

VCE

THEATRE

STUDIES

BLACK LIGHT

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED
BY JADA ALBERTS

PROMPT PACK B



MALTHOUSE EDUCATION

MALTHOUSE THEATRE
ACKNOWLEDGES THE
UNCEDDED LANDS OF
THE KULIN NATION. WE
ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR
SOVEREIGNTY AND
THEIR SONGLINES. WE
PAY RESPECT TO THEIR
ELDERS AND THEIR
CHILDREN. WE EMBRACE
AND CELEBRATE THE
OLDEST CULTURE IN
THE WORLD.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	2
PUTTING IT TOGETHER	4
CAST & CREATIVE TEAM	6
IN THEIR WORDS	12
PAGE TO STAGE	18
CONTEXTS	22
THEMES	30
CHOICES	32
HOW DID THEY DO IT?	36
ACTING	40
DIRECTION	42
DESIGN	44
RESOURCES	48

MALTHOUSE THEATRE PRESENTS *BLACK LIGHT*.

© Copyright 2026 Malthouse Theatre

COVER IMAGE / Pia Johnson
PRODUCTION PHOTOGRAPHY / Pia Johnson
REHEARSAL PHOTOGRAPHY / T J Garvie

Prompt Pack written and compiled by Lyall Brooks,
Malthouse Education Coordinator

INTRODUCTION

I hope you enjoyed our Malthouse production of *Black Light* – and that it's given you plenty of exciting things to discuss!

This Prompt Pack B picks up where Prompt Pack A left off, this time with a post-show collection of provocations, questions, observations and activities, designed to support you and your students' analysis and evaluation of this stage interpretation – and journey towards their final VCE Theatre Studies exams.

This pack is separated into three main chapters. **Putting It Together** gives you more background on our team, and compiles interviews and notes from several of our creatives. **Page To Stage** revisits some of the contexts and themes of the written playtext and is targeted at Unit 3's analysis of the interpretation of the text to stage. **How Did They Do It?** is focussed on Unit 4's interrogation of the production's interrelationship between acting, direction and design to create a cohesive whole. Finally, there are **Resources** at the end to add to your comprehensive library of contextual and background information.

I encourage teachers to support students to use the entire Prompt Pack, no matter which Unit's Playlist they are studying *Black Light* for. And of course, I highly recommend classes book in for Malthouse Education's **Revisit The Play** sessions later in the year in preparation for their final exams.

Remember that our Prompt Packs do not provide definitive answers; rather, students should use these insights and information to springboard into their own further study and discussion.

Whether it's related to this production, Theatre Studies in general, or even their wider school life, remember to keep alert to your students' wellbeing across this stressful year, and remind the classroom of the support offered by organisations such as **kidshelpline.com.au** and others you can find in Prompt Pack A.

As always, please get in touch with me at **lbrooks@malthousetheatre.com.au** if you have any questions, concerns, queries or quandaries!

All the very best and see you again soon.



Lyall Brooks

Malthouse Theatre Education Coordinator

PUTTING IT TOGETHER



CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM



TAHLEE FEREDAY
BUB

Tahlee Fereday (she/her) is a Jaru woman. As a First Nations and queer artist, Tahlee is a passionate advocate for the representation of minority voices on Australia's main stages and screens.

Malthouse Theatre: *Because the Night* and *Blackie Blackie Brown*.

Other Theatre: *Love* (Dee & Cornelius); *Bernhardt/Hamlet*, *Astroman*, *Cybec Electric* and *First Stage* (Melbourne Theatre Company); *Fallen* (She Said Theatre) and *Alternative Futures* (Theatre Works).

Film: *Penny Lane is Dead* (dir. Mia Kate Russell); *Jones Family Christmas* (dir. Stef Smith) and *Blue Canaries* (dir. Andy Lane and Luke Mounsey).

Television: *Erotic Stories* (Lingo Pictures/SBS); *Fisk* (Porchlight Films/ABC/Netflix) and *Superwog* (Princess Pictures/ABC).

Training: Victorian College of the Arts (VCA).

@tferdz



LISA MAZA
MUM

Lisa Maza (she/her) is a Meriam, Yidinji and Dutch professional actor, singer and producer whose career spans almost thirty years. Lisa's relationship with ILBIJERRI Theatre Company began in 1999 and she proudly served on the Company's Board of Management for over a decade, helping shape contemporary Blak theatre.

Malthouse Theatre: *The Lockdown Monologues*, *Yanagai! Yanagai!*, *Enuff*, *The Twilight Series* and *Stolen* (including international tour).

Other Theatre: *Black Ties*, *Goodbye Aunty Flo*, *Viral*, *Glorious Baastards*, *Sisters of Gelam*, *Yanagai! Yanagai!* and *Stolen* (ILBIJERRI Theatre Company); *A Wake – A Woke Mob* (ILBIJERRI Theatre Company/Melbourne Theatre Company); *Ngadjung* (Belconnen Arts); *The Sapphires* (Belvoir/Black Swan State Theatre Company); *A Letter for Molly* (Ensemble Theatre); *Emilia* (Essential Theatre); *Waltzing the Wilarra* (HIT Productions); *Unprecedented* (Hothouse Theatre Company); *From Darkness* (La Boite Theatre); *The Rabbits* (Opera Australia/Barking Gecko); *Hide the Dog* (Performing Lines) and *The Season* (Tasmania Performs).

Film: *Windcatcher* (dir. Tanith Glynn-Maloney) and *Paper Cut* (short, dir. Virginia Gay).

Television: *Bad Ancestors* (Purple Carrot Entertainment); *New Gold Mountain* (Goalpost Pictures/SBS); *True Story with Hamish & Andy* (Radio Karate/Warner Bros.); *Wentworth* (FremantleMedia Australia/FOXTEL); *House Husbands* (Playmaker Media/Nine Network); *City Homicide* and *Blue Heelers* (Southern Star/Seven Network); *Kath & Kim* (Riley Turner Productions/ABC) and *Stingers* (Nine Network).

Awards & Nominations: 2016 Tasmanian Theatre Award for Best Supporting Actor (*The Season*).



RACHAEL MAZA
AUNTY

Rachael Maza (she/her) is one of Australia's most recognisable faces of the industry and was the Artistic Director of the ILBIJERRI Theatre Company from 2008-2025.

Malthouse Theatre: As Cast – *Enuff*, *Holy Day* and *The Twilight Series*. As Director – *Stolen*.

Other Theatre: As Cast – *The Tempest* (Bell Shakespeare); *Conversations with the Dead* and *The Dreamers* (Belvoir); *The Sapphires* (Melbourne Theatre Company/Sydney Festival). As Director – *Big Name*, *No Blanket*, *Heart is a Wasteland*, *Black Ties*, *Jack Charles v The Crown*, *Which Way Home*, *A Black Sheep Walks into a Baa*, *Black Sheep: Glorious Baastards*, *Chopped Liver*, *Foley*, *Jacky Jacky in the Box*, *Sisters of Gelam* and *Stolen* (ILBIJERRI Theatre Company).

Film: *Radiance* (dir. Rachel Perkins); *Lillian's Story* (dir. Jerzy Domaradzki) and *Cosi* (dir. Mark Joffe).

Television: *Crazy Fun Park*, *Fisk*, *Newton's Law*, *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries*, *SeaChange* and *Heartland* (ABC); *Wentworth* (Foxtel); *Rush* (Network 10); *Halifax f.p.* and *Stingers* (Nine Network); *Secret Daughter*, *Winners & Losers*, *Marshall Law*, *Round the Twist* and *A Country Practice* (Seven Network).

