

# **WALKING INTO THE BIGNESS**

.....  
BY RICHARD FRANKLAND

## AUSTRALIAN SCRIPT CENTRE

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# MALTHOUSE PROMPT

Prompt Pack // an educational resource.



Malthouse Theatre presents

## Walking into the Bigness

Story by / Richard Frankland and Wayne Blair

Written by / Richard Frankland

Directed by / Wayne Blair and Chris Mead

The Coopers Malthouse, Merlyn Theatre  
1 – 23 August 2014

Prompt Pack compiled by Vanessa O'Neill for Malthouse  
Prompt – Malthouse Theatre's youth and education  
program.

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**MALTHOUSE  
THEATRE**

// what happens next.

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[PROMPT VIDEO: Actors Tammy Anderson and Paul Ashcroft discuss \*Walking into the Bigness\*](#)

[PROMPT VIDEO: Dramaturg and Co-Director Chris Mead discusses \*Walking into the Bigness\*](#)

[PROMPT VIDEO: Writer Richard Frankland discusses \*Walking into the Bigness\*](#)

[PROMPT VIDEO: Set and Costume Design team, The Sisters Hayes discuss \*Walking into the Bigness\*](#)

## ABOUT MALTHOUSE THEATRE

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Malthouse Theatre is at once a treasured building, a theatre company, a creative site and an engine for change. It is also the imaginative expression of a committed team of artmakers reaching out to an even larger number of local, national and international artists. All are dedicated to an ongoing conversation with audiences of exciting diversity and character.

This conversation chooses contemporary theatre as its vehicle: a compelling annual program of adventurous, multi-disciplinary work inspired by writers, directors, designers, choreographers, audio artists and performers. Here, the combined possibilities of all theatre arts are offered centre stage – for entertainment, for inspiration, and even for fun.

## CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

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**Story by //** Richard Frankland and Wayne Blair

**Written by //** Richard Frankland

**Directed by //** Wayne Blair and Chris Mead

**Dramaturgy //** Chris Mead

**Movement Director //** Katina Olsen

**Set and Costume Design //** The Sisters Hayes

**Lighting Design //** Rachel Burke

**Sound Design //** Darrin Verhagen

**Stage Manager //** Tia Clark

**Assistant Stage Manager //** Caitlin Byrne

**Cast //** Tammy Anderson, Paul Ashcroft, Luisa Hastings Edge, Rarriwuy Hick, Tiriki Onus

**Co-Musical Directors //** Richard Frankland, Monica Weightman



RICHARD FRANKLAND



WAYNE BLAIR



CHRIS MEAD



KATINA OLSEN



CHRISTINA HAYES



ESTHER HAYES



REBECCA HAYES



RACHEL BURKE



DARRIN VERHAGEN



TIA CLARK



CAITLIN BYRNE



TAMMY ANDERSON



PAUL ASHCROFT



LUISA HASTINGS EDGE



RARRIWUY HICK



TIRIKI ONUS



MONICA WEIGHTMAN

# PROMPT // CUE, INDUCE, MAKE, MOTIVATE, PERSUADE, ENCOURAGE, STIMULATE, IMPEL, INSPIRE.

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Welcome to the Malthouse Theatre Prompt Pack for *Walking into the Bigness*. When an actor forgets a line in rehearsals they may call for a prompt to provide a clue or a cue so that they can keep telling the story. This document aims to provide just that – a next step, a reminder, a series of provocations. It is full of information but also poses many questions of the audience. The Prompt Pack invites us to see how relevant and exciting contemporary theatre can be. As a resource, these pages are by no means definitive but we hope they'll take you on an interesting journey and keep you travelling through the world of the play well after the curtain call. Who knows where you'll end up?

## A NOTE FROM MALTHOUSE THEATRE'S ARTISTIC DIRECTOR //

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### HIS GETTING-OF-WISDOM A POSSIBILITY FOR US ALL.

It's strangely fitting that I'm writing this program note from Mexico. I am working on a play by indigenous Mexican writer Veronica Musalem, while back at home we are working on a piece by our own Indigenous writer Richard Frankland. Sometimes it takes some distance to get close to your own culture – and I've always argued that the most important cultural exchanges are the ones that allow you to get to know yourself. They're prismatic, refracting your own society's features, warts and all, through an entirely different lens.

I'm reminded almost every day of the early conversations I had with Richard and Wayne Blair

about *Walking into the Bigness*. Unfortunately the story about his stint in a South American hospital with typhus is never too far from my thoughts! But much of what we spoke about was centred around children and adolescents, the premature loss of innocence and the exposure of young people to horrors they should never see. Richard witnessed this phenomenon right across the world. Certainly, his own experiences as a child were relevant – as are the experiences of so many young Aboriginal people. But he also talked about the work he undertook for his documentary *The Innocents* – how he travelled overseas tracking war-zones, meeting children in hospitals and camps. In particular he talked about young people exposed to a kind of emotional violence that changes the way they see the world forever. This, it appears is a global problem.

