

AUSTRALIA

DANCE

LEVIATHAN

CIRCA

EDUCATION RESOURCE

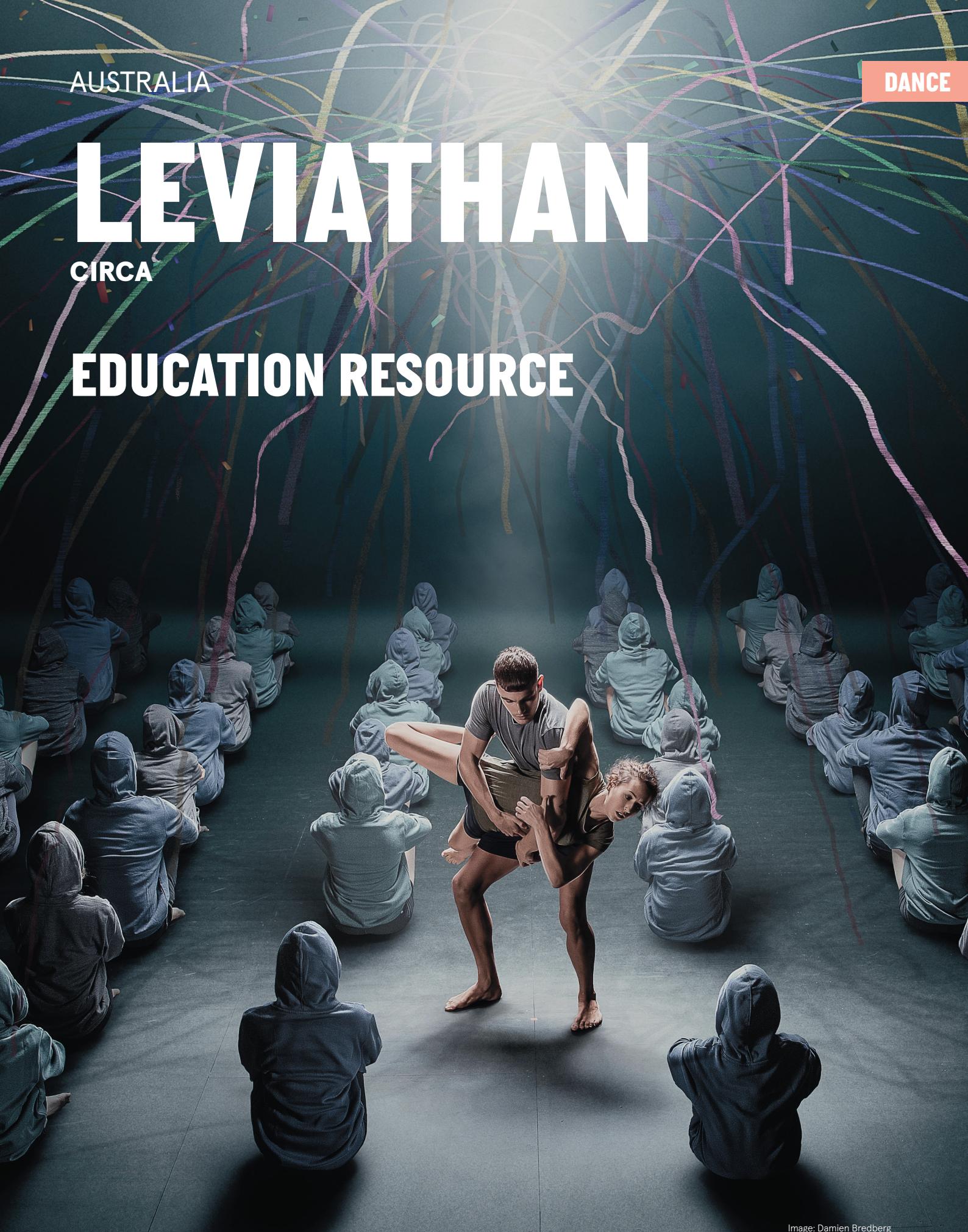


Image: Damien Bredberg

PERTH
FESTIVAL

Founder



Principal Partner



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Perth Festival respects the Noongar people who remain the spiritual and cultural birdiyangara of this kwobidak boodjar. We honour the significant role they play for our community and our Festival to flourish.

