

state ed

This is Where We Live

by Vivienne Walsh



**STATE SA
THEATRE
COMPANY**



**HotHouse
THEATRE**

ElectraNet



DURATION APPROX: *60 mins (no interval)*
SUITABLE FOR: *Years 9 - 12*
WARNING: *Mild coarse language and adult themes*
School performances followed by a 20 - 30 min Q&A session

Index

Index	3
Cast & Crew	4
Playwright	5
Director.....	8
Actor Profile.....	10
Synopsis	14
Plot	15
Themes	17
Writing Style.....	20
Characters	22
Interesting Reading	24
Designer	27
Design.....	29
Essay Questions.....	31
Post-Show Reflection	32
References.....	34

Cast & Crew

CREATIVE

Director	Jon Halpin
Designer	Morag Cook
Lighting Designer	Rob Scott
Composer /Tour Tech	Andrew Howard

CAST

Chris	James Smith
Chloe	Matilda Bailey

PRODUCTION

Production Manager	Gabrielle Hornhardt
Stage Manager	Rohan Yates
Wardrobe Supervisor	Kellie Jones

Playwright

VIVIENNE WALSH

Vivienne's play, *This Is Where We Live*, won the prestigious Griffin Theatre Award for 2012, and was produced in 2013 in Sydney at the Griffin Theatre to excellent reviews. It has recently been produced in Bristol, UK and performed at the Edinburgh Fringe. It won a Fringe Excellence Award for Best Overall Play in the 2014 New York Fringe Festival, and given an extended run at Soho Playhouse, New York.

Vivienne's plays include, *God's Last Acre* (published by Currency Press Inc.), *Birth Nation*, and *The Blood in the Suburbs*. Awards include the 2003 Malcolm Robertson Award, the inaugural Max Afford Award in 2004, an R.E Ross Trust Award, and she has been the recipient of several Arts Victoria and Australia Council grants. She has been an Associate Playwright at The Sydney Theatre Company, The Melbourne Theatre Company, and an invited member of the Royal Court Theatre Young Playwright's Invitation Group in London. She received the Dame Joan Sutherland Scholarship from the America-Australia Association in 2007 and is a YADDO fellow.



Vivienne's latest play, *The Blood in the Suburbs*, was short-listed for the 2014 Griffin Award.

INTERVIEW WITH VIVIENNE

1. Why do you think this story needed to be told?

I wanted to write a play with teenage characters in it. I remember what it was like to feel like you have so many worlds inside you that haven't been discovered, yet all the beauty you suspect might be there, and all the ugliness; the fear it might not work out in life; the hope that it will be better than you can even imagine. I remember feeling I didn't want to be chained down by the past, and worried that my path was already set for me. The two characters of Chloe and Chris reflect those same anxieties. Is my path already set? How can I start a new one?

2. The style of writing is very poetic. Is this a particular style that you use? And if so, why write the piece in this way?

With playwriting, as in all forms of art, the challenge is to find your own story and hope it comes out as uniquely as it wants to be. There are no wrongs when it comes to playwriting. It's an ancient form – people stand in front of an audience, telling a story. That's theatre. So the challenge is to make it as fresh as it can be.

I wanted to find a new way for characters to talk to each other and to the audience. I love rap music and so there is an influence there from rap and hip hop. I also really like poetry and all those styles of communication are in this play.

3. What are the challenges of writing a piece from a young person's point of view?

The challenge is to become that teenager, in your mind, when you are writing from a young person's perspective. As a teenager, I used to love writing short stories about being an old person sitting on a bench in the park. When you write – you can imagine yourself inside the lives of anyone. You can travel anywhere in the world. You can change genders. The imagination is just as real as the desk you are sitting at. But it's free to roam.

4. To you, what are the main themes in the play?

The writer simply writes and everyone who reads or watches a play finds the theme that means the most to them. The central character of Chloe is dyslexic and Chris is a poet. So there is one theme about how language is important to both of them. For Chloe – it represents a world she feels cut off from. For Chris, it's the world he inherited from his father – himself a poet.

There is also the theme of violence in the play. Not just physical violence, but how violent we are with our children and towards other students and of course, to our closest friends. We want people to be who we want them to be – rather than themselves. Chris' father has an expectation of what his son's future will look like – and that is a form of violence. Chloe's mother lets her new boyfriends beat Chloe, but she can also be terribly neglectful about what her daughter needs in life. This is another kind of violence.

There is also the theme of finding beauty in people, where you don't expect it. Finding beauty in a parched school, or an old ute up on stumps, or the community pool. If you look for beauty – it is there.

5. There seems to be some hope for Chloe when she meets Chris. However, by the end of the play it feels almost hopeless. What was your reasoning behind this?

At the end of the play, Chloe stands and the pain arrives like a train running through her. The pain of her difficult life and the end of her short relationship with Chris. It is the end of her old self, where her future was all laid out. She finally grieves for the loss of her father, for the childhood she wished she'd had, rather than the one she got. She grieves and she feels the whole world's pain and she starts her life new. That was how I saw the final image. To feel your emotions is to start your new life. Then again, I'm an optimist. The ending of the play is whatever the audience experiences for themselves.

6. Why is the regional setting important to the story?

I grew up in Melbourne, but it was so far from the city – it may as well have been regional. The train only came once an hour and it was another hour to get anywhere interesting to me. The feeling I wanted to create was best set in a small town with only one highway running through it. If you want to leave, you have to learn how to drive, or learn how to walk very long distances. Most teenagers feel isolated, so the setting simply magnified that.

The teenage mind is very open and we fill it with rules about good and bad behavior and a thousand expectations – so that it gets stuck. The teenage mind wants to work things out for itself and yet there is homework due tomorrow hanging over its head. Adults exhaust teenagers because we are frightened of them and for them. The infinite possibility of a young life is terrifying to us, because we have forgotten what it feels like to be that open.

7. What is the meaning behind the title, *This is Where We Live*?

The title announces that in this small town, in the middle of a vast desert, on a floating island - is where our lives are happening. We are proud of it. We are ashamed of it. We want to leave and we want to stay. When I was a teenager, I was always so embarrassed about my house – I never invited anyone over. I always wanted to be able to say "*This is where I live.*" Thankfully, when you become an adult, you realize the only person judging you, is yourself.

8. The play has been performed before, how has it felt seeing your play on stage?

The most wonderful feeling in the world is to create something, anything. To find out what you like to do and do it. I found my calling with the performing arts and it's a beautiful life to do what you love.

9. If anything, what do you think school audiences will take away from this play?

I hope school audiences take whatever they find. Every single member of the audience will have a different experience, seen only through that person's eyes. Some people will like it, love it, loathe it. I

hope the students discuss it and disagree with each other. They create the meaning for themselves. The theatre only exists in that one night, when it was seen live.

I hope people see that behind every tough veneer or nerd persona – is someone with an interior monologue that doesn't stop nattering. Be gentle with each other.



Director

JON HALPIN

Jon was the Artistic Director of HotHouse Theatre from 2010 - 2014, and Queensland Theatre Company's Associate Director from 2005 – 2009. His directorial credits for HotHouse Theatre include *Fractions*, *Dame Farrar's Dazzling Display of Stupendous Acts for the Stage*, *Australia the Show!* and *The Messiah*.

