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WHEN
SUN & MOON
COLLIDE

BY BRIAR GRACE-SMITH

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Thanks to The Infinity Foundation for its support in delivering school matinee performances at the ASB Waterfront Theatre in 2017.



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Please note.

- Schools' performances are followed by a Q&A Forum lasting for 20 minutes in the theatre immediately after the performance.
- Eating and drinking in the auditorium is strictly prohibited.
- Please make sure all cell phones are turned off prior to the performance and, if possible, please don't bring school bags to the theatre.
- Photography or recording of any kind is strictly prohibited.

Contents.

Synopsis P.05	Set & Costume Design P.38
About the play P.12	Lighting Design P.42
About Briar Grace-Smith P.14	Sound Design P.46
Māori Lunar Calendar P.16	Additional Reading and Resources P.50
Director — Rāwiri Paratene P.18	ATC Creative Learning P.51
The actor's process P.26	Curriculum Links P.51

Venue:	ASB Waterfront Theatre, 138 Halsey Street, Wynyard Quarter
School matinee performances:	Tuesday 4 and Thursday 6 July at 11am
Running time:	70 minutes without an interval
Suitability:	This production is suitable for Year Levels 11 - 13
Advisory:	Contains frequent use of strong language and violent themes.

WHEN SUN & MOON COLLIDE

BY BRIAR GRACE-SMITH

CAST

Isaac – **Jack Buchanan**
Declan – **Joe Dekkers-Reihana**
Travis – **Kura Forrester**
Francie – **Emily Campbell**

CREATIVE

Director – **Rāwiri Paratene**
Set & Costume Designer – **Daniel Williams**
Lighting Designer – **Jennifer Lal**
Sound Designer – **Thomas Press**

PRODUCTION

Production Manager – **Robert Hunte**
Company Manager – **Elaine Walsh**
Technical Manager – **Kate Burton**
Venue Technical Manager – **Josh Bond**
Stage Manager – **Youra Hwang**
Lighting & Sound Operator – **Stephen Paul**
Props Master – **Becky Ehlers**
Set Construction – **2Construct**

EDUCATION PACK CREDITS

Writer – **Amber McWilliams**
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AGENT, ADVISOR, BOOKSHOP



Synopsis.



Brothers.

IT IS the middle of the night in the middle of nowhere, somewhere in the Horowhenua. Declan Kopu, just out of prison, visits the local tearooms to ask for help from Isaac, the owner. Declan tells Isaac that he has been staying with a woman called Glenda since his release, but now, because it is Mutuwhenua – the new moon – he has been possessed by a persona called ‘Jason’, and doesn’t know what Jason has done. Isaac is nervous and noncommittal and Declan gets angry. Isaac goes to cook a meal and Declan remembers what his now-dead Koro used to say about Mutuwhenua: The moon dies, and the world is left in total darkness.” Travis, the local police officer, arrives. She reports that someone has destroyed the church, breaking windows and chopping up the pews. She collars Declan for attacking Glenda’s husband earlier in the evening and takes him to the station.

“The separate strands of the Harakeke that make up a weaving are like the structures of a play. The individual voices of characters and their concerns are like the strips of flax, each have a different quality or colour”

– Briar Grace-Smith



2

Francie.

NEXT MORNING, a local lass called Francie visits the tearooms. Isaac tries to convince her to eat, but she refuses anything but hot water – a symptom of what she calls “my skinny disease”. She points out that customers have gone to the new Café Astounding, where the food is better. They discuss the disappearance of a pair of Danish backpackers in the area. Isaac tells her about Declan, and that Declan was his foster brother when they were young. This discussion is interspersed with Declan, at the police station, raging at Travis about being arrested, and remembering his foster

family. Travis comes to the tearooms and remembers Isaac’s family running it years ago. She tells Isaac that Declan has been released on condition of being supervised – and has named Isaac as supervisor.

Travis tries to convince Francie to eat, saying that Francie’s brother Vic says she is starving herself to spite him. Francie is furious, tells Travis to focus on finding the murderer of the Danish tourists, and storms out. Travis talks with Isaac about her disappointment on not solving the case, and thanks him for his friendship.

3

‘Ten guitars’

DECLAN comes to stay at the tearooms. Isaac tells him about Francie and Vic, and Declan immediately teases him about fancying Francie. Declan heads to bed, and Isaac remembers the Danish tourists dancing to music from the tearooms’ jukebox.

4

Tamatea kai ariki

DECLAN recalls his Koro talking about the phases of the moon... Travis interrupts his reverie and asks for his signature on the prison paperwork. Declan says he can’t read, “because I never stayed in one place long enough to learn how.” Declan calls Travis ‘Mary’ and reveals he has discovered she was his foster sister, Mereana-Jean, but that she abandoned him and so is dead to him now. Meanwhile, Francie hides from Vic in her bedroom, but can’t stop the dark from slithering under her door...

5

Mereana-Jean

ISAAC tries to get Travis to talk about the childhood she and Declan shared. Instead, she tells him she’s going out to dinner at Café Astounding with Vic, saying Vic is “the best thing that ever happened to me.” She says that she and Isaac need to help Vic with Francie, whose anorexia is just attention-seeking.

6

Looking for a hit man

FRANCIE gives Isaac a note for Declan, because she sees him as a bad guy and a risk-taker, based on what she’s heard of his actions. Isaac tells her how worried they all are about her, and she loses her temper. She recognises that Isaac wants her, but says he’s everything she can’t stand: weak and a loser. She storms out, saying that Isaac is keeping a secret that may kill her. Declan arrives and makes Isaac read him the note – in which Francie asks Declan to meet her on Flannigan’s Hill.



7

A collision of planets

DECLAN AND FRANCIE meet as arranged. She tells him she is looking for a hit man to kill Vic, who is not really her brother, and who is keeping her captive. She also shows him a locket belonging to Zana, one of the murdered tourists. She can't go to the cops because Vic is dating Travis. She and Declan see the sun and moon out together, and Declan reassures her that the tide will turn.

8

Mutuwhenua

IT IS Mutuwhenua. Isaac is moody, assuming Declan has seduced Francie. Travis comes early to check on Declan, as she has a date with Vic. Declan recounts their shared childhood – and how their foster parents chose Travis and let him go. He attacks her; Isaac intervenes and Declan leaves. Travis explains that she has moved here specifically to look out for Declan. Isaac finally reveals his secret – a piece of the puzzle of what happened to the Danish tourists.

9

Jason returns

DECLAN remembers his last night with his Koro – also Mutuwhenua. He and Francie work together to attack the evil in their midst and set it on fire.

10

Firedancer

DECLAN appears at the tearooms, pleading for Isaac's help because 'Jason' has done something bad. Isaac doesn't know what to do. Travis arrives, shaken, to report a fire. She and Declan reconcile. Francie arrives and reveals the truth of her situation. Isaac packs his suitcase.

