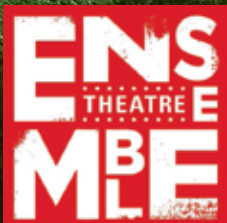


ALONE IT STANDS

BY JOHN BREEN | DIRECTED BY JANINE WATSON



AN ENSEMBLE THEATRE
EDUCATION RESOURCE
BY ELOISE SNAPE



TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| Preface | 2 |
| Curriculum Links | 2 |
| Play Synopsis | 3 |
| Character List | 3 |
| Meet the Team | 4 |
| Writers Note – John Breen | 5 |
| Haka Ka Mate | 5 |
| Q&A with Director Janine Watson | 6 |
| Teaching and Learning Activity 1 – Scene Study | 7 |
| Q&A with Actor Alex King | 11 |
| Teaching and Learning Activity 2 – Hot Seat | 12 |
| Q&A with Composer & Sound Designer Jess Dunn | 13 |
| Teaching and Learning Activity 3 – Setting the Score | 14 |
| Rehearsal Images | 16 |
| Teaching and Learning Activity 4 – Devising Narrative | 18 |
| Creating the World - Set and Costume by Emma White | 19 |



ICON LEGEND



Discussion
Activity



Create and
Perform



Reflection

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Ensemble Theatre proudly acknowledges the Cammaeraigal people of the Eora nation as customary custodians of the land on which we stand and share our stories.

In harmony with the land and water, its seasons and cycles, the Cammaeraigal people practiced their culture for thousands of years and the connection continues to this day.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

PREFACE

This education resource for Ensemble Theatre's production of ALONE IT STANDS, by John Breen, has been designed for secondary students and teachers across Australia. Exercises have been designed that encompass theoretical and practical components and can be applied to different stages of learning at the discretion of the teacher, class, and context.

For NSW based students, ALONE IT STANDS and its accompanying resources has links to the following syllabus outcomes within the NESA Curriculum:

DRAMA

STAGE 4

Compulsory Study of Theatrical Form/Style (Physical Theatre and Scripted Drama)

Making: 4.1.1, 4.1.3, 4.1.4

Performing: 4.2.2, 4.2.3

Appreciating: 4.3.1, 4.3.2, 4.3.3

STAGE 5

Compulsory Study of Theatrical Form/Style (Physical Theatre and Scripted Drama)

Making: 5.1.1, 5.1.3, 5.1.4

Performing: 5.2.2, 5.2.3

Appreciating: 5.3.1, 5.3.2, 5.3.3

STAGE 6

Studies in Drama and Theatre (Verbatim Theatre)

H1.3, H2.4, H3.1, H3.3, H3.4

ENGLISH

STAGE 4 & 5

Study of Drama

Outcomes 3, 5 and 8

STAGE 6

English Standard Year 11 Module B: Close Study of Literature

Outcomes 3, 5 and 8

CROSS CURRICULUM LINKS

- Physicality and Movement
- Sport Culture
- Social Class
- Redemption and Transformation

KEY COMPETENCIES

- Critical and creative thinking
- Ethical understanding
- Collecting and organising information
- Communicating ideas and information
- Literacy



SYNOPSIS

October 31st 1978. Thomond Park, Limerick. Cheers and jeers echo through the crowd as the all-amateur Munster rugby team ready for battle against the best team in the world, the legendary All Blacks. Nobody thought they could go the distance — but the scrappy Irish lads walked off the pitch with a 12-0 victory.

The game was never televised, but the myth of this historic skirmish lives on in John Breen's fast and funny play tackling the stories of those whose lives were touched by the unexpected win. A talented team of performers cheer, scrum and charge through 62 characters, bringing to life both teams, the fans and even animals!

Sports fans and theatre fans alike will love this mad-cap David and Goliath tale about the ultimate underdogs.