This is Jon's first production for State Theatre Company. For Queensland Theatre Company he has directed twenty productions including *Betrayal*, *Thom Pain (based on nothing)*, *Stones in his Pockets*, *Heroes*, *The Estimator*, *American Buffalo*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Hitchcock Blonde*, *The Goat or Who is Sylvia?*, *Proof*, *The Lonesome West*, *The Messiah*, *Bill & Mary* and *Bash: Latterday Plays*. Jon was Associate Director on the premiere of Michael Gow's *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony*, a co-production between Queensland Theatre Company and Playbox Theatre.

He was Assistant Director on Belvoir's production of *The Spook* as well as QTC's *The Road To Mecca*, *The Tragedy of King Richard the Second*, *Buried Child*, *Dirt*, *The Forest* and *Fred*. Other directing credits include *Women in Voice 13* (QPAC), *Harriers* (Metro Arts), *Cloud Nine* (QUT), *Five Women Wearing the Same Dress* (USQ), and *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* (Rolling Jaffa). He was invited to the Australian National Playwrights' Conference as a guest director in 2004 and 2006 and PlayWriting Australia in 2008 and 2009.

INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR

1. What are the main themes in this production and how do you hope young audiences react to them?

There are many themes running through *This is Where We Live*, violence, isolation, neglect, language, but to me, the main theme is self-identity. Both Chloe and Chris are struggling with this, but from different directions. Chloe suffers due to her mother's appalling choices in life and her neglect for Chloe. As a result, Chloe presents herself as the antagonist in the life of everyone she meets due to the shame she feels at being a victim, her inability to grieve for her father's death, and the fact she is physically different from the other kids at school. In Chris, and in Donald (Chris' father), Chloe sees a glimmer of hope for the future and a chance to escape what seems an inevitably unhappy life.

Chris lives in the shadow of the expectations of his father. I get the sense that Donald is living his dreams vicariously through Chris, putting pressure on him to succeed where he has failed. Through Chloe, Chris begins to stand up to his father, rejecting the life mapped out for him in favour of the passion and excitement that Chloe offers.

2. What drew you to this play?

Primarily, it was the language of the play. Chloe struggles throughout the play to read poetry, yet she speaks in beautiful cadences and uses such evocative imagery, that whole worlds are created and destroyed in seconds.

3. The language is very poetic – how do you approach the text to obtain the right rhythm and flow?

There's a lot of experimenting, particularly with tempo and inflection. I also enjoy using silence as a choice in performance – a well-timed, well placed silence can be deafening.

4. There are only two actors in the play, but the text helps to visualise the other characters.

What theatrical elements can you use to help enhance this?

Where the actors are in the space, use of body and voice are the key elements we're using. We're not really seeing the actors transform into other characters, it would create a very awkward rhythm if we did, but rather we see Chloe and Chris' versions of the other characters.

5. Having come from a regional centre yourself, what do you think is the underlying message to regional students?

We have the power to make changes and create futures for ourselves wherever it is that we live. Some kids, like Chloe, have a much rougher, more difficult road to travel, but accepting yourself for who you are is a first step in achieving anything you want.

6. Can you explain what you think the title, *This is Where We Live* means?

Chloe talks about it in terms of a sensory plane where she can escape the realities of her life. But more broadly, it does refer to living in small towns, in outer suburbs, and indeed, Australia.



Actor Profile

MATILDA BAILEY - Chloe

Matilda is a graduate of the Adelaide College of the Arts. For State Theatre Company, Matilda has performed in the *The Seagull* (2014) and the Sydney Theatre Company co-production of *Vere* (2013).

While at AC Arts, Matilda had many memorable moments including playing the lead in Shakespeare's *Richard III* and performing an assortment of roles in *The Laramie Project*. Upon graduating she received the Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Award, an encouragement award given to one outstanding graduate artist from the Helpmann Academy's partner institutions.

Since graduating, Matilda has performed in many styles from main stage theatre productions to touring educational children's musicals. Credits include *The City* by Martin Crimp (Now Yes Now), *The Book Show* (Splash Theatre Company), workshopping plays for State Theatre Company's *Young Playwrights Award* and devising and touring *Speak Out* with Act Now Theatre.

Matilda has trained in New York with master Meisner technique teacher William Esper and studied physical theatre with Zen Zen Zo in Brisbane.

Earlier this year, Matilda was offered a place in the prestigious Voice Studies masters course at Royal Central School of Speech and Drama in London. She will soon be travelling to the UK to gain this expert tutelage in voice and speech for theatre.



INTERVIEW WITH MATILDA

1. What do you think is the overall message left for the audience in this play?

I think it's hard to pick one message and I think that's great. It means it's a more complex and exciting piece. My favourite messages are:

Perseverance - Chloe perseveres through seemingly insurmountable odds. Many people in her position would give up but she keeps fighting.

Compassion - I think this is an important topic for the audience to reflect on. Remembering that the circumstance someone is in, does not define who they are. Eg. Chloe doesn't do well at school but that doesn't mean she isn't hard working.

2. Was school a difficult time for you? And what have you realized about this time since you've left?

I think school was a combination of amazing times and of terrible ones. I changed schools and countries many times and I think these continued new starts sparked my interest in learning about people, and now I investigate and represent people for a living!

It's a funny place because it focuses a lot on everyone being alike and I think learning to fit in can be a valuable lesson. But since leaving school all the things that made me weird or different are the things that now make me who I am.

If there is one thing this play could have taught me when I was at school it's that the time I had at school was my time- Yes there are rules and restrictions but I think it's very easy to be swept along rather than using the experience to take you where you want to go in your life.

3. Chloe is a deeply layered character with many flaws. Why do you think she's been written that way?

I think, in a sense, Chloe is an archetype. She has so many challenges; with learning, with her home life and with her physical disability. It gives us an insight to a character that you could easily write off as a victim but to me, her attitude makes her a warrior. The harder the battle won, the stronger the fighter.

4. Why do you think setting this play in a regional town is important?

Exposure- too often theatre is made for a certain audience; usually a person who lives in a city and is heavily involved in the arts community. Obviously great work can still come out of that situation, but I think that the reason for theatre is to tell and explore many different stories so that we can learn about the world we live in. Learn about others and also reflect on ourselves. How can we do that as a society when we only tell the stories of a few?

5. The play can be viewed as one of hope or despair. What do you think it achieves?

I think that on the one hand, the darker themes of the play, such as the unfairness of life, will possibly be very confronting for people. On the other hand, it also explores the process of overcoming these obstacles. I think this is very hopeful. When we see Chloe pushing and fighting for her future even with such obstacles in her way, it makes us reflect on whether or not we are putting as much time and effort into championing ourselves as we should. We are our biggest obstacle.

6. What can young audiences take away from this production?

Making your life the life you want and that opening up to people may make you vulnerable but it will also change your life.

7. What research/background work do you do before rehearsals begin?

Read and read the script! Maybe it's on the 10th read that something clicks. Read it in different places, with different voices, when you're happy, when you're sad. New information will always come.

