

state ed

# Things I Know To Be True

by Andrew Bovell



PRODUCTION PARTNERS

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 Australian  
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**DURATION APPROX:** 2 hours & 20 mins (including Interval)

**SUITABLE FOR** *Years 9 - 12*

*DWS performance followed by a 20 - 30 min Q&A session*

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# Cast & Creatives

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## **DIRECTORS**

*Geordie Brookman & Scott Graham*

## **SET & LIGHTING DESIGNER**

*Geoff Cobham*

## **COSTUME DESIGNER**

*Ailsa Paterson*

## **SOUND DESIGNER**

*Andrew Howard*

## **ORIGINAL ARTWORK**

*Thom Buchanan*

## **FEATURING MUSIC BY**

*Nils Frahm*

## **STAGE MANAGER**

*Melanie Selwood*

## **ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER**

*Alex Hayley*

## **BOB**

*Paul Blackwell*

## **FRAN**

*Eugenia Fragos*

## **PIP**

*Georgia Adamson*

## **MARK**

*Tim Walter*

## **BEN**

*Nathan O'Keefe*

## **ROSIE**

*Tilda Cobham- Hervey*

# Writer

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## ANDREW BOVELL

*The Secret River*, an adaptation of the Kate Grenville novel, premiered at the Ros Packer Theatre in the 2013 Sydney Festival. The acclaimed Sydney Theatre Company production was directed by Neil Armfield and toured to Canberra and Perth. It won six Helpmann Awards including Best Play, as well as Best New Work at the Sydney Theatre Awards, the Awgie Award for Stage writing, the David Williamson Prize and it was joint winner of the NSW Premier's Literary Award for Community Relations. It returned to the Ros Packer Theatre in Feb 2016 before touring to Brisbane and Melbourne.



*When the Rain Stops Falling* premiered at the 2008 Adelaide Festival, produced by Adelaide company, Brink Productions, before touring nationally. The play has been produced in London at the Almeida Theatre (2009) and in New York at The Lincoln Centre (2010) where it won five Lucille Lortell Awards and was named best new play of the year by Time Magazine. It has subsequently been produced throughout America, NZ and Europe, most recently in the award winning production “Cuando deje de llover” in Madrid.

Earlier works for the stage include *Holy Day*, *Who's Afraid of the Working Class*, *Speaking in Tongues*, *Scenes From a Separation*, *Shades of Blue*, *Ship of Fools* and *After Dinner*. The Sydney Theatre Company revived his first play, *After Dinner*, for a sellout season at the Wharf Theatre in Sydney in 2015.

His most recent film, *A Most Wanted Man* was an adaptation of the John Le Carre' novel for director Anton Corbijn with Phillip Seymour Hoffman, Rachel McAdams, Willem Defoe and Robyn Wright. The film premiered at the 2014 Sundance Film Festival and was released internationally in July, 2014.

Other films include *Edge of Darkness* (2010, starring Mel Gibson) *Blessed* (2009, Winner of the Best Screenplay Award at the San Sebastian Film Festival), *Lantana* (2001, based on his play *Speaking in Tongues*. Winner of the Best Screenplay at the Australian Film Institute Awards, Australian Critics Circle, Australian Writers Guild, London Film Festival, Durban International Film Festival). *Head On* (1998, Winner Best Screenplay Australian Writers Guild Awards) and the original screenplay for *Strictly Ballroom* (1992. Dir. Baz Luhrmann). For television he has written *The Fisherman's Wake* (ABC), *Piccolo Mondo* (SBS) and *Lust* for the Seven Deadly Sins series. (ABC).

In October, 2015 he delivered the BAFTA and BFI International Screenwriting Lecture. He is the first Australian screenwriter to be invited to do so. He delivered the landmark 2013 Keynote address at the National Play Festival in Sydney and the 2011 Foxtel Address on Screenwriting.

He currently lives in Willunga, with his partner, the Eugenia Fragos, who plays Fran.

## **INTERVIEW WITH ANDREW**

### **What is *Things I Know To Be True* about?**

The play is a deeply intimate play, naturalistic in style, but also monologue heavy. It's about family resilience, bringing up children who have now moved into their own lives, and the next chapter for the parents left behind.

It's also about the circle of life, beginning with the youngest child asking, "*What do I know to be true?*" She doesn't know much at the beginning of the play, but by the conclusion she has learnt more about the world around her. As the children move towards more certainty and follow their convictions, the parents, particularly the father, become less certain.

### **How much of the story is based on your own life?**

There is a lot of my father, he was a quintessential Australian suburban father. It has some of my mum and dad in the characters, but also my partner and I, and how we've felt since our children have all moved out of home. It isn't autobiographical, although the feelings that it creates can certainly relate to my life as well as other's lives.

I also really wanted to explore the father role and the place that I live, in southern Adelaide. It was a world where I grew up, ran away from and a place I eventually came back to.

### **What is the process for your writing?**

This has been a long process, starting with an idea about three years ago. It began with a group of people who wanted to create together, including the director, Geordie Brookman and the actors. Right from the beginning I also knew that Frantic Assembly would be involved, which meant doing some research on the company's devising style. However, Scott Graham told me not to pre-empt the physicality, "*Let me respond to what you write.*"

In the early stages we all came together and shared stories about ourselves as artists and as people. During this process we all told stories about family. Tilly Cobham-Harvey spoke about travelling to Europe for the first time, the big ritual so many young people undertake, going to the old world that is more sophisticated. She had her heart broken and became home-sick and was standing on a train platform making a list of the things she knew to be true. That became the starting point of my play.

### **Why Adelaide as the landscape for the play?**

I wanted to write my own version of the big family play, like *August Osage County* by Tracy Letts. My mother died not so long ago and at that moment, I became 'nobody's child.' Also, my youngest child has left home and studying at university – like I was 'nobody's immediate father.' I wanted to explore what that meant. I miss being a child and a father, but I appreciate the time and space I have to re-connect with my partner, because our lives have become ensconced around our children.

I also think it is a universality story. When *Things I Know To Be True* goes to London, they are keeping the setting as suburban Australia. Whilst not everyone can relate to the setting, everyone can relate to the family elements in the play, that of familial love and the complexities that sustains us, protects us, inhibits us and destroys us.

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## ANDREW BOVELL ARTICLE

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I was thrilled when Geordie approached me to write something for the State Theatre Company. At the time I was working on an adaptation of the John Le Carre' novel *A Most Wanted Man*. The film was set in Germany in winter. It was cold and moody in its tone and I think in writing it I had taken on something of that mood. I was yearning for the clarity of desert light, the steel blue water and the open sky of Adelaide.

As a writer I am pulled in different directions, between "over there" and "here", between the international and the local. No sooner am I settled back at my base in Willunga, than I am immediately thinking of ways to return to Europe or America and whenever I am away I'm dreaming about those golden hills on the Fleurieu Peninsular and the clear blue waters of Port Willunga.

This particular commission satisfied my restless soul. It is a co-production and collaboration between State Theatre and UK based company Frantic Assembly. It will be co-directed by Geordie and Frantic Assembly's artistic director, Scott Graham. Two heads are at the helm and two different but complimentary imaginations and aesthetics will create the work. We will produce the play here in Adelaide with a local cast and then again in the UK, later in the year but with a British cast. I've never worked like this before. It's incredibly exciting. But I'm jumping ahead. Where and how did this begin?

Geordie and I began with a series of conversations and exchanged letters (or actually emails) in which we sought out common interests and passions. What did we think about the world? What do we want to say about it? How do we want to create a piece of work together? How would we work with Frantic Assembly and their uniquely physically based language and approach to theatre?

The three of us quickly identified a shared interest in the work of American photographer, Gregory Crewdson. We had all been influenced by his aesthetic. Crewdson draws the viewer into a heightened American past. It is nostalgic, highly psychoanalytical and predominantly domestic. It often depicts emotional estrangement within relationships between husbands and wives, children and their parents, between humanity and nature. It's a highly evocative body of work. This shared interest provided a starting point. As often happens, as soon as I identify an influence, I want to react against it. Crewdson's work is controlled, precise and laden with dark meaning. I wanted to create some chaos and light and to make a work that captured the unpredictability and mess of life.

Six actors, locally based Paul Blackwell, Eugenia Fragos, Nathan O'Keefe and Tilly Cobham-Hervey along with interstate actors Luke Mullins and Alison Bell and the designer Geoff Cobham, joined us in the first workshop. So much of my writing life is spent in isolation so I welcome these opportunities to get "into the room" with others. It is in this room where the ideas are tested and begin to take shape.

Much of this first workshop was devoted to learning about the Frantic Assembly style and approach. I was particularly interested in testing how this physical performance language would sit with text. Scott gave me some really useful advice at this point. He told me not to write for the style, and not to anticipate what he might bring to it but to write as I normally would and allow him to respond to it.