Back in Mexico, people are amazed that we have poverty in Australia. They can't believe the photos I show them of Indigenous communities that somehow resemble their own. We talk with (thematic, rather than linguistic) fluency about our respective social problems, the problems that colonisation leaves in its wake, and most importantly, how we tackle this challenge within our own countries and maintain optimism. Personal stories abound, particularly those of the erosion of traditional values and rituals, and the disconnection and loss of identity – young Indigenous people walking into their own big desert. Once again I think of Richard. What makes his stories great is that we can immediately sense the person invested within them: they're intensely personal and emotionally honest. There is a gutsiness about Richard's ability to put himself on stage and express such a spectrum of responses and states of being. Composing his first song to the girl he fell for at 16 can segue quickly back to the tough little boy hacking carcasses at the meat works. *Walking*

*into the Bigness* is a mosaic of self-knowledge and optimism – and Wayne's decision to channel these through his ensemble of actors makes Richard's stories everyone's, his getting-of-wisdom a possibility for us all.

Many people have contributed to this production, not the least Chris Mead whose steady dramaturgical hand is so technically adept, but who is also a true believer. Also, Wayne Blair, who has been a committed collaborator of Richard's since Wayne starred in *Conversations with the Dead* ten years ago. Their relationship is so clearly borne of mutual respect but they also have a wicked sense of humour that sparkles through the piece. They have wanted to tell these stories together for some time and I am pleased that Malthouse Theatre was able to give them the stage.

Marion Potts // Artistic Director



## ABOUT THE WRITER // RICHARD FRANKLAND



Richard is a Gunditjmara man, and a singer/songwriter, author, poet and filmmaker. Working on the front line of Indigenous issues for the past 25 years, his aim has been to facilitate the voice of Indigenous Australians and bridge the gap between black and white. Richard's roles have included field officer/investigator on the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, and founder and CEO of Mirimbiak Nations where he acted as the representative of all Victorian Native Title claims (excluding the Yorta Yorta claim). His theatre writing/directing credits include: *Conversations with the Dead* (Malthouse Theatre, winner 2002 Green Room Award for Best Actor, Aaron Pedersen; performed in front of the United Nations 2004); *Walkabout*

(Chamber Made Opera); and *The Brady Bunch* (La Mama). His film writing/directing credits include: *Who Killed Malcolm Smith* (winner, 1993 AFI Award for Best Documentary); *No Way to Forget* (winner, 1996 AFI Award for Best Screenplay in a Short; premiered at 1996 Cannes Film Festival); *After Mabo - The Amendments*; *Harry's War* (winner of Best Short in 2000 St Tropez Film Festival, Flickerfest and Hollywood Black Film Festival); *The Innocents*; and *Stone Bros*. He has also written novels, recorded numerous albums and performed as a member of The Charcoal Club Band since 1990. In 2013 Richard was honoured to be a finalist in the Australian Human Rights Awards.



### ACTIVITY: MEET RICHARD FRANKLAND

#### WATCH THE INTERVIEW WITH RICHARD AND DISCUSS SOME OF THE FOLLOWING:

*"I believe that when you've got art, you've got voice. When you've got voice you've got freedom. And with freedom comes responsibility."* - Richard Frankland

How does Richard feel that the arts (including music, poetry, film and theatre) can help to combat discrimination and give voice to Indigenous Australians?

*"Agitators are a set of interfering, meddling people who come down to the community and sow the seeds of discontent amongst them. That is the reason why agitators are so absolutely necessary. Without them, in our incomplete state, there would be no advance towards civilisation."* - Oscar Wilde

Why do you think artists might also need to be agitators within Australia?

*"Most of all I would like to see [audiences] arm themselves with information to enable them to facilitate the voice of those who are oppressed in some way, shape or form."* - Richard Frankland

What role can theatre play in giving voice to people who have been historically misrepresented?

### ACTIVITY: ABORIGINAL LEGENDS

**RESEARCH** other Indigenous artists (poets, playwrights, directors, actors, novelists, musicians, filmmakers) who have all been what Richard calls 'Voice Facilitators'- ensuring that Indigenous voices and experiences are heard. Here are a few examples to begin with.

- Jack Davis – Poet and Playwright
- Wesley Enoch – Playwright and Director
- Anita Heiss – Novelist, Poet, and Children's author
- Oodgeroo Noonuccal (Kath Walker) – Poet
- Alexis Wright – Miles Franklin Award winning novelist
- Jane Harrison – Playwright
- Archie Roach – Singer / Songwriter
- Jack Charles – Actor, Writer, Living Treasure

Who are some of your local Aboriginal Legends?

## BRINGING RICHARD FRANKLAND'S STORIES TO LIFE

### LEARN MORE ABOUT...

Richard and the making of *Walking into the Bigness*:

- [730 Victoria](#) talks to Richard Frankland about his life and times to mark NAIDOC Week
- [A recent feature article](#) in which Richard Frankland speaks about the creation of *Walking into the Bigness*
- [Radio National Books and Arts Today](#) interview with Richard Frankland
- [Richard Frankland celebrates NAIDOC week](#) as a host on *774 Conversation Hour*

### RICHARD'S EXTENSIVE BODY OF WORK AND ACHIEVEMENTS:

[Richard Frankland's website](#)

### GUNDITJMARA COUNTRY:

Richard is a proud Gunditjmara man. Gunditjmara country has a history going back over 30,000 years, but acknowledgement of the Gunditjmara people and their ownership to their land, has only been acknowledged by the Australian Government recently. Read more about [The Gunditjmara Land Justice Story](#)

### ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLAND PEOPLE AT WAR:

[The Shrine of Remembrance](#) includes numerous references to Richard's Uncle, Reginald Saunders

### KEY OFFICIAL REPORTS REFERRED TO IN THE PRODUCTION:

[The Bringing Them Home – Stolen Children Report 1997](#)

[The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.](#)

### ABORIGINAL VICTORIA:

[Mission Voices](#) is a site created by the ABC and Koorie Heritage Trust, as an introduction to Aboriginal Victoria.