CHARACTER LIST

PERFORMED BY TRISTAN BLACK

Tony Ward, Munster player
Russ Thomas, All Black Manager
John Ashworth, All Black player
David, posh Cork supporter
Monica, child
Jasper, child
Bunratty singer
Brendan Foley, Munster player
Wayne Graham, All Black player
Dan's Friend 1
Mark Donaldson, All Black player

PERFORMED BY RAY CHONG NEE

Spider, child
Fox O'Halloran, President of Shannon Rugby Club
Tom Kiernan, Munster coach
Andy Haden, All Black player
Graham Mourie, All Black player
Relative at funeral
"Locky", Gerry McLoughlin, Munster player
Dan's Friend 2
Spectator

PERFORMED BY BRIALLEN CLARKE

Mary, Gerry's wife
Dandy, child
Moss Keane, Munster player
Marjorie, posh Cork supporter
Bunratty singer
Gary Knight, All Black player
Top of big NZ fan
Ball
Brian McKechnie, All Black player

PERFORMED BY SKYLER ELLIS

Lanky, Munster fan
Donal Canniffe, Munster player
BBC commentator
Rodney, posh Cork supporter
Brad Johnstone, All Black player
Bunratty singer
Bryan Williams, All Black player
Nurse 1
Eddie Dunn, All Black player

PERFORMED BY ALEX KING

Stu Wilson, All Black player
Ferret, child
Sinbad, dog
Bunratty singer
Pat Whelan, Munster player
Jim Bowen, Munster player
All Black fan 1
Taxi Driver
Nurse 2
Bottom of tall NZ fan
Colm Tucker, Munster player
Greg Barrett, Munster player
All Black forward

PERFORMED BY ANTHONY TAUFA

Gerry, Munster fan
Seamus Dennison, Munster player
Dan Canniffe, Donal Canniffe's father
BJ Robertson, All Black player
Bridie Walsh, barmaid
Irene, posh Cork supporter
Bunratty singer
Priest

MEET THE TEAM

CREATIVES



JOHN BREEN
PLAYWRIGHT



JANINE WATSON
DIRECTOR



TIANA TIAKIWAI
CULTURAL CONSULTANT



EMMA WHITE
SET & COSTUME DESIGNER



MATT COX
LIGHTING DESIGNER



JESSICA DUNN
COMPOSER &
SOUND DESIGNER



**LINDA
NICHOLLS-GIDLEY**
DIALECT COACH



TIM DASHWOOD
FIGHT DIRECTOR



CHLOE DALLIMORE
INTIMACY COORDINATOR



LAUREN TULLOH
STAGE MANAGER



RENATA BESLIK
COSTUME SUPERVISOR

CAST



TRISTAN BLACK



RAY CHONG NEE



**BRIALLEN
CLARKE**



SKYLER ELLIS



ALEX KING



ANTHONY TAUFA

WRITERS NOTE | JOHN BREEN

ALONE IT STANDS takes place in a very different world in 1978. It was a grim time in Ireland. There was a war in "the North". Contraception, homosexuality, abortion and divorce were all illegal. There was mass unemployment and immigration, a sense that if you wanted any kind of a life you had to get out – England, America, Australia; anywhere would do. It felt like to be Irish was to be cursed. There was no U2, no Riverdance, no Italia 90, no Celtic Tiger: until the Munster rugby team beat the All Blacks in 1978 in Thomond Park and the country went mad with joy.



I wrote ALONE IT STANDS to celebrate that victory and celebrate the town I grew up in. It is mostly true.

The play started its journey in a small rugby club moving on to small theatres, then big theatres, the West End and even The Sydney Opera House! The play has given much to me and I am thrilled it will be seen again in Sydney. Ireland has of course changed beyond recognition and we have beaten the All Blacks a few times now (don't mention the World Cup!), but nobody else has beaten them in Thomond Park, in Limerick, on a Tuesday. So Alone it Stands!

HAKA KA MATE

The writer, John Breen included the Haka Ka Mate in this play to represent the All Blacks performing the Ka Mate as they did at the 1978 game.

The Haka Ka Mate was originally composed by the Ngati Toa Rangatira tribe and is protected under the Haka Ka Mate Attribution Act 2014. This protects the words and associated actions and choreography, whether in whole or part of the haka known as Ka Mate. Ka Mate is acknowledged as a taonga (treasure, prized) and is an integral part of the history, culture and identity. It is important to the Ngati Toa Rangatira tribe that the Haka is performed with respect and not appropriated in any way. Approval of the usage of the Ka Mate in the play by Ngati Toa Rangatira tribe included the stipulation that a cultural consultant would be available to provide teachings and learnings to the cast members during the rehearsal process. Tiana Tiakiwai, acted as a cultural consultant for the production and provided direction to the cast on the actions and choreography alongside the vocal techniques of performing the Ka Mate.