A daily pattern soon emerged in our work. Scott worked with the actors in the first half of the day. Geordie and I would then create a series of structured improvisations and situations in the afternoon. Scott would then introduce elements of his own work into these scenarios. Stories are told. Moments are built upon moments. A phrase of improvised dialogue opens out to a whole scene in my head. A physical gesture suggests the world of a character. We laugh. We play. We argue. A thousand plays are discovered. My job is to discover the one that needs to be told.

Two things were going on in my own life at this time that became important. My mother had died not long before. My father died many years ago. I was no longer anybody's child. An important turning point in life, I think. At the same time my youngest child was preparing to leave home following in the footsteps of his older brother and sister. These three kids had dominated Eugenia's and my life for the past twenty-five years and now the last of them was leaving. It was a time of transition. Things were changing. Who would I be once they were gone?

All of this, and the many wonderful stories told by the actors and directors during the workshop went into the pot for the cooking. One and a half years later the play has emerged. It's strong and it knows what it is. It's an intimate, tender, warm, funny and ultimately tragic family drama about a suburban couple called Bob and Fran Price who still live in the solid brick home in the southern suburbs of Adelaide, in which they brought up their four children who are now adults and must, each in their own way break the bond with their parents in order to become the people they need to be. It's about growing up, moving on and what's left behind. It's about having your heart broken and being strong enough to go on anyway. It is a quintessentially Australian story and we're going to take it to the world.

# Plot

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The play is framed by a phone-call.

It is after midnight and the phone is ringing. Bob knows that someone he loves is in trouble. His inner thoughts are spoken by his four children. He fears picking up the phone, as he knows that something is wrong.

Fran and Bob are two doting parents whose lives are centered around their four children. But when their children start facing complex life decisions, how will they cope? Are Fran and Bob ready for their children to make their *own* decisions? How will they manage their next chapter in life after the youngest child leaves the nest?

Over a span of one year, for each season, one child tells their own story. Each season contains a crisis, a turning point and tough choices need to be made and the ramifications of those choices dealt with.



# Synopsis

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The phone rings in the middle of the night. The four children speak Bob's fears aloud; the fears of being a parent and the question racing through his head; *"Which one of my kids is hurt?"*

## WINTER (London)

The youngest daughter, Rosie is in Europe, living 'the great European adventure.' It wasn't what she expected and after a love-affair gone wrong, she is left cold, broken hearted and home-sick. She decides to go home.

## SUMMER (Adelaide)

Fran is getting ready for work, reminding Bob to pick up the grandchildren from school. Rosie arrives home. Bob chastises her for not calling him to pick her up from the airport and Fran is worried something's happened. She immediately starts calling the rest of the family. They all arrive, Pip, Ben and Mark. Fran fusses around, updating Rosie on the family activity, chiding her children about work, family and their relationships.

## AUTUMN

Pip is sitting in the family garden reminiscing about growing up in this place, *"This garden is the world."* Instantly Fran knows that something is wrong and comes out to see her daughter. Pip tells her mother that she's not happy and that she's leaving her husband, Steve. Fran tells her to try harder, *"You have a husband who loves you, who treats you well, who's a wonderful father and you're walking away from that."* Pip reveals she's taken a job in Vancouver and Fran argues that she shouldn't leave the kids. Bob confronts Pip and asks if there's another man and she answers, 'no'.

Later. Fran asks Rosie what she's going to do with herself. She's had a gap year, another one doesn't look good. Rosie isn't ready to decide. Fran confides that she's always wanted to travel, take Bob away, and that she has some money saved.

Later in autumn. Ben arrives with a new car. Bob thinks it's too flashy, too expensive, *"You're not even thirty years old and you're driving a brand new car."* Upset with his family's reaction, Ben leaves for work. Rosie announces that she's going to move out of home.

A letter from Pip arrives and Fran goes outside to read it. She tells her mother that she was right, she had met someone and moved to Canada to be with him and wonder if her mum ever felt this way.

## WINTER

Mark talks about his childhood, *"I would climb the gum tree and hide."* His sister would be singing, his brother kicking a football, his dad gardening with Rosie following him around and his Mum doing the washing. *"They didn't know I was up in the tree watching and seeing everything. Not really a part of the picture and not really knowing why."* He talks about his mother smoking to solve problems and believes that he worried her the most.

A storm is coming. Fran tells Bob that Mark is coming over to tell them something, *"I think he might be gay."* She is surprised that Bob is ok, telling her, *"No matter what, he's still going to be our boy."*

Mark arrives soaked through from the rain. Both parents fuss over him, before Fran says, *"There's nothing you could tell us that would shock us or make us feel any different about you."* Bob chimes in, *"Unless you told us you had decided to become a woman."* The secret is awkwardly revealed.

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Mark tells them that he's moving away to transition. Bob and Fran don't know how to respond and Rosie is upset that Mark hadn't confided in her. Mark becomes angry over his parents' reactions.

As winter turns, Rosie is helping Mark pack. Rosie and Bob drive him to the airport, Fran hasn't spoken to him as she's still angry. Bob in a single hug and kiss lets Mark know that he loves him and accepts him.

#### SPRING

Ben narrates his memory of Fran and Bob's love.

Fran and Bob are out dancing for their wedding anniversary. Bob tells Fran that he feels lost, *"I find myself standing in the shed wondering what to do next."* He regrets retiring early and how hard he worked to have a comfortable life. He tells Fran that he wants to feel young again. They talk about travelling.

At home. Ben arrives in an agitated state, needing to see his parents. They come home from their night out, and after seeing Ben presume he's on drugs. Ben reveals, *"I've stolen some money."* He's been skimming from work trying to fit in and now the company is investigating. If caught, he could go to jail. Bob is furious and tells him to face the consequences. Fran tries to fix it by giving Ben her savings, something that Bob is unaware she has.

Fran tells Bob that she's put money away, *"I had to know I could go if I ever needed to."* She fell in love with someone else and almost left, but instead she chose Bob and the kids and what they had.

#### SUMMER

A year has passed since Rosie returned from her trip. She tells Fran and Bob that she's going to do a creative writing course in Brisbane. They both tell her to get a qualification like teaching or nursing to no avail. Bob has a hard time letting his last child go, *"I thought they'd all live close by... I thought that's what life would be."*

Rosie is driving to Queensland and Fran is heading off to work, leaving Bob in the garden.

Night-time. A telephone is ringing. Bob enters in his pyjamas. Fran has died. Bob goes to the garden and in a rage breaks and tears the rose bushes from the ground. All of the children return home for the funeral.

*"Summer turns to autumn and that autumn becomes winter and that winter turns to spring and spring back to summer. And it goes on. Life. It goes on."*

# Directors

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## GEORDIE BROOKMAN

Geordie is the Artistic Director and co-CEO of State Theatre Company. Since graduating from Flinders University Drama Centre in 2001 Geordie has directed work around Australia, the UK and Asia. His State Theatre Company directing credits include *Machu Picchu* (Sydney Theatre Company and State Theatre Company), *Betrayal*, *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, *Beckett Triptych*, *Kryptonite* (Sydney Theatre Company & State Theatre Company), *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Little Bird*, *The Seagull*, *Maggie Stone*, *Hedda Gabler*, *The Kreutzer Sonata*, *Speaking In Tongues*, *romeo&juliet*, *Ghosts*, *Attempts on Her Life*, *The Dumb Waiter*, *Ruby Moon* and *Hot Fudge*, *Toy Symphony* (Queensland Theatre Company & State Theatre Company), *Knives In Hens* (Malthouse & State Theatre Company), Other directing credits include *Spring Awakening: The Musical* (Sydney Theatre Company), *Baghdad Wedding* (Belvoir), *Metro Street* (Arts Asia Pacific, Power Arts, Daegu International Musicals Festival and State Theatre Company), *The City and Tender* (nowyesnow), *Marathon*, *Morph*, *Disco Pigs* and *The Return* (Fresh Track), *Tiny Dynamite* (Griffin), *Macbeth* and *The Laramie Project* (AC Arts).



His productions have won or been nominated for Helpmann, Greenroom, Sydney Critics Circle, Adelaide Critics Circle and Curtain Call awards.

He has also worked as a producer, dramaturg, teacher, event director and curator for organisations including the Adelaide Festival, The National Play Festival, University of Wollongong, Australian Theatre for Young People, Australian Fashion Week and Queensland Theatre Company.