[Public Records Office Victoria – Koorie Records Unit](#) has a collection of archival and contemporary resources on Aboriginal Victoria.

[The Koorie Heritage Trust](#) is a not-for-profit Aboriginal community organisation that aims to protect, preserve and promote the living culture of Aboriginal people of south-eastern Australia.



*Walking into the Bigness* is an ensemble production with five actors and two musicians. The five actors play multiple roles throughout the play, including the role of Richard Frankland at various stages of his life. Each actor shifts between narrating and playing out scenes from Richard's life. The actors all make very quick shifts between characters: constantly changing their age, gender, status, context, characteristics and physicality. There are also a number of songs that they perform throughout the play.



### ACTIVITY: MEET ACTORS TAMMY ANDERSON AND PAUL ASHCROFT

**WATCH** actors Tammy Anderson and Paul Ashcroft discuss the rehearsal process and the experience of working as part of an ensemble within this production.

**DISCUSS** the actors' responses to the following questions:

- Being part of an ensemble where they are constantly changing character
- Working onstage and in the rehearsal room with the writer Richard Frankland
- What they hope audiences will get from seeing the show
- The nature of the Actor/Audience relationship in the play

### AFTER SEEING THE PRODUCTION, DISCUSS

- How do the actors use their expressive skills (facial expressions, voice, movement, gestures and stillness and silence) to convey the vast range of characters throughout the play?
- How does each actor convey the role of Richard at various times in his life throughout the production?



## FROM BOYS TO MEN

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The ensemble portray a range of characters (about 70 at last count) but most importantly, they all portray Richard Frankland. Structurally, *Walking into the Bigness* has each actor portraying Richard at a different age as he moves from a young boy to a man and then an Elder within his community.

*“[The play] will start a lot of interesting conversations around the idea of voice and who can talk on whose behalf.”* Chris Mead

The portrayal of each character and each version of Richard, is conveyed through the expressive skills of each of the ensemble members as well as through the use of storytelling. It is only at the end of the play, that the ‘real’ Richard introduces himself and we realise that he has been at our side all along.

- The ensemble consists of five actors – male and female, indigenous and non-indigenous. What is the significance of having such a range of actors play Richard? Why might the directors have chosen such a diverse cast to tell Richard’s stories?
- For an audience, how does the choice of this acting ensemble change the relationship of how we engage with Richard’s stories?
- What do you think is meant by the term ‘blind’ casting as it relates to gender, race and age?

### AFTER THE PRODUCTION, DISCUSS:

Key scenes with actors depicting Richard at different stages of his life. When analysing these scenes consider the use of both verbal (voice, expression, pace, register) and non-verbal language, (including gestures, stylised movements, stillness and silence). How do the actors use the acting space – horizontally, vertically and throughout different sections of the stage?

### RICHARD AT 13 YEARS OLD



- Consider how **Rarriway Hick** plays Richard as a thirteen-year old boy, starting work at Bothy’s (Borthwick’s Abattoirs in Portland). How does she convey Richard’s apprehension, youth and inexperience?

### RICHARD AT 15 YEARS OLD



- Consider how **Paul Ashworth** plays Richard at 15 years old, running into the ‘Willy-Willy’ in the desert with his mother. How does he convey Richard’s experience of watching his mother battle with nature to save all of his writings?

### RICHARD’S MOTHER



- Consider how **Tammy Anderson** conveys Richard’s mother during the scene where Richard leaves home. How does she use her voice, movements and facial expressions to convey the status, mood and motivation of Christina Saunders?

### RICHARD AS A RESPECTED ELDER



- What expressive skills does **Tiriki Onus** use to convey Richard’s status, mood and motivation at the end of the play as a respected elder with the young boys when he returns home to Gunditjmarra country?

### RICHARD IN HIS FORTIES



- How does **Luisa Hastings Edge** convey Richard as a man in his forties dealing with a range of health problem? How does she use her physicality, voice, facial expressions and gestures to convey Richard’s declining health?



## CHANGING STATUS IN THE PLAY

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Status is something that is played with dynamically throughout this production by all of the actors – both in their portrayal of Richard as well as the many other characters within the play. In the play, the character of Richard is often in situations with people of high public status (police officers, a group of soldiers, checkpoint security and bosses) and in those situations, we see him challenging those authority figures in unexpected ways.