11

The universe is these tearooms

FRANCIE remembers meeting Declan on Flannigan's Hill, and tells where everybody has ended up.

Talking points.

- Briar Grace-Smith likens the structure of a play to weaving, and strips of flax to the voices and concerns of the characters. In what ways are the paths of the characters in *When Sun and Moon Collide* woven together, and when do they unravel?
- What is the effect of the characters that are NOT seen on stage, such as Vic? What reasons (practical and dramatic) might Briar Grace-Smith have had for choosing this approach?
- Declan is inhabited by other 'characters' – Jason and Koro – during some scenes. Choose one of these 'characters' and explain what they contribute to the play.
- There are several split-scenes in this play, where two different actions/ locations are interspersed with each other at the same time. How many examples of this can you remember from reading or seeing the play? What impact did these split-scenes have on you and what did they reveal about the characters or the story?



About the play.

- In October 2000, *When Sun and Moon Collide* premiered in a short season at Wellington's Bats Theatre as part of the Shebang Festival.
<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/CU0010/S00016.htm>
- In 2003, a short story extract called *When Sun and Moon Collide* was published in Victoria University's literary magazine, *Turbine* – a prose version of Isaac's story, including the tearooms and the anorexic girl, here given the name Ataria.
<http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/iiml/turbine/Turbi03/fiction/N12213.html>
- In 2007, Grace-Smith's play *When Sun and Moon Collide* was published as a script by Huia Publishers.
<http://www.bookcouncil.org.nz/writer/grace-smith-briar/>

Reception and reviews.

“AT FIRST GLANCE, it seems Grace-Smith is putting a twist on the classical revenge tragedy. Instead of seeing her righteous avengers meet their own doom for defying both the law of he (sic) land and the law of God – or as in Greek tragedy, the gods – she offers positive outcomes all round. Francie starts eating, Declan finds family, Travis discovers true justice and Isaac hits the road of new possibility. But, as with Grace-Smith's

earlier plays (*Ngā Pou Wahine*, *Purapurawhetu*, *Haruru Mai*), the true meaning is better found at an allegorical level. Mutuwhenua brings a cathartic cleansing that liberates the psychologically imprisoned into new worlds of opportunity.”

– John Smythe, *National Business Review*, 20/10/2000.

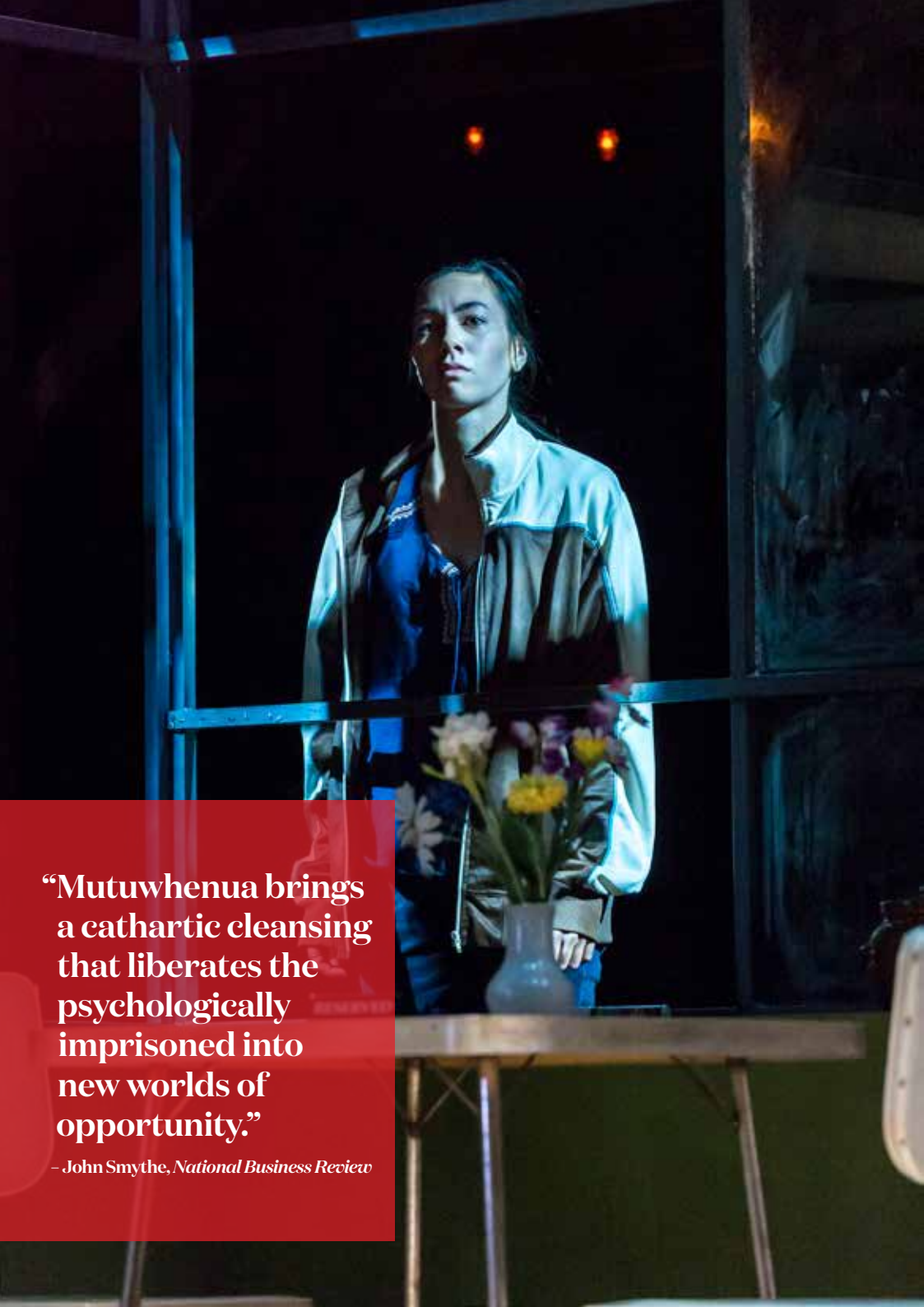
However, in 2004 the same reviewer wrote: “But there is a problem with *When Sun and Moon Collide*

[...]. While their lives start afresh with the next new moon, the moral universe has changed radically, yet the play does not acknowledge it. Because no world of consequence seems to exist beyond the people we've seen, instead of engaging with them and the play's big questions, the audience has to struggle with working out what's happened and deciding whether they believe it.”

– John Smythe, 'Beware Sun-Moon Collision', *National Business Review*, 07/07/2004.

Talking points.