## SCOTT GRAHAM

Scott is Artistic Director and co-founder of Frantic Assembly, for which he recently directed *No Way Back*, *Othello* and *The Believers*. For Frantic, he has also co-directed *Little Dogs* (with National Theatre Wales), *Lovesong*, *Beautiful Burnout* (with National Theatre of Scotland, Fringe First), *Othello* (TMA award – Best Direction), *Stockholm, pool (no water)*, *Dirty Wonderland*, *Rabbit*, *Peepshow* and *Underworld*. He has also been nominated for Olivier and Tony awards as the co-choreographer of the National Theatre's award winning play *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (West End, Broadway, UK & Ireland Tour).



Director/ performer credits include *Hymns*, *Tiny Dynamite*, *On Blindness*, *Heavenly*, *Sell Out*, *Zero*, *Flesh*, *Klub* and *Look Back in Anger*. Scott Graham's other directing credits include: *Man To Man* (Wales Millennium Centre); *Home* (National Theatre of Scotland) and *Ker-ching* (Sixth Sense). He has also provided choreography and movement direction on *Husbands and Sons*, *Port*, *Hothouse* and *Market Boy* at the Royal National Theatre; *The Merchant of Venice* for Singapore Repertory Company, *Praxis Makes Perfect* for National Theatre Wales & Foreign Affairs Festival Berlin; *The Canticles* at Brighton Festival/ Aldeburgh Music; *Dr Dee* for Manchester International Festival/ ENO; *Crouch Touch Pause Engage* for National Theatre Wales/Out Of Joint; *Villette* at Stephen Joseph Theatre; *Frankenstein* for the Royal & Derngate; *Beauty and the Beast* and *Cinderella* at the Unicorn; *The May Queen* at Liverpool Everyman; *Dazzling Medusa* and *A Bear Called Paddington* for Polka; and *Stuart Little* on tour. With

Steven Hoggett and Bryony Lavery, he created *It Snows*, a National Theatre Connections play. With Steven Hoggett, he has written *The Frantic Assembly Book of Devising Theatre* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)

## **INTERVIEW WITH SCOTT**

***Things I Know To Be True* marks State Theatre Company's first international co-production. What was it about this particular production that sparked an interest for Frantic Assembly?**

I had worked with Geordie before when he came over to the UK and assisted/observed on the making of *Lovesong*. We had a good time and I liked his the way he thought about making theatre. We had met years previously and kept in touch. Geordie then emailed me one day about a possible co directing collaboration. I thought this sounded great, as I thought our styles might complement each other and we could learn from each other too.

The project was to be with Andrew Bovell but it was an open brief. We were to just start with the images of Gregory Crewdson. Crewdson's work has been a massive inspiration to me so that seemed like a really exciting starting point. That developed into a family drama and I was immediately struck by the truth in Andrew's writing.

**What can audiences who aren't familiar with Frantic Assembly's work expect from this production?**

I am not sure how to answer this one, really. The productions I make do not feel strange to me because that is how I naturally make work but I guess I do have a fixation on how our bodies tell our stories. It is not simply dance. It is about recognizing how much information we relay and understand through our physicality. On stage that can manifest itself as hugely dynamic choreography, or the tiniest movement of someone's eye. Either way, I am always looking for that precision because our audiences are natural geniuses at reading these moments. We say so much without words.

I think I am always looking beyond naturalism but I always want images, scenes or moments to be rooted in naturalistic truth. I love text, my training is in English Literature, and I guess I am looking at ways in which movement or physicality can explore what is wrapped around or existing underneath the text. So the work can be very visual or highly physical but I always reserve the right for it to be quiet and delicate. It is all about what serves the production best.

**How would you describe Frantic Assembly's unique style of theatre?**

As I have said above, the work can be highly physical. I like to use actors rather than simply employ dancers for this physicality. I love training an actor to achieve something that they never thought they could. And when they have achieved this you can remind them that they are still an actor and that they can bring a lovely, humane and fragile nuance to any moment of physicality. Aside from their obvious ability with text, I think this is a more useful and truthful physicality than many highly skilled dancers can provide.

I always worry about distilling the 'style of theatre' into simple sentences. My worry is that an audience then comes along and spends their time ticking off those details and the work is predictable. I also believe that I am not best placed to comment as I make the work instinctually and probably cannot see the wood for the trees.

**Can you describe the importance of 'physicality' in Frantic Assembly's work?**

From the moment I switched on to theatre I have been interested in how physicality tells stories. In fact it was this physicality that made me want to be part of it. It felt exciting, immediate and truthful. I was inspired by companies like DV8 and Volcano Theatre Company. Their work spoke to me in a way that other theatre simply did not.

I guess I am trying to create that personal experience for my audience. As I said, I believe we are experts in reading physicality. We negotiate body language every moment of every day. I am trying to access

this understanding, to make my productions speak in this language. Sometimes that is heightened and energetic. At others it is distilled and precise. But every moment has been considered and is rich with potential and meaning.

**What has the experience been like working with Andrew Bovell and developing this piece of work?**

It has been fantastic. Andrew is a very proactive writer in the rehearsal room. Not all writers are. He was not afraid of accessing the opinions and histories of the actors in the development of the play. Some writers can be a little precious but Andrew is a fantastic listener. That is not to suggest he is some magpie. He always seemed to have a strong instinct about this piece but let it be informed by the voices within the room.

What I admire is his desire to try something new. To have his process challenged and explore new languages. I think this is very important and is one of the main reasons I love to collaborate to make work.



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# Frantic Assembly

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Frantic Assembly is an internationally renowned theatre company celebrated for its physical and collaborative approach. It makes thrilling, energetic and unforgettable theatre.

Over 21 years the company has built an enviable reputation as one of the most exciting theatre companies of the UK, and is led by Artistic Director and co-founder Scott Graham. Having toured extensively across Great Britain, Frantic Assembly has also worked in 30 countries internationally collaborating with some of today's most inspiring artists.

The company attracts new and young audiences with work that reflects contemporary culture and its unique methodology is recognised for liberating creative potential and building confidence. Each year the company introduces over 9,000 participants to the company's process of creating theatre, in a wide variety of educational and community settings. Frantic Assembly is a recommended theatre practitioner on UK curriculum (OCR, WJEC, AQA) and on the International Baccalaureate syllabus. The company also delivers Ignition, an innovative vocational training project for young men, particularly targeting those with little previous experience of the arts. From 2016 the company will be delivering practical modules on a new Collaborative Theatre-Making MA it has created with Coventry University (UK Modern University of the Year 2014 & 2015).

Frantic Assembly have recently completed a major UK tour of their celebrated version of *Othello*; choreographed primetime Channel 4 and AMC TV series *Humans*; and are the Movement Directors of the award-winning National Theatre of Great Britain production *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (West End, Broadway, UK & Ireland Tour). With Steven Hoggett, Scott Graham has been nominated for both an Olivier and Tony Award for Best Choreography for this production. Together they are the authors of *The Frantic Assembly Book of Devising Theatre* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Routledge).



*"The most innovative and progressive company around"* The Times

*"The vibrant and visceral Frantic Assembly"* The Independent

[www.franticassembly.co.uk/resources/](http://www.franticassembly.co.uk/resources/)



# Actor Profile

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## GEORGIA ADAMSON – PIP

Georgia trained with ATYP and in USA with Shakespeare & Company and has worked extensively in theatre and television. This is Georgia's first production for State Theatre Company.

For Bell Shakespeare, she has performed in *Actors At Work*, *I Own The Racecourse*, *The Tempest*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *War of The Roses*. For Sydney Theatre Company she played the lead role of Sal Thornhill in *The Secret River*, appeared in *Actor On A Box* and was a Resident Artist in 2012. Other theatre includes *Diving For Pearls* at the Ensemble, *Three Sisters* for Cry Havoc, *Pesciolino* for Teatro Paradiso, *Snugglepot and Cuddlepie* for CDP as well as *The Crucible* and *Edward II* with Sport for Jove. In 2015 Georgia won the Sydney Theatre Critics' Best Supporting Actress Award for her role as Elizabeth Proctor in *The Crucible*.



Georgia's TV work has included *A Country Practice*, *Echo Point*, *All Saints*, *McLeod's Daughters*, *Out of the Blue*, *Rescue Special Ops*, *Gangs of Oz*. Most recently she has appeared in the hit ABC series *The Code*, *Love Child* and *Hiding*, *Peter Allen-Not The Boy Next Door* and *A Place To Call Home*. In feature film Georgia has appeared in Mel Gibson's *Hackshaw Ridge* and Khoa Do's *Footy Legends*. She will soon be seen in Michael Joy's upcoming feature *Cul De Sac* and has appeared in several short films.

## INTERVIEW WITH GEORGIA

**You weren't part of the development process in the script. What has it been like stepping into a role as an outsider to the process?**

Stepping into this work has been thrilling. The actors who participated in the development had a feel for the world and physical language that we would be playing with but it really didn't take long to fall into step with them. We work physically for the first couple of hours of rehearsal each day, so by the end of week one we had a really good grip on how we'd be working and telling this story. Being involved in the development of a character during script development is a lovely thing to do, but the more common experience is to take an existing character off the page and work out how to bring them to life.