Richard learns at an early age, from his mother, the importance of maintaining your dignity, when faced with prejudice and discrimination:

*“Mum’s dignity, the way she held herself when they looked at us like we were below them, everything about her said we were equal to the white fellas, that we were human.”*

He also observes the respect with which his grandfather Reginald Saunders is treated. This is a play about a man who has learnt from his family to have pride in his culture, but he is faced with a society that tries to challenge that pride. Ultimately, he returns to his home, to his country, to his land and works with young people to help them build strength in their identity and culture.

As you watch the play, pay attention to the ways that the character of Richard deals with situations where he may be expected or perceived to have low status. Examine the ways that status can change within a scene, quite often through Richard’s own defiance and fearlessness in the face of danger.

*“I’ve got nothing to lose. I’ve seen death. I don’t mind dying...It’s an almost abject lack of fear, but it’s not scary. Chaos is normal, juggling hunger, survival...”*

### AFTER THE PRODUCTION, DISCUSS

- How Richard’s mother works to maintain her status when faced with the authorities?
- The scene in which Richard’s home is raided by police officers. How are status, mood and motivation conveyed in this scene?
- What happens to Richard at the Checkpoint in Palestine?
- The status and strength that is commanded by Richard as the Elder amongst the young boys when he returns to Gundiṯjmara country.



## ABOUT THE CO-DIRECTOR

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### WAYNE BLAIR

Butjala man, Wayne is a writer and director of film, television and theatre. He recently directed the feature film *Septembers of Shiraz* starring Adrien Brody and Salma Hayek. His first feature film, *The Sapphires*, had its world premiere at the Cannes Film Festival in 2012 and won 11 AACTA Awards. His theatre directing credits include: *The Removalists*, *The Seven Stages of Grieving* and *Romeo and Juliet* (Sydney Theatre Company); *Dirty Butterfly*, *Jesus Hopped the A-Train* and *Ruben Guthrie* (Belvoir); and *Unspoken* (The Old Fitzroy Theatre). He wrote and directed a stage adaptation of *Njunjul the Sun* (Kooemba Djarra Theatre), and wrote *Bloodland* (Sydney Theatre Company). His writing/directing credits in television include *Redfern Now*, *The Circuit*, *The Gods of Wheat Street*, *My Place*, *The Elegant Gentlemen’s Guide to Knife Fighting*, *Double Trouble* and *Lockie Leonard*. Wayne’s short film *The Djarn Djarns* received the 2005 Crystal Bear Award at the Berlin Film Festival, a Deadly Award for Outstanding Achievement in Film and an Australian Writers’ Guild Award for Best Short Screenplay. Wayne was a writer on *The Circuit*,

which won the 2009 Australian Writers’ Guild Award for Best Original Miniseries. He won the Richard Wherrett Fellowship in 2006, the Bob Maza Fellowship in 2011, and in 2013 was named one of Variety’s 10 Directors to Watch.

### CO-DIRECTOR’S NOTES FROM WAYNE BLAIR

When I first met Richard, I quickly realised he was a man who had seen much more than I could ever imagine. From that meeting 11 years ago a friendship began. Since then, and meeting Chris, this story has been fermenting, gaining momentum in the last two years when Malthouse Theatre became the producer.

Over this time we have become busy individuals with all the roles and responsibilities we carry, as we journey from the year 2014 into tomorrow. The world is changing as I write, but what I enjoy about this story is that through all the sadness and hurt we see through Richard’s eyes, he has a way of humanising everything to make us more aware and to make it real.

Co-creating *Walking into the Bigness* has been a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and I would not replace it for the world.

## ABOUT THE DRAMATURG // CO-DIRECTOR

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### CHRIS MEAD

Chris is the literary director of Melbourne Theatre Company. Previous positions have included: inaugural artistic director of PlayWriting Australia; literary manager of Company B Belvoir; curator of the Australian National Playwrights' Conference; director of the International Festival for Young Playwrights; literary manager of Sydney Theatre Company and producer of Sydney Theatre Company's *Wharf 2LOUD*. Recent directing credits include *Rare Earth* (NIDA); *Quack and The Modern International Dead* (Griffin Theatre Company), which won the Sydney Theatre Critics' Award for Best New Play, the WA Premier's Literary Award, and was shortlisted for the NSW, Queensland and

Victorian Premier's Literary Awards. Chris has a PhD from Sydney University, was awarded an inaugural Dramaturgy Fellowship by the Australia Council for the Arts in 2004 and was selected to attend New Visions New Voices at Washington DC's Kennedy Center in 2008. His monograph on institutional racism and outreach strategies was published by Currency House in 2008; and he has recently written introductions to Currency Press volumes by Lachlan Philpott and Lally Katz. In 2009 Chris was named by Vivid Festival as one of Sydney's 100 Creative Catalysts, he sat on the steering committee for the 2011 Australian Theatre Forum and on the Board of Arena Theatre Company from 2008-13, is on the artistic directorate of Hothouse Theatre and has just joined the Board of Theatre Network Victoria.

### CO-DIRECTOR'S NOTES FROM CHRIS MEAD

Life is messy and representing someone's whole life (to the present) is almost impossible. Yet Richard's writings are colossal and complex – many, many people meet, talk, witness, share their stories of survival, beauty and pain, in many places and in many times, on the land, on the fringes of society, on city streets, in tower blocks, parks, fishing boats, creeks, slaughterhouses, and I don't just mean across Victoria, or even Australia, but in Palestine, Mexico and more. And this is what makes Richard's voice so remarkable: it is supremely ambitious and deceptively simple.