BIOGRAPHIES

CIRCA

'The mighty Circa.' (Lyn Gardner, *The Guardian*)

Circa Contemporary Circus is one of the world's leading performance companies. Since 2004, from its base in Brisbane, Australia, Circa has toured the world performing in 40 countries to over a million people. Circa's works have been greeted with standing ovations, rave reviews and sold-out houses across six continents.

Circa is at the forefront of the new wave of contemporary Australian circus – pioneering how extreme physicality can create powerful and moving performances. It continues to push the boundaries of the art form, blurring the lines between movement, dance, theatre and circus, and is leading the way with a diverse range of thrilling creations that 'redraw the limits to which circus can aspire' (*The Age*).

Under the direction of circus visionary Yaron Lifschitz, Circa features an ensemble of exceptional, multi-skilled circus artists who have been a regular fixture at leading festivals and venues in New York, London, Berlin and Montreal with seasons at Brooklyn Academy of Music, The Barbican Centre, Les Nuits de Fourvière, CHAMÄLEON Theatre as well as major Australian Festivals.

Circa is committed to fostering the next generation of circus artists and runs a Training Centre from its studio in Brisbane. Circa also runs regular circus programs with communities throughout Queensland and around Australia.

As a champion of live performance, Circa manages arTour and was the Creative Lead for the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games arts and cultural program.

YARON LIFSCHEITZ

DIRECTOR

Yaron Lifschitz is a graduate of the University of New South Wales, University of Queensland and National Institute of Dramatic Arts (NIDA), where he was the youngest director ever accepted into its prestigious graduate director's course. Since graduating Lifschitz has directed over 60 productions including large-scale events, opera, theatre, physical theatre and circus.

His work has been seen in 40 countries and across six continents by over one million people and has won numerous awards, including six Helpmann awards and the Australia Council Theatre Award. His productions have been presented at major festivals and venues around the world including Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Barbican, Les Nuits de Fourvière, Chamaleon and all the major Australian festivals. His film work was selected for the Berlin and Melbourne Film Festivals. He was founding Artistic Director of the Australian Museum's Theatre Unit, Head Tutor in Directing at Australian Theatre for Young People and has been a regular guest tutor in directing at NIDA.

He is currently Artistic Director and CEO of Circa, and was the Creative Director of Festival 2018: the arts and cultural program of the 21st Commonwealth Games. In 2018 Lifschitz directed four new Circa creations, and a new production Idomeneo which opened in Lisbon at The Teatro Nacional de São Carlos.

MARG HORWELL

STAGE & COSTUME DESIGNER

Marg Horwell is a multi-award-winning set and costume designer. She recently designed set and costumes for *Blasted* (The Malthouse) and costumes for *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* (Sydney Theatre Company).

Horwell has also designed set and costumes for *REVOLT. She Said. Revolt Again, The Testament Of Mary, The Real And Imagined History of the Elephant Man, The Homosexuals, Or Faggots, Edward II, I Am A Miracle, The Good Person Of Szechuan and The Histrionicā* (Malthouse Theatre), *Animal* (InFlux Theatre), *Lilith Jungle Girl, Summertime in the Garden of Eden* (Sisters Grimm), *The House Of Bernada Alba, Peddling, Cock, Constellations, Music, Birdland, I Call My Brothers* (Melbourne Theatre Company), *Resplendence, Chapters From The Pandemic, Save For Crying, Wretch* (Angus Cerini Doubletap), *Big Heart, Shit, Savages* (Dee & Cornelius), *Eight Gigabytes Of Hardcore Pornography* (Griffin Theatre Company/Perth Theatre Company), *Ophelia Doesn't Live Here Anymore* (Bell Shakespeare Company/Chambermade Opera), *Bliss, Nora, La Traviata* (Belvoir), *Common Ground* (Chunky Move), *Marlin* (Arena Theatre/Melbourne Theatre Company). Horwell was Designer in Residence for Malthouse Theatre in 2017.

OWEN BELTON

SOUND DESIGNER

Owen Belton lives in Vancouver, Canada and graduated from Simon Fraser University with a degree in Fine and Performing Art. His studies included acoustic, electroacoustic and computer music composition, film sound and dance. He has been writing music for dance for the last 25 years, working with many Canadian choreographers including Crystal Pite, as well as choreographers from Europe and the USA. Dance companies he has created scores for include Kidd Pivot, The National Ballet of Canada, Nederlands Dans Theatre, Ballet Nuremberg, The Royal Ballet and 420 People (Prague). Belton also creates sound design and composition for theatre and has scored several short films, as well as movies and documentaries for television. He is excited to be having his first foray into the world of the circus with Circa.