**What part of yourself have you been able to stamp on your character?**

Pip and I are in very similar circumstances. We are both mothers of two children, seeking genuine connection and satisfaction from work, love and life and are willing to take risks and leaps of faith for happiness. I don't really look to work out how I can stamp myself on a character, but the Pip that audiences see in this production is created through the prism of my imagination and experiences. I see her as both strong and vulnerable, I empathise deeply with her situation, and I admire her desire to live a full and true life.

**Pip really has the internal struggle between career and mother, how crucial are both of these elements when becoming the character?**

I think that the struggle to balance work and motherhood is key to Pip's experience but that there is a third element in the mix and that is her search for happiness and understanding of herself as a woman. These three elements can't be separated but they do connect to three different parts of her. And I think that struggle and juggle is a familiar one to many women my age.

**What has it been like to work with Scott on the physical aspects of the show? And can you describe how this has enhanced your performance or characterisation?**

The physical work that Scott has brought to this process has been superb. It's such a joy to open up storytelling in this way and to find physical and visual expressions of emotion, mood and memory. The conditioning work we've done to prepare for the show has been grueling and really satisfying, and we've all taken great pleasure in our increasing strength and abilities. The movement work really feels like it enriches the story and our telling of it, gives beautiful insights into the characters and I hope provides electric emotional triggers for the audience.

This work has opened up the way I think about how we express things on stage and is something I hope to keep exploring beyond this play.



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# Characters

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## **BOB**

Is a 63 year old, retrenched auto factory worker. He is married to Fran and father to four children. As a blue collar worker, he worked hard his whole life to provide for his family, giving them a college education. When the factory closed down, Bob took a package at 57 as he didn't think he would get another job. *"I thought I earned a rest. When I worked all I could dream of was a few extra hours in the day to spend in the garden, but who would have thought that the days would turn out to be so long."*

He loves his family and has a special place for each child in his heart. He believes that he's brought them up well. He is brutally honest in his opinions, but weathers each crisis within the family stoically. He supports Pip's decision to separate from her husband, works hard to accept Mark's transition and cries when Rosie tells him she's moving away. However, he is angry at Ben's mistake, seeing it as a rejection of his love. *"I've got nothing for you Ben. What I had, I've already given. And you never wanted it anyway."* He loses the love of his life before they have a chance to re-connect again as a couple, now that the children have moved away.

## **FRAN**

Is 57 and works as a nurse and is always coming or going from work. Fran is in constant contact with her four children and fusses and pries into their lives. She is very opinionated and lets them know exactly what she thinks. *"It's a mother's job to make her children cry....so they understand pain."* Fran balances work and family life, but has kept her independence by putting money aside. She worries about Bob becoming old before his time and wants to take him on a holiday.

Fran sees herself in Pip, and instead of understanding, she disapproves and argues with her. She doesn't understand her son Mark and is offended that he wants to become a woman. She nags Rosie to do something meaningful with her life. She protects Ben when he reveals he's been stealing, even giving him the money to cover it up. Whilst she is the matriarch of the family and very strong, she needs Bob to ground her.

## **PIP**

Is the oldest child at 34. She is in a career transition, moving up through the Education department before being offered a job in Canada. She works hard to have a balance of work and family life and is often criticised by her mother about her commitment to her career. She never really got on well with her mother and has vivid memories of the bad times they had while she was growing up. Fran says that Pip is too similar to her and that is why she's never gotten on.

Pip is daddy's girl, finding that she can relate better to him. She comes to a moment in life where she needs to choose between her comfortable married, middle-class life and the excitement of travel and having an affair. She lies to her family and only explains it in a letter to her mum, as she wonders if her mum ever felt the same as she does.

## **MARK**

Is the second oldest child and works in IT. He is very close to Rosie, often taking on the 'mum' role when Rosie was a baby. Although close to his family, he always felt that he didn't fit in. He finds it incredibly difficult to tell his family that he is going to transition from a man to a woman and that he needs separation and space from the family during this time. He is angry when his parents don't know what to say. Both he and Fran stop speaking to each other. However, he is surprised at the love and support from his dad at the airport.

## BEN

Is the third child. He works in financial services and is corporate and flashy and likes to spend his money. He is not a natural fit in this high-flying world, coming from a middle-class family who have had to work hard to put him through university, so he struggles to keep up with those who come from money. He tries hard and puts on a show to be different from his family. Ben is rooted to home, bringing his shirts for his mum to wash, making him visit once a week. Home is also where he turns for support when it is revealed that he has been stealing from the company. Ben is Fran's favourite, *"What can I say? The boy makes me laugh. He just has to walk into a room and I want to smile."*

## ROSIE

Is the youngest child, a 'happy accident'. She goes overseas to find herself and thinks that she's more grown up, but realizes that things she knows are very little and comes home. She is fussed over by everyone in the family, but is particularly close to Mark. *"He was more of a mother to you than I was,"* explains Fran. She is daddy's little girl and it upsets him the most when she leaves.

Others tell her to grow up, but she likes the protection of family. Rosie finally stands up for herself announcing that she is going to study writing at university, instead of conforming to a 'secure' job, like her parents wanted.

As she watches the others, she grows through the play and at the end is able to sum up what she now knows.



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# Themes

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*"Being a parent is a painful experience but being a child is a painful experience too."*  
Andrew Bovell.

## FAMILIAL LOVE

Bob and Fran have been married for over forty years. They are a great couple and we see some of their history as their story is revealed. Whilst they have a volatile relationship, they are committed to each other and together they work well. Theirs is a strong bond, knowing each other intimately and at times, too well.

Each child presents them with a crisis, a turning point in their lives that affects the whole family. Resiliently, they weather each crisis still standing. The family embrace the complexities and even when they think they can't change, particularly in accepting their son's transition, somehow their love makes it possible. Their love sustains, protects, inhibits and at times destroys each child, but they always affirm the capacity of love and to be loved.

## EXPECTATIONS

Bob and Fran have lived the Australian dream. They got married, both had working-class jobs, had a family. They struggled to save money and to educate their children at University, believing that their children could become better versions of them, better educated, better jobs, better in life. To them, this is the Australian way of life.

*It wasn't meant to be like this... I thought they'd be like us. But better than us.  
Better versions of us. Better educated. With better jobs. And better prospects.  
That's what we worked so hard for. Wasn't it? But I thought they'd all live close by.  
In the same city, at least. In a house they built. Just like us.  
And that they'd get married to good people. And have kids. Like us.  
And that we'd put on a barbecue here most Sundays. And there would be all the kids.  
All the cousins. And that there'd be cricket. And totem tennis. And sleepovers at Nan and Pop's.  
You know. And engagements. And weddings. Here in this garden.  
I thought that's what life would be.  
That's all I ever wanted it to be, Fran.*

Bob and Fran find it difficult to believe that each of their children is challenging that idea and rejecting the model they've laid out for them.

Pip is unhappy at her career/family balance, and even though Fran has always worked, she expects Pip to conform to the role of 'mother'. She also disapproves of Pip leaving her children behind to live in Canada, even though we later find out that she understands Pip's struggles.

They expected Mark to marry his girlfriend, settle down and have children, with Fran lamenting, *"I miss her. I thought she was the one. I'd made room for her."* His decision to transition is an incredible affront to his parent's expectations and one which they don't cope with particularly well.

Ben has always been protected in a way, particularly by Fran who still washes and irons his clothes. Although they are pleased with his career, they believe that he is too flashy, that things should be a

struggle, not easily purchased and flaunted. Ben's breaking the law is an affront to their common decency and one which Bob in particular, struggles to feel empathy towards.

Rosie is the youngest child, just beginning to spread her wings. Fran tells her that she needs to work out what she's going to do. *"A woman needs to stand on her own feet and earn her own money. That's the best advice you'll ever get from me."*

### **LIVING UP TO PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS**

Each of the children feel that they don't live up to their parent's expectations and that their choices have let their parents down. Travelling through Europe, Rosie expected her life to really begin. She finds disappointment, but doesn't want to give up for the thought of disappointing her parents, because it is a defeat. When she arrives home, she is harassed by her parents to make a decision about the rest of her life, something that she's not ready to do. When she does decide to study writing, they try to steer her away from the idea, and look at something more practical.

Pip finds it very difficult to live up to her mother's ideals. She is tired of hearing how wonderful her husband is with the kids, *"He's a father and he's got an important job of his own. He's amazing."* She is trying to progress in her career, taking on a temporary role in the education department, before accepting a position in Canada. Pip had a strong figurehead in her mother, who worked and raised a family, but she is criticised for trying to do the same.