At its heart is the real story of a boy fighting for his life, battling imminent, systemic adversity in the form of racism, poverty and family dislocation; a young man going through the fire, passing through chaos, and all the while a voice coalesces – a voice of fury, resistance, insurgency, cultural leadership.

And while this story is tough – it's oftentimes an ugly, cruel Australia being witnessed – Richard is also a songwriter of great sensitivity, so the play has its own in-built soundtrack, a second narrative of joy, compassion and poignancy.

All of which demands a new form – neither Brecht nor naturalism fits the bill, neither post-dramatic nor verbatim theatre is quite right – and a new dramaturgy, which has kept all of us on our toes. I remember back, working with Richard and Wayne (and Wesley Enoch, Rachael Maza, Lillian and Elaine Crombie, Kirk Page, Luke Carroll) on Richard's earlier play, *Conversations with the Dead*, ten years ago now at Belvoir, and seeing that something extraordinary happens when politics, aesthetics, history and the personal collide in front of an audience. Something ancient. And something new.

It has been a privilege to have worked on this show, and all of us have sought to meet Richard's openness, honesty and generosity with genuine bravery.



## A NEW FORM OF THEATRE?

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*“It feels like an entirely new form of theatre and Australian theatre is all the better for it.”* Chris Mead

Chris Mead outlines how the play brings together an eclectic range of theatrical styles drawing on European theatrical traditions such as Brechtian/ Epic Theatre as well as Character based ensemble drama and combining it with Indigenous storytelling traditions and aspects of Verbatim Theatre.

In the interview, Chris Mead makes reference to Aristotle’s terms ‘Diegetic’ and ‘Mimetic’ when discussing the play. The term ‘Diegesis’ refers to narration – the telling of the story as opposed to the showing of it. The term ‘Mimesis’ is the act of showing rather than telling. There is a constant shift throughout *Walking into the Bigness* between narration and re-enacting key scenes from Richard’s life.

*“Wayne Blair’s vision was always to let the audience see - in a Brechtian sense - the way that [the play] is built.”* Chris Mead

### ACTIVITY: REVIEW THEATRICAL STYLES

Once you have seen the play, research and discuss key examples of theatrical conventions and how they were applied throughout *Walking into the Bigness*:

- Verbatim Theatre
- Storytelling
- Brechtian / Epic Theatre
- Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed
- Physical Theatre
- Character based ensemble drama

*“We wanted to open up the moments where you see [Richard’s] uncertainty, his fear or vulnerability. Part of what is great about Verbatim Theatre is that it feels like there is nothing between you as an audience and the storyteller.”* Chris Mead

*“[The play] will start a lot of interesting conversations around the idea of voice and who can talk on whose behalf...These are stories to be shared.”* Chris Mead



### ACTIVITY: MEET CO-DIRECTOR / DRAMATURG CHRIS MEAD

**WATCH** [the interview with Chris Mead as he discusses his role on \*Walking into the Bigness\* as both Dramaturg and Co-Director.](#)

*“The play started off as ‘The Voices Project’ and then moved in on Richard’s voice in particular... and all of his different voices, starting off with his childhood voice.”* Chris Mead

### AFTER THE PRODUCTION, DISCUSS

- Why might *Walking into the Bigness* be a new form of theatre?
- Can you find examples of what Chris Mead refers to as both ‘Diegesis’ (narration) and ‘Mimesis’ (re-enacting) throughout *Walking into the Bigness*?
- How did the writers and directors go about ensuring that Richard’s voice throughout the play was as authentic as possible?

## ACTOR // AUDIENCE RELATIONSHIP

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*“There is no forth wall...Mostly we are in a conversation the whole way through...”* Chris Mead

*“This is happening now. This is Australia and it is an Australia that you may have only seen on the edges but this is what it is like from the inside.”* Chris Mead

*Walking into the Bigness* uses direct address throughout the play, interspersed between scenes featuring a diverse range of characters and locations. The constant throughout the play is the voice of Richard Frankland – at various points throughout his life, played amongst each of the five actors. We follow his journey from a young man working at the abattoirs, to soldier, fisherman, Investigator/Field Officer for the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, through to respected Elder and leader amongst his community.

### AFTER SEEING THE PRODUCTION, DISCUSS:

- How do you feel as an audience member being addressed so directly by all of the actors throughout the performance?
- What was the effect of having such a range of actors represent Richard throughout the play?
- Did the play change the way you see Australia today?
- Did it alter your understanding of Australia over the last forty years?



## A POETIC LANDSCAPE

The challenge of the set and costume design for *Walking into the Bigness* is that the theatre space and the actors must depict multiple places and characters over time. The stage must be the space for stories which are located in many different workplaces, homes, parks and even different countries such as Palestine and Mexico.

The world of *Walking into the Bigness* is realised through design and a 'poetic landscape'. The set represents a world in decay where structures are in decline and in some respects, where nature might be winning.

