

**BELVOIR**



# **FANGIRLS**

30 JANUARY - 20 FEBRUARY 2021

**LEARNING RESOURCES**

Belvoir and Queensland Theatre, in association with Australian Theatre for Young People (ATYP) present

## **FANGIRLS**

Music, Book and Lyrics by **Yve Blake**

Directed by **Paige Rattray**

This production of *FANGIRLS* opened at Queensland Theatre on Thursday 12 September 2019 and returned for an Australian Tour at the Seymour Centre on Wednesday 3 February 2021.

Original Music Director / Vocal Arranger **Alice Chance**

Music Producer / Sound Designer **David Muratore**

Dramaturg **Jonathan Ware**

Music Director / Vocal Arranger **Zara Stanton**

Set, Video Content and Costume Designer **David Fleischer**

Video Content Design and Production **Justin Harrison**

Lighting Designer **Emma Valente**

Choreographer **Leonard Mickelo**

Sound Designer **Michael Waters**

Associate Director **Carissa Licciardello**

Associate Choreographer **Sharon Millerchip**

Lighting Realiser **Renaë Kenward**

Stage Manager **Khym Scott**

Assistant Stage Manager **Julia Orlando**

With

**Aydan**

**Danielle Barnes**

**Chika Ikogwe**

**Shubshri Kandiah**

**Ayesha Madon**

**James Majoos**

**Sharon Millerchip**

**Karis Oka**

**Tomáš Kantor**

**Shannen Alyce Quan**

*FANGIRLS* was originally commissioned and developed by **ATYP**, with the support of **Global Creatures**.

*We acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora nation who are the traditional custodians of the land on which Belvoir St Theatre is built. We also pay respect to the Elders past, present and emerging, and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.*

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**BELVOIR**

**STREET THEATRE**

## **ABOUT BELVOIR**

**ONE BUILDING.**

**SIX HUNDRED PEOPLE.**

**THOUSANDS OF STORIES**

When the Nimrod Theatre building in Belvoir Street, Surry Hills, was threatened with redevelopment in 1984, more than 600 people – ardent theatre lovers together with arts, entertainment and media professionals – formed a syndicate to buy the building and save this unique performance space in inner city Sydney.

Thirty years later, under Artistic Director Eamon Flack and Executive Director Sue Donnelly, Belvoir engages Australia’s most prominent and promising playwrights, directors, actors and designers to realise an annual season of work that is dynamic, challenging and visionary. As well as performing at home, Belvoir regularly takes to the road, touring both nationally and internationally.

### **BELVOIR EDUCATION**

Our Education Program provides students and teachers with insights into the work of Belvoir and first hand experiences of the theatre-making process.

Belvoir Education offers student workshops, teacher professional development workshops, work experience, VET placements, archival viewings and a wealth of online resources designed to support work in the drama classroom. Our arts access programs assist schools in Regional NSW and Western Sydney to access the company’s work.

Explore our education pages at [www.belvoir.com.au/education](http://www.belvoir.com.au/education)

# CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM



**YVE BLAKE**  
*Music, Book and Lyrics*



**PAIGE RATTRAY**  
*Director*



**AYDAN**  
*Harry*



**DANIELLE BARNES**  
*Edna's Mum, Caroline*



**ALICE CHANCE**  
*Original Music Director,  
Original Vocal Arranger*



**Matthew Erskine**  
*Front of House Mixer*



**DAVID FLEISCHER**  
*Set, Video Content, Costume  
Designer*



**JUSTIN HARRISON**  
*Video Content Design  
and Production*



**CHIKA IKOGWE**  
*Jules*



**SHUBSHRI KANDIAH**  
*Brianna*



**TOMÁŠ KANTOR**  
*Swing*



**CARISSA LICCIARDELLO**  
*Associate Director*



**AYESHA MADON**  
*Lilly*



**JAMES MAJOOS**  
*Saltyprinkl*



**LEONARD MICKELO**  
*Choreographer*



**SHARON MILLERCHIP**  
*Associate Choreographer/  
Edna's Mum, Caroline - Sydney*



**DAVID MURATORE**  
*Music Producer/  
Sound Designer*



**KARIS OKA**  
*Edna*



**JULIA ORLANDO**  
*Assistant Stage Manager*



**SHANNEN ALYCE QUAN**  
*Swing*



**KHYM SCOTT**  
*Stage Manager*



**ZARA STANTON**  
*Music Director, Vocal Arranger*



**EMMA VALENTE**  
*Lighting Designer*



**JONATHAN WARE**  
*Dramaturg*



**MICHAEL WATERS**  
*Sound Designer*

# WRITER'S NOTE

YVE BLAKE

This show isn't just for fangirls. It's for fans who aren't 'girls', former fans, parents of fans, and for people who've never heard the word 'fangirl' in their life. But it's also for my 14 year old self, so I need to address this to her:

Hi girl, it's future you. First up: I know, acne sucks. Guess what? It's going to stick around way into your twenties. But I promise you'll stop feeling like it defines you.

I know that right now you feel like the most powerful and interesting thing that you could be is hot. And that's scary, because, what even is 'hot'?

Is it hot to be smart? To have ambition? To express you ideas?

Or is that only true if you're a boy?

It's fair that you feel confused. As a girl, so much in this world has told your that your highest goal is to fall in love, and that this will have everything to do with how you look and not who you are. But screw that.

You know how you saw *The Seed* at Belvoir? Written by a woman? And now you want to be a playwright? Go for it. I know, 90% of the plays in the library are written by dudes, but read them anyway and do your own thing.

Also, I know your secret. I know you want to write songs too.

Listen: even though your music teacher just asked you to drop the subject because you're the bottom of the class and can't play a single instrument: Fear not! One day you'll figure out how to write music on your computer and it won't matter. So, be careful about believing people when tell you what you aren't capable of, and keep recording made up songs into your flip phone.



Yve Blake

PROGRAM

TEXT

DESIGN

PRODUCTION

PROMOTION



*Yve Blake in FANGIRLS (2019)*

I know you're terrified all the time, and I know that you hate yourself.

But I guess what? I don't hate you. I think you're so powerful in all these ways that you haven't realised yet.

Future you will write a whole show about exactly this. It's the show of your 14 year old dreams. It's like a play that's also the best pop concert you've never been to and the stage will literally be made of sparkles. Srsli.

So, don't stress about your acne, your braces, or being hot.

None of that really matters. But please, DO shower more frequently - and stop being such a brat to your mum, she's the best.

P.S. Thanks to: the 70+ performers who have helped develop this show. To Jenni, Jane, and Louise: our story doulas. To ATYP and Rebel Wilson for being the OG supporters of this show. To Maido, the unsung hero of *FANGIRLS*. To Paige for showing me who I REALLY wanna be when I grow up and to Claire, Batman, Avi, Maz, Tim, Lee, Lachlan, Jewel, Clare and Scott: you know what you did. Most of all to Johnny, Dave and Alice: we've grown up together making this. You began as my collaborators and you became my muses. Thank you for this adventure.

P.P.S Mum, Dad, Furby & Caroline: This is dedicated to you.

# DIRECTOR'S NOTE

PAIGE RATTRAY

PROGRAM

*FANGIRLS* is a celebration of young women, their passion and their power. It has a narrative that we are not often told, that if they put their mind to it, teenage girls can achieve anything.

TEXT

If watching 16 year old Greta Thunberg address the UN the week we started rehearsals for the premiere season was anything to go by, the world needed to brace itself - because the myths teenage girls have been told for so long, that they're 'weak' and 'hysterical' that their love and passion is 'crazy' were being dismantled rapidly. With *FANGIRLS*, Yve Blake is contributing to that disruption whilst simultaneously injecting joy and understanding and love into the world in bucket loads.