- Do you think you engaged with the play's big questions? Did you 'believe' what had happened?



“Mutuwhenua brings a cathartic cleansing that liberates the psychologically imprisoned into new worlds of opportunity.”

– John Smythe, *National Business Review*



Left to right: Daniel Williams, Jen Lal, Rāwiri Paratene and Briar Grace-Smith in rehearsal.

About the playwright.

BRIAR GRACE-SMITH is an award-winning writer of plays, television scripts and short stories. She is of Nga Puhī and Ngāti Wai descent, and lives in Paekakariki with her family.

PLAYS

- *Ngā Pou Wāhine* (1995 Bruce Mason Playwriting Award)
- *Purapurawhetū* (Best New Zealand Play, 1997 Chapman Tripp Theatre Awards)
- *When Sun and Moon Collide*
- *Haruru Mai*
- *Potiki's Memory of Stone*
- *Paniora!*

SCREENPLAYS

- 2012 *Fresh Meat* (feature film)
- 2012 *When Sun and Moon Collide* (television)
- 2012 *Purapurawhetū* (television)
- 2011 *Billy* (television, with Dave Armstrong)
- 2011 *Nine of Hearts* (short film)
- 2010 *Kaitangata Twitch* (television)
- 2010 *Lily and Ra* (short film)
- 2008 *The Strength of Water* (feature film)
- 2005 *Mataku* (television)
- 2002 *Fishskin Suit* (television)
- 2001 *Being Eve* (television)
- 1998-2000 *The Big Chair* (television)

FIND OUT MORE about Briar Grace-Smith – check out:

- Playmarket – www.playmarket.org.nz/playwrights/briar-grace-smith
- The Arts Foundation – www.thearts.co.nz/artists/briar-grace-smith
- Wikipedia – https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Briar_Grace-Smith



“Arts Laureate Briar Grace-Smith is one of our most respected playwrights and her works have been staged at festivals throughout the world... In *When Sun and Moon Collide*, she explores how identity, isolation and abandonment shape our life experience and fuel our darkest fears.”

– To Tatou Tamaki Makaurau: Our Auckland

Māori lunar calendar.

THE MĀORI LUNAR CALENDAR is called the Maramataka, which literally means the turning of the moon. It marks the phases of the moon in a lunar month. Each night, which also typically marks a day, was given a name and over time each day/night was accompanied by information guiding fishing, gardening, and other activities in the natural world. During a typical lunar month, some days are noted as being favourable for resource harvesting, whereas other days are known to be unfavourable. © www.tepapa.govt.nz

A typical lunar month cycle lasts for 29.53 days. Whiro is the first night of the new moon, Tirea is the second night, and so on until Mutuwhenua, the last night.

Whiro



Tirea



Hoata



Ōue



Ōkoro



Tamatea-kai-ariki



Tamatea-ā-ngana



Tamatea-āiō



Tamatea-whakapau



Huna



Ariro



Māwharu



Everything is good

Ōhua



Atua Whakahaehae



Ōturu



Rākau-nui - Full moon



Rākau-matohi



Takirau



Ōike



Korekore Te Whiwhia



Korekore Te Rawea



Korekore Piri Ki Tangaroa



Everything is good

Tangaroa-ā-mua



Tangaroa-ā-roto



Tangaroa-whakapau



Tangaroa-ā-kiokio



Ōtāne



Ōrongonui



Mauri



Mutuwhenua



Everything is bad

GOOD MOON FOR:



Eeling



Crayfishing



Shellfish



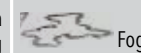
Planting



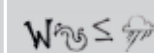
Kumara planting



Kumara harvesting



Fog



West winds prevail, pushing with them a fire that only rain will quell



Dangerous fishing time

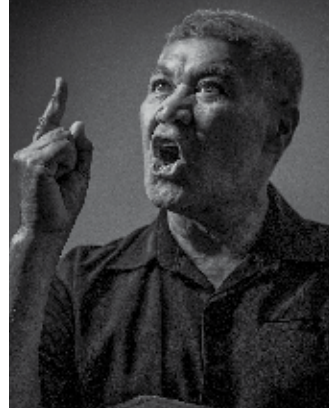


Fishing



Wind

Talking to Director Rāwiri Paratene



...about the rehearsal process

“On the first day, we got together as a team for the first time. We had Briar there too, which was a real bonus. It’s only in modern works that you get an opportunity to have a writer, so we had a Q&A with her, for the actors to ask questions. It’s interesting - she didn’t really have many answers!”

“I’d given the actors homework: getting some lists together. This is quite a common process; lots of actors do this for themselves. They made lists of:

- what other characters say about their character
- what their characters say about the other characters

- what their characters says about themselves
- what they say about characters that are mentioned – and are important in the play – but don’t appear physically: Vic, Doc Murdoch, Glenda...
- about the tea-rooms, and about Café Astounding.”

“I also gave them some research. Jack had to research rural tearooms (he plays the proprietor of the tearooms, Isaac). I got Joe, who plays Declan, to research Maramataka, the Māori moon calendar. I got Emily, who plays Francie, to research food disorders, and to work out which food disorder Francie had

(anorexia nervosa). Travis - Kura - I got her to research being a rural police officer, the training they undertake and so on.”

“The first day was meeting the creatives, and the design presentation. Then we went on to what I call ‘table work’: we listened to all the actors’ lists, and they presented their research. The point of doing all that homework was that they arrived in the rehearsal room having a really good knowledge of the play. The discussion that ensues is very valuable.”

“I set a time aside for ‘table work’ out of respect for the intellect of the actor. Often, directors and actors shy away from intellect



and think that it doesn't help the process. I'm not one of those directors or actors. Actors tend to be very bright and very experienced and very good

which I call 'open space exploration'. I pushed all the furniture – everything – away to the sides of the room. I asked the actors to not think of the audience,

“If the people on stage aren't connected with each other in some way, it's going to be hard for the audience to connect with the people on stage. I thought we'd push that aspect of it.”

at research – it's a natural part of their preparation anyway – so I like to give them an opportunity to do that.”

“On the second day, we got straight into it. We did the first phase of rehearsal,

or where the audience was going to be: to simply treat the space as an open space. They were welcome to grab chairs and whatever else was lying around the rehearsal room if they felt a need to.”

“This is a process that I'm making up as we go. It's not a process that I walked into the rehearsal with. It's a process I decided on because the first week I was going to do 'blocking', with the aim of having a run at the end of that week. When we started working with the set, we'd gone not even one page before I thought 'this is stupid. I don't want this; I don't want them to have to negotiate a set, I want them to negotiate a text.' In that first scene, I got up and said 'okay, stop'. Then I pushed everything away, and invented 'open space exploration'.”