Lately, as an actor I've been really interested in images and the idea that we store information with our senses not with words. If I ask you to think of a beach you don't think, 'hot sunny sand', you see a beach in your mind's eye. In fact you probably see a specific beach, a specific time, feel how hot the sand was and how cold the water was when you dove in. If this is the richness of our inner life in real life, striving for this richness within the work will obviously create a deeper experience not only for me as the actor but by extension for the audience.

8. What is your ideal rehearsal process/space?

I am really interested in the idea of rehearsing in a retreat style. Where the company rehearses and lives in a place, often in the country, away from distractions. Obviously this requires you to put your life on hold at home - which makes it less possible for a lot of people.

I have had retreat experiences with study, such as with Zen Zen Zo (a Brisbane based physical theatre company), and they were life changing. It's amazing what creativity can blossom at unexpected moments.

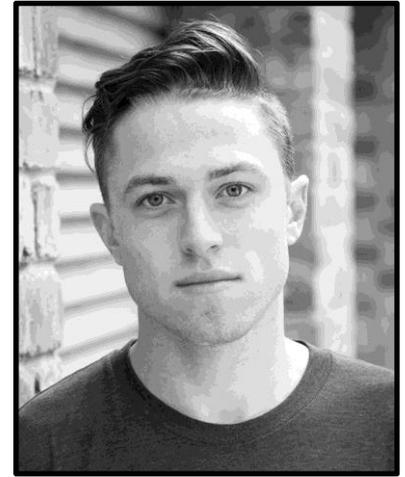
9. If you could tell your character one thing what would it be?

That she is inspiring, she constantly surprises me with how strong she is. She has a lot to give to the world and to others and if she keeps looking I'm sure she will find her place.

JIMMY SMITH – Chris

James is an acting graduate of Flinders Drama Centre. For State Theatre Company, James has appeared in *Neighbourhood Watch* and *Othello*. His studies at Flinders Drama Centre have given him a good foundation and the chance to play many challenging and rewarding roles as well as the opportunity to work with respected directors and teachers including David Mealor, Rosalba Clemente, Tom Healy, Alirio Zavarce and Renato Musolino.

James has also had some exposure to film during his time at The Drama Centre, playing a self-devised character 'Victor' in Kath Dooley's *The Sister*. He also appeared in Aaron Nassau's OzAsia award winning films *Birdbath* and *Pardesi*. In his graduating show at Drama Centre, Jim played the role of William in Simon Stephens' *Punk Rock* directed by Tom Healy.



INTERVIEW WITH JIMMY

1. What do you think is the overall message left for the audience in this play?

Like any good writing, I think there are lots of different messages and ideas an audience can take from *This is Where We Live*. Any one overriding message is tricky to pin down, but I'd say it's about identity; finding yourself, taking charge of who you are, no matter the circumstances, whether it be putting your past to bed or focusing on the future.

There are also messages in the play of love, in its all of its many forms, bad and good. How love, a lack of love or even too much love can impact us or shape us.

2. Was school a difficult time for you? And what have you realised about this time since you left?

Difficult yes, like it is for pretty much all students in one way or another. School is hard; it can be a social, political minefield. Teenagers are nasty to each other sometimes. I was lucky and had good friends and teachers. Unlike Chloe and Chris.

This play is for everyone, but in my heart I send it out to those people especially. I have realised, with the luxury of hindsight, that high school is not the be all and end all, not by a long shot. It ends. It will be over. Make the most of it whilst you're there and burst out the other end as best you can.

3. Chris has been a loner in a small country town and says he was waiting for someone. Why do you think he tells Chloe this?

He thinks Chloe is this person, he's sure she is. He lets her in on his fantasy because he believes it was always meant to be like this. What he doesn't realise is that by telling Chloe this, he reveals himself to be on a slightly less realistic wavelength. It's an unfair and unrealistic expectation to put on someone, but I completely understand. Chris is alone, an alien in this country town, but he has the likes of Baudelaire and Rimbaud for company. These writers have been fuelling Chris' fantasy about being needed, about falling in love, about having someone to save and in turn, save him. A very romantic notion.

4. Why do you think setting this play in a regional town is important?

I don't think it's because this story could only even take place in a regional town, I think this could happen anywhere, at any school. I think it serves an important purpose in this play because it adds to the sense of isolation, of being far away from these characters' previous lives. The flipside to this is that, there's nothing quite like meeting one of your own kind, so to speak, in a small country town. A friend in a place like that can feel like home.

5. The play can be viewed as one of hope or despair. What do you think it achieves?

Honestly, I leave the play with a sense of both. There are some things in both these characters lives that will probably get a whole lot harder before they get better. However Chloe has already overcome so much and has broken bad patterns, found a sense of self. A sense of self needed to move on and overcome whatever it is that will challenge her next.

6. What can young audiences take away from this production?

I hope people of all ages will be able to take something from the production, but it will speak directly to a younger audience. Maybe a sense that young people's stories matter; that their experiences are worth exploring. Perhaps also a personal insight, something they've seen enacted in the production that they felt spoke right to them that might promote self-reflection, if only for a fleeting moment.

7. What research/background work do you do before rehearsals begin?

It's really important to me to understand and have a knowledge based on all the references that I didn't understand from initial reads. For this show, I had to brush up on Baudelaire and Rimbaud and other romantic/ French symbolist thinkers. Not to mention refreshing my memory of the tale of '*Orpheus and Eurydice*.'

8. What is your ideal rehearsal process/space?

A friendly room, filled with interesting, hard-working, generous artists. Somewhere quiet, with tea and coffee. Maybe biscuits?

9. If you could tell your character one thing what would it be?

I would tell Chris to love himself more. There's a lot to love. To respect his own wants for his life and to keep it real dude, always.

Synopsis

Nobody's looking back at me. I'm in the underworld, now.

Brought up on the wrong side of the tracks with an unrelenting limp, Chloe has had to develop a vicious outer-shell to shield against daily bullying. Moving to a new town in the middle of nowhere hasn't made things easier.

Chloe has bleak hopes for her future until she meets 'Odd Boy' Chris, the painfully unpopular son of her new English teacher. An intense bond is forged and the two outsiders begin to see the glimmer of new possibilities amidst their small-town underworld.

Evoking the tale of Orpheus and Eurydice, Vivienne Walshe's *This is Where We Live* is packed with vivid poetic language that is brimming with as much life and energy as its characters. Winner of the 2012 Griffin Award, this is an exceptional piece of brave and exciting new Australian writing.



Plot

Chloe is new in town, having come with her mother to live with Bill, the new boyfriend. *"Remember we're in a new town, his house now."* She's in her final year of school, worried about whether she'll fit in. She quickly checks out her classmates, *"Skank. Skank. Odd. Bully. Big girl."* The teacher, Donald works out she's dyslexic and tells her, *"Reading skills of an elementary student will not get you very far"* and continues, *"Can't read, can't drive. Can't walk your way out. It's a one-highway town."*

Chloe meets Chris, the son of the teacher and asks what there is to do in town. Chris has his life mapped out, *"You've got plans, a new car, long drives the summer before you say goodbye,"* but he is drawn to her, *"Chloe from the underworld."* A connection is made and he begins to wonder if he might have a chance with Chloe.