DESIGN

A brilliant team over many years helped Yve create *FANGIRLS*, it was developed over five years in total - the core team being Yve with Johnathan Ware as Dramaturg, David Muratore as Music Producer/Sound Designer and the glorious Alice Chance as the Vocal Arranger and Music Director. Watching these four very talented artists work was such a pleasure, their dedication, drive and belief in each other and themselves was incredibly inspiring.

PRODUCTION

I joined the team around two years before we began rehearsals and assembled another creative team around that core - David Fleischer, Justin Harrison, Leonard Mickelo, Emma Valente and Michael Waters. Their generosity and sheer brilliance allowed the show to sparkle in the way it deserved to. Then came our cast - they impressed us at every turn, the boundless energy and precision, creative contribution and pure talent was the greatest pleasure to work with. It has been the only production I've worked on to date that gave me more energy than I gave it. We recently had a development in preparation for our return 2021 season and new cast members joined. They are as talented, joyous and energetic as the last. I'm constantly impressed by the emerging talent in our industry, especially when working on *FANGIRLS*.

PROMOTION

It's important I acknowledge some more people (the team is huge!). This production wouldn't have happened without our original Stage Management team Bella Kurdijk and Katie Moore. Huge thanks also to Carissa Licciardello our Associate Director, Louise Gough for additional dramaturgy and our voice and dialect coach Amy Hume. The production and technical team on this show went above and beyond - Gareth/Chris, Dan/Toni and their teams and of course the staff at Belvoir, QT and ATYP. They all deserve their own celebratory concert medleys!

I'm so pleased *FANGIRLS* has been gifted another life in 2021, the positivity and love that pours from this production is the perfect antidote to what has been and continues to be such a difficult time worldwide and I seriously can't wait for people to start making school productions of this wonderful beast. It is a gift to any who are lucky enough to experience it, whether it's through watching, reading, listening or working on it - *FANGIRLS*, like Harry's hair, gives life.





Paige Rattray, Kimberley Hodgson, Chika Ikogwe, Ayesha Madon, James Majoos during rehearsals FANGIRLS 2019



Paige Rattray



David Fleisher, Paige Rattray

# HOW FANGIRLS GOT MADE

BY YVE BLAKE (PLAYWRIGHT) AND JONATHAN WARE (DRAMATURG)

PROGRAM

When *FANGIRLS* premiered in 2019, I got contacted by a lot of teenagers who wanted to know HOW the show was made.

I remember being that teenager, and so does my dramaturg (Jonathan Ware). So, we decided to use the following pages to answer some of the best questions I got, and to shed some light on the five year journey of bringing this show to life.

## How long did it take to make *FANGIRLS*?

YB: I started researching it in January 2015, started writing it in April 2016, it opened in September 2019, and then I re-drafted it in June 2020... so... five+ years?

TEXT

## How did you learn how to write?

YB: I started writing plays when I was a teenager (the key word being 'started', I never finished anything), and then eventually I started using scenes I'd written to apply for playwriting groups and workshops. I never formally 'trained' in playwriting or songwriting at a university, I've just read/watched/listened to a lot of plays and musicals, and put in hours of practice. My main tips are - start writing before you feel 'ready', read every script you can get your hands on, and accept that every first draft is SUPPOSED to be terrible.

DESIGN

## What got you interested in writing about fangirls?

YB: In 2015, a member of the boy band One Direction (Zayn Malik) suddenly announced that he was leaving the band. I remember seeing mainstream news outlets report the story, and describing his fans as "hysterical", "hormonal", and likening them to "banshees". I noticed how gendered this language was, and I thought to myself - wait, why is it that the image of young girls screaming at a pop concert might be read as "psycho", "crazy", "pathetic" or a "bit much", but the image of a young boys screaming at a football match might be read as "loyal" and "passionate". From that moment, I knew I wanted to write a show about fangirls. Because to me, the gendered way that the world talks about fangirls is a microcosm of how the world tries to minimise young women by undermining their intelligence and painting them as 'too emotional'.