Q&A WITH JANINE WATSON, DIRECTOR

CAN YOU DESCRIBE YOUR PROCESS AS A DIRECTOR?

I work with the text first and dive deep into the complexities of that. Then I work on building the physical world through structured improvisation. I work very physically.

AS A DIRECTOR, YOU'VE WORKED ON A WIDE RANGE OF PLAYS AND GENRES. WHAT MAKES THIS PLAY SO UNIQUE?

Everything about this play is unique. It's the most physical and movement based play I've worked on. A cast of 6 playing 62 characters with multiple accents. The Haka Ka Mate is featured and performed in the play, so it was very important that we worked closely with a cultural consultant. Tiana Tiakiwai allowed us to explore the Haka and perform it with respect and honour to its origin and history.

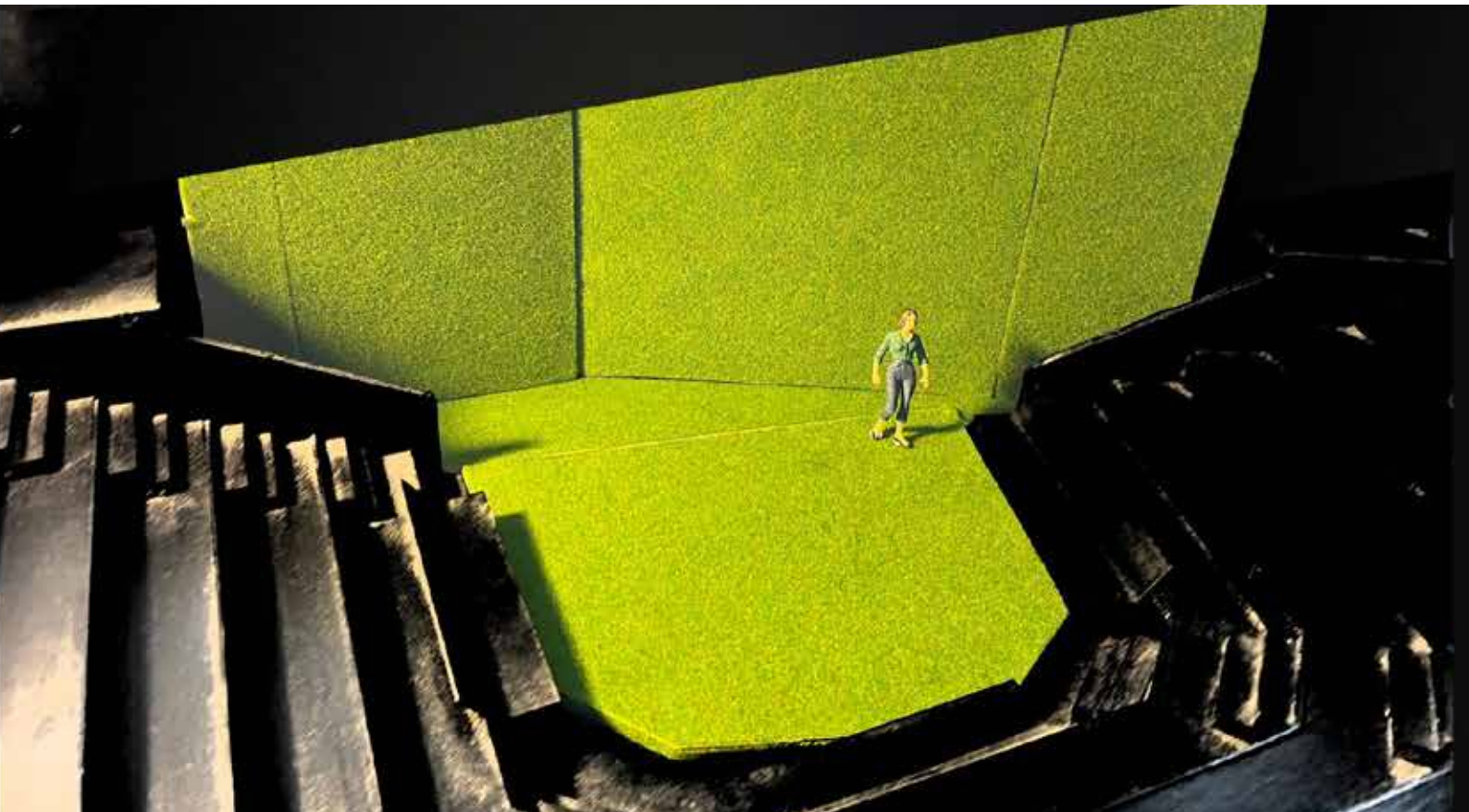


WHAT WAS THE MOST CHALLENGING THING ABOUT DIRECTING THIS PLAY?