“We did this exploration through the whole play, scene by scene. It was an opportunity, early on, for actors to make bold, often stupid, and very wrong

offers. I played a game one day, where we were working through scenes in this manner, and I gave them secret things to work on – which the other actors didn't know. I whispered to Emily to play that afternoon's scenes as if she were the murderer: she had killed the Lindhardsens, she had used Vic's car, and did it in a way that was setting him up. There is text in the play where Isaac says, 'I didn't really see the driver - all I saw was profile.' I asked her to imagine it wasn't Vic at all... it was her. There were other secrets as well. I told Travis that her secret thing was that the reason Declan got sent away was that he abused her. That's why he got taken out of the house.”

“Though those 'secrets'

are 'wrong' – I mean, the story doesn't actually go like that – doing this exercise gave the actors a different chemistry, and forced them to try something else. The actors embraced that process. I kept insisting that they be really bold with the space and the offers that they brought, inviting them to be wrong.”

“We did open space exploration for the entire first week. We made some tremendous discoveries. By the end of that week, the actors had a really good understanding of the text, and the relationships. One thing I kept pushing was 'you need to be connected with each other. You need to go for connection, even physical connection.' We played a game where they

had to make physical contact in some way, and then make eye contact as well, which are the two obvious forms of connection.”

“If the people on stage aren't connected with each other in some way, it's going to be hard for the audience to connect with the people on stage. I thought we'd push that aspect of it. So, we got to the end of the week and we'd gone through the whole play. We had even run it – still with no set and no furniture. They worked very fast; I'm working with four very bright and giving young actors.”

“At the end of that week we kicked off phase two, which I call 'on set exploration'. We've gone through the whole of part

one. Because we did that open exploration in the first week, I'm not having to say 'on this line you need to be up here'. We just moved the stuff in, and I said 'okay - act! Start!' They came in, and because they knew the text so well, I just let them negotiate their way around the set with an understanding that an audience is out here. It's worked out okay!"

"We did right through to the end of part one yesterday and ran part one. Today I'm going back through part one and them to 'mine' it. I ask them questions, or let them ask questions. I let them express difficulties they're having with parts. Once you start moving it around, you do run into difficulties. Suddenly an actor discovers 'I've got no idea what this line is about!'"

"We had a great example in one of the monologues

(the beautiful, poetic pieces that Briar puts in all her plays). Isaac's monologue ends with something like 'people get really scared when they don't know what they're running from.' He said that because of everything he'd been saying, he didn't know how it related to the rest of the piece. He looked at me, and I said, 'I dunno' - which isn't that helpful for an actor! - and then said, 'let's just go again and see.' When I heard it again, the word 'escape' came in, and I was able to link it with that. I said 'you feel imprisoned here. He talks about the stars falling like bombs from the sky. He's trying to escape the vast landscape of Horowhenua. He feels trapped. Maybe the last line refers to that?' He thought about it, and said, 'oh, okay'. So, we're able to make those kinds of discoveries and advance

our understanding of the story we're trying to tell."

"At the end of this week, we'll have gone through the whole play again with that kind of detail. On Saturday morning, we will run it, with the creatives there. There are some things that we are doing with the set that might not quite work, in terms of our lighting design, which is forming as well. We've got such gifted creatives around us, but it will be the first time they see the piece off the book. It'll be quite rough, as it's our first go!"

"I told the actors that I didn't expect them to be off their books until the beginning of next week, but because of the first week, they've got to know it so well, they're pretty much off their books now. It gives them more room to explore."



... AND ABOUT THE PLAY

“Some of the thematic ideas that run through the play are loneliness, the feeling of being trapped... and this doesn’t only apply to Isaac, though he is the one that often articulates it. All of the characters are

town – to feel somewhat trapped. I love that it’s set in a small tea-rooms that no-one visits anymore, in the middle of nowhere in Horowhenua.”

“The whole play is set in the tearooms. There are other settings – the prison cell, Francie’s bedroom,

expand for a lighting designer to create things with. It’s just the perfect response to my request. There is this very domestic set, but behind it, because the stage area of the ASB Waterfront Theatre is so huge, is the landscape. The tearooms are nestled in this expanse, but not in a comforting way.”

“In real terms, the play is set in Horowhenua. I know that area well. The mountains are stunning, and you are surrounded by them. That’s the inspiration of the piece.”

“What I have shifted is the time that it’s set in: it’s present day. Small town Horowhenua hasn’t changed much from the beginning of the millennium, so it was simple. There aren’t references that age the play. Even the references Francie makes to her make-believe world are classic: Humphrey Bogart, James Dean, Russell Crowe, Robert de Niro. They’ve all been around forever. There’s no mention of who is the Prime Minister. It’s set in 2017 - it’s set now.”

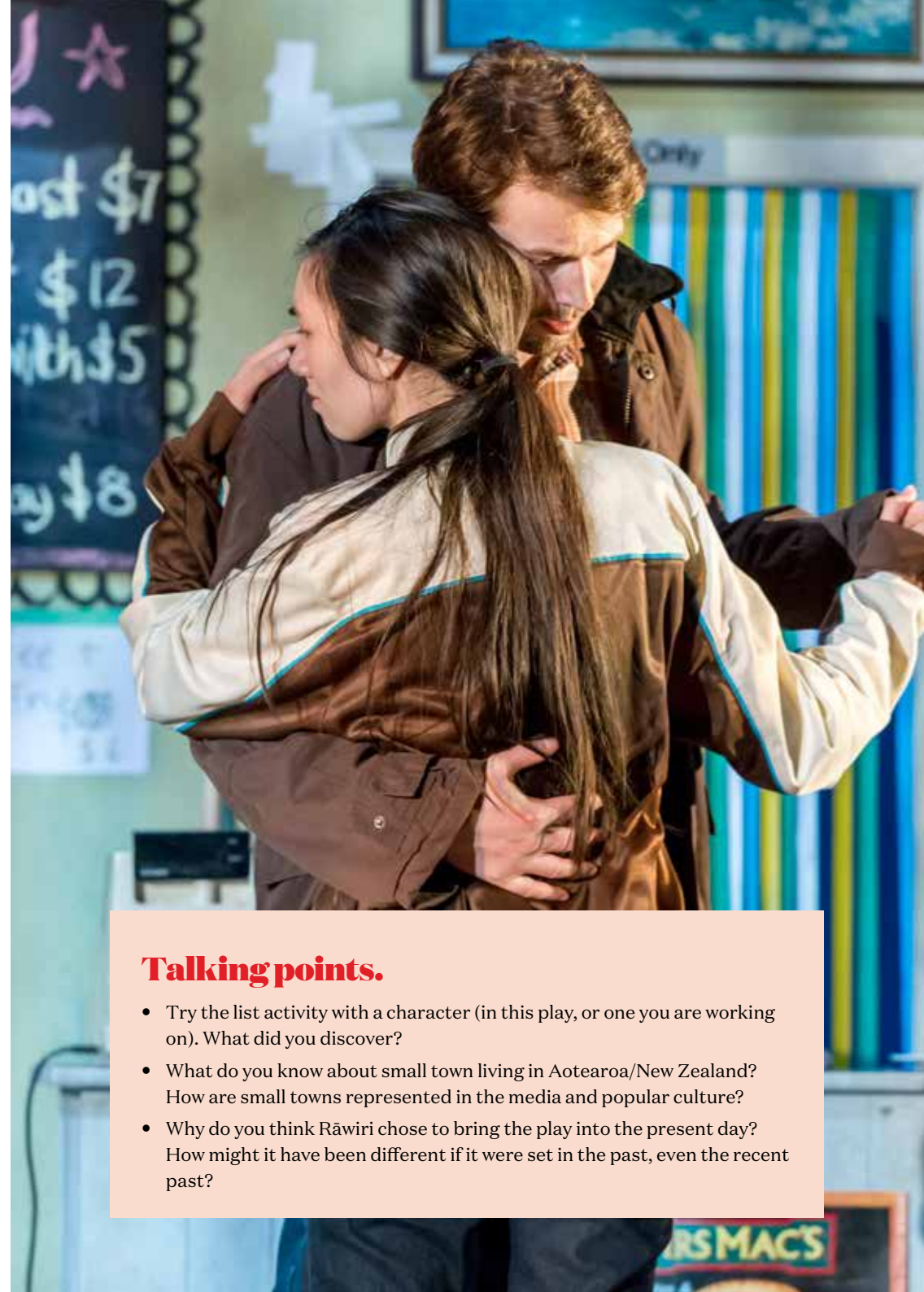
“All of the characters are to some extent trapped and caught. By history, to some extent; by geography, definitely.”

