

PREPARED BY CLAIRE CHRISTIAN & AMY ANDERSON

LA BOITE, OPERA QUEENSLAND & BRISBANE FESTIVAL PRESENT

SNOW WHITE

EDUCATION NOTES

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FEATURE TEACHER



AMY ANDERSON

Amy has been a Drama teacher, Arts HOD and Pastoral Care Coordinator on the Gold Coast for just over 10 years. She is also heavily involved in her community; actively participating both on stage and as a director. As well as classroom teaching, Amy teaches private and group acting classes at The

National Academy of Performing Arts. This means she puts an average of 3 plays and musicals a year on the stage. So, she is also crazy. Somewhere amongst all of this Amy lives her real full time job as the mum of a hilarious teenage boy.

YOUR FAVOURITE FAIRY TALE AND WHY?

Jack in the Beanstalk – Even though it asks us to see Jack as a hero and he's kind of a brat, I think I just really enjoyed doing the giant voice when I read it to my son.

YOUR GO-TO WARM UP GAME?

A shared chant and dance game that I learnt in the cafeteria of a high school in Seattle. It's called Gigolo (but has nothing to do with gigolos).

WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT BEING A TEACHER?

Teenagers. I generally prefer them to most grown-ups. I particularly love the passion and creativity they bring to the Drama classroom. They make me laugh, they keep things real.

WHAT IS SOMETHING YOU WISH YOUR STUDENTS KNEW?

Don't skip the process! Creating great theatre is a lot like life; the golden moments come from the journey. Trying to jump ahead to the answer or focussing too much on the finished product can mean that you don't take enough risks or make enough mistakes. Often the most amazing work is born out of wonderful accidents.

ABOUT LA BOITE

ARTISTIC VISION

“Theatre That Matters”

La Boite holds a unique place in the hearts and minds of artists and audiences in Brisbane. For the past nine decades La Boite has represented the adventurous and alternative. There has always been a strong focus on the development of new work and artists, and today it is no different.

The stories, ideas and voices of our city and country are many and varied and as such La Boite seeks to represent and engage in this beautiful and rich diversity; the diversity of form, of ideas, ethnicity, gender – of identity.

HISTORY

La Boite is a story of people, passion, purpose and place.

People like Barbara Sisley, who in 1916 found herself stranded in Brisbane when her theatrical touring company unexpectedly disbanded. She along with literature academic J. J. Stable formed the Brisbane Repertory Theatre Society in 1925 in response to the public's growing appetite for high quality, locally-produced theatre. For twenty years, Sisley and Stable reigned supreme in Brisbane's theatrical community.

After decades of moving between large venues such as the Theatre Royal and Albert Hall, in 1967 the company finally found a home of its own. Company members converted an old Queenslander in Hale St, Milton into a theatre-in-the-round. Hollowed out, the house had the appearance of a box and the name 'La Boite' was born. In 1972, the company moved next door to the Blair Wilson designed theatre, which so many remember with such fondness. This remained home for three decades, before the move to our current Roundhouse Theatre in Kelvin Grove in 2003.

90 years of existence takes resilience and ingenuity. La Boite has survived two World Wars, censorship, public outrage, politically-charged programming, changing tastes, floods and the constant flirting with failure that comes with walking the tightrope between risk and certainty.

Ultimately, La Boite's history is your history. Whether you have been with us for years or are new to the fold, we welcome you to join us as we move into our next 90 years.

THE ROUNDHOUSE THEATRE

La Boite's Roundhouse Theatre is an epic-intimate space and Australia's only purpose-built theatre-in-the-round. It's also flexible enough to be used as a thrust stage with the audience on three sides. This 400-seat home stage offers a distinctive theatre experience.

ABOUT OPERA QUEENSLAND

Opera Queensland's Vision: A Boundless Landscape of Opera Experiences reflects the richness, expanse and diversity of both the operatic art form and Queensland itself; while our Mission: To reflect, celebrate and enrich life in our communities articulates the important role the arts play in contemporary Queensland life. One of Australia's major performing arts companies, OperaQ serves Metropolitan Brisbane and regional/remote Queensland through the development and presentation of opera projects that reflect our core values of Excellence, Community and Adventure.