Awards & Nominations: 2021 Green Room Award's Lifetime Achievement Award; 2019 Australian Council Award for Theatre; 2001 Green Room Award for Best Performance by Female Actor, Leading Role (*Holy Day*) and Sydney Theatre Critics Circle Award for Best Performance (*Radiance*).

Training: Wester Australia Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA).



TRISHA MORTON-THOMAS
NAN

Trisha Morton-Thomas (she/her) is an Anmatyerr woman born in the Northern Territory of Australia. She is a writer, producer, director and actor who has worked in the Australian film industry since 1998.

Malthouse Theatre: Debut.

Film: *Kangaroo* (dir. Kate Woods) and *Radiance* (dir. Rachel Perkins).

Television: *High Country* (Curio Pictures/Binge); *Total Control* (Blackfella Films/ABC); *The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart* (Amazon Studios); *Ten Pound Poms* (Eleven/Stan); *True Colours* (Bunya Productions/SBS); *Maverix*, *8MMM Aboriginal Radio* (Brindle Films/ABC); and *Redfern Now* (ABC).

Other: Co-founder (with Rachel Clements) of filmmaking company, Brindle Films. Producing credits span film, television and documentaries including *Kangaroo*, *Maverix* (the largest ever local production for the NT), *Audrey Napanangka*, co-writer/co-creator for *8MMM Aboriginal Radio* and co-writer & co-director for *History Bites Back*, Occupation: *Native* and *Journey Home*, *David Gulpilil*.

Awards & Nominations: 2026 AACTA Award for Best Documentary (*Journey Home*, *David Gulpilil*) and 2026 AACTA Award nomination for Best Film (*Kangaroo*).



JADA ALBERTS
WRITER & DIRECTOR

Jada Alberts (they/them) was born and raised on their mother's country, Larrakia country (Darwin, NT), and has family ties to the Yanyuwa, Bardi and Wardaman peoples.

Malthouse Theatre: As Writer/Director – *Brothers Wreck* (premiered at Belvoir, directed by Leah Purcell).

Other Theatre: As Writer/Director – *Brothers Wreck* (State Theatre Company of South Australia). As Writer/Director/Performer – *ARETHA*. As Director – *Title and Deed* (Belvoir) and *The Seven Stages of Grieving* (Brown Marts Theatre). As Assistant Director – *The Glass Menagerie* and *Windmill Baby* (Belvoir); *Three Sisters* (Sydney Theatre Company). As Co-Writer – *Elektra/Orestes* with Anne-Louise Sarks (Belvoir); *Jarradah Gooragulli Dance Of The Brolgas* with Mooradoop Kathy Mills (Brown Marts Theatre). As Dramaturg – *Kill the Messenger* directed by Anthea Williams.

Television: Associate Script Producer and Writer – *Cleverman* (Goalpost). Writer – *Mystery Road Origin* (ABC and Bunya Productions).

Awards: Balnaves Indigenous Playwright's Award (2013) and Mona Brand Emerging Playwright's Award (2016). *Brothers Wreck* was shortlisted for Best New Australian Work at the Sydney Theatre Awards (2014) and the Nick Enright Prize at the NSW Premier's Literary Awards (2015). It was also nominated for Best Stage Play at the 2015 AWGIE Awards.

@jadajalberts



DALE FERGUSON
SET & COSTUME DESIGNER

Dale Ferguson (he/him) is a set and costume designer working with all of Australia's leading Theatre and Opera Companies with additional West End, Broadway and International Opera credits during a career spanning over thirty years.

Malthouse Theatre: *Because the Night*, *Brothers Wreck*, *Away*, *Timeshare*, *The Riders*, *Night on Bald Mountain*, *Dance of Death*, *Exit the King*, *WomanBomb*, *Rapture*, *Nightfall* and *Burning Time*.

Other Theatre: *The Jungle and the Sea*, *Counting and Cracking*, *Sami in Paradise*, *The Blind Giant is Dancing* and *The Judas Kiss* (Belvoir); *And Then There Were None* (Crossroads Live); *Death of a Salesman* (GWB Entertainment); *Lucia Di Lammermoor* (Melbourne Opera); *Julius Caesar* (Melbourne Shakespeare Company); *The Removalists*, *Come Rain or Come Shine*, *Emerald City*, *Cosi*, *An Ideal Husband*, *Born Yesterday*, *The Weir*, *The Speechmaker*, *The Crucible* and *Top Girls* (Melbourne Theatre Company); *Julius Caesar in Egypt* (Pinchgut Opera); *L'Appartement* (Queensland Theatre); *A German Life* (State Theatre Company South Australia/Adelaide Festival) and *Les Liasions Dangereues* (Sydney Theatre Company).

Awards & Nominations: Helpmann Awards for Best Scenic Design (*Counting and Cracking*, *August Osage County*); seven Green Room Awards for Best Design (*Counting and Cracking* most recently); Tony Award nomination for Best Scenic Design (Play) and Drama Desk Award nomination for Outstanding Set Design of a Play (*Exit the King*, originating at The Malthouse).

fergusondesign.com.au

CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM



JENNY HECTOR
LIGHTING DESIGNER

Jenny Hector (she/her) is a Melbourne-based designer, whose designs have been experienced nationally and internationally.

Malthouse Theatre: *Inside 03: the Technology Project*.

Other Theatre: As Lighting Designer – *Class Act* (APHIDS); *Storytime: Nutcracker* (The Australian Ballet); *Miracle* (BalletLab); *Madeleine* (Black Sequin Productions/Arts House); *Lung Swara* (Chawati Sugarto, Aviva Endean & Matthais Schack-Arnott); *Rewards for the Tribe* (Chunky Move); *Bad Boy* and *RUNT* (Dee, Cornelius and Wilks); *Exodus II* (Fraught Outfit); SUB (Guts Dance); *Please Stand* (Hersch & Thoms); *Big Name, No Blankets* (ILBIJERRI Theatre Company); *The Seen* and *The Unseen* (Kamila Andini/Asia TOPA); *X-Risk* (Kuopio Finland); *Is God Is* (Melbourne Theatre Company/Sydney Theatre Company); *Opera for the Dead* (Monica Lim & Mindy Meng Wang); *Stellar* (Prue Lang); *Out of Light* (Sandra Parker); *Strangers Make the World Together* (Stompin Youth Dance Company); *The Howling Girls* (Sydney Chamber Orchestra for Tokyo Festival World Competition 2019) and *Beacon* (TasDance). As Set & Lighting Designer – *Blood on the Dance Floor* (Jacob Boehme); *Overture* (Jo Lloyd) and *Imagined Touch* (Jodee Mundy).

Awards & Nominations: Green Room Award for Best Lighting Design in Theatre (*Miracle*); Green Room Award for Best Lighting Design in Theatre (*Madeleine*, with Ben Cobham); 2016 Green Room Award for Technical Achievement.

Training: Victorian College of the Arts (VCA).

@necartcat



KELLY RYALL
COMPOSER & SOUND DESIGNER

Kelly Ryall (he/him) is an award-winning composer, musician and sound designer for theatre, dance, and film.

Malthouse Theatre: *The Trial, Truth, Nosferatu, Brothers Wreck* (with State Theatre Company South Australia), *Edward II, The Shadow King* (including tour to Barbican), *Dance of Death, One Night the Moon* and *Die Winterreise* (with Thin Ice / Brisbane Festival).