Mark tried to find the right girl and settle down, but deep down, this isn't really what he wanted. He stayed with his girlfriend Taylor out of expectation of what he was supposed to be. Transitioning is the most difficult thing to tell his parents as it is an affront to everything they believe in. Mark really feels on the outside of his family and believes he's been the one they've worried about the most.

Ben took everything that he was given and worked hard to build himself a better life. However, with this came a need to 'fit in.' He was poorer than the others he studied and worked with and being able to afford new things was something his parent's didn't understand. Whilst his mother still tries to protect him, his father's reaction hurts the most.

### **CYLE OF LIFE**

The youngest child is really at the precipice of what's next, what can be achieved? She's been living with her parents and feels that life is about to begin. She thought her journey to Europe was the start of growing up, but realised that she really didn't know much. By the end of the play she repeats her list of what she knows and is more profound about life.

*"I know that having your heart broken by a boy from Spain won't be the worst thing that happens to you. I know that things can't remain the same no matter how much you want them to. I know that people aren't perfect. Even the people you love. Especially the people you love. And I know that love is not enough to save them. And I know that the story you thought you were telling doesn't end how you thought it would... And I know on the day my mother died my childhood finally ended."*

At the other end of the cycle are the parents. They've had a loving, sometimes volatile, but committed marriage and they're re-discovering themselves as a couple, without the children at home. Bob is also dealing with forced retirement and is becoming less certain about life as he ages and what his future looks like.

# Metaphor

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*"This garden is the world. Everything that matters happened here."*

## **GARDEN/HOME**

All through the play is the undertone of being home. Home is where the children return, home is comfort, home is safe. *"All those beautiful cities. All that history. All through Europe. And all I could think about was coming home."*

The garden is the anchor point for dreams and memories and provides solitude for each member of the family. The story itself is told across the seasons, reflected in the garden setting. The tree represents the constant in the family. When Bob talks about cutting it down Fran says, *"It's the most beautiful thing in the garden. It was here before the house was built and will still be here when we're gone."*

Pip remembers her childhood where everything happened in the garden; kissing a boy, getting drunk, family cricket, totem tennis tournaments, fashion parades, sleepovers, Sunday barbeques, birthday parties, engagements and her wedding. She also remembers seeing her mother banging her head on the tree crying when she was younger and wonders why.

Rosie dreams of getting married in the back yard, *"I'm there in a white dress on my father's arm walking across the lawn."*

When he was a boy, Mark could see the world from the tree in the garden. He looked down on his family from the tree, *"Not really a part of the picture and not really even knowing why."* He knew that his mum would hide in the garden to smoke and solve problems, *"She could go through a pack, one after another until a solution was found. I suspect that of all of us, she smoked the most cigarettes on account of me."*

Bob spends most of the time in the garden, mainly because he doesn't know what else to do. Both he and Fran retreat to the garden when they need space. Bob to settle his emotions and Fran to find solitude and the strength to tell Bob about saving money and choosing to stay with him. In the final moment, all of Bob's anger and frustration and grief culminate in his breaking and tearing the rose bushes.

## **FAMOUS BLUE RAINCOAT- LEONARD COHEN**

Pip hums a few bars from the song before she announces that she's moving to Vancouver. In her letter to her mother she sings part of it again. *"I never really understood the song when I was a girl. But I knew enough to know that it was about love and that each time you played it you wanted to cry."*

In her letter Pip explains why she left her family, how she is as a mother, and wondering why they never had intimate conversations. She tells her Mum that she met another man and she made a choice to be with him. *"Thanks for taking the trouble from her eyes. Do you remember that line from the song? That is what this man has done for me. And I'm wondering if there was someone who could have done it for you, if you let them."* In this moment, she understands her mother like she has never been able to before.

*It's four in the morning, the end of December  
I'm writing you now just to see if you're better  
New York is cold, but I like where I'm living*

*There's music on Clinton Street all through the evening.*

*I hear that you're building your little house deep in the desert  
You're living for nothing now, I hope you're keeping some kind of record.*

*Yes, and Jane came by with a lock of your hair  
She said that you gave it to her  
That night that you planned to go clear  
Did you ever go clear?*

*Ah, the last time we saw you, you looked so much older  
Your famous blue raincoat was torn at the shoulder  
You'd been to the station to meet every train  
And you came home without Lili Marlene*

*And you treated my woman to a flake of your life  
And when she came back she was nobody's wife.*

*Well I see you there with the rose in your teeth  
One more thing gypsy thief  
Well I see Jane's awake*

*She sends her regards.  
And what can I tell you my brother, my killer  
What can I possibly say?  
I guess that I miss you, I guess I forgive you  
I'm glad you stood in my way.*

*If you ever come by here, for Jane or for me  
Well your enemy is sleeping, and his woman is free.*

*Yes, and thanks, for the trouble you took from her eyes  
I thought it was there for good so I never tried.*

*And Jane came by with a lock of your hair  
She said that you gave it to her  
That night that you planned to go clear*

# Interesting Reading

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## TRANSITIONING

Is the process of changing one's gender to the opposite of their birth-assigned sex and gender. For transgender people, this process commonly involves sex reassignment therapy, which may include hormone replacement therapy and sex reassignment surgery. One of the most significant parts of transitioning for many transgender people is coming out for the first time. Transitioning is a process, that can take anywhere between several months and several years.

Within our current society, we are exposed to many stories of transgender persons through the media. For example; the stories of Caitlyn Jenner; Laverne Cox, a trans-woman on the television show, *Orange is the New Black*; and Maura, a fictional trans character in the series *Transparent*, have all drawn greater attention to the many aspects of trans lives and what it means to identify with a gender different than the one person was assigned at birth.

Gender identity is someone's personal identification as man, woman, or a gender outside of societal norms. Gender expression refers to characteristics and behaviors a person identifies with that can be viewed as masculine, feminine, a mix of both, or neither.

There are many obstacles to transitioning, including discrimination and lack of knowledge about gender identity and expression, which can make it difficult for trans, gender nonconforming, and genderqueer people to come out until later in life. Unfortunately, it is common for families to shun and even disown children over their gender identity and expression.



# Featured Music

## NILS FRAHM

Nils Frahm had an early introduction to music. During his childhood he was taught to play piano. It was through this that Nils began to immerse himself in the styles of the classical pianists before him as well as contemporary composers.

Today Nils Frahm works as an accomplished composer and producer from his Berlin-based Durton Studio. His unconventional approach to an age-old instrument, played contemplatively and intimately, has won him many fans around the world. For a musician this early in his career, Frahm displays an incredibly developed sense of control and restraint in his work, catching the ear of many fans.



As the recognition continued to grow for his solo piano works *Wintermusik* (2009) and *The Bells* (2009), 2011 saw the release of *Felt* created by placing felt on the hammers of the piano. The album was followed by the solo synthesiser EP *Juno and Screws* (2012) – a birthday gift to his fans he recorded while recovering from a thumb injury. Nils released his follow up to Juno titled *Juno Reworked* (2013) with guest reworks by Luke Abbott and Clark.

In 2013 Nils returned with his new album *Spaces* to much critical acclaim, expressing his love for experimentation and answering the call from his fans for a record that truly reflects what they have witnessed during his concerts. Recorded over a period of two years on various formats the album captured his live performances from various concerts worldwide. Nils also released his first published music book, entitled *Sheets Eins* in this year.

In 2015 Nils announced Piano Day - an official body created by Nils and his closest friends to celebrate the piano and to house various and exciting, piano-related projects. The first project revealed by the Piano Day team was the building of what will be world's tallest piano: the Klavins 450. In May 2015 Nils announced his first score release *Music for the Motion Picture Victoria* for one-take feature film, *Victoria* and went on to win the prestigious German film prize for 'Best Soundtrack'. The soundtrack opens with an edit of *Burn With Me* by German producer DJ Koze.

In August 2015 Nils announced his continued musical partnership with fellow artist Ólafur Arnalds which culminated with the release of their 'Collaborative Works' in October 2015 and included *Stare* (2012) their very first recording together which took place in 2011 between Reykjavík and Berlin, featuring cellist Anne Müller. *Loon* a synthesiser-led 5-track EP that was recorded in autumn 2014 across five days at Nils's Durton Studio in Berlin. *Life Story Love And Glory* (2015) a 2-track live improv affair on two pianos and *Trance Frenz* (2015) the audio recording of their intimate 45-minute studio film.