There are a range of recurrent motifs in *Walking into the Bigness* including work, travel but also strong connections to the elements including: earth, sky and water.

### AFTER SEEING THE PRODUCTION, DISCUSS

- Which places or spaces do you feel are explicitly identified throughout the production?
- What was the effect of having such a range of spaces used - both vertically and horizontally?
- How does the set design capture elements of both the urban landscape as well as the natural world?



## THE SISTERS HAYES

The Sisters Hayes (Christina, Esther and Rebecca) are cross disciplinary artists and designers who have exhibited their work widely in commercial galleries, ARIs and site specific locations throughout Melbourne. Their theatre work includes: set and costume design for *Blood Wedding* (Malthouse Theatre); production design for *Finucane & Smith's Carnival of Mysteries* (Melbourne Arts Festival 2010) and also for *The Flood*, which toured nationally in 2012. Also in 2012 was *The Great Un Reveal*, their year-long project with 13 artists at Arts Project Australia. In 2013 The Sisters Hayes were guest artists at Rawcus Theatre, and were invited to create a moving image commission for ACMI as part of their Profile Me public program. In 2014 they collaborated with artist and dancer Paul Hodges for the group show *Knowing Me Knowing You* at Arts Project Australia. Solo exhibitions for the sisters include a series of photographs in *Big Sky Country* at Rae & Bennet Gallery and *A Good Death for 2010 Next Wave*. Currently, The Sisters Hayes are delighted to be art directing Malthouse Theatre's 2015 season brochure set to launch in September.



### ACTIVITY: MEET THE SISTERS HAYES

**WATCH** [The Sisters Hayes \(Christina, Esther and Rebecca\) discuss the research they undertook in their Set and Costume Design for \*Walking into the Bigness\*.](#)

After watching the interview, DISCUSS the following:

- What did The Sisters Hayes do to research the set design concepts for *Walking into the Bigness*?
- How did they decide upon the costume designs for the play?
- How did they manage to come up with a set design for a play that has so many shifts in location?
- How did they decide upon their costume designs for a play that covers such a range of time periods and locations?



ESTHER HAYES



REBECCA HAYES



CHRISTINA HAYES

## ADDITIONAL BIOS

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### PERFORMER // TAMMY ANDERSON

Tammy Anderson is a proud Palawa woman from Tasmania. Her theatre credits in performance, writing and directing include: *The Call and I Don't Wanna Play House* (Malthouse Theatre and international tours) which is the longest running Aboriginal theatre production, now in its 14th year; *Stolen* (Malthouse Theatre/Ilbjerri Theatre Company/Belvoir); and *Itchy Clacker and Natives Getting Funny* (Ilbjerri Theatre Company). Her film credits include *Boxing Day* and *The Sapphires*. Tammy is actively involved within the community, regularly undertakes residencies, and uses her work to help change lives. Her writing is concerned with the exploration and documentation of the human condition. At present she is facilitating for Essendon Football Club, Michael Long's Walk the Talk program and Richmond Football Club's Korin Gamadji Institute program. She is an MC, and hosted the 2014 NAIDOC Ball. She is currently writing a commissioned work for the Cancer Council Foundation and Ilbjerri Theatre Company, having just finished her first children's book SAM (Oxford University and Laguna Bay Publishing), which has been selected to be a part of the national curriculum. Her biggest credits to date are her three beautiful children, Jackson, Darcy Lee and Tadhg. In 2010 she was the recipient of the Victorian Indigenous Performing Arts Uncle Jack Charles Award and Uncle Bob Maza Award.

### PERFORMER // PAUL ASHCROFT

Paul is a WAAPA graduate from 2002 and current ensemble member of Red Stitch Actors Theatre. Shows: *The Kitchen Sink*, *Herding Cats*, *Howie the Rookie*, *The Laramie Project* (10 years later), *Orphans* and most recently *Belleville*. Other Theatre: *Shrine (Black Swan)* *Let the Sunshine (QTC/MTC)*, *Cruel and Tender (MTC)*, *Far Away*, *The Woman Before*, *Checklist for an Armed Robber*, *Mercury Fur* and *Jet of Blood*. As a producer: *Robots Vs Art*, *Shadow Boxing* and *Skin Tight*. In Film and TV, Paul has appeared in *Howzat!* *Kerry Packer's War*, *Van Diemen's Land*, *Salem's Lot*, *Winners and Losers*, *Cop Hard*, *Blue Heelers*, *Hell's Gates* and *Fire Truck*. In addition, Paul is also a successful musician/singer, having played in bands around Perth and Melbourne.