The most challenging weeks were when we were staging the reenactment of the rugby match. I used scrapbooks to sketch the staging, movement and game play. It was highly choreographed and exhausting for the actors. A lot of repetition. They were incredibly dedicated.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO BUDDING YOUNG DIRECTORS?

Learn as much as possible early on about lighting design, sound design and composition, and set/costume design. Trust your unique vision even when other people question you. Seek out mentors who have more experience than you and watch them work.



TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITY 1

SCENE STUDY



DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

In this scene, an excerpt from Act 2 Scene 9, Munster, the underdogs, defeat the All Blacks. Munster fan Gerry, learns his wife Mary is at the hospital giving birth to twins whilst he is in the midst of celebrating his teams win.

In pairs, beat through the scene by colour-coding the moments that shift the mood of the piece. A beat is a moment in the script where something shifts considerably, and there is a change in the mood of the play.

There is a long whistle. It's the worst sound Andy has ever heard. Andy falls to his knees, shattered

Haden We've lost.

The All Blacks take it in. They walk back disbelievingly to become the crowd

There is another long whistle

Lanky Gerry, we've beaten the All Blacks !

The Lights change to a cold exterior setting

All Yeeehhhh.

David Lanky, I love you.

David goes to plant a smacker on Lanky's lips which Lanky avoids

The others clap

Lanky becomes Donal Canniffe; he and Tony Ward shake hands with the defeated players

Canniffe Well played, good game. Well played.

The All Blacks are dignified in defeat

Wilson You didn't let us play, Tony.

Ward Thanks.

Wilson I didn't mean it as a compliment.

Wilson stomps off

Tony Ward is baffled at Wilson's lack of grace. Andy Haden becomes Graham Mourie and approaches Tony

Mourie Well done, Tony. It doesn't get much better than this. Stu will apologize for that later. He just takes it a bit personally. (*To Donal Canniffe*) Captain Fantastic.

Donal Canniffe becomes Lanky; he and Gerry and thousands of others invade the pitch

Gerry Well done, lads. Good man, Tony Ward.

All Tony!

Gerry Didn't the Shannon lads do us proud ?

The players try to fight their way through the crowd. The crowd faces another direction

Good man, Colm Tucker, Shannon can hold our heads high today!

Lanky becomes Donal Canniffe and gets away from the mêlée. Tony Ward becomes David

David Donal Canniffe!

All Donal!

David Come here to me, boy. A bit of Cork grit goes a long way. I'd say you'll remember this day for ever.

Canniffe Oh that's for sure.

Graham Mourie becomes a Spectator

Spectator How's poor Stu Wilson? Jesus, Seamus Dennisson nearly had you kilt. That'll teach you for tryin' to ride the Bunratty singers.

Crowd Hurray, Munster, Munster, Munster.

Spectator Mungo Gerry, what are you doin' here ?

Gerry Ah, same as yourself.

Gerry and the Spectator are swept apart. Gerry can no longer hear him

Spectator No, I'm serious. Your wife's at the hospital.

Gerry (*not hearing him but pretending he has*) Yeah, great. There'll be a few pints tonight.

Spectator She's havin' the twins like.

Gerry Yeah, it's mad.

Spectator Jesus, Gerry, your wife's at the hospital; she's havin' the babies!

Gerry (*still unable to hear him*) What?

Gary Knight has had enough of this. He lifts Gerry up by the lapels. The Spectator is swept away by the crowd

Knight Your wife is at the hospital having your children.

Gerry How did you know that?

Knight Go!

Knight throws Gerry away from him

Crowd Munster, Munster, Munster.
Munster, Munster, Munster.

Gerry appears between the legs of the crowd

Gerry Get out of my way. Can't you see I'm in a hurry? For fuck's sake ——

The crowd freezes

— it's only a game.

The crowd carries on as before

Lanky appears

Lanky Gerry, what are you doin' here? Mary's havin' the twins.