## Track listing

*It Was Really, Really Grey*  
*More*  
*Stolen Car*  
*Keep*  
*Tristana*  
*Snippet*

*Said and Done*  
*Corn*  
*Ambre*  
*For Peter - Toilet Brushes - More*  
*Less*



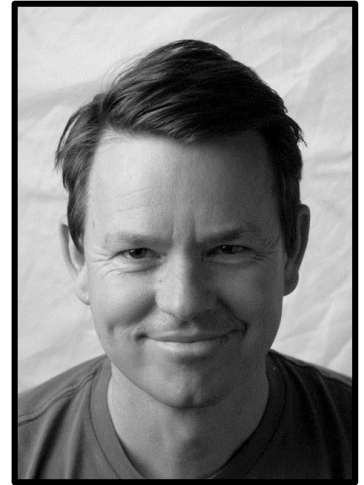
# Designer

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## **GEOFF COBHAM – Set & Lighting Designer**

Geoff is State Theatre Company's Resident Designer and has worked as a Production Manager, Lighting Designer, Set Designer, Event Producer and Venue Designer.

His recent Set & Lighting Design for State Theatre Company include *The Events*, *Betrayal*, *Little Bird*, *The Seagull*, *Hedda Gabler*, *The Kruetzer Sonata*. Other Set & Lighting Design credits include; *Nothing to Lose*, *Never Did Me Any Harm*, *Not In A Million Years*, *The Age I'm In*, *Already Elsewhere*, *Same but Different* (Force Majeure), *Construct* (Tanja Leidtke), *Ode to Nonsense*, *The Tragical Life of Cheeseboy*, *Wolf*, *Man Covets Bird* (Slingsby) *Fastest Boy*, *Emily Loves to Bounce*, *Me and My Shadow* (Patch Theatre), *The Flying Dutchman* (State Opera of South Australia)



His recent Lighting Design credits for State Theatre Company include *Mortido*, *Volpone*, *Masquerade* (Griffin Theatre Company & State Theatre Company), *Madame* (Torque Show, Vitalstatistix, State Theatre Company), *Othello*, *Neighbourhood Watch*, *Babyteeth*, *Pinocchio* (Windmill Theatre and State Theatre Company), *Speaking in Tongues*, *romeo&juliet*, *Attempts on Her Life*, *Metro Street*, *The Goat*, *Night Letters*. Other Lighting Design Credits include *G*, *Vocabulary*, *Nothing* (Australian Dance Theatre), *Beetle Graduation*, *Skip Miller*, *The Hypochondriac*, *Drums in the Night*, *This Uncharted Hour*, *The Duckshooter* (Brink Productions), *Not according to plan*, *Impulse*, *Phillip Glass Trilogy*, *Quick Brown Fox*, (Leigh Warren & Dancers), *Salt*, *Landmark*, *Rebel*, *Starry Eyed*, *In The Blood* (Restless Dance Theatre), *Plop*, *The Wizard of Oz* (Windmill Theatre).

At the 2015 Helpmann Awards Ceremony, Geoff received a Helpmann Award for Best Scenic Design of our production of *Little Bird*. He has also received the following awards; Ruby Award for Sustained Contribution, Sydney Theatre Award Best Lighting Design for *Never Did Me Any Harm*, Green Room Award Best lighting Design for *Night Letters*. He has produced many outdoor events and clubs for Festivals and received a Churchill fellowship in 2010 to study outdoor theatre in Europe

## **INTERVIEW WITH DESIGNER**

### **You've said that lighting will lead the design. What do you mean by this?**

As per most of my set designs, they consist of an often quite neutral space in which I can use light to provide a wide range of atmospheres. If the set design was more descriptive, I could not create such a range of worlds. I also find that a neutral space helps me put the actor at the centre of the design. I am always striving to make the actor the brightest thing in the room. In its simplest form this idea is best served by a dark backdrop and sidelight.

This work is influenced by the work of American photographer Gregory Crewdson. His use of dominant key lighting to create a hyperreal suburban world is our touchstone for this production.

### **What considerations of Frantic's work have you made in your design and how is this evolving in rehearsals?**

Scott Graham has brought an extra dimension to the show with the addition of Physical Theatre. This has had a major influence on all aspects of the design. We deliberately delayed the construction of many set and prop items so they could develop organically in tandem with rehearsals. The workshop team would respond daily to new requests and modifications. The action and props are fully integrated. The show

also has 10 times the amount of lighting Cues of a more standard theatre show.

**Why do you like exposing the theatre mechanics to the audience in your design?**

This design concept takes it lead from a video by Talking Heads called “Stop Making Sense”; a seminal concert of theirs in which they start with a bare theatre and build a full concert during the show. The audience gets to see the lighting sound and staging get built. Over the years I have found that the more you let the audience “participate” in the making of the show the more they have invested and therefore are more engaged.



# Set & Costume Design

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Frantic Assembly's work, which is instilled into the play, helps inform and complete the design elements through the rehearsal process. Starting with a stripped back, but highly visual set the designer has drawn on inspiration from Peter Brook's simple, but visually rich designs in *The Suit* and *Battlefield*, and the photos of Gregory Crewdson, which contain incredible visual representations of static suburban scenes, all with amazing stories within them.

The play is set in a suburban backyard, a family space that has been lived in and loved. The children haven't strayed too far from the family home and this setting creates the perfect image for the coming together of the family. There is a shed, wading pool, rose bushes, lemon tree, garden hose and a wheelbarrow. The space is open, showing exposed theatre mechanics. Lighting and Frantic's vision of movement will lead the design, letting the audience in on the creation of the story.

The stage is separated into two halves. There is a slippery black floor at the front where furniture can be slid into place to make the domestic settings of the scene. This space will become about the work that Frantic will do and how they will create tableaux of the family life. The back half of the stage is the garden. Water will be used as a visual element creating sprinklers, wading pool and rain, so a pool liner will be built into this half of the stage.

At the back is a large monochromatic tree designed by Thom Buchanan. The tree is the centre-piece of the garden, which is referenced throughout the script as a place of comfort and solitude. The tree is painted onto a large black scrim in mirror image (top/bottom) and the lighting highlights various elements of the tree as the seasons change.

Lighting is used to give a ceiling to the vastness of the stage. There is a curved ceiling made of 122 tear-drop light bulbs, representing the bubble that the father lives in and the very romanticised view of family and his world.

## **COSTUMES**

The costumes are of everyday people. Each character has a basic outfit, to which various pieces are added that depict season and character changes.

*Bob* - Gardening clothes, old jeans, top, sandals and cap. He wears a suit later in the play.

*Pip* - Works in the Education Department, so wears corporate attire.

*Fran* - Works as a nurse and is always coming or going from work, so wears in her nurse's uniform. She wears a dress for her night out with Bob.

*Rosie* - The youngest daughter returns from overseas wearing her duffel coat. Then she changes into summer dresses and boots.

*Ben* - His outfit is corporate, flash and oozes money.

*Mark* - Through the play transitions from a man to a woman. He wears blue, green and yellow tones.

# Design References

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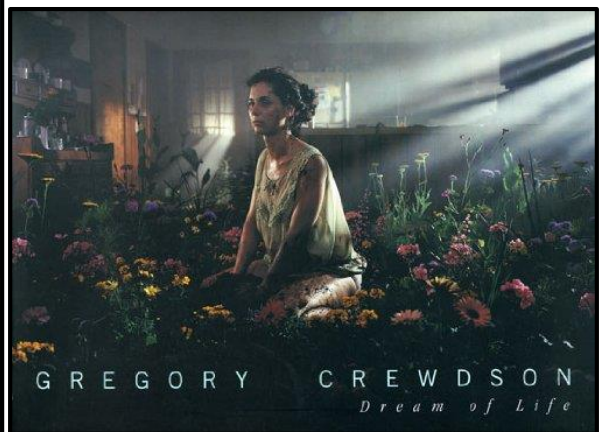
Gregory Crewdson began as the starting visual reference point for the design team.

## GREGORY CREWDSON

Born in Brooklyn, New York in 1962, Gregory Crewdson is an American photographer. He photographs tableaux of American homes and neighborhoods.

In the mid-1980s, Crewdson studied photography and received his Master of Fine Arts from Yale University. He is currently a professor at the Yale University School of Art.

Crewdson's photographs usually take place in small-town America, but are dramatic and cinematic, featuring disturbing, surreal events. Each photo is elaborately staged and lit using film crews, equipment and techniques. Crewdson cites films *Vertigo*, *The Night of the Hunter*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, *Blue Velvet*, and *Safe* as having influenced his style.







### THOM BUCHANAN – ORIGINAL ARTWORK

Thom Buchanan is a painter, drawer and cross-disciplinary artist.

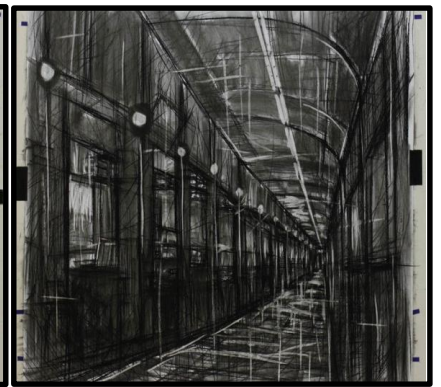
For State Theatre Company, Thom's original artwork credits include *The Kreutzer Sonata*.