Other Theatre: *Romeo & Juliet, As You Like It, Tartuffe, Phedre, Henry IV, Macbeth, Julius Caesar* and *The School for Wives* (Bell Shakespeare); *Orlando, Title and Deed, Nora, Hedda Gabler, Cinderella, Kill The Messenger* and *Love Me Tender* (Belvoir); *Switzerland* and *Suddenly Last Summer* (Ensemble Theatre); *The Boys* (with Sydney Festival) and *And No More Shall We Part* (Griffin Theatre Company); *Destiny, Mother Play* (a play in five evictions), *The Almighty Sometimes, My Sister Jill, A View from the Bridge, Working with Children, Di Viv and Rose, Hay Fever, Three Little Words, Double Indemnity, Peddling, Rupert* (including tour to Sydney's Theatre Royal and The Kennedy Centre, Washington, D.C.), *The Crucible, On the Production of Monsters* and *Return to Earth* (Melbourne Theatre Company); *Hedda* and *Scenes from a Marriage* (Queensland Theatre) and *Triple X* (with Queensland Theatre) and *Boys Will Be Boys* (Sydney Theatre Company).

@kellyryall



TOMAS PARRISH-CHYNOWETH
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Tomas Parrish-Chynoweth (they/them) is a multidisciplinary artist living and working on the unceded Lands of the Wurundjeri-Balluk. Their work centres questions of justice, care and ancestry, often exploring queer lineage and familial ties. tomas is currently studying at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music where they are a doctoral candidate researching care practices within music making and composing their first symphony.

Malthouse Theatre: Debut.

Other Theatre: As Cast – *Our Monster's Name is Jerry* (Dirty Pennies Theatre Project/Theatre Works); *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (Hayes Theatre Co.); *Metropolis* (Little Eggs Collective/Hayes Theatre Co.); *What If If Only* (Melbourne Theatre Company) and *threadbare* (Nick Mayer Productions/St Martins Youth Arts Centre).

Television: *In Our Blood* (Hoodlum Productions/ABC)

Other: As playwright, their debut play, *threadbare*, premiered at St Martin's Youth Arts Centre in 2025.

Training: Victorian College of the Arts (VCA); Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

@tomas.parrish



KEZIAH WARNER
DRAMATURG

Keziah Warner (she/her) is an award-winning playwright and dramaturg. She has three plays published by Currency Press including *Nosferatu*, *Control* and *What's Yours*. Keziah's next play, *Possessions*, commissioned with the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA), is set to premiere in June 2026.

Malthouse Theatre: As Writer – *Hour of the Wolf* and *Nosferatu*. Keziah is currently on staff as the New Work Associate, Script Development.

Other Theatre: As Writer – *Her Father's Daughter* (Hotel Now); *Poona* (Next Wave); *What's Yours* and *Control* (Red Stitch Actors' Theatre). Developments and readings include *Help Yourself* (Melbourne Theatre Company's Cybec Electric) and *LuNa* (Victorian College of the Arts).

Other: Currently an Associate Artist at Geelong Arts Centre

Awards & Nominations: 2019 Patrick White Playwrights Award winner with Sydney Theatre Company; 2025 AWGIE Award nomination for Interactive & Gaming (*Hour of the Wolf*); and 2024 Lysicrates Prize finalist. Keziah has been shortlisted for the Shane & Cathryn Brennan Prize, the Griffin Award, Max Afford Playwrights Award, Rodney Seaborn Playwrights Award, Martin-Lysicrates Prize, Soho Theatre Young Writer's Award and received Highly Commended for the Victorian Premier's Literary Award.



JESSICA ARTHUR
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Jessica Arthur (she/her) is a director and dramaturg, working in an open and devised manner, experimenting with form and audience perception. Jessica was Sydney Theatre Company's Richard Wherrett Fellow in 2017 and later promoted to Resident Director in 2018-2022.

Malthouse Theatre: Jessica is currently on staff as the New Work Associate, Artist Development.

Other Theatre: As Director – *Lose to Win* (Belvoir); *The Wolves* (Belvoir/Red Line Productions); *Koreaboo* (Griffin Theatre Company); *Two Hearts* (KXT/Bakehouse Theatre Company); *Kindness* and *Realism* (NIDA); *All the Fraudulent Horse Girls* (The Old Fitz); *The Bugalugs Bum Thief* (Redline Productions); *The Dictionary of Lost Words* and *Chalk Face* (State Theatre Company South Australia/Sydney Theatre Company); *The Shiralee, The Tenant of Wildfell Hall, Grand Horizons, Home I'm Darling, Wonnangatta, Banging Denmark, Mosquitoes* and *Lethal Indifference* (Sydney Theatre Company).

Training: NIDA (Directing); Monash University (Performing Arts).

www.jessicakarthur.com



SUZANNE HEYWOOD
VOICE & TEXT COACH

Suzanne Heywood (she/her) is delighted to be returning to the Malthouse and to be working again with Jada Alberts.

Malthouse Theatre: *Telethon Kid, Nosferatu, K-Box, Because the Night, Cloudstreet, Brothers Wreck, Blasted, The Real* and *Imagined History of the Elephant Man, Picnic at Hanging Rock, Timeshare, The Shadow King* and *Blood Wedding*.

Other Theatre: *Girl Talk* (Hit Productions); *The Crucible, M. Butterfly, Racing Demons, Great Expectations, The Other Place, Buyer and Cellar* and *Disgraced* (Melbourne Theatre Company); *Bad Jews* (Vass Productions); *The Happy End* (Victorian Opera) and *Yes, Prime Minister* (YPM International). As Resident dialogue/dialect coach – *Sunset Boulevard, Chicago, Cabaret, Mamma Mia, The Wizard of Oz, The Full Monty, High School Musical, The Lion King, West Side Story, Annie, South Pacific* and as Resident Acting Coach, *Dirty Dancing*. She has also coached the dancers of The Australian Ballet and Chunky Move.

Film: *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* (dir. Shawn Seet).

Television: *The Slap, Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries, Curtain, Last Man Standing, Something in the Air, Raw FM* and *Simone de Beauvoir's Babies* (ABC); *Olivia Newton-John: Hopelessly Devoted to You* (FremantleMedia/Seven Network); *Neighbours* (Grundtvig Television/Network Ten); *Horace and Tina* and *Treasure Island* (Jonathan M. Schiff Productions) and *Child Hood's End* (Universal).

CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM



JESS KEEPECE
STAGE MANAGER

Jessica Arthur (she/her) is a director and dramaturg, working in an open and devised manner, experimenting with form and audience perception. Jessica was Sydney Theatre Company's Richard Wherrett Fellow in 2017 and later promoted to Resident Director in 2018-2022.

Malthouse Theatre: Jessica is currently on staff as the New Work Associate, Artist Development.

Other Theatre: As Director – *Lose to Win* (Belvoir); *The Wolves* (Belvoir/Red Line Productions); *Koreaboo* (Griffin Theatre Company); *Two Hearts* (KXT/Bakehouse Theatre Company); *Kindness and Realism* (NIDA); *All the Fraudulent Horse Girls* (The Old Fitz); *The Bugalugs Bum Thief* (Redline Productions); *The Dictionary of Lost Words* and *Chalk Face* (State Theatre Company South Australia/Sydney Theatre Company); *The Shiralee*, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, *Grand Horizons*, *Home I'm Darling*, *Wonnangatta*, *Banging Denmark*, *Mosquitoes* and *Lethal Indifference* (Sydney Theatre Company).

Training: NIDA (Directing); Monash University (Performing Arts).

www.jessicakarthur.com



ROSEMARY OSMOND
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

Rosemary Osmond (she/her) is a Melbourne based stage manager with a background in education and dance. She holds an interest in collaborative and movement led processes and developing accessible work environments.