CREDITS

Created by Yaron Lifschitz with the Circa Ensemble and participating artists

Performed by the Circa Ensemble and artists from Co:3 Australia, Circus WA and Circus Maxima

Music by Owen Belton

Director Yaron Lifschitz

Stage & Costume Designer Marg Horwell

Associate Designer Libby McDonnell

Technical Director Jason Organ

Producer Danielle Kellie

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

Brisbane's Circa Contemporary Circus unites with a local cast of dancers from Co3, circus performers from Circus Maxima and young people from Circus WA to create the world premiere of *Leviathan*.

Directed by Yaron Lifschitz, *Leviathan* sees 36 performers hanging from a grid suspended in the air and propelling themselves across the stage, tumbling, balancing and soaring together. The grid acts as a metaphor for the structure and confines of human society and the sometimes precarious, sometimes abandoned nature of the movement reflects our search for freedom within these confines.

The incredible balancing acts are reminiscent of our interdependency on others and by the incorporation of a cast beyond the company we see the importance of connection, sharing and exchange with others.

MAJOR THEMES

FREEDOM VS CONFINEMENT

Individuals within western civilised societies often seek and value freedom. *Leviathan* poses the question how much freedom really exists within the confines of our societal structures and do we need these structures to be able to find a degree of individual freedom?

INTERDEPENDENCY

Humans are social creatures and rely on each other to survive and thrive. The pyramid building and partnering work clearly display this reliance and caring approach to working with others.

KEY IDEAS TO EXPLORE

Key ideas to explore with students could include:

- Partnering skills and how to work safely and effectively with a partner and / or group.
- The evolution of the circus art form.
- Circus-based skill development.
- The merging and fusing of different art forms to create new performances.
- The importance of collaboration in a successful working environment and to achieve and convey ideas through the arrangement and relationship of people in space.

RESOURCES

circa.org.au/show/leviathan/

www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=17&v=oZUcZbIMhaQ&feature=emb_logo

www.bl.uk/collection-items/hobbess-leviathan#

http://www.circopedia.org/SHORT_HISTORY_OF_THE_CIRCUS

Open Rehearsal Video (begins at 3min 45sec mark) www.facebook.com/circaccontemporarycircus/videos/1516129172128289/

BEFORE THE SHOW

BEGINNER'S CIRCUS

OBJECTIVES

Students will develop their awareness and understanding of:

- The history and origins of circus
- Safe dance practices
- Circus skill development

DISCUSSION POINTS

Discuss ideas of what circuses are and can be. You can also relate this to expectations of *Leviathan*.

Keep the focus of the skill development on giving things a go and encouraging all attempts.

Include safety tips for skill development e.g. always keep straight arms and elbows in handstands as bones are stronger than muscles. If the arms are straight the bones are stacked.

Focus the reflection on how students viewed their participation in the class.

ACTIVITY

RESPONDING TASK

Partner Concept Map

Discuss with a partner and create a concept map of what you think a circus is and what it looks like. The map can include words, images, performance types etc.

As a class ask each group to share one idea they have.

RESEARCH TASK

Research the history of modern circus.

http://www.circopedia.org/SHORT_HISTORY_OF_THE_CIRCUS

- When and where did the circus originate?
- What type of acts did the early circuses include?
- Describe the 'building' circuses were performed in?
- Why did touring circuses become so successful?

Create a flyer (using paper or an electronic one e.g. www.canva.com/) to advertise the 'new' modern circus to villagers who have never seen a circus before.

What information do you need to include and how you can entice them with the design to make sure they come?

MAKING TASK

Warm-Up

Cardio, stretch and strength-based warm-up including exercises for the wrists, spine and abdominal strength such as planks, plank walks etc. Coordination exercises.

Skill Development

(Can be done with or without mats).

Best done in a line so teacher can observe students. If students are going one at a time down the line you can give the students in the line activities, so they are not just standing and watching.

- Balancing – competition to see who can stand on left then right leg the longest. Can make students go on to toes if needed for time.