In 2010 he graduated from the School of Art, Architecture and Design at UniSA with a Bachelor of Visual Arts (Honours) and has since exhibited extensively locally, nationally, and internationally along with being a finalist and winner of a number of art prizes.

In 2011 Thom collaborated with Garry Stewart's Australian Dance Theatre on *Worldhood* using live performance drawing.

In 2013 he was involved in several major collaborations such as the Centenary of Canberra 2013 live performance drawing with the Canberra Symphony Orchestra, and was one of several artists commissioned to create a mural in the Canterbury Museum as part of the Rise Festival, Christchurch New Zealand.

2015 saw Thom created a large-scale drawing for Samstag Museum of Art *Do it* [Adelaide] exhibition. 2016 saw him create a large scale Mural for The Royal Croquet Club spanning 6x14m and has been selected as a finalist in the prestigious Fleurieu Art Prize 2016 at Samstag Museum of Art.



# Essay Questions

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## ENGLISH QUESTIONS

1. Look at transgender in the media. How does the media portray these individuals and does it feed discrimination?
2. Throughout the play there is reference to a song; *Famous Blue Raincoat* by Leonard Cohen. Using examples, explain how this ties the characters of Fran and Pip together.
3. Explain the importance of Rosie's character to the father, Bob. Why is he so distraught that she decides to move to Queensland?
4. How has Andrew Bovell conveyed a clear story plot without pursuing one single protagonist? i.e. The use of multiple characters perspectives.
5. How are the parents, Fran and Bob's, concepts of what is 'right' and 'wrong' for their children displayed throughout the play?
6. Why is Fran stricter on Pip than her other children? Discuss.
7. *Things I Know To Be True* focuses on family. What elements of the play can you relate to your own life and how does this inform your reflections of the play?

## DRAMA QUESTIONS

1. How do the projected images by Tom Buchanan and music by Nils Frahm add to the theatrical experience and dramatic tension of the play?
2. Think about the set design for the production. How was the set used effectively to:
  - Support the text?
  - Emphasise themes?
  - Draw focus to an emotion or idea?
  - Provide a space for the actor?
3. How can theatre invite an audience into the emotional and personal experiences of its characters in a sympathetic or empathetic way? Choose two of the characters In *Things I Know To Be True* and describe how they make you feel.
4. Despite the drama of the play, there are moments of humour and joy. What role does humour play in this piece and what is its purpose?
5. The lighting is a key element of the design concept, creating layers that combine to enrich the audiences experience and understanding of the play. Describe your personal response to these elements and how they enhanced the production.
6. Compare Gregory Crewdson's work to the design of *Things I Know To Be True*. What references to Crewdson's work have been used in the play, including colour and composition.
7. Discuss the physical/devised work throughout the play and how it shaped the storytelling.

## WRITING

Imagine you are the fifth child in the Price Family and devise your own monologue to perform.

## OR

Pip writes a letter to her mum, explaining everything that she couldn't say in person. Choose one of the other children and write a letter to the mother or father explaining their inner-most feelings and truths.

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## Pip's Letter

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Dear Mum. It's cold in Vancouver but I like where I'm living. That's a reference to a Leonard Cohen song except he was talking about New York. But you know that, don't you. "Famous Blue Raincoat". You used to play it. Over and over.

I was on Skype with Katie the other day and I found myself thinking that she was a little plump. And wishing that her face was not quite so round and that her hair didn't fall quite so straight from her head. Is that what we do to our daughters? Praise them whilst we secretly think they're not good enough. The moment they start to become women, the first shedding of blood (do you remember how early I was) and the first sign of a developing breast, is this when we start thinking that they're not pretty enough. Or smart enough. Is this when we start worrying that they're never going to find someone? Or be someone. Is this what we do? Maybe it's better that the girls are brought up by their father who looks at them and only sees the best. Like Dad. That's what Dad sees when he looks at me. I wish you could too.

*Yes, and Jane came by with a lock of your hair She said that you gave it to her That night that you planned to go clear Did you ever go clear?*

I never really understood the song when I was a girl. I still don't. But I knew enough to know that it was about love and that each time you played it you wanted to cry. You never did. Not with us around. Only once did I see you let yourself go. You thought you were alone. In the backyard. Leaning against the old gum tree. Howling and howling. Banging your head against the trunk. Why were you crying that day, Mum?

I'm sorry I never asked you. Why didn't we have those conversations? I think that maybe we were too busy hiding from each other the things that really mattered.

And so I'm sitting here in my apartment in Vancouver and it's threatening to snow. And I hope that it does because that's a good enough

reason not to go out. And I'm playing that song and wondering why it meant so much to you. And I can only ask this from a distance because I'm scared of seeing the truth in your face like you saw it in mine.

I met him at an education conference here in Vancouver on that first trip. I didn't see it coming. Do you ever see it coming? So yes, your accusation of another man was right. Are you ever wrong, Mum?

I was ready. For him. For love. A Canadian. A public education specialist. A man who spoke with passion about something that I'd stopped caring about years ago. It wasn't hard. I was ready to fall. For someone. Someone who reminded me of what mattered. And so I fell, Mum. In love. Three days at a conference. Six months of thrilling emails and text messages and clandestine phone calls and I knew that I had to come.

He's married. Of course. You knew that too. Three children. A son and two daughters. To a woman who is good and fine and right and beautiful. But I don't care. Because I feel loved. By him. Like I have never felt loved by Steve. My good sweet husband who has done nothing but care for me and the children but who does not look much further in life than the end of his own driveway. And now, I'm waiting for his call, my lover, wondering if tonight he will find the excuse to leave his good wife, his sweet children and his safe home and come to me.

I didn't want to be this woman, Mum. But I can't leave. I won't. Eventually, he will have to make a choice and it probably won't be me. But for now... well for now, I am this woman.

"Thanks for taking the trouble from her eyes". Do you remember that line from the song? That is what this man has done for me. And I'm wondering if there was someone who could have done it for you, if you let them.

# Monologues

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## ROSIE

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Berlin. A winter coat. A travel bag. A red nose.  
And a broken heart.

I'm standing on the platform at the train station.  
It's cold. The train is late and my socks are wet.  
I'm not quite sure how I got here or where I'm  
meant to go next.

I met him four nights ago and he was the most  
beautiful boy I had ever seen. His name was  
Emmanuel, of course and he came from Madrid.

I'd been travelling by myself for three months.  
The great European adventure. London. Dublin.  
Paris. Prague. Then Berlin. I'd been saving for a  
year. Café work, bar work, babysitting. Mum and  
Dad said don't go by yourself. It's too dangerous.  
Go on a tour or at least with some girlfriends.

I'll meet people. I told them. I'll be fine. But  
meeting people is harder than you think. I mean  
I did, meet people, at hostels and stuff but  
mainly other Australians. And it was fun for a  
night or two. But the boys just wanted to have  
sex and I guess that's alright but if I wanted sex  
with an Australian boy I would have stayed in  
Hallett Cove.

So I go to the churches and the museums and  
the galleries and I walk through the cobbled  
streets and I sit in cafes trying to look  
mysterious and everything is so beautiful.  
Everything is what I was expecting it to be. And  
yet somehow I want it to be more.

I skype home once a week and tell Mum and  
Dad what an amazing place Europe is. They've  
never been. I tell them I'm having the best time  
because I can't bear the thought of them being  
disappointed for me. And when I skype my  
brother Mark, I pretend the camera on my lap  
top is broken because he knows me and he will  
see it in my face. He'll see that it's all a mess and

he'll tell me to come home but I can't go home,  
not yet, I mean then, I couldn't go home then  
because it would be such a.... defeat.

I don't know what it's meant to be. I don't know  
what I'm meant to do. I keep wondering when it  
will start. Life. When will life start?

And then there he is. At a club in Mitte. Dancing.  
With his shirt off. And I think, wow, that guy can  
really dance. That guy is like... fire. And then he  
looks over at me. Me? And I am gone. I pretend  
not to be. I try to be cool. To make it seem like  
I'm not interested. But I am so interested. And  
we dance until the sun comes up. And as we  
come out of the club into the light, I think this is  
it. This is life. I am living. And I know he wants  
to take me home. To his place. Or to his friend's  
place. Or to someone's place, I'm not quite sure  
whose place it is and I say ok. Because at last I  
am living and I don't want life to stop.

And when he kisses me I want to cry. Because  
I'd never been kissed like that. Not in Hallett  
Cove. And I'd never been kissed where he kissed  
me or touched quite like that. He seemed to  
know things and for once it didn't seem to  
matter that I didn't. Three days. Three days we  
stayed in bed. And after three days I knew some  
things too.