PRODUCTION

## What was your artistic goal when writing this show?

YB: It would have been too easy to simply write a show that ONLY made fun of fangirls, or ONLY defended them, so instead, I decided to make the show like a Trojan horse. At the beginning, the show just looks like a comedy that invites you to laugh at teenage girls, but then! Bam! The show sneaks up on you and smuggles these girls into your heart.

PROMOTION

I did this because I wanted to make a show that was truly for all generations. Whenever I went to the theatre as a teenager, I would notice that I was often the youngest person in the audience. Let's be real, lots of theatre is made to suit the tastes of old, rich, mostly-white people. I wanted *FANGIRLS* to be a show where teenagers felt like they had FULL permission to be there.

Musically, I wanted the whole show to feel as adrenaline-filled as a first crush, but I also wanted the score to contain moments of quiet beauty, and give the audience

the same goosebumps that the fans feel about Harry. Therefore, I wanted the show's sound to be "pop concert meets rave meets church".

Finally, I wanted the show to feel "true". I grew up watching TV shows where teenagers were played by hot 30 year olds, and so I wanted the teenagers in *FANGIRLS* to be like I was as a teenager: Awkward, and a bit feral. I wanted the lyrics to reflect the speed-of-light pace at which teenagers speak, I wanted to put the internet on stage, and I wanted to make a show teenage me would not have been bored by.

### **How did you actually get your show produced?**

YB: This show really got made through word of mouth. In 2016, I began writing the show after winning a grant called the Rebel Wilson Theatre Maker Scholarship (awarded by the Australian Theatre for Young People, or 'ATYP'). That year, I began sending rough drafts of the tracks (with me singing all the parts) to industry mentors, to peers, and to potential producers, which was a really helpful way to build interest in it. At the end of 2016, I pulled together a live 45 minute 'showcase' of *FANGIRLS*, which I shared with an invited industry audience. It consisted of seven extraordinary actresses singing the hell out of six draft songs from the show. Between each song, I talked to the crowd about the show's inspiration, its story, and what I hoped it would become. Crucially, ATYP got that showcase professionally filmed, and then sent the footage to every fancy producer who wasn't able to attend. Within a couple of weeks I was being approached by interested theatre companies, but it took another 18 months of negotiations before I was handed a contract for the show to be made (!). My tips are: find cheap ways to put your work in front of people, film everything, and don't quit your bar job.

### **Did you do any readings of the script before you started rehearsals?**

YB: SO MANY! And these were all crucial to the show's development. Once Belvoir and Queensland Theatre licensed the show, we did two professional, week-long workshops of the show before rehearsals began. These involved a cast of actors reading and singing the show around a table, so that Johnny (the Dramaturg) Paige (the Director), Louise Gough (Head of New Work at Belvoir) and I could make edits. However, before any producers were attached, I spent 2.5 years independently hustling to find opportunities to develop the show, and getting my mates to read it out loud around my dinner table. In this time I was lucky to get a week-long residency at the Barbican Open Lab, and then a week-long workshop of the show at The Adelaide Cabaret Festival, as well as funded showcases at the Southbank Centre London, the Brisbane Powerhouse and in LA with the Australian Theatre Company. All up I must have re-drafted the show about 20-30 times?

### **What was the and hardest part of the process? And what was the most fun part?**

YB: The hardest part was staying patient and persistent. There were so many times when finishing this show felt impossible, and I felt like a 'bad' writer with 'bad' ideas. But, the most fun part was the overwhelming response to the show. When the show opened in Brisbane and Sydney in 2019, I would look out at the audience and see so many young faces. I saw teenagers dancing in their seats next to their grandmas. I saw crying dads. I met teenagers in the foyer who had returned to see the show five times, and even some who had driven from Brisbane to Sydney to catch the show again. The cast received hand-made crafts inspired by the show, and started getting tagged in Fan art, and Fan-made memes! By the end of our run in Sydney, we were so sold out that Belvoir began selling standing-room tickets, and when all of those tickets all sold out, even I couldn't get more tickets. The energy in the audience was electric. Like a pop concert.