- Rock n rolls – Sitting with legs bent, chin tucked and hands on knees, students roll from sitting on to their backs and back up again maintaining a curved spine.
- Forward rolls – From a squat, chin tucked, and students roll straight down their backs
- Safety roll (forward) – Like a forward roll except the student goes over the shoulder and diagonally across to roll. This a good option on a hard floor as the head shouldn't touch the floor.
- Safety roll (backward) – Students start from a squat and roll backwards over their shoulder.
- Fish flop – begins like a back-safety roll except student extends legs to the roof then either rolls down through the stomach or steps down one leg at a time.
- Bunny hops – in preparation for handstand. Focus on lifting the hips in line with the shoulders and wrists.
- Elephant stand – hands wide on floor, place shins on to upper arm and balance with feet off the floor.
- Handstands – can practice on a wall, in the centre or with a partner. If students are proficient you can have handstand / handstand walking competitions.
- Cartwheels – can begin with mini-wheels with feet only just off the floor.

Optional extras depending on resources and students – splits, headstands, handsprings, round-offs, flips, leg mounts, bend backs etc.

REFLECTION

- What challenges did students have in this class?
- How did they approach these challenges?
- What was their favourite part of the class?

PERFORMANCE PROTOCOLS

MAKING THE MOST OUT OF THE PERFORMANCE

These activities are intended to maximise the theatre experience for all audience members. These activities guide students through a series of engagements intended to get them thinking about how and why they should behave in particular ways and what their behaviour means in this context.

OBJECTIVES

Students will develop their awareness and understanding of:

- Theatre etiquette
- Appropriate behaviour for an audience
- Relationship between performers and the audience

DISCUSSION POINTS

Live performance involves performers acting and interacting in real time, before your eyes. The audience is active in the way they view the performance. The performers on stage can hear and see you; your reactions and your behaviour can contribute to, disrupt or disturb their performance. The audience can have a big influence on the energy, pace and vibe of the actors and the performance as a whole.

ACTIVITY

Talk to your students about whether they have been to the theatre before. Use the following questions to guide their discussion:

- What show did you see?
- Who did you go with?
- Where did you see it?
- What was the show about?
- Were the performers professional or amateur?
- What did it make you think about?

Split the class into small groups and ask them to create a list of behaviour they consider appropriate and inappropriate for different settings. Assign the groups the following settings:

- Footy match
- School assembly
- Cinema
- Rock concert
- Theatre

Come back together as a whole group and ask groups to feed their thoughts back to the group. Create a matrix that compares different kinds of behaviour across each setting. For example:

	Footy Match	Assembly	Cinema	Rock Concert	Theatre
Talking	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Eating					
Walking in and out					
Laughing / crying					
Booing / shouting					
Using your mobile phone					

Based on the above, discuss the conclusions students have come to about attending a live performance and compile a series of protocols to guide their behaviour. Ensure elements in the appendix at the end of this document are included.

AFTER THE SHOW

CONTEMPORARY CIRCUS

OBJECTIVES

Students will develop their awareness and understanding of:

- The evolution of contemporary circus and the context within which it has changed
- Safe dance practices
- Group work skills and partnering

DISCUSSION POINTS

- How the difference between circus and contemporary circus reflects the values and ideas of our society today.
- The importance of group work skills and approaching partnering and group work safely and with a mature attitude.
- How working together with other people allows us to do things we may not be able to by ourselves
e.g. counterbalancing.

ACTIVITIES

RESPONDING TASK

Having seen *Leviathan* go back to your original circus flyer and compare the circus of yesterday with today's contemporary circus. Did *Leviathan* meet or challenge your ideas of what a circus is?

In partners discuss the differences between the traditional and contemporary circuses. Come up with a list of three differences between the two types of circus.

As a class share and discuss the responses.

- Identify what the differences are?
- Discuss specific moments in *Leviathan* where we see these differences.
- Suggest reasons why contemporary circuses have evolved this way. How does this type of circus reflect what interests audiences in Australia?

MAKING TASK

Introduction

Discussion – Ask students to describe how the performers worked together in *Leviathan*. What skills did they need to be able to perform their aerial feats and tall pyramid structures?

Warm-Up Games

Tangleknot – Students stand in a circle shoulder to shoulder with eyes closed. On the word from the teacher students are to reach into the middle of the circle and grab one hand in each of their hands (teacher may need to assist). Students then open their eyes and work together to untangle themselves.

Scarecrow – Like chasey but when someone is tagged, they become a scarecrow 'stuck in the mud' (standing with legs wide in second and arms straight out in second) until someone releases the scarecrow by crawling under their legs.