Malthouse Theatre: As Stage Manager – *Who No Kno Go Kno* and *The Birds*; as Assistant Stage Manager – *Truth*, *F*ck Christmas*, *Macbeth* (an undoing), *Yentl* and *Hour of the Wolf*.

Other Theatre: As Stage Manager – *Technique* (Elbow Room); *June* (Fabricated Rooms), *Pinocchio* (Make A Scene), *I Hope this Means Something* (Patrick Livesy) and *The Paper Escaper* (Terrapin, Australian Tour). As Assistant Stage Manager – *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* (Michael Cassel Group).

Other: Production Assistant for Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

Training: Victorian College of Arts (VCA).



ELLA FERRIS
STANDBY

Ella Ferris (she/her) is a Taribelang Bunda and South Sea Islander artist from Cairns, Queensland.

Malthouse Theatre: Debut.

Other Theatre: *Tracker* (ILBIJERI Theatre Company/Australian Dance Theatre); *Creature* (Box of Birds Theatre); Evonne Goolagong in *Sunshine Super Girl* (Performing Lines) and *Honour* (Red Stitch Actors' Theatre).

Television: *Scrublands* (Stan).

Training: Victorian College of the Arts (VCA, Acting); Patrick Studios Australia; The Australian Ballet School.

@fellaellaf



IN THEIR WORDS

JADA ALBERTS (WRITER & DIRECTOR)

I began thinking about this work in 2024 while I was driving alone. I made several trips across Country, some 8,000km back and forth to see my family and my maternal grandmother, Cecilia Cubillo. Her health was declining as she aged and I needed to be with her. Mostly to honour her. The sacrifices she made for the survival of those that came after her cannot be quantified with words. The same can be said of every Black mother in my ancestral line. I know this because I saw it in the three generations before me and if they had passed on before I was born, I checked. I studied their lives. I asked older family members. I searched for them in records, history books and archives. Up until I was in my early 20's, I had two great-grandmothers, both Black. As a survivor of genocide, this is incredibly fortunate. I had the privilege to truly know them as grandmothers, to spend so much time listening and learning from them. The wisdom and love they embodied and shared is the beating heart of my family lineage and the backbone of my life's work. In September this year my maternal grandmother, Cecilia, will turn 90. In a matter of days, her first great, great grandchild will be born.

When I finally began writing the words that make up this play, I was on Dharawal country, thinking about all of the Black mothers before me. I began to wonder what they might say if they were with me, how they would pass on the wisdom and culture they held, given one last earthly, spectacular chance. What came is the play you're about to watch.

Naturalism works a little differently in this world. Most of the characters you'll see on stage don't have names. My culture in practice teaches us to relate to ourselves and to each other reciprocally (two-way learning); circularly. To time and to space this way too. And then there is a dream space you'll come to know too, (not to be confused with The Dreaming). This place is somewhere-in-between. In this dream place, the character of Nan is almost completely free to guide her family back home. Back to belonging. Back to Country and to each other. I hope you remember your belonging in her words too. I hope her words remind you of your own humanity, your interconnectedness, to every living thing and the Country that holds you.

Lastly, I chose not to use a single Larrakia word in this play. That was deliberate. Despite that, *Black Light* is the most culturally informed work I've written. In the fullness of my sovereignty I've attempted to use the English language to serve a very Black purpose. I've used rhythm and poetry in an attempt to distort and bend colonial language and colonial concept. To turn a weapon used against us, as a tool to service Black knowing and being. Who knows how this little experiment will go, but thank you for coming and being a part of it. I hope you enjoy the show.

Jada Alberts
Black Light Show Program

In the following interviews, some speakers use language that doesn't align with Jada Alberts' current pronouns (they/them). The interviews have been included in full to preserve the integrity of the original conversations, but we use collaborators' correct pronouns throughout the rest of this resource.

TAHLEE FEREDAY & RACHEL MAZA (ACTORS)



Click on the above image to watch the whole interview, or head to vimeo.com/malthouse/BLActors. You can use the links to specific questions below.

- How did you prepare for the play? [Link](#)
- How did you build your character's arc? [Link](#)
- How did you navigate the non-linear structure of the play? [Link](#)
- How are you supported in your acting work by the other production elements? [Link](#)
- How do you see your relationship with the audience? [Link](#)
- What's the most exciting part of this production for you? [Link](#)

IN THEIR WORDS

DALE FERGUSON (SET & COSTUME DESIGNER)



Click on the above image to watch the whole interview, or head to vimeo.com/malthouse/BLSetCostume. You can use the links to specific questions below.

- Can you describe your inspiration and development process for the set and costume design of *Black Light*? [Link](#)
- What's the collaboration process on this play like? [Link](#)
- What part of your design process have you found the most challenging? [Link](#)
- How did you play with symmetry and contrast? [Link](#)
- What most excites you? [Link](#)
- What would you like the audience to take away from this work? [Link](#)

KELLY RYALL (COMPOSER & SOUND DESIGNER)

In the third week of Black Light rehearsals in February, the show's Composer & Sound Designer Kelly Ryall (KR) found time to sit down with Malthouse Education Coordinator Lyall Brooks (LB) for a chat. Here's an excerpt of their conversation.

LB: Can you describe your inspiration and development process for the sound design and composition of *Black Light*?

KR: Well Jada and I have worked together a few times before – we've known each other for probably ten or twelve years now. The first time we met was here, working on *Shadow King*, when Jada was acting in it. I've always loved their way of dreaming poetry into everyday moments – sort of finding the extraordinary in very ordinary worlds.

When we started discussing *Black Light*, my first response to the script was very personal – the stories of these four women. But as we explored it more deeply, Jada was also really interested in what was happening beyond their immediate world: the pressure of this impending war, or end of the world – that kind of apocalyptic quality sitting just offstage.

That really resonated with me. We often see post-apocalyptic works set in other parts of the world, so it felt powerful to experience that from an Australian perspective – and particularly from an Indigenous perspective. Sitting on a beach in Darwin feels like the last place you'd imagine the world ending, even though it already feels like the edge of the world. There's something sort of uncanny about that.

Jada had these incredible photos that clearly inspired Dale's design, but they also affected me deeply. It really felt like sitting on the edge of the world, waiting for it to come to us. That infinite skyline started to shape how I thought about the sound.

I'm sending Jada off with a Zoom recorder this weekend to capture that environment – or somewhere very similar – to record a wide sonic atmosphere of the place. I'm really curious to hear what comes back.

In the script, Jada clearly designates three modes of reality: the "here and now," the "in between" where the actors speak to the audience, and the "dream," which blends elements of the other two. That led me toward the idea of bleeding between those realities. Using natural sounds. Using synthetic sounds. Blending the two. Sort of bookending scenes with a sense of travel between those three modes.

Another major reference – not in the script but part of our discussions – was the Russian "doomsday radio." It's a bit of a rabbit hole. It's this shortwave frequency that's been broadcasting since the 1970s. Most of the time it's just a tone. Occasionally a voice cuts through. Occasionally music. There are theories it's used to send messages to sleeper cells. There's a whole conspiracy culture around it.

We've placed a radio in the set. It becomes a conduit for information from the outside world. I'm always looking for a portal through which sound can enter. It helps blend reality and unreality. If a radio turns on by itself and a voice comes through, the audience already accepts that transaction. The world becomes aurally porous. We sort of agree to that as an audience.

LB: What's your setup for creating the sound?

KR: So every show demands a different setup. I spent quite a bit of time working with an analogue synth I have at home. It's very good at finding sonic spaces 'in between'.

IN THEIR WORDS

KELLY RYALL (COMPOSER & SOUND DESIGNER)

Not quite a tone, almost a tone... two tones competing with each other.