Gerry I know.

Lanky Well, maybe you should think about goin', like.

Gerry What are you cryin' about?

Lanky Somethin' in my eye! It's great though.

Gerry and Lanky hug

C'm'ere, you need to be goin'.

Gerry glares at Lanky, then dives back into the fray

Using the table below, identify five examples in the above script where a character reveals a new piece of information.

| Character | Dialogue | What is revealed? |
|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |



CREATE AND PERFORM

Reread the scene with your partner, activating the beats throughout your performance. Make sure the drama occurs at the right moments. In your rehearsals, discuss and focus on the following themes in your performance:

- Sport culture
- Physicality and movement
- Redemption and transformation

Whilst rehearsing, consider the status of each character. The Munster players and fans are clearly the underdogs, so how do you portray that?



REFLECTION

Once you have rehearsed and performed the scene, use your logbook to reflect on the elements of performance you have created. Consider:

- Who affirms or goes against their assumed status in this scene? What is an example of how this develops throughout the scene?
- What do we learn about the relationship between Gerry and Mary in this scene?



Q&A WITH ALEX KING, ACTOR

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE VARIOUS CHARACTERS YOU PLAY IN ALONE IT STANDS?

PLAYFUL! All 13 of them are so beautifully, ridiculously different and yet all so fun to play. From a 90 year old Taxi Driver, to a loyal dog to a young kid, to a strong, naive All Black winger; they all have heart, they all have history, they all have lives, wants and needs.

WHAT WAS THE MOST CHALLENGING PART OF THE REHEARSAL PROCESS?

I think for me, the hardest part was finding the truth in these characters whilst not yet being confident and comfortable with the accents early in the rehearsal process. With help from our director, Janine, we realised that the accent should not be at the forefront of our minds. YET! We began focusing on story first as you would with any play. Once we could get the words in our bodies, find the heart of each scene and the flow, the accent sort of just slipped itself in with the help of our absolutely incredible Dialect Coach, Linda Nicholls Gidley. This approach helped ease the anxiety around accents which I was really grateful for.



THE PLAY IS VERY DEMANDING ON AN ACTOR PHYSICALLY AND VOCALLY. HOW DO YOU PREPARE BEFORE A SHOW?

I try to get to the theatre an hour before our hour call. I use this time to do a long physical warm up, have a honey tea and a vocal steam. I then do a vocal warm up and get into my costume around the hour call. We give ourselves this much time because once we are all ready as a collective, we spend the remaining 45 minutes doing a group check in, physical warm up and a "Fight Call". A fight call is when you step through all of the super physical moments in the show including stunts, lifts, fights etc. We also choose a few chorus dialogue moments to speed run through, just to centre us as a collective and focus in as a team before the show.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO STUDENTS WHO WANT TO START A CAREER IN THE ARTS INDUSTRY?

Take every opportunity you can and give it 100%. You never know when your efforts will pay off. It's usually when you least expect it.



TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITY 2

HOT SEAT

Exploring character is an important part of the rehearsal process.



DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

Choose one character from *ALONE IT STANDS* and put them in the 'hot seat'. What questions would you like to ask them? Think about the relationships they have with other characters and their individual backstories. What would you like to know about them that isn't discussed in the play?

Invite one of your peers to be in the 'hot seat' while you ask the questions and then switch – making sure to explore a different character.

Remember, if you don't know the answer to a question, use your imagination! This is your opportunity to embody the characters from the play as you see them.



REFLECTION

Use your logbook to reflect on your hot seat experience. Consider:

- What did you discover about the characters in the play?
- Did you read something into their past?
- How was your interpretation different to your peers?



Q&A WITH JESSICA DUNN, COMPOSER & SOUND DESIGNER

CAN YOU PLEASE EXPLAIN YOUR ROLE AS SOUND DESIGNER AND COMPOSER FOR THIS PRODUCTION OF ALONE IT STANDS?

For Alone It Stands my role was to compose music that made up the score of the show e.g. scene change music and underscore, which sits under the actor's dialogue. This show also involved some use of sound effects that relate to the show e.g. crowd sounds, referee whistles, fire. Because the show moves very quickly and tracks through multiple story lines, I made different themes to help situate the audience at a particular point in time. I also approached some of the sections of game play as if I was scoring a dance or movement piece, aligning sound and movement as closely as possible.