# DRAMATURG

## INTERVIEW WITH JONATHAN WARE

PROGRAM

### **What is a dramaturg and why is it a vital role?**

The role really varies from project to project. On this show, I'm a bit like a book editor, a bit like a business consultant, a bit like a best friend with a shoulder to cry on, and a bit like a walking music theatre encyclopaedia. The dramaturg often sits external to the intense creative process on a show as an outside eye for the writer or creative team.

TEXT

My first step on a project is to always ask the writer what they are aiming for. What they are trying to say, where they want the audience to end up, where they see the work fitting amongst the works of their peers. By being more distant than many other creatives on a production, the dramaturg can be useful to measure the work as it progresses against the original intention, checking that the politics or story planned is being conveyed. Checking whether the goal is actually on the page and on the stage, rather than just in the head of the creator.

### **At what point in the process did you come in on *FANGIRLS*?**

A few weeks after Yve fell into the internet wormhole that is One Direction fandom. I remember we were living in London together at the time and she was like 'so I'm a bit obsessed with fangirls', I was like 'Okay cool'. But then Zayn left the band and we saw another side of it. This was nearly five years ago.

DESIGN

[On fostering creative interpersonal relationships] We have known each other and have been nerding out about musicals together since high school. You might make friendships in high school and meet people who love what you love and are your kind of people. Those relationships and pairings can last for a long time and can be really formative. Don't dismiss it as 'high school' or 'lame', because if we had done that then we wouldn't have worked together. We were the two kids at the back of our rehearsal for a school play going on like "this is real theatre". Everyone else was like "who is hosting the afters", and we were like "no guys this is important theatre". We really found each other through school drama and doing that work.

PRODUCTION

### **Why do you think there are changes to the production throughout the process?**

That was a real journey for us over time. For a long time we knew Act I and we knew what would happen at the interval. We always knew ... it was about a fan who kidnapped Harry, but what we were never certain of, maybe even last year, was what would happen next.

PROMOTION

The ending of the play was up-for-grabs. How the world resolved and what the inherent moral lesson was. The judgement that we were going to place on the characters wasn't settled for a long time. There's a scene in Act II where Edna and Salty, her fan-fiction friend, talk about changing the ending of the story that they're writing - and that closely parallels a chat that Yve and I had about how we want to end this story.

Once upon a time, the show used to end with Edna having her house invaded by 'crazy' fangirls and they tore her arms off. There were stage directions some like...

*and then the fangirls enter and tear her arms off*

After Trump [was elected] and after we read and learnt and studied, we realised this couldn't be the way the story ended. These amazing women who we have spent two hours falling in love with and telling the audience to stop judging, it can't end with them going crazy and massacring somebody and being exactly what the world tells them they are.

So we were actively searching [for an ending] and this was a long process of questioning 'Does Harry actually fall in love with her?', 'Does Harry actually quit the band and run away without her?'. Suddenly the last scene is him with a shaved head at a phone booth calling her? We went through so many different things until we ended on: a) we don't particularly care what happens to Harry, because he's a supporting character for the lives of the women in the play and b) it had to end with the three friends realising the power of community and love - between friends and between women.

So we ended up where it is now. Looking forward and realising that, stepping outside of the machine and seeing how manipulative it can be when it's top down and commercial. Seeing the girls and the community realise that that's where the real love comes from and that it's not from him.

That was about us learning, listen to and watching our peers and watching the world and realising we didn't want these women to be just as crazy as they are told they are.