### LIGHTING DESIGN // RACHEL BURKE

Rachel has had 25 years experience in theatrical and architectural lighting design. She has worked nationally and internationally with Australia's leading arts companies including Malthouse Theatre, Melbourne Theatre Company, Sydney Theatre Company, The Australian Ballet and Belvoir. Her awards include six Green Room Awards of Excellence in Theatre Lighting Design from 1994 to 2010; the 2005 IES Victorian and National Awards of Excellence in Lighting Design for Hamer Hall; and numerous architectural and urban design awards. Her theatre credits include: *Black Medea and Parramatta Girls* (Malthouse Theatre/ Belvoir); *Moth* (Malthouse Theatre/ Arena Theatre Company); *Cargo*, *Woman Bomb*, *Wolf*, *Glass Mermaid*, *Good Works*, *The Incorruptible*, *Night Fall and Rapture* (Malthouse Theatre); *Cock*, *Solomon and Marion*, *True Minds*, *Constellations*, *True West*, *Coup D'Etat* and *The Man from Mukinupin* (Melbourne Theatre Company); *Art to Sky*, *Cinderella*, *Swan Lake*, *Dark Lullaby*, *Ballet Imperial*, *Intersext*, *El Tango*, *Imaginary Masque*, *Unspoken Dialogues* and *Molto Vivace* (The Australian Ballet); *Save for Crying*, *Chapters from the Pandemic* and *Saving Henry V5* (Angus Cerini/ Doubletap); *Look Right Through Me* (KAGE); *The Dream* (Bell Shakespeare); and *Romeo and Juliet* (Bell Shakespeare/Melbourne Symphony Orchestra). In 2006 she won a Helpmann Award and received a Sydney Theatre Award nomination for Malthouse Theatre's *Black Medea*.

### SOUND DESIGN // DARRIN VERHAGEN

Darrin's recent work includes: *Ugly Mugs* (Malthouse Theatre); and various Daniel Schlusser productions – *M+M* (Melbourne Festival), *Menagerie* (Melbourne Theatre Company), *The Histrionic* (Malthouse Theatre) and *Ophelia Doesn't Live Here Anymore* (Bell Shakespeare/ Chamber Made Opera). His recent film soundtracks have included *The Last Time I Saw Richard* (Nicholas Verso) and *The Templar Journey*. His installations this year were *On View* (Sue Healey, Manley Art Gallery) and the *Audiokientic Jukebox* (National Gallery of Victoria). Darrin is a senior lecturer in sound and multisensory experience at the Audiokinetic Experiments (AKe) Lab, RMIT.

### CO-MUSICAL DIRECTOR // MONICA WEIGHTMAN

Monica is a guitarist, singer and songwriter with 30 years experience in the industry. Originally from North Queensland, she is of Aboriginal and European descent. Her festival appearances include: St Kilda Music Festival, Moomba Festival, Port Fairy Music Festival, Melbourne City Arts Festival and Brunswick Music Festival. She has performed at The Famous Speilgeltent, The National Gallery of Victoria, Arts Centre Melbourne and Melbourne Concert Hall among many. Monica has worked and recorded with musicians including Brian Cadd, Paul Hester, Ross Wilson, Lee Kernaghan and Nicky Bomba, as well as being an independent recording artist. She is a long-time member of The Charcoal Club Band, and with the group has performed in the theatre production *Burning Embers*; and was musical director of *The Brady Bunch*. She is a member of Songlines Aboriginal Skin Choir, and has a Masters of Fine Arts Degree in Performance from Monash University.

### ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER // CAITLIN BYRNE

Caitlin graduated from Charles Sturt University with a Bachelor of Arts in Communication and Theatre Media. Her recent theatre credits include *The Government Inspector* (Malthouse Theatre/ Belvoir); *Night on Bald Mountain*, *The Dragon*, *Pompeii*, *L.A.*, *Happy Days*, *Tame and Happiness* (Malthouse Theatre); *Half-Real* (Malthouse Theatre/The Border Project); and *Thyestes* (Malthouse Theatre/The Hayloft Project). Other credits include *The Nest* (The Hayloft Project); *Life's A Circus* (Magnormos Productions); and *Melburnalia No 2* (White Whale Theatre); *List of Invisible Things* (Scratch Theatre); *Yummy* (Susan-Ann Walker and Sally Bourne Cabaret); *As You Like It* (Winterfall Theatre); *The Pyramid* (3 to a Room Productions/Midsumma Festival); and *Once We Lived Here* (Bryant & Frank Productions).

### STAGE MANAGER // TIA CLARK

Tia is a graduate of WAAPA. Her credits for Malthouse Theatre include *Ugly Mugs*, *The Government Inspector*, *The Shadow King*, *The Bloody Chamber*, *Dance of Death*, *Hate*, *Opera XS*, *A Golem Story* and *Baal* (with Sydney Theatre Company). Other credits include: *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (Gordon Frost Organisation); *Every Breath* (Belvoir); *The Rake's Progress* (Victorian Opera); *Scooby Doo Live 2011 Tour* (Entertainment Store Group); *The King and I*, *The Boy From Oz*, *Sugar (Some Like It Hot)*, *Anything Goes*, *Kismet* and *Grey Gardens* (The Production Company); *The Marriage of Figaro* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Arts Centre Melbourne); *At the Beach* and *Behind the Veneer* (Buzz Dance Theatre); *The Hidden Forest* (Spontaneous Insanity); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Shakespeare WA); and *The Nutcracker* (WA Ballet).