HOW DO YOU BEGIN THE PROCESS OF COMPOSING A NEW SOUND OR PIECE OF MUSIC?

My process changes slightly depending on the show, however, being trained in jazz I often start the process by improvising as a means to come up with different melodies and harmonies. I also find it helpful to set restrictions with myself, whether that be time spent on a particular aspect or instrumentation, as I can find too many options overwhelming.

HOW DO YOU COLLABORATE WITH THE CREATIVE TEAM THROUGHOUT THE REHEARSAL PROCESS?

Working with collaborative designers, whether that be lighting, set, costume or video is my preferred way of working as I think it makes a show stronger and more cohesive. Collaboration can look many different ways; a conceptual discussion about style, genre etc... or practical collaboration such as working with a designer to hide a microphone in an actor's costume or even matching the fade times of my music with that of the lighting designer.

WHAT INSPIRES YOU IN YOUR ROLE AND WHAT ARE YOU MOST EXCITED FOR STUDENTS TO EXPERIENCE WHEN THEY COME TO THE THEATRE?

The things that inspire me are excellent storytelling, a dedication to craft, and collaboration that involves the whole team building an entirely new world together. What I love about theatre, and what I hope students also enjoy is that there's a living, breathing performance evolving in real time right in front of you, and if it does its job properly, you get lost in a story for a short period of time.



TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITY 3

SETTING THE SCORE



DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

Music and sound play an integral role in setting the tone of any production. Consider Act 2 Scene 12 from ALONE IT STANDS:

Gerry Taxi!

A warm patch of lighting comes up c

Spider and Lanky, on all fours, form a taxi on the centre spot, Spider at the front, Lanky at the back. Sinbad the dog becomes the taxi driver who is about ninety

Gerry gets into the back of the taxi which is outside the ground. He's exhausted after struggling through the crowd

Gerry Bedford Row hospital, please.

Driver The baby place?

Gerry Yeah.

Driver Next to the Savoy.

Gerry Yeah.

Driver Let's see now, what'd be the quickest way?

Gerry Over Sarsfield bridge and up Henry Street.

Driver Oh, that'd do it right enough. I think we've missed most of the traffic.

Gerry is silent. The taxi driver tries to make conversation

Driver So, were you at the match ?

Gerry Ah, yeah.

Driver What was the score?

Gerry Twelve-nil.

Driver Oh, Munster didn't let themselves down too badly, so.

Gerry No, actually it was ... No.

Driver So are you visiting?

Gerry Yeah, my wife's expecting.

Driver When is she due?

Gerry About half an hour ago.

Driver I think I'd better put on my glasses. *(He does so, with great ceremony)*

The taxi accelerates to two hundred miles an hour. Gerry is pushed back in his seat. The taxi roars around corners, over potholes, then comes to a screeching halt

Driver Traffic.

Gerry is going to be sick. The taxi driver twiddles his fingers on the steering wheel, pushes his glasses up and looks around, then pushes his glasses back down again

You know I think you'd nearly be as quick if you hopped out here.
Gerry Yeah! How much do I owe you?
Driver Ah, leave it. Buy the baby somethin' nice.
Gerry Bees.
Driver What?
Gerry (*proudly*) Babies. She's havin' twins.
Driver (*after a quick admiring glance at Gerry's groin*) Good man yourself!

The Lights change to a warm, sombre interior

Discuss as a class or in small groups with your peers how a piece of original sound could impact this moment of the play. How would you describe this scene? What tone would you like to evoke to your audience?



CREATE AND PERFORM

Using the script excerpt above, create a soundscape for Act 2 Scene 12 of ALONE IT STANDS. Think about how you can use percussion and the everyday objects around you to generate sound.

Keep adding layers until you feel like you have a rich and layered soundscape. You might even need to ask someone to be the conductor!



REFLECTION

Perform a staged reading of the script excerpt above including your soundscape. Ask your audience what impact your soundscape has on them. What emotions do they feel after they hear it? Is this different to the emotions that you experienced when you saw the production live? Write a logbook entry summarising your discussion.



REHEARSAL IMAGES



REHEARSAL IMAGES



TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITY 4

DEVISING NARRATIVE



DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

Watching a theatre production can often be the first step in developing your own ideas about how the characters in the script could be portrayed. Think about what you'd like to know more about from certain characters, or how the direction of the play would change if we were in a different time or place. What if Sinbad, the dog, could talk – what would he say? What might Spider be like as an adult?