ACTIVITY 1 – PARTNERING

Discuss safe dance requirements for partnering. Can relate to what they identified the *Leviathan* performers needed.

Basic counterbalances

- Facing each other, monkey grip and lean away.
- The above can lead into a chair counterbalance and one-handed grip and combinations of these.
- Back to back – lower to the ground and stand again.
- Trust falls – can also lead to a partner full transfer of weight.

ACTIVITY 2 – OBSTACLE LINE

www.facebook.com/circaccontemporarycircus/videos/leviathan/516129172128289/

Watch the above video link 19.50–21.20minutes.

Split the class in half and have each group building their own obstacle line. Start with one dancer in the space and have the line created through an accumulation of dancers. Encourage the students to use some of the counterbalance skills they just learnt.

Perform for the first time with the lines parallel to each other, one group at a time.

In the second 'performance', get one group to create their obstacle line first. Have the performers in the second line weave through the first line, as in the video, to then move and create their own line. Once the second line has been created the first group can weave through the second line.

REFLECTION

- What worked successfully for you and your group today?
- What skills did you need to be able to work together?
- How did the obstacle line show one of the key themes of *Leviathan* which was freedom within constraints?

REVIEWING LIVE PERFORMANCE

There are many different ways to write a review, as reviews express an individual's thoughts and feelings about a show.

Traditional reviews will often:

Give the reader brief background information about a production

- Title of show (mention playwright or choreographer if relevant)
- Is it an adaptation of another text? An original work?
- Identify the company presenting or performing the show
- Where is this show being performed?

Briefly outline plot and themes

- Make sure not to include any spoilers
- Were the themes/issues effectively conveyed to the audience?
- How do the characters and relationships communicate these?
- Does the design (e.g. set, costumes, lighting, sound and filmic elements) contribute to the conveyance of themes/issues? Consider symbols and metaphors.
- How do style and form play a part in communicating these?

Provide an idea of what the design elements are

- Think about set, lighting, costume, filmic elements and sound
- How did the design choices convey place, time and situation (dramatic meaning or context)?
- What atmosphere and mood were the creative team aiming for?
- How successful were they in achieving their goals?

Evaluate the writing, production and performances

- You might consider things like: Were there any stand out performances or design elements? Why? What were the technical aspects of the production that stood out?

Reviews should reflect how you felt about a show, not what you think you should have felt.

In the digital age, the act of reviewing has changed immensely. It has enabled platforms for a broad range of voices to participate in the reviewing process that previously would not have been heard.

Have a go at writing a 140-character Twitter review of the work.

SPECIFIC LINKS TO CURRICULUM

DANCE

Connections to Year 8 Dance: In Year 8 Dance students continue to use improvisation skills to build on their movement vocabulary. They choreograph dances using the elements of dance (BEST) and choreographic devices for a purpose. They further develop their dance skills to explore the technical aspects of different dance styles. They discuss how dance can communicate meaning and how dance genres/styles differ.

- Reflective processes, using dance terminology, on their own and others' work, and the effectiveness in dance works of the use of the elements of dance and design concepts (lighting, music/sound, multimedia, costume, props, sets, staging) (ACADAR018)
- Differences in dance genres/styles and eras of dance (ACADAR019)
- Group work practices (sharing ideas, problem-solving, listening skills, providing constructive feedback) in dance (ACADAM017)
- Dance skills that develop technical competence in relation to body control, accuracy, posture/alignment, strength, flexibility, placement, balance and coordination (ACADAM015)
- Safe dance practice of style-specific techniques (ACADAM015)



APPENDIX

Latecomers

The show will start promptly and latecomers will not be admitted until an appropriate break in the show. Be aware that for many shows, you will not be admitted if you arrive late.

Lock out

If you leave your seat during the performance, you may not be allowed back in. Make sure you go to the toilet and have a drink of water before the performance and/or during the intervals.

Noise

Food wrappers and plastic packets make a lot of noise. It is generally accepted that the audience does not eat during a performance. If you absolutely have to have lollies (such as a cough lolly), ensure it is out of the wrapper prior to the performance.

Mobile phones

Please ensure mobile phones are turned off. If your phone rings during a performance, it can be very embarrassing for you and very distracting for the performers. It is inappropriate to receive a text during a performance.

Talking

Allow everyone – performers and the audience – to focus on the performance by not talking. Talking is annoying for other audience members and can be very distracting for performers.

Photographs

Taking photos, videos or audio recordings is not allowed.