to some extent trapped and caught. By history, to some extent; by geography, definitely.

“Small town living is a theme. In a small town, you can be both lonely and trapped, because you can’t get away from other people... I think it would be common for people born and raised in a small town who have never gone away – or even, in Travis’s case, who have deliberately put themselves in that small

Flannigan’s Farm – but the play, the story, unfolds in those tearooms. In my early discussions with Daniel, I said ‘the tearooms need to have a feeling that they’re nestled in this vast space’. The sky is important to this story. There are so many references to the sky and the mountains.”

“Daniel’s response to that was to have a layered cyc made from a voile, which will be painted, and which will give a vast



Talking points.

- Try the list activity with a character (in this play, or one you are working on). What did you discover?
- What do you know about small town living in Aotearoa/New Zealand? How are small towns represented in the media and popular culture?
- Why do you think Rāwiri chose to bring the play into the present day? How might it have been different if it were set in the past, even the recent past?



The actor's process.

When Sun and Moon Collide is a character-driven drama and in rehearsal the cast of four worked together to discover relationships between the characters and to uncover their secrets. We asked Emily, Jack, Kura and Joe to describe their processes of approaching Isaac, Declan, Travis and Francie.

Emily Campbell – Francie.



“She’s quite a firecracker of a person. She’s got a lot going on under the surface, but she can come across quite bold and ballsy and

home situation with Vic. She also runs everywhere: she’s a compulsive runner.”
“She’s a tough nut to crack, because she’s

what she is going after. She’s going to do whatever it takes to get it – which is potentially behaviour she learnt from Vic.”

“She wants to be safe. She wants to be free.”

cheeky and manipulative.”
“It’s all a cover up for her less-than-ideal home life. She’s got an eating disorder, which has manifested around her

covering up so much. But at the same time, she’s very direct; she might be the only character in the play who from the get-go knows what she needs and

“She even says at the end of the play ‘we were looking for salvation.’ She wants Isaac to tell the truth. She wants Travis to do her job and figure out the murder case, because that would help her get away from Vic. She wants Declan to help her. All of those things are very clear in her relationships.”

THE PROCESS

“It’s evolving. Every day you find new things as you try things out. We did a lot of research. I did research on eating disorders and anorexia, and on domestic violence and abuse. I always find it useful to ask what are the similarities that exist between me and the

“The focus was always on connection, and on relationship.”

character, and then what are the differences, and to try out different things (in rehearsal) to see how the two personas can come together to form the Francie that I will play. Things like the way she talks, walks, holds herself, is all stuff we play with in the room.”

“I think backstory is really important. You take what you can from the text – all the facts and everything – and whatever’s not there, you try to make an educated assumption as to where she came from and what her life was like. You really try to

build a real person who has had experiences.”

“She’s young, and there’s so much that has happened to her that I’ve never come close to experiencing. I’ve never been beaten up to the point of near death, but there have been times in my life when I’ve felt helpless or bullied, and so it’s finding

the connection from your life. We all have these human feelings, so it’s connecting your feelings with her feelings, even if you got there a different way.”

“Another thing is the connection between the characters, because that’s where the story lies. What’s Francie’s relationship to Isaac? What’s her relationship to Declan? They are two different relationships and they influence her in a completely different way. Then there’s her relationship to Travis, and to the characters we

never see, like Vic and Doc Murdoch. All of those relationships are really important to who she is in that little world.”

“I really enjoyed Rāwiri’s open space exploration sessions. The focus was always on connection, and on relationship, which was really useful, because you can get so confused and blinded by all the other things happening that it’s nice to have the freedom to just lock in to one person and work out what is happening in the scene and ask, ‘how do I feel about you?’”

“An interesting challenge is the different locations. Because we’ve gone with one set – the tea-rooms – we’re building the other locations in our minds rather than actually seeing them. It means I have to be really specific about what each area of the set means, and in my head, I have to be clear about where Francie is and what she is seeing, because it’s not what the audience is seeing. It’s a challenge, but hopefully it works!”



Jack Buchanan – Isaac.



“On the page, I found Isaac quite withdrawn, reticent. When we first started, I was playing him indirect and unsure of

– or even acknowledging what he wants.”
“He’s not as timid or nervous as I maybe once thought he was. He’s stuck:

“He’s just not good at going after what he wants – or even acknowledging what he wants.”

himself. But I’m starting to discover that’s not necessarily how it’s expressed. It actually works better, I’m finding, when he can be direct about things, in that rural New Zealand male way.”

“He’s just not good at going after what he wants

he’s got this huge sense of inertia and he doesn’t know how to express himself, or pursue what he wants. The world happens around him, and things happen to him, and he just absorbs it all and doesn’t do anything. Which can be a tricky thing to play!”