CREATE AND PERFORM

Write a short monologue from the perspective of one of the characters in the play. Set the monologue either BEFORE, DURING or AFTER the timeline of the play. For example, write from the perspective of Mary as she is on her way to the hospital to give birth. How might she be feeling? How have Gerry's actions affected her?



REFLECTION

Share your monologue with the class and invite conversation between your peers. Did some monologues take you by surprise? What stuck out to you? How did your perception of a character change now that you have more information? What do you have more questions about?



CREATING THE WORLD - SET AND COSTUME BY EMMA WHITE

COSTUME DESIGN

MUNSTER UNIFORM

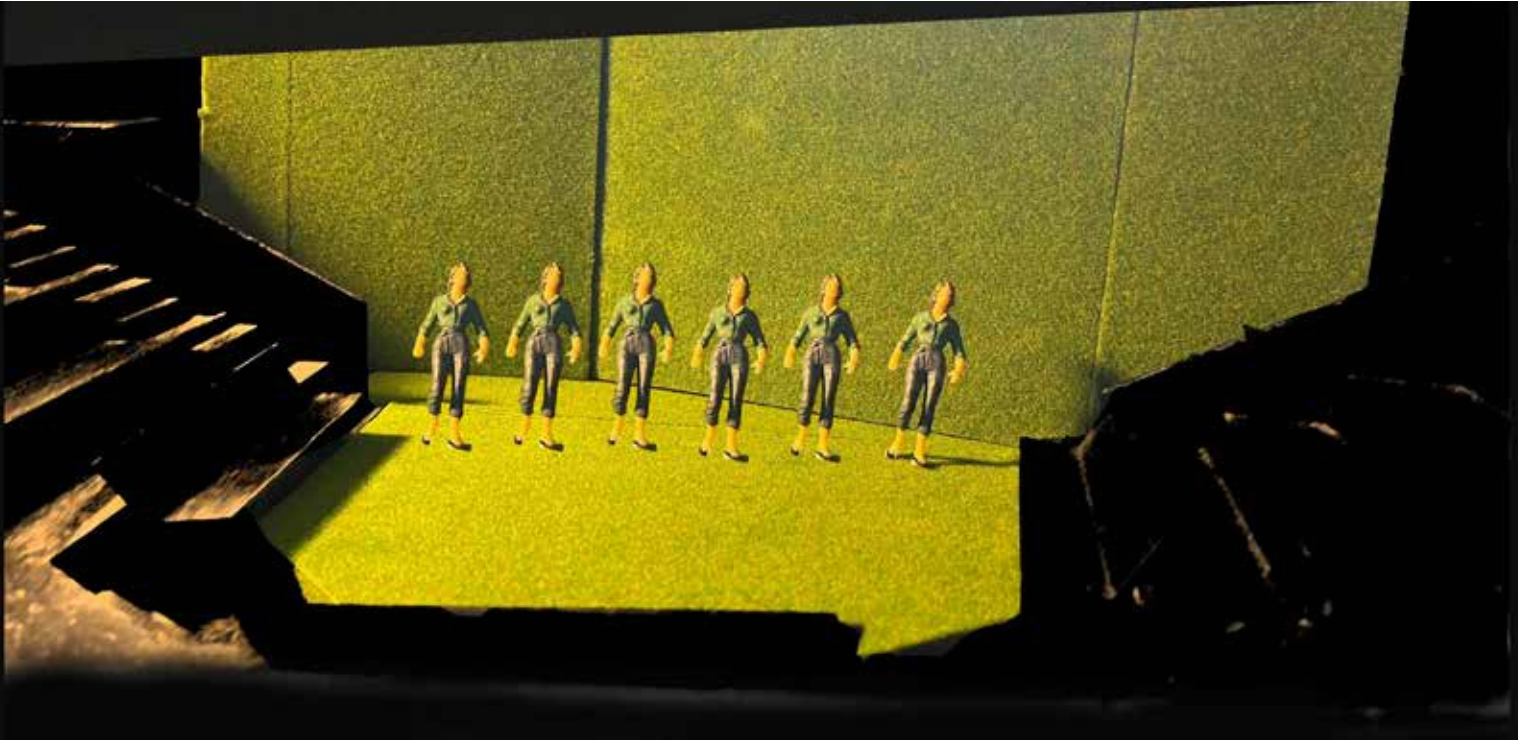


COSTUME DESIGN

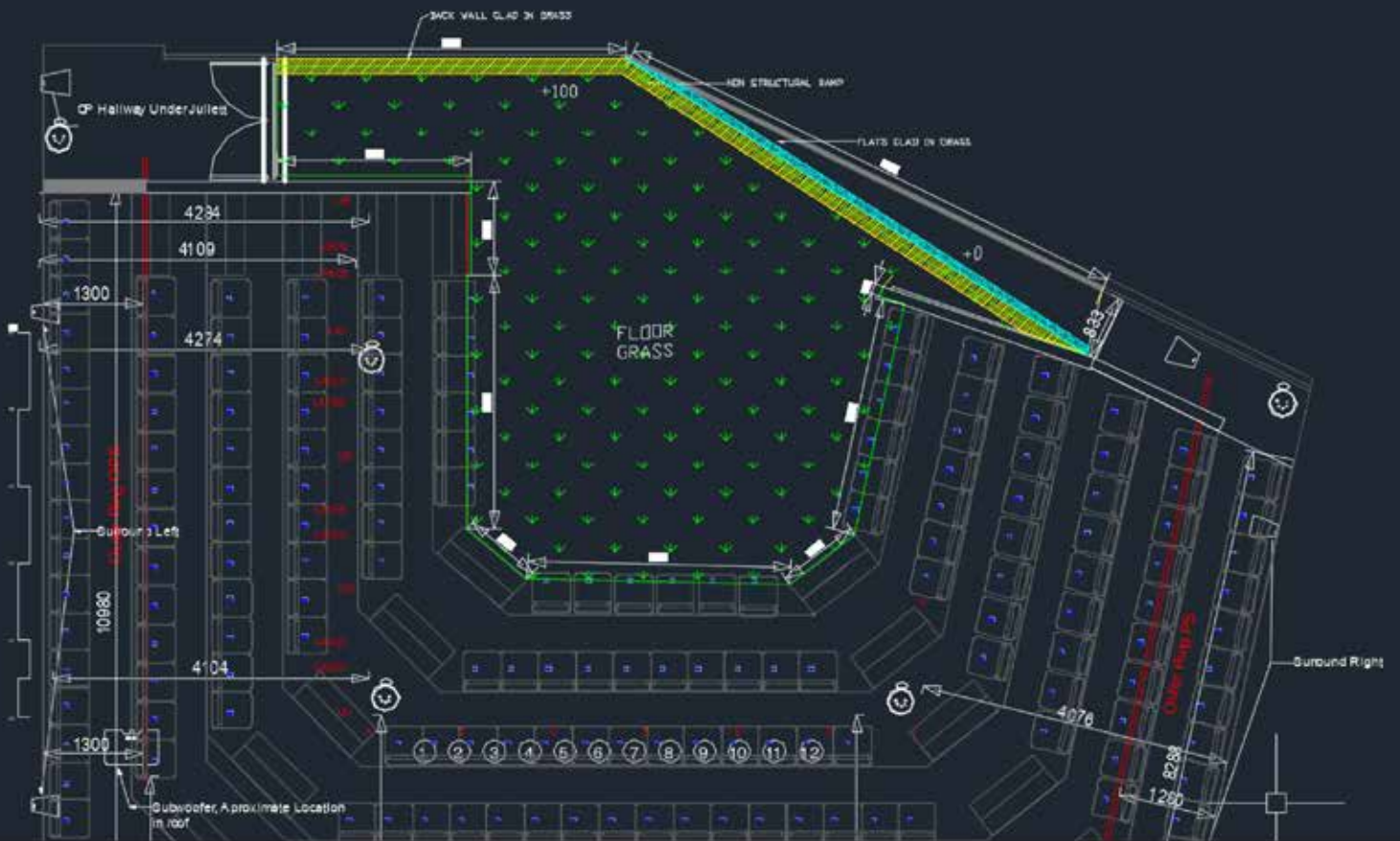
ALL BLACKS UNIFORM



CREATING THE WORLD - SET AND COSTUME BY EMMA WHITE



set model



set plan