### PERFORMER // LUISA HASTINGS EDGE

Luisa is a graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts. Her theatre credits include *The Bitter Tears of Petra Von Kant* (TheatreWorks); *On the Bodily Education of Young Girls* (Melbourne Theatre Company NEON); *Pale Blue Dot*, also co-deviser (Malthouse Theatre Helium); *Stockholm* (Red Stitch); *Baal* (Malthouse Theatre/Sydney Theatre Company); *Elektra* (Fraught Outfit/The Dog Theatre); *Something Natural but Very Childish* (La Mama); *Judith* (Tamarama Rock Surfers); and *Richter/Meinhof Opera* (Art Gallery of NSW); *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Hamlet* and *As You like It* (Bell Shakespeare); *Death Variations* (Belvoir); *Handbag* (The Seymour Centre) and *One Thumb Out* (The Old Fitzroy Theatre). Luisa co-created and devised *Weill Women: A Kurt Weill Cabaret* and *A Jacques Brel Cabaret* (Bondi Pavillion/The Old Fitzroy Theatre/Bar Me/Chapel Off Chapel). She worked as dramaturg on *Hedda Gabler* (Belvoir) and *Love Letters* (St Martins/Arts Centre). As well as working in London as an actor, her Australian television credits include *Mrs Biggs*, *Home and Away*, *Headland*, *Always Greener*, *All Saints*, *Winners and Losers* and *Neighbours*.

**PERFORMER // RARRIWUY HICK**

Rarriwuy is from North East Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory. She has performed in *Brother's Wreck (Belvoir)*, *The Shadow King* (Malthouse Theatre and national tour), *Bloodland* (Sydney Theatre Company/ Bangarra Dance Company) and *Wrong Skin* (Ngurrumilmaramiriwu) (Opera House/Malthouse Theatre/Adelaide Festival/Darwin Festival). Rarriwuy's television credits include Brendan Cowell's TV movie *The Outlaw Michael Howe*, Broken Shore, AACTA and Logie Award-winning series *Redfern Now* and *The Gods of Wheat Street*. She has also appeared in the short films *The Hunter* directed by Margaret Harvey, *Scar* with Toronto's Imagine Native Film Festival winning director Tiffany Parker and *She Say* directed by Leah Purcell. In addition to acting, Rarriwuy is also a dancer and choreographer.

**MOVEMENT DIRECTOR // KATINA OLSEN**

Katina is a descendent of the Wakka Wakka and Kombumerri people in Queensland. Highlights in Katina's career to date have included performing in *Bone Woman...when all is gone* (bwsene !nmotion Australia); *Cultivate* (Force Majeure); *Murder and Dinosaur Petting Zoo* (Erth Visual & Physical Inc.); *I Am Eora* (Sydney Festival); *No Cold Feet* (De Quincey Co.); *Forseen* (Frances Rings/Narelle Benjamin); working as performer and choreographer of *Big Dance in Small Chunks* (Dance Makers Collective); being involved in the development of *Long Grass* (Vicki Van Hout); and receiving the Australian danceWEB scholarship at ImPulsTanz: The Vienna International Dance Festival. From 2007 Katina performed nationally and internationally with Bangarra Dance Theatre in *Clan*, *True Stories: X300*, *Awakenings*, *Fire - A Retrospective: 20th Year Anniversary* and *Of Earth & Sky*; and *Emeret Lu*, *Mathinna*, *Rites of Spring* (The Australian Ballet/Bangarra Dance Theatre). In 2012 Katina mentored young emerging artists as part of the Digital Futures (Arts Central, Central Coast) and performed in installation work *Ebb* (Tin Sheds Gallery) by new media artist Ella Barclay. Katina was the recipient of a 2014 Australia Council JUMP Mentorship with

Philip Channells in disability-inclusive dance, choreographic practice and community arts in Norway/Australia, and also a 2014 Group JUMP Mentorship as part of Dance Makers Collective with Michelle Silby, Ausdance NSW.

**PERFORMER// TIRIKI ONUS**

Yorta Yorta bass baritone Tiriki Onus spent ten years as a visual artist, art conservator and exhibition curator before he began singing professionally. His first operatic role was in the Mooroopna premiere of Deborah Cheetham's *Pecan Summer* in October 2010, which he reprised in 2011, and 2012 for Melbourne and Perth tours. He received the Dame Nellie Melba Opera Trust's Harold Blair Opera Scholarship in 2012 and 2013. He has performed at various venues around Australia, including Malthouse Theatre, the Shepparton Arts Museum, The Heath Ledger Theatre in Perth, Her Majesty's Theatre in Adelaide, the Cape Otway Lightstation, Government House Victoria, Etihad Stadium, Melbourne Recital Centre, BMW Edge and Arts Centre Melbourne. He also performed as a part of the kwaYa Cross Cultural Connections journey to Uganda in 2012. Tiriki lectures in Indigenous Knowledge and Cultural Practices at the Wilin Centre for Indigenous Arts at the Victorian College of the Arts, educating others in the field of Indigenous identity, arts, culture and history. Other performance credits include: the 2014 Melbourne Indigenous Arts Festival; *Til the Black Lady Sings* (Melbourne Recital Centre); *Blak Cabaret* (Malthouse Theatre); *The Tenderlands* (Melbourne Lyric Opera/Chapel Off Chapel); and *Pecan Summer* (Her Majesty's Theatre, Adelaide). He wrote, produced and performed in the one-man-show *William and Mary*.





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