Two weeks into the new town and things begin to change at home for Chloe, *"Second weeks the happy time before it all starts to slide. He starts slurring who leaves all the lights on. Mum starts whispering all the time."* At the local pool with her mother, Chloe meets Chris again. She tries to draw his attention by using her sexuality and Chris tries hard to resist, even though he likes her. Chloe heads off towards Kevin, the bad boy in town, leaving Chris feeling that he doesn't have a chance with Chloe unless her can either 'save her' or be best friends.

At home, Chris' father, Donald, is hard on him, teaching him extended work and wanting him to achieve greatness, *"The problem at the core of your poetry Chris, is that it's crowded with the great minds and when it's not, it fails to transcend the inter, the inter, the inter personal."*

At home, Chloe hears her Mum and Bill arguing and she walks in hoping to diffuse the situation. Bill has her mother on the floor with his hand round her throat and his fist in the air. Chloe goads him into hitting her so that he'll leave her mother alone. *"When they hit me, I know where I am. We're in the centre now, I'm getting hated and shamed. Limp like a rag doll as he takes the reins."*

Chris is out riding hoping to get a glimpse of Chloe. He sees her out walking and notices her black eye. He takes her down to the river where they talk. He realises he's in love, *"Love comes like a slow wheeze,"* and he vows that no one will ever hurt Chloe again.

Chloe waits for the bruising to subside before returning to school. This time she gets worried looks from her classmates, but she quickly puts up her armour and says to the big girl in her class, *"I would rather die of gangrene in a caravan park, then chit chat with you about am I alright?"*

Keeping her back after class, Donald tells Chloe that if she can listen to the poem's tempo, she'll overcome her reading difficulty and succeed. For once, she contemplates an alternative future, *"One where I'm happy."*

Chloe and Chris are becoming close, hanging out together. She tells him about her Dad dying and how she couldn't cry. Instead, to alleviate the pain she was feeling she broke her arm. They kiss.

Back at home, Bill and her mother are arguing again, but this time Chloe doesn't step in, even when her mother calls out to her. *"What would happen, if I didn't. This time. Step in" ... "I will never. Ever. Step in again."* Her mum opens up to her saying that Bill wants a child, but cries because she's too old. Chloe says, *"I pat her wet cheek because she's my Mum. You only get one."*

Chloe starts to feel confident that she could finish school, buy a car and find a way out of this town, but is brought back to reality at school, when she is taunted by the girls saying, "*Spina bifida, spi, spina bifida.*" Chris arrives at her side and they walk into school together. "*For the first time in my short order teenage wonder life, I walk to class with an even gait.*"

Chris invites Chloe to his house for dinner. However, his mum has been drinking and his Dad fails to understand why Chris would get involved with Chloe, whom he sees as '*a bit of flange*'. "*Why, after all these years of quiet, sincere effort on his part and considerable sacrifice on ours, Chris is going to blow it by getting involved with this...girl*"

Offended, Chloe yells at Donald and leaves the house, with Chris in pursuit. He catches up with her to tell her that he loves her. Unable to let her guard down she begins to tell him that he's misjudged her and goads him to hit her. Hurt by this Chris runs away and doesn't engage with her again. Chloe is alone.

*Stand in the toilet cubicle.
Railway sleepers lay where my spine used to be.
And the train arrives, passing through me.
My whole body shakes. Convulsing.*

*And I'm not afraid.
Of what's coming.*

Themes

This is Where We Live deals with the change from childhood into adulthood, including bright hopes and stark realities. The challenges of teens are represented; the pressures of school, exams, teachers and the hope for success. Chloe and Chris face different battles, from high expectations, to domestic violence and grieving the death of a parent.

VIOLENCE

There are various forms of violence throughout the play; physical, emotional, domestic and schoolyard abuse.

Chris' father has a constricting, rigid expectation of Chris' future; Chloe's mother lets her new boyfriend beat Chloe and is neglectful of what her daughter needs in life; the students at school label people and taunt Chloe about her limp; and Chloe herself launches at Chris, goading him to hit her.

Domestic violence is explored through Chloe's home life, powerfully portrayed through the shattering of long silences with explosions of beautiful poetry. Chloe's mum accepts the abuse as part of her 'lot' in life. Chloe has tried to protect her mum from abusive men before, *'He's got a hand round Mum's throat and his fist in the air. Come on Chloe. Come in now with the ice-breaking funny.'* But, this has meant that Chloe herself has been hit, *"I know where I am. We're in the centre now; I'm getting hated and shamed. Limp like a rag doll as he takes the reins."*

As the play progresses, Chloe becomes angry and frustrated with her mother and refuses to help her, *"What would happen, if I didn't. This time. Step in..."*

REGIONAL TOWN/ISOLATION

Chris' father says, *"It's a one-highway town,"* and *"back water town."* When we originally meet Chris he has his escape planned out, *"You've got plans, a new car, long drives the summer before you say goodbye. You've got a future all mapped out for you."*

His father feels that he's given Chris every opportunity and made sacrifices to make Chris' life easier and give him a bright future, despite his isolation. He does not approve of Chloe, feeling that she's distracting Chris.

Chloe has come into this town an outsider, coupled with her dyslexia, she struggles to fit in and can't see an escape from isolation. For her there are two options; end up like her mother *"and fall in love with someone who makes me wait for even the tiniest things;"* or die, whether by some made-up neurological disease, or by ending it herself.

HOPE

This play shows hope. It comes into Chloe's life for perhaps the first time in a long while, when her teacher, Donald tells her that she has a way with words and could succeed. There is also hope that by meeting Chris she has found a good and supportive friend.

However, Chloe doesn't know how to deal with the issues in her life and when the teacher who has given her hope, describes her as *"a bit of flange,"* she is furious and retreats behind her armour. She runs out of his home determined to burn the school. When Chris finds her and proclaims his love for her she initially responds, before putting up her defenses and pushing him away.

The ending of the play is not clear. After Chloe reads her poem she finishes the play with;

*“Stand in the toilet cubicle.
Railway sleeps lay where my spine used to be.
And the train arrives, passing through me.
My whole body shakes. Convulsing.*

*And I’m not afraid.
Of what’s coming.”*

Does this poem tells us that resilient Chloe is no longer afraid, and will take the path less travelled, right out of the underworld she’s in? Or is she giving up, giving in, and letting the end take over?

ARMOUR

To keep herself at a distance from her home life and from the bullying she gets at a new school, Chloe puts up barriers, or armour.

Chloe has moved to a strange town, where her mother is living in an abusive relationship. She’s often put up with abuse from her mother’s boyfriends and steps in to ‘save the day.’ This has meant that she’s been abused many times. To help, she either tries humour to diffuse the situation, *“Come in hard with a soft pun, make him laugh, make him smile,”* or she sexualises the experience.

She has lived with her mother and seen how sexuality can be used to attract men. At the local pool she is embarrassed by her mother because her bathers are see-through, but she tries to entice Chris by showing her arse. Later she uses it to push him away, trying to display what she thinks he wants, but she goes too far and Chris feels rejected.