“The set is the tearooms, so it’s Isaac’s space. But I’m noticing increasingly that there are times when I’ll be in the tearooms and other characters will swirl in and have these big arguments around me and things will happen and Isaac will be at the centre watching it and letting it happen to him. Then it will swirl out and he’s left to deal with everything. Stuff happens in his tearooms, and he’s there, but he’s not part of it – he’s actively shut out. There’s an interesting thing: he feels like an outsider within his own world. There’s a beautiful line in the last scene,

when Francie says to him: ‘When you watch the world through glass, it’s easy to pretend it’s not real’, which has been a key for me to understanding who he is.”

THE PROCESS

“We’ve been set homework, which I really enjoyed. Rāwiri contacted us about a month before we started, and assigned us areas of research. I had to research ‘rural NZ tearooms’ as a concept and a business venture, and the district of Horowhenua. It was interesting, and I found out a lot of stuff... It’s the kind of information you never see on stage, and

might not feel useful from the outside, but already there’s a lot of it that you draw on and that informs the way you are in the room.”

“I think with this script there’s a lot going on under the surface. Doing the character lists forced me to read the play four or five times in different ways, looking for different things. Turning up at the first day of rehearsal, when we started to discuss them I went ‘oh... I know this play really well, and I know my character really well.’ I started the process knowing my character as well as I might two weeks

into a different kind of process. So that was a good way to start.”

“In the open space exploration, the focus for me became ‘don’t try to do ‘good acting’, don’t worry about stagecraft, forget all of that and just say the words and try to connect with the other people’. I think this production lives or dies on the strength of the relationships, and so to start with that and spend a week exploring those was great. Now that we’re on the set and crafting the scenes more, it’s been great to see how organic that has been, because of that other work we did.”

Joe Dekkers-Reihana – Declan.



“Declan Kopu is a very troubled young man, who has spent his whole life bounced around from foster home to foster home.

with one adoptive family, who were okay to him, but who also adopted a little girl, and he really admired this girl. But things went

way, and people don’t like him – and he knows that. He’s not taking responsibility for his actions... because he does cause a lot of trouble for other people.”

“There are a couple of things that Declan says or does that are influential to how I play the character. On Mutuwhenua (the new moon, a black sky) Declan is kind of like a reverse werewolf; when there’s no moon, he loses control of himself, and turns into ‘Jason’ from the Friday the Thirteenth movie. Then

there is the line ‘I was once swapped for a washing machine’. That’s what he was worth as a child – less than an appliance.”

“For me, the Koro moments are a memory. In the world of the play, I don’t know if Declan would be sitting at the table talking aloud. It’s what’s going through his head at the time. Because Koro taught him all about the Māori moon calendar, he has a story for every moon that he looks at, or every day of the month, and this calendar – Maramataka –

is a guide. Declan makes his choices based on that calendar. Now I personally pay a lot more attention to the moon – trying to work out which day it is just from the shape.” (See page 16 for the Māori lunar calendar).

THE PROCESS

“I’ve done a lot of character development with this play. In Drama School in 2010, I spent about 10 weeks rehearsing this show, only to perform two scenes of it. We went through all sorts of exercises – your character’s

animal! – all sorts of methodologies to find the character. Then later I did a couple of scenes from the same show in an Ensemble Impact tour. So now, coming back to it, there’s heaps of work that I’ve done. But there’s work that I’ve basically forgotten about because I’ve done so many things in between! It’s all in there somewhere, but I’m trying to start afresh, because I don’t want to just recycle what I’ve done in the past.”

“He’s lost; he’s a lost young man who’s always looking for a place to belong and people to love him.”

He only ever really felt he belonged in two places: one was with his Koro, who raised him when he was young but then passed away; and the other was when he was safe staying

wrong in that place too, and he had to move on from there.”

“Declan sees himself the way he is. He’s almost a product of his upbringing. Things haven’t gone his

Kura Forrester – Travis.



“Travis is the local police officer in the small rural town where the play is set. She has a few secrets: she’s the foster-sister of Declan,

find out is a pretty bad guy, so it kind of shows her level of self-worth; she’s got a few issues around that.”
“Throughout the play

“She doesn’t have a hell of a lot of self-esteem, so she’s covering that with a big persona.”

and she is keeping an eye on him, professionally and personally, but she’s keeping that under wraps. She’s got quite a big ego, and also quite a big front – she pretends to be a confident, outspoken woman, but inside, she’s quite troubled. She’s got a lot of guilt towards Declan. She’s quite self-conscious. She’s dating Vic, who we

we learn that she’s not as confident as she seems, that she has a real love for Declan, that’s she’s willing to do anything to get his love, and she has a need to forgive herself. When he forgives her, it’s like her whole life can start again. Also, there’s the resolution with Vic. The way the show ends, it’s almost like Travis can begin her life

after the show. It would be interesting to see what happens to her after the play, because her life gets tipped upside-down, as do they all. I guess that’s her trajectory: love and forgiveness.”

THE PROCESS

“One of the great things about being an actor is that you get to study humans for your job. Quite often when I approach characters I think of people I know who are like this. We all know people like this; we’ve all behaved like this as well. It’s exploring what it feels like to ‘cover’. It’s about being very truthful to what’s going on. You must plot your course throughout the show, and

be aware of when you show a little bit of that. You must let yourself be affected by the other characters, too. It’s mapping out your emotional journey. A lot of work goes into that, but it’s what really helps, to get inside what’s going on inside of people.”

“I really enjoyed doing the homework. Doing those lists gives you an insight into your character, and it also helps you learn the play. I’ve really enjoyed this because all four of us, and Rāwiri, have a sense of the story early in the process, which is an advantage. I think that’s a credit to Briar and her writing, too; it’s not easy, but it’s well-woven.”

“Rāwiri sets the tone of the room. It’s really

relaxed, and it’s easy to explore. You’re able to try out new things, to give it a go, or stuff up and it doesn’t matter. Everyone’s so competent so we’re all trying things out.”

“*Le jeu* and *complicite* are pretty much my favourite things about acting and performing. It’s so much fun to do: the connection with the audience, that wink in your eye. *Le jeu* lends itself to comedy, I find.”

Is there comedy in this play? “Yes! 100%. I’m trying to play Travis with as much humour as possible, until it all turns to s*#t, and then it kind of has to be serious. But there are beautiful moments of truth and connection and humour

throughout the piece.”

“One of the things that I say to young people whenever they watch theatre, is ‘whatever you think is right’. Theatre is there to be interpreted; it’s not to make the audience feel dumb, it’s not an elitist way of being entertained. When people ask me ‘did you do that because of this?’, I put it back on them and say, ‘what do you think?’ They often have the most incredible answers. There’s no right answer when you look at art. I hope students don’t come and think they have to get everything right, because whatever they feel is right.”



Talking points.