Three intersecting spheres of engagement are central to achieving our goals:

- In a range of theatres and venues across Metropolitan Brisbane we present grand opera of excellence and bold creative adventures;
- We tour extensively throughout Regional Queensland, creating unique and innovative opportunities for regional artists and audiences to experience opera; and
- OperaQ's Open Stage program creates first-rate education and community engagement programs for all ages.

Located in the heart of Brisbane's South Bank cultural precinct, OperaQ enjoys creative partnerships with Griffith University and multiple arts organisations, festivals and presenters across and beyond Queensland.

THINGS TO PONDER

- Why the fascination with the macabre in stories all through time?
- The production blurs our childhood definitions of good and evil – How? Why?
- Is a woman's power purely sexual? Is that the representation of gender fairy tales teach little girls?
- Vanity and being ruled by the mirror. Does beauty equal power? *How does that translate into contemporary society i.e. social media and the selfie generation?*
- Why is the mirror male? Male mirror and female queen – *is she in love with her own reflection?*
- The mirror propels her from a girl into a woman – *what does that mean for her? For us?*
- “Who's life means more to you?” “A life is a life is a life” - #alllivesmatter

ELEMENTS OF DRAMA

SYMBOL – ICON

- Blood
- Lipstick
- Mirror
 - The Queen threatens to smash the mirror – *what would that mean?*
 - *Does the mirror lie? Manipulate? Why?*
 - *What does the mirror reflect? What it is a reflection of?*
- Old/Young

MOOD

- The music controls, supports and superimposes the mood of the piece. How? To what effect?
- What else creates mood in the piece? How do the design and production choices develop mood?

ROLE AND RELATIONSHIP

- *What does the piece say about mothers and daughters? Is it accurate?*
- *How does it compare with your experience of the changing nature of mother/daughter relationships?*
- *The Hunter and Snow White – what is the relationship? Is this really all it could be, as the text suggests? How else may a production of Snow White have treated and conveyed this relationship?*

PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES

WARM-UP:

Cat and Mouse

FAIRY TALES AND ORAL HISTORIES

Classic fairy tales have been told and retold over time, these include cultural and even family variations.

- In small groups, each share your story of Snow White
- Agree on 4 – 5 freeze frames that sum up the integral moments in the story
- Share with the class
- Discuss as a whole group the similarities and differences

THERE IS ALWAYS A PRINCESS

- In pairs select a princess, Disney or other wise
- Analyse the key aspects of the character – *who she is, how she looks, speaks, moves, behaves etc.*
- Create a one paragraph character brief that could be given to an actor playing the role
- Now – build your own princess – consider what you would like to change about the princess discovered in your research. Develop a princess that you would be proud to put on stage/screen in 2016. *Who is she? How does she behave? What does she believe in?*
- Write a one paragraph character brief for your new and original princess.
- Put all of the character briefs into a “hat” and draw one each (*boys are most welcome and encouraged to take on the characteristics of a princess in either a male or female character*)
- In larger groups (6ish) create scenarios that places these characters together. Devise a scene that gives them a problem to solve or challenge to overcome. Rehearse and share.

MIRRORING

- Begin in pairs experimenting with mirroring
- Play with 4 way mirroring – changing subjects and mirrors as the action naturally changing direction
- Use the 4 way mirror convention to explore the evolution of youth. *Is youth something to be feared/revered?*
- Select an appropriate song that supports or juxtaposes the mood or the actions that develop.
- Show. Discuss what arose.

POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES

THE MACHINE

- Create a machine that uses movement, sound and repetition to convey the cyclic nature of the child becoming the mother.

ALL LITTLE GIRLS ARE BAD

- Together recall a list of fairy tales and the message or moral it aims to teach small children.
- *What is the imbedded or overt attitude towards gender that underpins the text?*
- Use the text below as taken from the play, as a pretext to create composition: make sure you include extracts from the text, sound effects, and conventions of chorus. Rather than planning a didactic message – see what arises from the work.
- Show and discuss.
- *How were these the same or different from the message about little girls conveyed in the production?*

MIRROR AND SNOW WHITE

MIRROR:

HELLO PRETTY!