We don't even get up to eat. He disappears and  
comes back with a bowl of cereal and two  
spoons. And that's all we eat. Cereal. Out of the  
same bowl. For three days. On the third night I  
watch him sleeping and I do that thing you  
shouldn't do. I think about the future. I imagine  
taking him home to meet Mum and Dad and my  
sister and brothers and how they will all love  
him, like they love me. And how clever I am and  
brave to have found such a man, such a beautiful  
man, different but the same and brought him all  
the way back to Hallett Cove and then, there I



am.... Oh, I am so embarrassed but suddenly there I am in our back yard with Dad's roses all around us and I'm walking across the lawn on his arm, and he's got tears in his eyes and Mum's there in a new dress, which she never lets herself have and my sister Pip is there with her husband, Steve and their two girls. She got married in the backyard too. And Mark, my oldest brother who I adore is there with his girlfriend, Taylor. And then there's Ben, my other brother who's there with a girl who's new and won't last because they just don't with Ben and I love them all so much, sometimes I think, too much, if you can love too much but now I have to make room for Emmanuel who's standing there in a suit and he is just so, so... so handsome.... And I... I'm wearing a white dress... And I'm kind of surprised, kind of shocked because I never even knew that that's what I wanted. And maybe it's not what I want, it's what I think Mum and Dad will want for me but anyway I'm there in a white dress on my father's arm walking across the lawn and

Then he wakes up and he looks at me as if he knows what I'm thinking and as if he wants to get up and run so I kiss him on his lips before he can. And he smiles. And I'm gone all over again. And we make love, so tenderly, so sweetly and after, as I drift off to sleep, lying on his chest, listening to the beat of his heart, thinking I could listen to this for the rest of my life, I think is this it, is this what falling in love is?

And when I wake up in the morning he's gone... along with 400 euros from my wallet, my ipad, my camera, my favourite scarf and a large piece of my heart. I find a girl in the house, smoking a cigarette at the kitchen table and ask if she's seen him. She shrugs and says that he said something about going to see his girlfriend in London. She tells me to get my things and to get out of her house.

I walk through the streets of Berlin. I feel small. I feel like I'm 12 years old, I feel ridiculous. I want to cry but I won't. Well I do, a bit. But not as much as I want to. I want my dad. I want my mum. I want my brothers and my sister. I want to hear them laugh and argue and fight 7 and tease me. But I can't think of them much because if I do my chest will explode. I feel like I'm going to literally fall to pieces. That my arms are going to drop off and then my legs and my head. And so to stop myself coming apart I make a list of all the things I know.... I mean actually know for certain to be true and the really frightening thing is.... It's a very short list.

I don't know much at all. But I know that at 25 Windarie Avenue, Hallett Cove, things are the same as when I left and they always will be.

And I know that I have to go home.

This garden is the world. Everything that matters happened here.

I kissed my first boy in that shed. I was nine. He was my cousin, Tom. Down from Port Augusta. I don't know if it counts if it was your cousin. But it was a kiss, nonetheless. He kissed me and then he put his hand down my pants. I don't know what he expected but I think he got a shock because he pulled it straight back out again. But I liked it. I got so excited that I bit his face. He started to cry and ran to his mother and I was sent to my room. And I don't know if it was because I bit him or because I liked having his hand down my pants. Somehow, I think Mum knew. I think she knew exactly why a girl bites a boy in the face. But then she always knew the things you didn't want her to know.

She caught us, me and Penny McCrea and Stella Bouzakis with a bottle of sweet wine. We were in year nine and we snuck off from school at lunchtime. Penny had stolen it from her parents' drinks cabinet. We came back here and made a party of it, smoking those long coloured cocktail cigarettes as well. Thinking we were totally it. And suddenly Mum's standing at the back door. She was meant to be at work. She never came home for lunch. Never. But that day, when we're

wagging school and drinking sweet wine in the back yard she decides to come home. Stella got such a scare she started to vomit. Mum stuck her face in the compost pit and said "Vomit there you silly girl". I was grounded for the rest of Year Nine and never drank sweet wine again.

This garden is the world.

Family cricket and totem tennis tournaments. Hey Presto and cartwheels across the lawn. Fashion parades and sleepovers. Sunday barbecues. Eighteenth birthday parties. Twenty firsts. Engagements. And even a wedding. Mine. It all happened here and more.

Once I saw her, mum, bawling her eyes out and banging her head against the trunk of that tree. I was twelve. I had never seen her cry. Not once. Not even when her own mother died. And everything I thought was certain about the world changed. I went back inside and turned the television on. I was scared. What makes a woman cry like that? A mother. My mother. I didn't understand and I didn't have the courage to ask her. Now, that I am a woman, married with children of my own I don't need to, I know exactly why a woman bashes her head against the trunk of a tree.

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## MARK

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On the weekends when Dad wanted help in the garden I would climb the gum tree and hide. From up there, I could see the world.

At least I could see our world. Pip singing to a song on the radio and checking her split ends at the patio table. Ben kicking the football from one end of the yard to the other. Always running. Dad pushing a wheelbarrow of dirt around with Rosie following him with her plastic shovel ready to help. And Mum hanging out the washing before sneaking a cheeky fag behind the shed, thinking that no one knows she's there.

They didn't know I was up in the tree watching and seeing everything. Not really a part of the picture and not really even knowing why. There

were two occasions on which Mum would smoke. The first was if she'd had more than two glasses of wine. She wasn't a big drinker so this was rare. It usually happened on New Year's Eve. She would light up after two glasses of sparkling wine and only ever smoke the one. She was also known to dance with dad's undies on her head, after he had taken them off for God knows what reason so New Year's Eve was always an ordeal for us kids. The other occasion was when she thought that one of us had a problem that she couldn't solve, which was also rare, Mum having a solution for most problems in life. And on these occasions she could go through a pack, one after another until a solution was found. I suspect that of all of us, she smoked the most cigarettes on account of me.

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## BEN

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In the chaos of our home, in the kitchen when we were cleaning up after dinner, as arguments were being had about who did what to whom, and arrangements were being made about who had to be where when, basketball, netball, football, soccer, drama, piano, and who would take them, Mum or Dad or the bus and in the middle of the arguments about who would do what in the clean up, the washing, the drying, the putting away, and the wiping down the surfaces and who does more and who does nothing and who always goes to the toilet when the sweeping up needs to be done. (It was me).

In the midst of all this a song would come on the radio and Dad would stop and reach for her. And she would resist, she would push him off... "I'm too busy", "I don't have the time" "My feet are too sore" but it was just part of their play, part of the game because she loved it when he took her, she loved it when they danced. And we, we kids, we groaned and stuck our fingers down our throats and pretended that we weren't interested, in their dancing, in their love, in the secrets that only they shared.

### **MONOLOGUE PERFORMANCE #1**

Choose one of the four monologues by the children to workshop and perform in class.

Be sure to;

- Read the monologue thoroughly
- Analyse the monologue, pay close attention to subtexts
- Research and analyse your character

### **MONOLOGUE PERFORMANCE #2**

In a small group, choose one of the four monologues by the children. Listen to one of the tracks by Nils Frahm and create a devised movement piece using the monologue as your text basis. Pay particular attention to the flow of the music, and the rhythm of the text. Find the ways that physicality can enhance the subtext of the monologue.



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# Warm-ups

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*Things I Know To Be True* is a unique piece of theatre that uses the Frantic method integrated throughout the play, accessing various forms of physicality. Here are some sample warm-ups the cast went through each day of rehearsals to prepare themselves both physically and mentally that you can do with any class.

- **Concentration game**
  - Tennis ball game; in a small group tapping a tennis ball in the air and passing it to other group members.
  - Aim: to keep the ball in the air without it touching the ground
  - Rules: can't double touch the ball
- **Aerobics**
  - Playing an up-beat song, repeat four simple moves over and over again to warm up
  - E.g. four beats of small foot tap, four beats of 'twists', four beats of star jumps, four beats of extended 'running man' move
  - Followed by stretches
- **Circuit exercises**
  - Passing the ball; stand back to back with a partner and pass/ receive the ball
  - Ab/ bicycle work out on a mat
  - Crunches
  - Lunges
- **Netball/ basketball game**
  - Team work game
  - In two teams, the aim of the game is to get a 'goal' in your hoop which is placed on the floor
  - To do so, team members have to pass the ball down the court (can't move if you have the ball in your hands) and try and get a goal by one person catching the ball while they have at least one foot in the hoop

# Tables

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	production elements	performance elements
strengths		
impact on audiences		
weaknesses		

design role	technique	what did this contribute to the performance?
lighting	<i>one</i>	
	<i>two</i>	
	<i>three</i>	
music	<i>one</i>	
	<i>two</i>	
	<i>three</i>	

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