That in-between space is where radio static lives. It's where something might feel like a dream, or something misheard. You might hallucinate the wind playing music. That's the space I want: where we're not sure if it's music or just the wind, or birds, or something else entirely. That ambiguity is really important to me.

A synthesiser is perfect for that. You can dive into this world of tone and not-tone, melody and not-melody. You can sort of swim around in it.

LB: And in the theatre itself – are you using anything specific?

KR: We're considering surrounding the audience with speakers to make them feel present on that beach. Then, when that atmosphere is removed, it becomes confronting.

Silence is probably the most powerful thing you can do in theatre (*laughs*). And I say that as someone who makes sound for a living.

If we open with a broad environmental recording – which Jada is hopefully capturing – then suddenly remove it, we're left in a vacuum. An in-between space. Then we can bring it back, but altered – perhaps with a tone or melody underneath it.

So we'll develop three distinct worlds, but keep the means simple. That's always what I'm looking for: the path of least resistance. It takes research to get there. It's easy now to have entire orchestras at your fingertips. But choosing just one or two elements – distilling the idea – is harder, and ultimately more powerful. It's surprisingly difficult to be simple.

There'll be a lot of spatial audio in this work. And because Dale's set closes down the image –

there's a lot of black around the letterbox frame – that darkness allows sound to fill in imaginary worlds. It gives the sound somewhere to live.

LB: What part of the design process has been most challenging?

KR: Oh, definitely the delicacy.

We're traversing these three modes – reality, dream, and the in-between. The challenge is not making those transitions heavy-handed. It has to feel natural, even when we're entering unnatural territory.

Jada talks about the “bleeding” between these modes. Making that bleed feel organic is the difficult part. You don't want the seams to show.

Introducing music in theatre is always hard. Why is there music? There isn't music in real life. In film, we accept it because it's part of the cinematic language. In theatre, the world is already three-dimensional. Music can feel imposed.

That's why I look for portals – radios, record players, televisions – ways to introduce sound without it feeling like I'm leading the audience. The moment they feel led, the bubble bursts. And once that happens, it's very hard to get them back.

LB: What excites you most about the design – big or small?

KR: I think it's how close it feels to our world. That's the thing that really gets me.

We're all aware of the pressures of politics, climate change, global instability. That tension is in this work. It sits right on the edge of today and tomorrow.

Often works are historical, or pure fiction. But the most powerful science fiction is often just tomorrow. Even tomorrow, the world could shift fundamentally. It's not that far away.

That's what excites me dramaturgically – and to help illustrate that aurally.

And of course, I love collaborating. Working with Jen on lights, Dale on set, and Jada again – we haven't been in a room together for years. It's wonderful to build a world collectively again. That part never gets old.

LB: And finally, what would you like the audience to take away from the work?

KR: There's a definite darkness in the work. A melancholy about the inevitability of endings – the end of lives, eras, worlds, even small endings.

It's not frightening exactly. Not something you leave feeling depressed about. But there's a quiet resignation in these characters – this sense of waiting.

What would we talk about if we knew the end was coming? What would we actually say to each other? That's compelling. It's food for thought – and food for art.

If audiences walk away asking themselves that question, then we've done our job. That would feel like a win.

PAGE TO STAGE



This chapter aims to support you to recollect your experience of the production, structure your analysis, and begin to articulate your evaluation of how effectively the contexts and themes implied in the written script (as highlighted in Prompt Pack A, as well as how you understand them) were interpreted on stage.

Consider how each **production role** contributed to the creative and imaginative interpretation of these contexts and themes, and remember to keep these **key questions** in mind:

- HOW DID IT HAPPEN?
- WHY DID IT HAPPEN?
- WHAT DID I THINK OF THAT CHOICE?
- WHAT EFFECT DID THE CHOICE HAVE ON THE AUDIENCE?
- WAS THE EFFECT POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE?

In evaluating this production, try to move beyond statements such as 'it was emotional' or 'it was powerful'. Instead, consider:

- Was there a clear and coherent interpretation?
- Did the directorial vision feel unified?
- Were cultural contexts handled with integrity?
- How effectively did acting, direction and design integrate?
- How were you positioned as an audience member?

Following are some of the contexts and themes of *Black Light* you may have researched prior to seeing the show, together with a small selection of simple provocations to get you going.



CONTEXTS

PLACE

In Prompt Pack A, you explored the idea of Place in *Black Light* through lenses such as:

- The Porch
- Domesticity
- Larrakia Country
- Distance and Systems

Now that you have seen the production, how did Place function in performance?

Some provocations to consider:

- How was the porch realised on stage? Was it literal, symbolic, or fluid?
- Did the design evoke a specific geography, or something more conceptual?
- How was Larrakia Country acknowledged or embedded in the staging, the sound and the lighting?
- Did the production emphasise the tension between intimacy (home) and distance (institutions, systems, remoteness)?
- Was the domestic space portrayed as safe, fragile, contested, or exposed?
- How did spatial relationships between actors reinforce power, care or isolation?
- Did Place feel grounded and local, or expansive and philosophical?

Consider how lighting, sound, blocking and proximity contributed to your understanding of place.

Did the space feel like somewhere you could locate on a map – or somewhere you experienced emotionally? Or both? Or neither?

TIME

Prompt Pack A asked you to consider:

- Ontology
- Disrupted beginnings and endings
- Elapsed time without measurement
- Waiting as a temporal state
- Time, memory and speech
- An uncertain present

In performance, how was Time shaped and structured?

Consider:

- Did the production move fluidly between past and present? How clearly?
- Were transitions marked through lighting, sound, gesture or vocal shift? Did they snap or meld?
- How was waiting embodied? Through stillness? Repetition? Rhythm?
- Did time feel linear, circular, suspended or fractured?
- Were beginnings and endings clearly defined – or deliberately blurred?
- Did pauses feel intentional and loaded – or awkward and empty?
- How did the performers' pacing influence your perception of urgency or endurance?

Was time something that progressed... or something the characters endured?



SOCIETY, POLITICS & CULTURE

In Prompt Pack A, you explored:

- Care, kinship and responsibility
- Systems, power and absence
- Culture in the present tense

In the live production, how were these ideas made visible?

Consider:

- How were institutions represented – directly or through absence?
- Did power dynamics feel embodied in spatial arrangements or vocal control?
- Were systems portrayed as faceless, indifferent, violent, overwhelmed, or invisible?
- How was kinship demonstrated physically? Through touch, proximity, gesture?
- Did the production emphasise resilience? Bureaucracy? Exhaustion?
- How did contemporary cultural realities shape the world of the play?

Be careful when evaluating theatre that expresses political views. Rather than asking, 'Did I agree with it?', consider:

- Was the cultural framing clear and coherent?
- Did the production honour lived experience without reducing it?
- Did it position the audience as observer, accomplice, or witness?

CONTEXTS

LANGUAGE

Prompt Pack A explored:

- Everyday speech and naturalism
- Nan's cognitive decline
- Storytelling and shared memory
- Repetition, rhythm and pause
- Speaking, listening and power

Now that you have heard the text embodied, consider:

- Did dialogue feel naturalistic or heightened?
- How was Nan's cognitive decline communicated vocally and physically?
- Did repetition feel musical, ritualistic, frustrating, tender?
- Were pauses active and charged, or simply silent?
- Who was allowed to speak – and who was interrupted?
- How did listening function as an act of care or control?

How did vocal delivery intersect with themes of memory and authority?

Did language build connection... or fracture it?

THEATRE STYLE: CONTEMPORARY INDIGENOUS THEATRE

Prompt Pack A identified:

- Contemporary Indigenous Theatre
- Fluid time
- The uplift
- Language and relationships

In the performance you saw, which stylistic conventions were most evident?