(After Queen has left the room MIRROR sees the little girl in the wings)

[Tone – sneaky, fun, cheek, beckoning her in, evil, trying to stir up trouble! The audience should be able to laugh at the sneaky mirror suddenly finding a new toy! But also that this is a turning point where the girl will become something more – she is called out of the shadows which will propel her to wanting to take her place as woman, as threat, etc.]

MIRROR:

Well hello pretty girl, what have we here now?
You were a baby when last I did prowl

You're now growing I do see a bud
Starting to bloom there will soon be moon blood

Dear girl I have watched from your dawn
The way you are movin' your innocence's shorn

So come to me I'll cut that umbilical cord
Such a fun project for when I am bored

And I can see as you stand there in awe
There's much to entice, your eyes say they want more

Come let me see you in all of your vein
For all girls are curious, you're surely the same

I see you are quite lovely, soon will command stares
Oh how exciting, the men we'll ensnare

Reprise this from Duet - spoken or whispered
You're gorgeous

And when you're sucked into this glass that is me
I will show you what men want so knowledgab-ly

It's my belief all girls are quite bad
So you must be also - but perhaps you are glad?

For once you grab the full moon and take it for yours

You can then enter through all palace doors

This is the truth, all I speak is quite right
Behind every woman is a man with a light

And so I am Mirror yet all of mankind
And you my dear is not yet quite refined
You will grow tall – (quite) stunning it seems
Those breasts they shall be worshipped and held in esteem

My gaze (it) has been caught and when you are grown
We'll force your dear mother to hand over her throne!

THE QUEEN

- What motivates the Queen ?
- In small groups, agree upon the stages of the story from the perspective of the Queen.
- Rehearse a series of freeze frames to convey these
- Add captions, sound effects, music...
- Present to the class separated by doing eyes closed, eyes opened.

WHO IS HE?

- The following stage directions are taken from the script. Consider the construction of masculinity.

He is the prey.
She is the hunter.

He hesitates but she pushes him on.
He completely gives over to her.

He collapses weeping – what has he done?
She picks up the axe and stands holding it – triumphant.

- Create an original scene that uses one or a combination of these directions to shape the action.
- Rehearse and show.
- *Do these scenes support or challenge the construction of masculinity in the production of Snow White?*

ASSESSMENT

POSSIBLE RESPONDING QUESTIONS

1. Reconstructions of traditional stories as contemporary and relevant theatre require theatre makers to engage with dramatic conventions selected from a range of forms and styles. Analyse how this was achieved in Opera Queensland, La Boite Theatre Company and Brisbane Festival's production of Snow White.
2. *"It is time for everyone ... to think outside of the standard paradigms of how opera and musicals should be. It is time to imagine how operas and musicals could look if we claimed them for ourselves, and to create something truly Australian and multifaceted."* Jane Howard, Kill Your Darlings Journal, February 9 2015: <https://www.killyourdarlingsjournal.com/2015/02/thinking-outside-box-seats/>
3. Analyse and evaluate the place of musical theatre as a style in a contemporary theatre setting. Support your position with an analysis of Opera Queensland, La Boite Theatre Company and Brisbane Festival's production of Snow White.

CHECK THESE OUT

By contemporary standards, the Grimms' original stories are packed with violence and sex

<http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2012/05/fairy-tales-started-dark-got-cute-and-are-now-getting-dark-again/257934/>

It seems very important to me, perhaps even more important today, that these ancient stories should be repeated again and again.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/dreaming-freud/201406/the-importance-fairy-tales>

Various analysis and perspectives on Disney's Treatment of Snow White

<https://punkbulletwomenstudies.wordpress.com/2012/09/14/snow-white-and-the-seven-dwarfs/>

<http://fairytalesfantasy.umwblogs.org/2009/08/31/traditional-female-gender-roles-in-snow-white/comment-page-1/>

<https://hayley10.wordpress.com/2010/09/24/snow-white-the-representation-of-gender-in-disney/>



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