rural expansion? How can a society stay true to traditions while also providing housing for expanding populations? How does population growth affect traditions and communities?

Language

Australian Idiom. Reviewer for The Age, Cameron Woodhead, wrote that the play "crackles with the Australian idiom". What does he mean by this? How is idiom and dialect a key part of this play?

Verse: What is the difference between watching / listening to this play, and reading it closely? The playwright calls this "a play in verse". Do you agree? How does this change in performance?

How is language heightened?

Theatricality

The play's performance style is both Naturalistic and Non Naturalistic. It freely negotiates the swing from high drama to laugh out loud comedy.

Fourth Wall: What is the difference between the scenes played with a fourth wall and the scenes directed at the audience (direct address)? How does this theatrical device add to the theatrical experience?

Design: The play takes place over several weeks and in several locations and yet there are only minimal changes in set and costume. How does this work and why might these decisions have been made? How is place transformed? - Police station, patio of family home, hotel room, outdoor rural environment. In what way does lighting help in the telling of the story? (For instance an image of dead trees symbolising the destruction of the rural landscape and mirroring the lives of the characters)

Music: In what way does the music serve as a 'character' in this production? Why is the musician on stage? Does this serve the production or distract from it? In what ways is the original music used to help tell the story?

Audience / Actor relationship: An intimate actor audience relationship is integral to the performance and it is achieved through the manipulation of dramatic elements, expressive and performance skills.

Tension is inherent within the plot and this enhances interpersonal tension between the brothers as the key protagonists. The actors heightened focus and shifts in energy and timing draw the audience into the world of family conflict. The actor's skillful manipulation of space further engages the audience, prompting them to reflect on not only the characters' situation, but their own personal predicament. Conflict is most evident at significant turning points of the play, with the rapid pace of the plot keeping the audience guessing what is going to happen next.

The play in Production: Some aspects of the play are best explored in production.

The play opens with a climatic confrontation between the two main protagonists and multiple climaxes occur throughout the performance leading to the penultimate revelation regarding the brother's paternity.

Mood is evoked through the world of the play, not only through set design, sound score and lighting design, but through the actors developed expressive skills and their insightful and authentic portrayal of recognisable rural characters that resonate with the audience.

Contrast between characters, moods, settings, differing social /economic values and attitudes effectively illustrating the central themes of the play, actively engage the audience.

Rhythm is evident through the rhythm of the language by utilising the meter of verse and incorporating Australian idiom, making the subject matter very accessible to contemporary audiences.

Structure And Form Theatre Studies Unit 3

Script The script of Boy Out of the Country will be available from April 2016 and preorders taken bunworth@gmail.com

THEATRICAL STYLE

Nobis gently develops the story like a watercolour painting, adding depth and colour in subtle layers that slowly reveal a more intricate picture in a wholly gratifying way. It is sharp, canny and astute, but it is also very funny.

The script captures the vernacular and flows with casual abuse, but its language shines most brightly in the monologues performed by the local cop, played by Christopher Bunworth, and mum – Jane Clifton. In the hands of these seasoned experts, not only do their characters take on a more poignant air, but the cadence and verse of Nobis' words is also revealed. More than once, a quotable quote hit me mid-monologue with its condensed insight and observation. It's a script that demands tight comic delivery balanced with laid-back country style

Look at these images of the set.

How do you think the musician (in the back corner) would support the theatrical style?

What does this set design tell you about the play? (Remember when you see the performance it may look different)

Application of performance and /or theatrical styles

The play's performance style is described as both Naturalistic and Non Naturalistic. It freely negotiates the swing from high drama to laugh out loud comedy. **Note down in the script and when you see the show where this occurs**

Theatrical Conventions

- Transformation of place: Police station, patio of family home, hotel room, outdoor rural environment
- Heightened use of language- Use of idiom, verse, story telling
- Direct address /breaking fourth wall

How do you see these changes/transformations on stage? When reading the script, how did you think these might occur?

STAGECRAFT

- Minimalist set design to denote multiple places
- Sound –live music, music serves as a 'character'
- Lighting – Image of dead trees symbolising the destruction of the rural landscape and mirroring the lives of the characters

SYMBOLS:

Look for other symbols and motifs through the script and then realized on stage

Description of how the actor /audience relationship /s will be manipulated

An intimate actor audience relationship is integral to the performance and it is achieved through the manipulation of dramatic elements, expressive and performance skills.

Tension is inherent within the plot and this enhances interpersonal tension between the brothers as the key protagonists. The actors heightened focus and shifts in energy and timing draw the audience into the world of family conflict. The actor's skillful manipulation of space further engages the audience, prompting them to reflect on not only the characters' situation, but their own personal predicament. Conflict is most evident at significant turning points of the play, with the rapid pace of the plot keeping the audience guessing what is going to happen next.

The play opens with a climatic confrontation between the two main protagonists and multiple climaxes occur throughout the performance leading to the penultimate revelation regarding the brother's paternity.

Mood is evoked through the world of the play, though not only set design, sound score and lighting design, but through the actors developed expressive skills and their insightful and authentic portrayal of recognisable rural characters that resonate with the audience.

Contrast between characters, moods, settings, differing social /economic values and attitudes effectively illustrating the central themes of the play, actively engage the audience.

Rhythm is evident through the rhythm of the language by utilising the meter of verse and incorporating Australian idiom, making the subject matter very accessible to contemporary audiences.

Have you noticed throughout these notes that the language appears to be a very important element of this play?

FURTHER RESOURCES

Producer: Larrikin Ensemble Theatre:

Larrikin Ensemble Theatre (LET) brings together the combined talents, expertise and experience of artistic director Chris Bunworth and producer Wolf Heidecker. They create 'comedy with a conscience' for the national and international market place.

LET is a performing arts company interested in diverse work, original and established that explore the boundaries between the known and the unknown. LET is a company that provides a forum for the realisation of dreams. LET's projects are efficiently run, commercially viable, not overly dependent on public funding and have revenue to support reinvestment in continuous improvement. LET want to illuminate the ineffable.

WEBSITES:

- Regional Arts Victoria: www.rav.net.au
- Production Company: www.boyoutofthecountry.com/

Contact Regional Arts Victoria for details of post-show forums.

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