- In the rehearsal room, Jack discovers that his character is different from the Isaac of the printed page. What is your experience – as a performer or an audience member – of finding a character different from how you initially conceived them when reading the play?
- Kura talks about 'le jeu' informing her performance. Find out more about this performance technique. What evidence of this kind of 'play' did you see in this production?
- All the actors talked about the value of research before rehearsals started. If you were directing this play, what other research tasks might you set your cast? If you were performing a role where would you start your character research?

Design.



“The tearoom is based on small town rural New Zealand tearooms, the sort you see on the side of the road in the middle of nowhere.”

Set & costume – Daniel Williams.



“Rāwiri was really interested in how we could capture that expansive sky, and valley, feel.”

SET

“We decided to set the whole play in the tearooms, even though we also go to different locations in the story; a cell, Francie’s bedroom, Flannagan’s Hill. We will evoke those places, excitingly, with lighting, and use the different levels. For example, we’ll probably use the upper level for the bedroom; the jail might be on stage right. And we’re going to play with using different zones within the cafe to create those areas.”

“The tearoom is based on small town rural New Zealand tearooms, the sort you see on the side of the road in the middle of nowhere that have

these old-style verandas and mismatched, dated interiors.”

“The basic design is that we’re looking into a corner of the room. It’s a V shape. Wrapping around the outside is a veranda, so there’s a large amount of outside space. It’s very open; the whole thing is windows, except for the kitchen area.”

“For visual references, we’ve looked at a lot of paintings by artists Colin McCahon and Grahame Sydney – who both use architecture against big skies. Rāwiri was really interested in how we could capture that expansive sky, and valley, feel.”

“We’re working with this segmented cyc (cyclorama) which is going to wrap around the outside of the café so that it’s layered and ‘piecey’, like a Colin McCahon painting. There’ll be fifteen voile drops, which I’m going to hand dye and paint, so they’ll be like a giant painting.”

“The colour palette we’re working with is also inspired by Colin McCahon paintings; earthy landscape tones: olives, burnt browns, the land.”

“In terms of set-dressing, we’re using traditional NZ tearoom things: the little tomato-sauce bottles, the Lea & Perrins sauce, the dirty

curtains, the very simple chalkboard menu with only two things on it! On the counter there's a plastic sandwich cabinet, with only a couple of dodgy egg sandwiches in it. It's all very minimal because it's not well frequented. There's no coffee machine, though there might be a percolator. There's a juke-box, and mismatching furniture."

"We're creating a bit of a thrust stage, because we're interested in how we can bring this intimate piece forward, into the audience. The theatre's proscenium arch is six metres across. Though it can be narrowed, we're going to keep it as wide as possible, to give

that sense of a landscape view. When we put the borders in, we'll probably take them up a bit higher, so when you're sitting in the stalls, this sky will be even higher – 8m, instead of 6m. We can play with that scale: making it feel really lonely and expansive and big, and then making it really intimate and close."

"At the ASB Waterfront Theatre, there's a forestage that comes up; we're just going to use the middle part, and drop it down 800mm, so it's a step up to the mainstage. Then there's another step up to the space behind the cafe, so we're playing with levels as well."

COSTUME

"Rāwiri and I want costume to be something we find in rehearsal, something we work together on. I have a colour-palette in mind that's complementary to the set (browns and reds) that I want to play with. It's set in 2017, so the clothes are contemporary. But it won't be heavily 'designed' – more 'discovered'."

"Travis gets to wear a real police uniform. We had to sign a special form to get permission. And it has to be locked away every night."

Talking Points.

- Discuss the use of the layered cyclorama, and how it contributed to the atmosphere of both specific scenes, and the play as a whole.
- Research landscape paintings by Colin McCahon or Grahame Sydney. What are the characteristics of this painter? How are these elements reflected or referenced in the set?
- What did the final costume choices reveal about each character? Choose a character and do a more detailed analysis of the colour / cut / overall style of their clothing and accessories.
- Why is the real NZ Police uniform so powerful onstage? What messages does it carry?





Lighting – Jennifer Lal.



The layered cyc will be a challenge to light, technically, because there's so much of it. We want to have the light set up so it can take over the cyc at transition stages, so it feels like it swamps the tearrooms, because the tearrooms are a little oasis in the world of chaos that's going on around the characters. Their subconscious environment is that sky. They're lost, isolated, little people – so I want the sky to take over sometimes, to give that sense of their world.”

“I'm going to use moving lights on the cyc, because they force their way through the fabric, and paint it, like

an actual painting, to fit with the Colin McCahon and Grahame Sidney references.”

“I'll also paint pictures within the tearroom itself, at the times of the day when each scene takes place. That's why we haven't gone for practical lighting in there, which would turn it into a naturalistic setting. We will use theatre lighting to put beautiful light on the solid wall, and create the shadows of people and the tearrooms. The tearrooms may be an oasis, but it's also the prison that each of the characters is in... they're all troubled characters...”

“The play's a murder mystery, so I want a sense

of foreboding. We're going to use haze within the tearrooms and outside too. I like to think of it as being like *Howl's Moving Castle* - this universe that spins through the real universe, but is an emotional landscape.”

“We will use low light, as much of the play is set at night and in the early morning. If I shoot light at person-height through the tearrooms set, it will give a warmth and an emotional reality to what's going on for the characters. Of course, we also have to be able to see the actors!”

“Moonlight will be seen on the cyc, and from the audience you'll see the effect of moonlight, but

not the shape of the moon itself. Not showing the moon gives me the chance to paint pictures from every angle of the cafe, so the characters are not locked into being in only one area when the moon comes up. And of course, Mutuwhehua means there's no moon!" So, how do you light a climax that takes place in the dark? "The light from the voile

'painting' (the cyc) will bounce onto the stage, and low light will create a sense of spookiness."

"To delineate the different locations, we'll use tight light on specific spaces. Maybe we'll use some gobos for outside... Then we'll use planes, so when the actors are downstage for Flannigan's Hill, we'll keep the cafe dark, but have the skies

really bright behind them in a night-time style, so that the world is in a different reality from the interior scenes."

"The depth of field is to bring the upstage and downstage to the fore, and lose the mid-stage, so that it changes our visual perspective from the audience."

Talking points.

- How effective was the delineation of locations outside the tearooms? What lighting techniques contributed to your understanding of where each scene was occurring?
- What is the effect of the low lighting on 'setting the scene' in terms of time and place?
- Do you know what these technical terms mean? If not, look up their definitions:
 - moving light
 - cyc (cyclorama)
 - practical lighting
 - gobo
 - planes
- How does the lighting support the assertion that "the play is a murder mystery"?



Design.



Sound – Thomas Press.