Consider:

- Did the production embrace realism, magical realism, symbolism or fluid theatricality?
- Were stylistic shifts clear and intentional?
- How was the “uplift” staged? Through lighting, sound, stillness or physicality?
- Did design support the stylistic intentions, or compete with them?
- Was the audience invited into shared cultural storytelling traditions?
- Did the production balance naturalism with theatrical metaphor?

CONTEXTS

OTHER THEATRE STYLES

If you identified and are applying a different stylistic lens to the production, ask yourself:

- Was the style unified?
- Did it support the thematic interpretation?
- Was it sustained consistently across the performance?

And remember to always avoid labelling the production as 'eclectic' without identifying the specific styles and their conventions that justify that term.

In Prompt Pack A, we offered some ideas of what other Theatre Styles might be present. These (and others) include:

- Speculative Fiction
- Naturalism/Realism
- Non-Naturalism
- Magical Realism
- Eco-Horror / Climate Horror
- Epic Theatre

How many of these conventions did you identify in the written script of the play? Take a scene of the playtext and underline any instance of the suggested conventions here. Work in a group, or take a solo pass at the scene before comparing your work with a friend and discussing.

How many of these conventions did you identify in the stage interpretation of the play?

Using a scene from the stage interpretation, consider each production role's contribution and give examples of any of the listed style conventions that were evident. Were they clear? Were they effective in supporting the other production roles/elements, and ultimately the interpretation?



THEMES

CARE AS RESPONSIBILITY, BURDEN & LOVE

In Prompt Pack A, you examined patterns of care within the play.

In performance:

- How was care embodied physically?
- Did care look tender, exhausting, transactional, sacred?
- Who carried responsibility – and who avoided it?
- Was care shown as sustainable... or corrosive?
- Did the audience feel admiration, discomfort, frustration?

Did the production frame care as a moral obligation, a cultural expectation, or both?

ENDURANCE

Prompt Pack A asked you to consider crisis not as a single event, but as something lived inside.

Now ask:

- How was endurance staged? Through repetition? Stillness? Physical depletion?
- Did the crisis escalate – or plateau?
- Did the performers' physicality change over time?
- Was endurance portrayed as heroic, inevitable, unfair, communal?

Did the audience feel the duration of struggle?

Or was the hardship softened by theatrical pacing?

CONNECTION TO COUNTRY & CONTINUITY OF KNOWLEDGE

In the script, knowledge is something passed on.

In performance:

- How was Country invoked – textually, visually, sonically?
- Was it present, absent, remembered, embodied?
- Did storytelling feel like transmission?
- Were moments of cultural continuity staged as fragile or enduring?
- Did the production treat Country as backdrop – or active presence?

How effectively did design and performance reinforce the idea that knowledge survives, even when systems fail?



CHOICES

When crafting your own responses to specific images, scenes, ideas or creative choices you notice in the production, remember that describing what happened is only the first step. Your task is to analyse how the choice functioned within the overall interpretation and evaluate how effectively it contributed to meaning. Try to utilise and incorporate all the relevant **elements of theatre** composition and continue to use your toolkit of **theatrical terminology and expressions** you have learned in Theatre Studies.

A few of my own observations and ideas as an audience member are given below, with the aim to get you started in analysing and evaluating how (and how effectively) those moments were interpreted from the script and/or integrated onstage. Remember these are simple suggestions, not definitive answers.



PRESHOW

Cohesion, Contrast, Motion (Arrangement, Pattern, Position, Spatial Flow), Variation (Conflict, Energy, Intensity, Use of Space)

What did you notice as you walked into the theatre and waited for the production to begin?

Some of the actors started on stage. BUB oscillates between resting and pacing, checking their phone. AUNTY and MUM circle, watching each other, feigning disinterest or domesticity by making a cup of tea; a silent game. A pervasive feeling of *waiting*: for news, for action, for love, for meaning.

Scattered on the porch are a plastic kids' toy, and a cardboard box with a whimsical 'Hotel Crabita' crayon-scrawled on the side in bubble writing – signs of the presence of young (active, inquisitive) children somewhere close by.

The view of a kitchen disappears into the wings: a fridge with magnet-attached papers and a kettle with tea-making miscellany (symbols of domesticity, sustenance, communality); and a glowing 'bug zapper' – a literal 'black light'! – (both a suggestion of the environment and a symbol of protection and defence, albeit small).

There is the sound of the sea and insects, but no wind – the aural feeling of heat and humidity supported by costuming of light fabrics, shorts and sleeveless tops.

The other sound is the crackling radio, its intermittent reception suggesting a tenuous, fractured connection to the outside world. Finally, it springs to life with Nina Simone's *New World is Coming* and the play begins its first two scenes, respectively titled, you might remember, 'The End' and 'The Beginning'.



CHOICES

WATER AND ROCKS

Cohesion, Contrast, Emphasis, Motion (Arrangement, Proportion, Spatial Flow), Variation (Intensity, Tension, Use of Space), Actor-Audience Relationship

Originally inspired by a photo of local Larrakia landmarks taken by writer/director Jada Alberts and shared with set and costume designer Dale Ferguson, the space resembles a wide porch looking out to (and connected to) the sea.

The water and sky are suggested by a single-coloured curved cyclorama, sometimes suggesting an endless horizon stretching far beyond the available depth of the theatre, sometimes lit along the bottom edge to more clearly delineate sea and air and resemble a sunset, sunrise or other, less natural, distant light. In the earlier interview with Dale Ferguson, you may recall he also wanted it to feel occasionally like a massive wave, frozen in its (terrifying? cleansing?) approach.

The rock formation can be construed as a natural spit, a human-made breakwater, or the remains of an ancient stone-walled Aboriginal fish trap. A solitary chair sits at the point.

The 'letterbox' stage masking creates a forced perspective of this upstage space, subtly bolstered by the asymmetrical porch posts cutting the view from small to larger sections as our eyes travel from left to right. This focus allows the audience to see the above interpretations at different times (or sometimes simultaneously). Yet with each interpretation, something feels 'off'. If it is a small fish trap, why is the 'water' so still and light? If it is a breakwater, who built it so close to this house 'far from town'? If it is a peninsula or spit curving off into the distance, why does the chair look too large for this perspective?

Are we sitting above the sea? Are we just a step off the porch into ocean shallows? And how do any of these realities get challenged or broken when a character steps onto the blue floor – or the moment NAN walks across the 'water' to sit on the chair?

All these interpretations and actions are deliberate choices supporting the theatre style, contexts and themes – leaning into the elements of non-linear time, magic realism and connection to Country.

Did you notice the lighting hidden amongst the rocks? Sometimes they would glow orange, like fire or something volcanic and angry, usually when tone shifted to conflict or danger. Sometimes they would glow blue, like luminescent plankton (or algae?) in rock pools – or perhaps an extension of the black light emanating from the kitchen bug zapper, creating a protective ring around the house and the women. This could be interpreted as reinforcing moments of anchoring and shelter conveyed by NAN.



LITTLE NANNAS

Contrast, Emphasis, Motion (Arrangement, Spatial Flow), Rhythm (Pace), Variation (Conflict, Tension, Use of Space), Actor-Audience Relationship

In the script, this is the end of Scene 13 (pp 67 – 70), transitioning from MUM's 'You know how many Stevens are out there?' monologue, through NAN's story of the cycad nuts and ending, in the Malthouse production, the characters making their way out to the tip of the rocks.