In class at school, she makes humorous comments such as; *‘prick’* and *“takes a lady longer to get there, if you know what I mean.”* She’s trying to be tough in front of the other students and trying to avoid having to answer anything where she has to read, as it is difficult for her. But this diversion tactic often gets her in trouble. When it is discovered that she can’t read, she immediately puts up her armour to hide her humiliation.

GRIEG

Chloe still talks to her Dad, but it is clear that he has died. Reading between the lines, when she speaks with him, she always adds, *“cough, cough”*, which indicates a disease of the lungs and later the word Mesothelioma is mentioned. This is a cancer of the lungs and abdomen due to asbestos. There is no known cure.

Unable to express her emotions after he died, Chloe tells Chris that she broke her arm, *“Yes. (Beat) After my Dad died. I couldn’t cry. Put my arm in a belt sander, I don’t know why.”*

Through the dialogue with her father, it was clear that she was close to him and misses him, particularly now that she feels isolated and alone and living in an abusive house. *“You left an unfinished sentence, Dad, and a gammy left leg. What are my options here, dancing for the blind?..Don’t let me go. Don’t let me end up here, in the creek bed, handing out my options. Dad...? Are you still there...?”*

But she has made a pact with him to finish school and she’s determined to keep that deal. Her poem that she reads to the class at the end shows that she’s maybe starting to grieve for her loss. *“My dad. Taught me.”*

LANGUAGE

Language is important to both Chloe and Chris. For Chloe with her dyslexia, it represents a world she feels cut off from. Putting up her armour again, she makes fun of it, *“What’s a poet got that a dyslexic can use?”* She also uses words as a weapon, with witty repartee to the teacher, asking about Shakespeare, the dark lady from the sonnets; and with other students. However, for the first time in her life the teacher tells her that she could succeed if she listens to the poem’s tempo. At this moment she is happy and contemplates an alternative future from the one she’s only ever known.

For Chris, language is the world he inherited from his father, who was a poet. Unfortunately, his father places pressure on Chris to be more, to live the life he couldn’t succeed at.

LOVE

Chris falls in love with Chloe quickly. He describes it as, *“Love comes like a slow wheeze. Punctured at the top of my head, every cell divided and there is no one thing that will be whole again. I fake cry to see if it’s sadness. No, that’s not it. It’s a new kind of absence. It’s not being alone. I’m in two places at once. I’m in nowhere. A young man. And it won’t ever be the same again.”*

Chloe falls for Chris too, but before she can admit this she begins to push him away. Love does not save the day for this couple and they end up more alone than ever.

Writing Style

Vivienne Walshe deals poetically with issues of the fragility of teenage life; as Chloe and Chris traverse the line of childhood and adulthood. She says of the dialogue, *“I wanted to try something new; a way of using language that was lyrical and beautiful to hear”*.

In this writing style, she captures the vulnerability and intensity of adolescence using heightened, poetic language. She jumps between lyrical odes and onomatopoeic beat poetry, giving the writing its punch and shows a contrast between the two characters. Short staccato sentences convey the dramatic stakes Chloe attaches to her situation and the imagery shows us her feelings, heartache and fragility.

She uses onomatopoeic utterances, *‘cough, cough; crunch crunch; pad pad’*, to describe actions of invisible others and the characters themselves.

Vivienne says, *“I wanted to find a way to make language in the theatre rich and with a pulse. I love poetry but hate the way it’s performed, the watered-down beat poet drone. I love the theatre but people on stage talk as the crow flies – straight and to the point. And so I wanted to try for something new; a way of using language that was lyrical and beautiful to hear.”*

Australians have the most poetic phrasings and expressions, and I rarely hear them in film, television or on the stage. I think there’s a feeling that we’re not going to ‘get the joke’ unless it’s done in the boldest, most hammy way.”

ONOMATOPOEIA

Onomatopoeia, which is used throughout the play, refers to words that sound exactly or almost exactly like the thing that they represent. Many words that we use for animal or machine noises are onomatopoeia words, such as ‘moo’ for the sound a cow makes and ‘beep’ for the noise of a car horn.

Words like ‘slurp,’ ‘bang,’ and ‘crash’ are also onomatopoeia words. Even some ordinary words like ‘whisper’ and ‘jingling’ are considered onomatopoeia because when we speak them out loud, they make a sound that is similar to the noise that they describe.

Poetry often uses onomatopoeia words because they are so descriptive. This type of word helps us to imagine the story or scene that is happening in the poem.

Vivienne uses this device throughout the play to describe the actions in more detail;

- *“Feet on carpet, pad pad pad, flush, fart, feet on carpet pad pad.”*
- *“I’m shot in the face by a black man. I beg him not to. Click. Boom”*
- *“Dad said cough cough...”*
- *“Crash. Oh no! Here we go.”*
- *“Bang. Hit the back of my head. Pant pant pant his face has gone red. Pad pad pad creak slam and he’s gone.”*
- *“Crunch, crunch, crunch. Is there something wrong with him?”*
- *“Donald’s at the blackboard, twinkly-eyed. Click. Click. Click.”*
- *“Clump, clump, cling.”*

CONVENTION

There are only two actors on stage portraying the two teenagers, their parents and other students in the class. At points they talk directly to the audience, other times it is their internal thoughts and sometimes they talk to each other.

Changing from the various characters and in and out of thoughts and asides is tricky and requires the actors to break down each action. Why do you think the writer has done this?

INCLUSION OF DISABILITY

Discussions on the first day of rehearsal was why Vivienne would write a play about a girl whose father has died, her mother has a new abusive boyfriend, but also has dyslexia and scoliosis which causes her limp.

Was it to show courage through adversity? Or did it help make her an easy target for the teasing at school? Or was it simply building the back story for the character? Or was it to comprehensively explore many issues teenagers may face in one core character?

Characters

Chloe and Chris are the protagonists in this duologue drama which follows their search for identity and stability in their fractured home lives. This interesting odd-couple form a relationship based on their shared struggles at school and home, and their mutual hope to find a better future for themselves.

The characters are relatable and are asking the questions so many of us ask; Who am I? Where do I fit? Who likes me? Who doesn't? Where am I going? What's wrong with me?

CHLOE

Chloe finds herself in another dead-end Australian town after her mother moves in with another deadbeat and violent boyfriend. Chloe is aggressive, but teeters between sexual bravado and the awkwardness of an uncertain 16 year old girl. Her father has died, but she still talks to him, still needs him as she doesn't get the emotional support from her mother that she needs.

Brash, sexy, and illiterate, Chloe protects herself from getting hurt, wearing an armor of toughness. She is trapped with nowhere safe to go. At home she has to deal with her mum's new abusive boyfriend and at school she is an outsider, bullied by her classmates.