“The play can get quite heavy, so the challenge with the sound will be to keep a sense of lightness so not all elements have to say the same thing. There may be elements of a *Twin Peaks* atmosphere. There might be an ‘ice people’ theme (for the Lindhardsens),

exploring non-musical motifs.”

“We are considering using the sounds of a tearoom – like the beeps and hums of the fridge and the microwave – to create musical elements.”

“Spatially, there will be speakers on stage and

over the audience, to give us the option of moving sound in and out.” This means that the sound can be directional, coming from different locations in the auditorium to indicate different locations in the world of the play.”

Talking points.

- Thomas talks of the play being ‘heavy’ and needing to have the juxtaposition of ‘lightness’ in the sound. How do you interpret these terms?
- Which sound elements contributed to a sense of foreboding?
- How recognisable were the domestic sounds incorporated into the soundscape? Why were these elements included?
- Listen to the *Twin Peaks* intro (www.youtube.com/watch?v=i7dOLm_3IBE) Can you draw parallels with the final sound design you heard in the show? How does this TV theme inform the music / soundscape of the play?



Additional resources and readings.

- Grace-Smith, Briar *When Sun and Moon Collide*. Briar Grace-Smith. Huia Publishers, 2007. Print.
- Betts, Jean. "Study Resource". *When Sun and Moon Collide*. Briar Grace-Smith. Huia Publishers, 2007. Print.
- For further research Briar Grace-Smith and her place in the development of Māori Theatre:
<http://artsonline.tki.org.nz/Teaching-and-Learning/Secondary-teaching-resources/Drama/Reviewed-resources/Key-Collection/Purapurawhetu-and-The-Pohutukawa-Tree>

ATC creative learning – encouraging acts of imagination

Whether we are unpacking a play, creating a new work, or learning new skills we are encouraging habits of thinking that foster acts of imagination to take place. ATC Creative Learning promotes and encourages teaching and participation in theatre and acts as a resource for secondary

and tertiary educators. It is a comprehensive and innovative arts education programme designed to nurture young theatre practitioners and audiences.

ATC Creative Learning has direct contact with secondary school students throughout the greater

Auckland region with a focus on delivering an exciting and popular programme that supports the Arts education of Auckland students and which focuses on curriculum development, literacy, and the Arts.

Curriculum links.

ATC Education activities relate directly to the PK, UC and CI strands of the NZ Curriculum from levels 5 to 8. They also have direct relevance to many of the NCEA achievement standards at all three levels.

All secondary school Drama students (Years 9 to 13) should be experiencing

live theatre as a part of their course work, Understanding the Arts in Context. Curriculum levels 6, 7 and 8 (equivalent to years 11, 12 and 13) require the inclusion of New Zealand drama in their course of work.

The NCEA external examinations at each level

(Level 1 – AS90011, Level 2 – AS91219, Level 3 – AS91518) require students to write about live theatre they have seen. Students who are able to experience fully produced, professional theatre are generally advantaged in answering these questions.



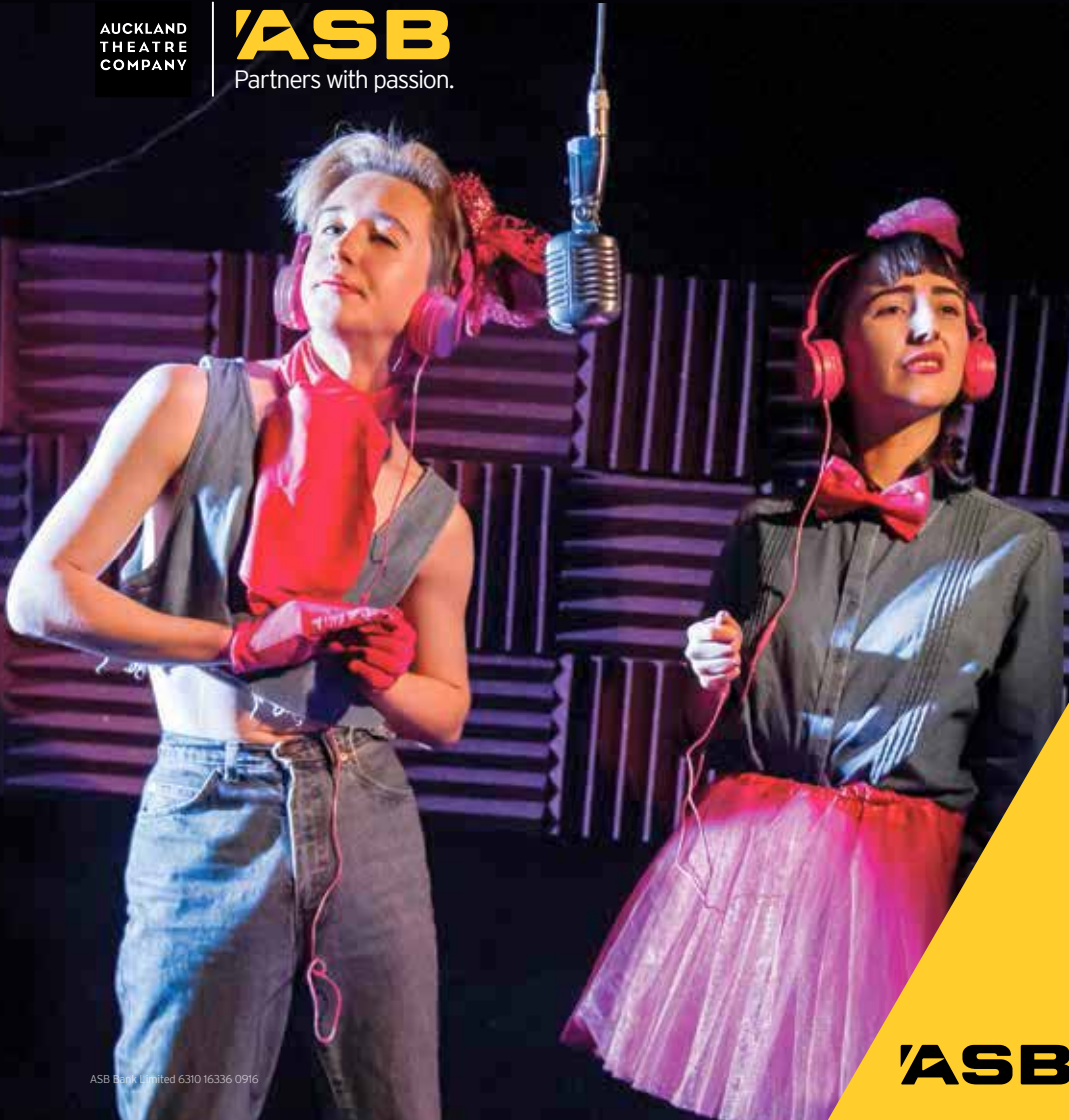
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