Building on the tension of MUM's re-entry, where she picks up an earlier argument with her sister, director Jada Alberts makes the interesting choice of reattributing the second part of MUM's dialogue to AUNTY, who spins to the audience with a direct challenge: 'Fuck your tall ships'. This flips and reframes the fight the sisters are having: from intra-family differences in how to honour traditional duties of care, to ostensibly forcing the audience themselves to consider our own shared responsibility, presumptively as representatives of white colonialist Australia, for these rifts between Indigenous connection to Country and community. We're forced to sit in the discomfort and reflect.

But NAN reclaims the space with another alternative: that focusing on internal or external blame just blinds community from caring for itself, and this is a time when community must rally together.

We're not meant to be always spinning, darlings. No one is. We are Country.

No different, no better. When we forget, we are lost, hungry dreamers.

I know what's happening now. I can see it. Too much heat. Hungryearth, hungry sea.

And the only light left, is black.

During NAN's story, did you notice how the other production elements contributed to the change in mood and introduced a different kind of tension?

The 'rock lights' flicker back and forth between angry-orange to protective-blue (again, my interpretation, see **WATER & ROCKS** above), before settling into a simpler warm neutral. The front LX state also becomes warm and broad, perhaps like a sunrise, an invitation for a new beginning.

Meanwhile, intermittent lightning flashes. (These were on specific words of NAN's text. Did you notice? If so, which words were underscored, and why might those words have been emphasised?). The lightning was occasionally accompanied by the sound of what might be dry, Larrakia thunder, or the foreboding rumbling of the distant chaos... or perhaps Country itself, roaring at us.

Composer Kelly Ryll has also provided a bed of unearthly, elongated static-like tones which, with its tonal uplift at the end of phrases, sounded both ominous and hopeful.

Finally, as the family moves together along the rocks, you don't need to understand the words or recognise the song (*Ngabujyu Akurija - Nanna Song* by Shellie Morris & The Borroloola Songwomen) to feel the comfort, reassurance and power of the sound of this community of women singing in their language.

HOW DID THEY DO IT?



This chapter focuses on Unit 4 Theatre Studies' exploration of the **interrelationship between acting, direction and design** in creating a cohesive theatrical interpretation.

- As you work through the following sections, remember:
- Your task is not simply to describe what you saw.
- You must analyse how each production role contributed to meaning.
- You must evaluate how effectively those roles integrated to create a unified interpretation.

Where possible, provide specific examples from the performance.



ACTING

PERFORMANCE

Select two performers and analyse how their use of acting skills – including voice, facial expression, gesture, movement, stillness and silence – supported the audience's understanding of:

- Character status
- Relationships
- Cultural positioning
- Motivation and objective
- Emotional state

Was there a particularly effective use of contrast (for example, tenderness shifting into confrontation)? How was this achieved?

Provide an example of a performer using stillness or silence to create meaning. How did this shape the audience's focus?

Identify one moment where vocal delivery – rhythm, repetition, pause or interruption – shifted the dynamic of a scene. Was this shift subtle or overt? Was it effective?

ENSEMBLE & RELATIONSHIPS

As an ensemble performance, *Black Light* relies heavily on relational energy.

- How did the performers establish familial intimacy?
- How was conflict staged physically?
- Did proximity suggest care, threat, obligation or surveillance?
- Were there moments when actors deliberately avoided eye contact? What was the effect?

Identify one scene where the ensemble composition (grouping, spacing, levels) communicated power dynamics more clearly than dialogue alone.

Evaluate how effectively the ensemble work supported the themes of care, endurance or connection to Country.

INTERRELATIONSHIP WITH DESIGN

Choose one performer and analyse how they interacted with:

- The rocks / water space
- The porch architecture
- Props or furniture

Did the actor appear constrained or empowered by the set?

Discuss how lighting shifts influenced acting choices. Did performers adjust physicality or tempo in response to light or sound cues?

How effectively did acting and design feel synchronised?

ACTOR–AUDIENCE RELATIONSHIP

Describe one moment where you felt directly implicated in the action.

Was this achieved through direct address, spatial arrangement, lighting and/or tonal shift?

Were there moments when you felt distanced from the characters? Was this intentional?

Did the actor–audience relationship shift across the performance? If so, how and why?

Evaluate how effectively the production positioned the audience as:

- Witness
- Participant
- Observer
- Representative
- Outsider



DIRECTION

SPACE & COMPOSITION

How did director Jada Alberts manipulate the acting space to support:

- A) Specific locations within the script; and
- B) The broader thematic concerns of the play?

Consider:

- Blocking and levels
- Use of the rocks and horizon
- Framing through porch posts and masking
- Entrances and exits

Were spatial arrangements symbolic, naturalistic or both?

Did direction encourage fluidity between time periods or clearly delineate them?

DYNAMICS

Identify three significant shifts in dynamics – energy, tension, conflict, stillness – across the performance.

How were these shifts constructed?

Through:

- Lighting changes?
- Sound escalation?
- Blocking?
- Vocal rhythm?
- Silence?

Were these shifts gradual or abrupt? Did they feel organic?

Evaluate how effectively dynamic contrast sustained audience engagement.

CULTURAL & THEMATIC FRAMING

How did the director shape the interpretation of themes such as:

- Care
- Endurance
- Cultural continuity
- Systems and absence

Did the direction avoid didacticism while maintaining clarity?

How were political or cultural tensions staged: through confrontation, ritual, humour and/or stillness?

Did the interpretation feel unified from pre-show state to final image?



DESIGN

You may wish to refer back to interviews in the **IN THEIR WORDS** chapter for insight into the designers' intentions.

SET & SPATIAL DESIGN

How did Dale Ferguson's design establish:

- Place
- Perspective
- Symbolism
- Scale

In what ways did the curved cyclorama and rock formation manipulate depth and horizon?

Did the set invite multiple interpretations?

How did design support both domestic realism and mythic or symbolic imagery?

Evaluate how effectively the set design integrated with direction and acting.

LIGHTING

Identify at least three ways Jenny Hector's lighting manipulated:

- Time of day
- Mood
- Power dynamics
- The boundary between realism and symbolism

How did colour shifts (warm, blue, orange, etc.) contribute to thematic meaning?

Were lighting transitions visible or seamless? How did this affect the audience's perception of time and tone?

Analyse how lighting worked in combination with sound or blocking to create tension or release.