At school, she hides behind her flirtations, attracting 'odd boy' Chris, who describes her; *'Bombshell. Deluxe. Delectable. Devine. Chloe from the underworld arrived. A porn star's love child, slight curvature of the spine, the hint of a limp she's trying to hide.'*

With Chris, she is both cautious and wild. She asks him, *"What's a poet got that a dyslexic can use?"* Her only experience of sexuality has taught her that her body is greatest weapon, but also her greatest vulnerability. Unable to handle rejection, she goads Chris into becoming abusive, almost using this as her armor to stop getting hurt.

Chloe is at a crossroads, with two different paths stretching before her; the path that everyone expects her to take, or making a new future.

CHRIS

Chris is the opposite of cool. He is a typical teenager with raging hormones. Though Chloe sees him as an 'odd boy', he forms an intense connection with her as he is an outsider too, with no real friends of his own. He has an escape from his small town life planned out via education, with his Dad tutoring him at home for entrance exams. Chris enjoys reading romantic literature and in his mind, sets Chloe up as a romantic heroine that needs saving.

His parents are failed artists; his Dad a writer and his mum a painter. *"Great artists, that's what my folks had in mind, before they got stuck in this town, went supine."* His mum drinks to avoid confrontation with his father, who says to Chris, *'You'll end up like her, painting your way to the middle.'*

His Dad, also his school teacher, puts great pressure on Chris to become a writer and fulfill his own dream, instead of being stuck in this small town.

DONALD

Donald is the school teacher and Chris' father. He identifies Chloe's dyslexia early and tries to provide her with tools to overcome it. He is tough with his son and wants him to live out his own unfulfilled dream of being a writer. It is not clear why Donald has ended up in this town and why he hasn't left

before, or sent Chris to boarding school. He seems to want to keep Chris close and feels that his teaching is the best opportunity for Chris. His wife drinks and he doesn't appreciate or understand his wife's artistic endeavours. He feels that Chloe is a distraction for Chris and is unimpressed with their relationship.

BILL

Bill is Chloe's mother's boyfriend. He is an explosive man, particularly getting jealous of Janelle and who she is talking to. He hits Janelle and has no problem hitting Chloe if she gets in the way.

JANELLE

Janelle is Chloe's mum. Her own family has died, including her husband, Chloe's dad and she seems to have had many bad relationships since, before coming to live with Bill. She is wrapped up in her and Bill's world, wanting to have a baby with him and she doesn't either care or notice that Chloe hasn't been at school after she is hit by Bill.



Interesting Reading

ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE MYTH

This is where we live, borrows the bare bones from the Greek tale *Orpheus and Eurydice*. There's no mythical underworld that Chloe and Chris need escape from, although their hell is a fear of stasis and predetermination, and the only escape they can see is through each other.

Chris refers to Chloe as '*from the underworld*,' and often says that he wants to save or rescue her. At the end, after she hurts him, she begs him to look at her, "*Nobody's looking back at me. I'm in the underworld, now.*" She has lost him and the hope of him rescuing her.

There are a few different versions of the Greek tale. Orpheus, the son of Apollo is a talented musician, rivaling only the gods. He falls in love with Eurydice, a woman of unique beauty, whom he marries. However, one day a viper stings her and she dies. Devastated, Orpheus sings of his grief, and both humans and gods become deeply touched by his sorrow. Protected by the Gods he travels down into the underworld to beg Hades for her return.

He successfully charms the creatures of death with his sweet music, and finally Hades agrees to give Eurydice back to Orpheus on one condition: Orpheus must not look back at his wife as she follows him back above ground. If Orpheus was patient enough, he would have Eurydice as a normal woman again on his side. A delighted Orpheus thanks the gods and begins to ascend to the living world.

Not convinced that Eurydice is following him, he tries to hear her footsteps, but fails. Of course Eurydice was behind him, but as a shadow, waiting to come to light to become a full woman again. Believing that the gods had fooled him, he loses faith and turns to see Eurydice behind him, but her shadow is whisked back among the dead, gone forever. Orpheus tries to return to the Underworld, but a man cannot enter alive twice.

In one version, Orpheus started playing a mourning song calling for death, so beasts came to kill him. In another version of the story, Zeus decides to strike him with lightning, so that Orpheus doesn't reveal the secrets of the Underworld. In both stories, Orpheus dies, but the Muses keep his head to sing for the people and enchant everyone with his lovely melodies.

DYSLEXIA

Chloe has dyslexia. She is called to read from the board in class, something that is terrifying for her. "*Son.Nat.To. Words swirl, I'm running through the vowels clutching for a hard letter to hold on to or drown. Lilies that. Lilies that. Fest. Fest. Fast? Someone going to help me out here. Waving. Waving. Drowning now.*"

Dyslexia is also known as reading disorder or alexia. It is a learning difficulty characterised by trouble reading, despite normal intelligence. Problems include sounding out words, spelling words, reading quickly, writing words, pronouncing words when reading aloud and understanding what was read.

Dyslexia is the most common learning disability. It affects about 3% to 7% of people.

DOSTOEVSKY

Chris reads a lot of romantic literature and when he describes his love for Chloe, he references Dostoevsky, "*That's what I hoped for, with all that Dostoevsky, I thought my love would arrive wearing fingerless gloves, in a syphilis bath.*"

Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-1881) was a Russian novelist, journalist and short-story writer whose psychological penetration into the human soul had a profound influence on the 20th century novel.

His first novel, *Poor Folk*, was published in 1846 when he was 25. His major works include *Crime and Punishment* (1866), *The Idiot* (1869), *Demons* (1872) and *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880).

Poor Folk describes the relationship between the elderly official Makar and the young seamstress Varvara, remote relatives who write letters to each other. An unscrupulous merchant finds the inexperienced girl and hires her as his housewife and guarantor. He sends her to a manor somewhere, while Makar alleviates his misery and pain with alcohol.

Crime and Punishment describes Rodion's life, from the murder of a pawnbroker, through spiritual regeneration with the help of Sonya (a "hooker with a heart of gold"), to his sentence in Siberia.

BAUDELAIRE – Une Malabaraise

When Chris' dad finds him reading *Une Malabaraise*, he says, "My dear boy, my only son that puerile imperialist exotica excuse for a poem."

Charles-Pierre Baudelaire is a French poet born in 1821. He tried to forge links between evil and beauty, the joy fleeting and unattainable ideal, the violence and sensuality, but also between the poet and the reader and even between artists. Besides poems, he expressed the melancholy, horror and envy through the exotic.

MESOTHELIOMA

Chloe's Dad died of Mesothelioma.

Mesothelioma is an aggressive cancer affecting the membrane lining of the lungs and abdomen. It is primarily caused by exposure to asbestos.

Asbestos is a microscopic and naturally-occurring mineral that lodges in the lining of the lungs. In most cases, several years will pass (up to 60) before mesothelioma develops in those who have been exposed to asbestos. There is currently no known cure for mesothelioma.

SCOLIOSIS

It is never made clear why Chloe has a limp. There is mention of polio and spina bifida, but it is assumed she has scoliosis.

Scoliosis is an abnormal sideways curve of the spine. The cause is usually unknown. Surgery is recommended in severe cases. Mild scoliosis generally does not need treatment. However, severe scoliosis is painful and debilitating and tends to worsen with age. An orthopedic brace may be used for children prior to adolescence.

POLIO

Polio is a contagious, historically devastating disease that was virtually eliminated from the Western hemisphere, in the second half of the 20th century. The polio vaccine was introduced in 1955.

SPINA BIFIDA

Spina bifida is the incomplete formation of the spine and spinal cord which occurs during the first month of a baby's development in the womb. It is a common form of neural tube defect (NTD).

LIMERICK

The teacher, Donald refers to poetry and gets Chloe to read a limerick. A limerick is a five lined poem often comical, nonsensical, and sometimes even lewd. Composed of five lines, the limerick adheres to a strict rhyme scheme and bouncy rhythm, making it easy to memorize.

Typically, the first two lines rhyme with each other, the third and fourth rhyme together, and the fifth line either repeats the first line or rhymes with it. The limerick's anapestic rhythm is created by an accentual pattern that contains many sets of double weakly-stressed syllables.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The statistics surrounding domestic violence are frightening;

- **EVERY week**, on average, one Australian woman is killed by a current or former partner.
- More than 27,000 domestic violence assaults were reported to police last year in NSW alone
- 30 per cent of all homicide cases are due to domestic violence
- One in three women in Australia has experienced some sort of violence since the age of 15
- One in five Australian women have been stalked
- It's the leading contributor to death, disability and ill-health in Australian women aged 15-44

These distressing figures show that something needs to be done about domestic violence, but public attitude towards it is just as shocking. 40 per cent of people believe that rape results from men not being able to control their need for sex. One in five people believes that domestic violence can be excused if people get so angry they lose control.

In 2014, Chief of Army David Morrison said domestic violence is "*an absolutely existential issue*" for Australia and "*we need to do something about it. Most Australians, I would think, don't know that one woman is killed by her partner or former partner every single week.*"

In *This is Where We Live*, Chloe has to deal with this issue. In one scene, she steps in to help her mother and ends up getting hit herself. This is not the first time that she's done this. Later, she wonders what it would be like not to step in and eventually chooses not to, despite her mum calling for help.

Domestic violence affects children. All children are affected emotionally by witnessing violence. Children who witness regular acts of domestic (family) violence have greater emotional and behavioural problems than other children.

Some of the effects include: blaming themselves, nightmares, trouble sleeping, becoming anxious, displaying aggressive or destructive behavior, withdrawing from people, becoming victims of bullying, displaying speech difficulties and misusing drugs and alcohol.

A child growing up in an abusive household learns to solve their problems using violence, rather than through more peaceful means. Some of the long-term effects may include copying their parental role models and behaving in similarly destructive ways in their adult relationships.

Children may learn that it is acceptable to behave in a degrading way to other people, as they have seen this occur in the violent episodes they have witnessed.

In an emergency police urge all victims of domestic violence to phone 000 or 131 444 for police attendance.

For support, phone the Domestic Violence Crisis Service on 1300 782 200 or Crisis Care on 131 611.

Designer

MORAG COOK

Morag studied Theatre Design at AC Arts (formerly AIT Arts), graduating 2002 and in 2008 she held the position of Associate Artist at State Theatre Company.

Morag's design credits have been varied. For State Theatre Company, her credits include *Holding the Man, God of Carnage, Seven Stages of Grieving, Mnemonic, The Dumb Waiter* and *Ruby Moon*. Other theatre credits include *the Moon's a Balloon* (Patch Theatre Company), *Nothing* (Australian Dance Theatre), *Cat, The Sad Ballad of Penny Dreadful* (Windmill Theatre) *Constance Drinkwater and the Final Days of Somerset* (Darwin Theatre Company), and *Blackout* (Stone Castro/ Adelaide Festival). Morag was also the Opening night event designer for the 2003 and 2013 Come Out Festivals.

She has worked for many years in Community Arts, Events, Education, and Youth Arts for Unley City Council, Uniting Communities, Community Arts Network, Flinders University, Urban Myth Theatre of Youth, Cirkidz, Kaurna plains primary school, OARS, CAVAN Detention Centre and Nunkuwarrin Yunti (Aboriginal Healing Centre).

INTERVIEW WITH DESIGNER

1. What is the starting point when beginning a design?

The starting point can be different for every play. You would start by doing a thorough first read. This can be the most important read and I often will do this in a very quiet place and let my imagination suck up all of the images and thoughts that come to me. This tends to influence how I start working on the play.

This is Where We Live is a very moody and poetic work. You go on a huge and very deep emotional journey with our characters. Although the play is set in many locations, we never stay in one place for a long time. The playwright wants us to really feel the emotions of the characters, rather than where they are and so I focused on what each scene felt like. I looked at lots of abstract art. One artist that I loved in relation to the mood was Jeffery Smart. He really captures the heat and stillness of the some scenes in the play and another was Mark Rothco who uses colour to describe feelings.

2. What are the main challenges in designing for this play?

It's always challenging to design a touring set that has to work in small and large venues. I also found the play challenging. The characters have a very difficult journey in their lives and it's hard to re-read the script when you know how hard their lives are. I feel sad for them.

It was also a challenge to design a set that could create a mood, not be specific about 'place', provide surfaces for an actor to work against and be engaging all at the same time.

3. You said that you found an image of twisted metal that was the springboard for this design. In what way does an image like this dictate the design process?

This image came from the searching for abstraction describing the play's emotions. I looked a lot at contemporary sculpture and one of the images had twisted metal. Both the director and I loved the twisted form. We were looking for real object that might be able to incorporate the twisted metal and the director suggested a broken concrete pipe. As an object, it speaks metaphorically about the pressures we can feel, journey, escape and decay as well as referencing the Orpheus of the underworld myth.

4. What are the main themes that stand out to you in the play, and how are these represented in your design?

I feel very strongly that the play is talking to those of us who might have great difficulties in life. The things that we have been burdened with do not need to define who we become. We can choose to take control of these things. We are smart enough to change the path that our lives take.

Chloe is a person, who has already had a very hard life, but despite this, she keeps fighting to change her destiny and her teacher helps her visualise a positive future.

5. When in the process do you work with the Lighting Designer, and how important is this to your overall design?

The relationship with the lighting designer is a really exciting one. I love giving over my design to the lighting designer to find a new level or a new way of looking at the set.

I tend to visualise the possibilities for the set in terms of lighting from quite early on and I can work with a lighting designer early in the process, but when I work for a company like State Theatre Company, the first discussions tend to happen after the presentation. This will often be the first time that the lighting designer gets to see the design. I like to use this time to show images that inspired me and chat about different ways that I visualise light playing on the set. I also discuss moods and colours.

Throughout the rehearsal process I will keep chatting with the lighting designer about different ideas and where the action takes place on the set.