SOUND

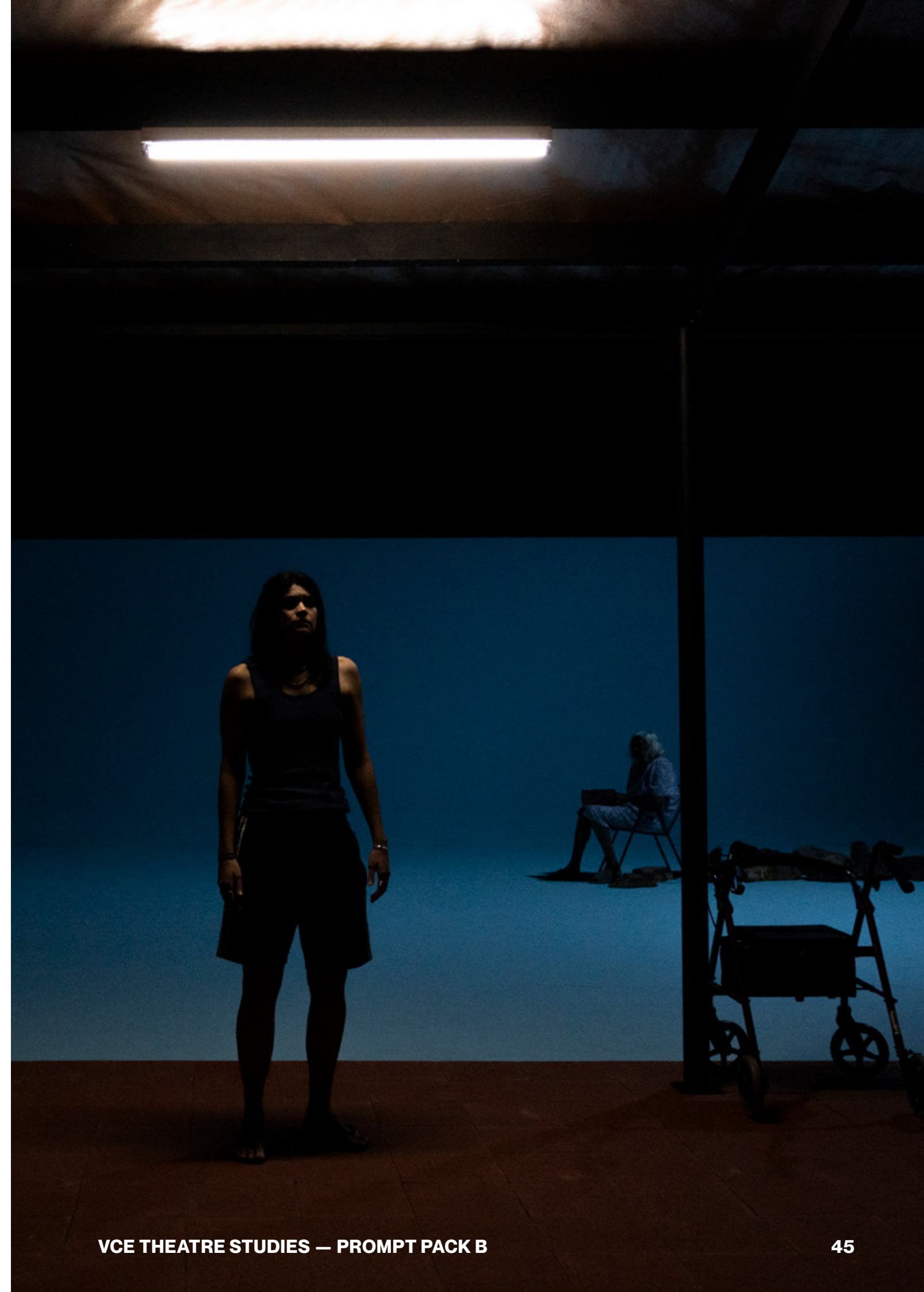
How did composer Kelly Ryall's sound design:

- Establish environment?
- Create unease?
- Support cultural continuity?
- Underscore shifts in dynamics?

Was sound used to signal internal states, external threat, or both?

Did music or sonic motifs reappear? What was their cumulative effect?

Evaluate the interrelationship between sound and acting. Did sound ever lead the action – or respond to it?



THEATRE TECHNOLOGIES

Identify at least two theatre technologies employed in the production.

These might include:

- LED or concealed lighting within the rocks
- Illusion (i.e. the moving mug of tea)
- Cyclorama projection or lighting effects

How were these technologies constructed or operated?

Were they visible or hidden?

Did their use enhance immersion, symbolism or thematic clarity?

Were they effective? Why or why not?

INTEGRATION & COHESION

Finally, evaluate the overall interrelationship of acting, direction and design.

Did the production feel cohesive?

Were there moments where one element overpowered the others?

Did all elements appear to be working toward a shared interpretive vision?

In your opinion, how successfully did the production's theatrical construction support its exploration of place, time, care and cultural continuity?



RESOURCES



DESIGN

The following resources can be used in conjunction with those provided in **Prompt Pack A** to form a comprehensive bank of assets. Once again, these are a mix of resources referenced in the body of this document, and extra sources to further inform and stimulate.

Note that all resources are hyperlinked for those clicking on an interactive PDF version of this Prompt Pack but, for those holding a paper version, simple-to-type (but case sensitive) Bitly links have been provided.

RESOURCES DROPBOX

bit.ly/BLPromptPack

In addition to the references and links in our two Prompt Packs, you can head to the above general Resources Dropbox that will be populated on a rolling basis for the rest of the year with extra material like:

- Recorded Q&As from our school matinee performances
- Production, rehearsal and behind the-scenes photos
- Set and costume design presentation and materials
- Press and reviews from the Malthouse season
- Behind-the-scenes stage management and production documents
- Further reading and research
- Prompt Packs A and B

PROMPT PACK B RESOURCES

- **Video Interview with Actors Tahlee Fereday and Rachel Maza**
vimeo.com/malthouse/BLActors
- **Video Interview with Set & Costume Designer Dale Ferguson**
vimeo.com/malthouse/BLSetCostume
- **Interview with Actor Tahlee Fereday**
Ramona Mag | bit.ly/BLResources03
- **Dale Ferguson**
Designer Website | bit.ly/BLResources04

EXTENSION RESOURCES: CONTEXTS

- **Stone Fish Traps**
Past Masters | bit.ly/BLResources05
- **Hermit Crabs**
WA Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions | 2026 | bit.ly/BLResources06
- **The ghostly radio station that no one claims to run**
Article on the 'Doomsday Radio' | BBC | 2020 | bit.ly/BLResources07
- **What Happened, Miss Simone**
Documentary on Nina Simone and Songs of Protest | Netflix | 2015 | bit.ly/BLResources08
- **Cycad nuts**
Facebook post | Warddeken Land Management & Sovereign Union | 2025 | bit.ly/BLResources09

EXTENSION RESOURCES: THEATRE & DESIGN

- **The History of Forced Perspective**
Neil Oseman | 2021 | bit.ly/BLResources10
- **Lines, Forms & the Emotions of Space**
Medium | 2025 | bit.ly/BLResources11
- **Cyclorama, Scrim, and Backdrop Key Features Explained**
SP Studios | 2024 | bit.ly/BLResources12
- **Black Light & UV Lighting**
Wikipedia | bit.ly/BLResources13
- **Sound Design for Theater: Another Medium for Our Craft**
Designing Sound | 2016 | bit.ly/BLResources14
- **Designing Silence: How Intentional Sound Design Shapes Our Modern Spaces**
L-Acoustics | 2025 | bit.ly/BLResources15

OTHER RESOURCES

- **VCE Theatre Studies: 2025 Study Design, Sample Learning Activities, and Written Examinations & Reports**
bit.ly/BLResources16
- **Black Light Malthouse show page**
bit.ly/BLResources02
- **Black Light digital show program**
bit.ly/BLResources18
- **Malthouse Education**
bit.ly/MalthouseEdu
- **Stories of M**
Malthouse Theatre's Database of Productions, People, Stories and History |
bit.ly/BLResources17



COPYRIGHT NOTICE

© Copyright: Malthouse Theatre, the artists, designers, photographers, collaborators and contributors. All rights reserved, 2026.

Prompt Pack created by Lyall Brooks,
Malthouse Education Coordinator.

The person who has downloaded this document is granted a non-exclusive, limited license to print or make up to 20 copies and distribute them to students in the state of Victoria, for the express purpose of participation in Malthouse Education program.

These copies must be made available to those students free of charge.

Neither this PDF (digital document) nor its printed copies may otherwise be copied, distributed, emailed, stored or saved on a shared or public server or file service, in whole or in part, without the express prior written permission of Malthouse.

This copyright notice must be preserved in its entirety on all copies.

MALTHOUSE THEATRE
113 Sturt Street
Southbank VIC 3006
Phone 9685 5111

education@malthousetheatre.com.au