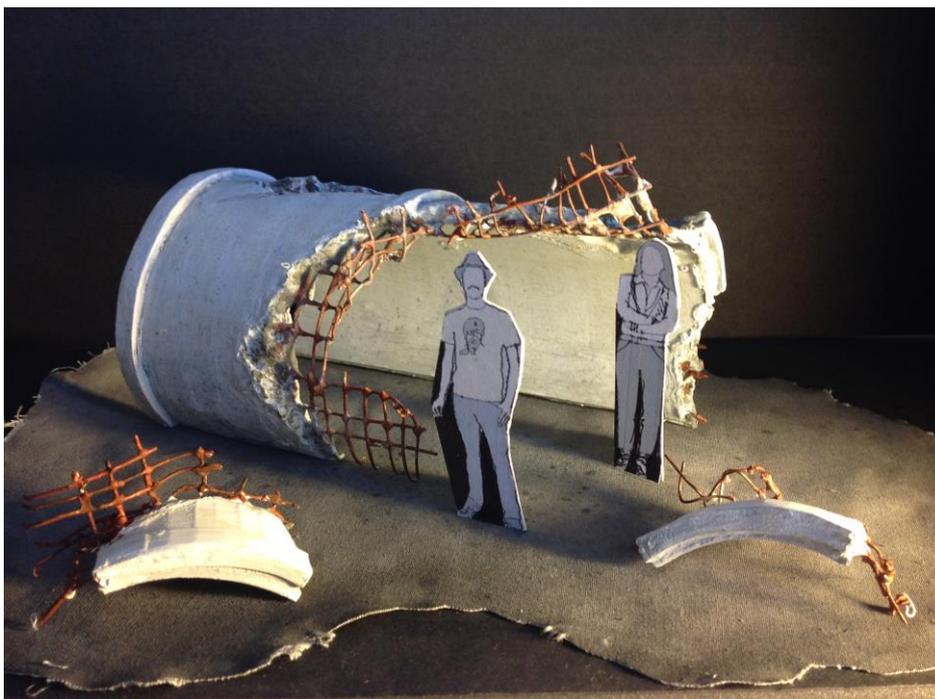
Design

SET DESIGN

In this design, the Director, Jon Halpin and Designer, Morag Cook wanted to create an abstract world, reminiscent of the underworld theme. The design is used to represent confinement and isolation of being in a small town and a brokenness or decay of the ideals of the characters. It also needed to be vulnerable, representing the adolescence of the two characters.



The starting point was from considering a sculpture of twisted monkey bars (like above) and the reinforcing wire which goes inside concrete. This led them to thinking about a concrete pipe. It is a vessel of movement for water and sewerage, but when it is broken, it's no longer a vessel. Left broken and discarded, it becomes a clumsy shelter and refuge for Chloe and Chris. The broken pieces and twisted metal represent the character's inner struggles.



The script calls for many settings, and to be literal with the staging would mean too many changes and would take away from the characters' journey. It is also surreal, not a real place, so there is no graffiti, just the representation of a vessel.

The pipe represents all settings; broken pieces at the front are structured and ordered like a classroom; inside the pipe becomes the sanctuary of the creek; and light projections on the metal give the space different meanings.

The design also needed to be portable as the show goes to Albury/Wodonga before coming back to Adelaide and then regional South Australia. Considerations needed to be made about the size of the set, how it can be broken down and put together in a three-hour bump in.

COSTUME DESIGN

The characters needed to be easily relatable and recognisable as contemporary teenagers. Chris' clothes consist of jeans and a short sleeved shirt. Chloe is more 'pale grunge' with shorts, tights and check shirt that can be tied around the waist or closed in around her.



Essay Questions

ENGLISH QUESTIONS

1. Explain the differences in the writing style for the two characters of Chloe and Chris.
2. What do you think is the overall message of the play?
3. How much can a young person break free of their background? Does where you come from always determine, at some level, where you end up? Discuss
4. Explain the purpose for using onomatopoeia and how you think it affects the play.
5. In the creek bed, the words Chloe and Chris speak are echoed. However, in the script, they are written to be read by the actors, not used as a sound device. What effect does this have on the scene?
6. How well do the other characters' voices come through in the script?
7. Discuss the poem at the ending of the play. What do you think it means?
8. The playwright Vivienne says that there are elements of hip-hop in her writing. Discuss.

DRAMA QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the conventions of the play with the two main characters taking on other character voices, talking to the audience and their internal conversations. How well do these work in the play?
2. Think about the set design and discuss how it relates to the themes of the play. How well do you think the set design worked?
3. How does the mood of the play change with the lighting? Discuss
4. Discuss how the costumes represent the personalities of the characters.
5. Minimal props are used in this play. Discuss this as a technique and what choice you'd make as a director.
6. Choosing either Chloe or Chris, write a monologue from their perspective, five years from now. Where are they, what has happened, how do they feel and do they reminisce about their final year of school?

WRITTEN TASK

Here is a short list of onomatopoeia words. Choose three words from the list and use them to write your own poem.

Zap	Gurgle	Achoo	Boom
Jingle	Clanging	Fizz	Pop
Hiss	Rattle	Vroom	Smash

DESIGN TASK

Design your own set for the play. Remember to think about how the different scenes can be represented.

Post-Show Reflection

PRODUCTION & PERFORMANCE ELEMENTS

	Production elements	Performance elements
Strengths		
Impact on audiences		
Weaknesses		

TECHNICAL ELEMENTS

Design role	Technique	What did this contribute to the performance?
Lighting	<i>one</i>	
	<i>two</i>	
	<i>three</i>	
Music	<i>one</i>	
	<i>two</i>	
	<i>three</i>	
Stage & Costume Design	<i>one</i>	
	<i>two</i>	
	<i>three</i>	

References

PLAYWRIGHT & REVIEWS

<http://bodyliterature.com/2014/09/02/vivienne-walsh/>
www.wow247.co.uk/blog/2014/08/04/this-is-where-we-live/
www.broadwaybaby.com/shows/this-is-where-we-live/701198
www.timeout.com/newyork/theater/this-is-where-we-live
<http://hyreviews.com/fringenyc2014-reviews.htm#TIWWL>
www.bristolpost.co.uk/Live-new-play-Bristol-s-Alma-Tavern/story-21937848-detail/story.html#ixzz3AEBYRKbv
www.au.timeout.com/sydney/theatre/events/35005/this-is-where-we-live
www.au.timeout.com/sydney/theatre/features/12267/vivienne-walsh

INTERESTING READING

www.gradesaver.com/mythology/study-guide/section7/
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dyslexia>
www.online-literature.com/dostoevsky/
www.mesothelioma.com/mesothelioma/#ixzz3TvsK6oij
http://kidshealth.org/parent/infections/bacterial_viral/polio.html
www.scoliosis-australia.org/scoliosis/about_scoliosis.html
<http://examples.yourdictionary.com/limerick-examples.html>
www.poets.org/poetsorg/text/poetic-form-limerick
www.news.com.au/lifestyle/the-numbers-that-will-shock-you-to-tears/story-fneszs56-1227134136506
www.sbfv.org.au/spina-bifida-the-facts/
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fyodor_Dostoyevsky
<http://www.poetry4kids.com/blog/news/onomatopoeia-poetry-lesson-plan/>
http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/domestic_violence_and_children

PHOTOS

Rehearsal Photos by Shane Reid

1. Matilda Bailey & James Smith
2. James Smith, Jon Halpin & Matilda Bailey
3. Matilda Bailey & James Smith
4. The rehearsal room

Set Design & Costume Design images provided by designer, Morag Cook