### **What advice would you give to a student hoping to go into Dramaturgy?**

My Dramaturgy Masters [degree] was primarily focused on contemporary European theatre practice, mostly because of the theatre-making practices and history at VCA [Victorian College of the Arts]. The students at VCA make incredible beautiful and profound art. But I was always embarrassed, I felt my taste was more commercial than my peers. I was a bit embarrassed that I like musicals, that I watch superhero movies. I will argue that engaging with popular culture allows an understanding of what your audience is consuming outside of your play. So with *FANGIRLS* I deliberately watched every Netflix teen movie, anything that an audience member between the ages of 12 and 20 is going to have watched - *Pen15*, *Broad City*, *Sex Education*, Marvel movies and Taylor Swift albums.

I was ashamed of how 'pop' the art I wanted to watch and make is. Actually, to get a bit economic, if you want to compete in the marketplace, if you want audiences to see your art instead of someone else's, you have to know what else they're watching so you can be on a par with that.

In a way, *FANGIRLS* is very traditional structured. The teen high school rom-com. It just happens that the romance is a friendship between three women and one mother. That's deliberate.

Don't be ashamed of watching *Avengers* or *The Lion King* or *Star Wars* and *Legally Blonde*, or whatever the 'popular' things are in the area that you're working. If you are striving to be just as good, if not better, than them, you need to know your competition.



# THE JOURNEY OF WRITING A MUSICAL

## HOW IT STARTED

PROGRAM

### How did you actually **START** writing this show? What part came first?

YB: I started with a very basic idea for the story: a 14 year old girl loves the biggest pop star in the world, and ...and then...the twist at the end of Act I. Before I could start writing, I wrote a few drafts of the show's 'plot'. There were literally just paragraphs of what the story of the show might become, which included which bits of the story might give way to song.

TEXT

JW: Sometimes this is called 'song-spotting'. Some of the songs Yve initially 'spotted' were:

- a 'Love Duet' between Edna and Harry (which became 'Let Them'),
- an opening number for the fandom that we called 'Worship' (which turned into 'Nobody'),
- an 'I Want' song for Edna (Wait and See),
- 'Don't Exist', (kept it's title!)
- and 'Justice', which was about fans uniting and calling out sexism (Also kept it's title)

Yve also 'spotted' lots of songs that later got cut, and some songs in the final show were only added much later.

DESIGN

YB: Once I had some song ideas, I wrote what I call a 'scaffold'. It's the whole show in dot point form. I use this step to plan out the structure of the show, and also to figure out what I want the audience to learn in each scene/song.

For example:

### Scene 1

- Edna and Harry are on the run, and escape the cops
- Song: "Love Duet"
- Edna and Harry sing about their love. It's HOT!
- We learn that they were unhappy before they found each other

PRODUCTION



Yve Blake, Sharon Millerchip in FANGIRLS (2019)

PROMOTION

## Scene 2

- Psych! That was a fan fic. Edna's mum interrupts her / is annoying
- We learn that Edna is actually a teenager, and on a scholarship
- We see that her mum is a Nurse/shift worker.

I showed this scaffold draft to Johnny, and he helped me identify points where I was repeating information, or the story was too slow. After re-drafting my scaffold a few times, I could start writing the scenes and songs, because I knew what info they each needed to contain.

### What was the biggest difference between the first draft and the final script?

JW: From the start, Yve was pretty clear about what happened in Act I, but Act II changed a lot. The show's ending changed about seven times. The original ending involved a lot of blood.

YB: To be completely honest, I originally thought that the show needed to have a tragic ending where Edna... didn't survive. I wanted a shock ending that was all about the destructive cost of the lies we tell young women about themselves. But then I changed my mind. I decided that it was more powerful to write a story where Edna got her power back. I also wanted the audience to see Edna finally choosing to collaborate with the women in her life rather than fighting against them.

JW: We also had to cut lots of stuff which was fun but not essential to the story. Sometimes this is called "killing your darlings"

### What "darlings" did you have to kill?

YB: So so many. There are maybe hundreds of fun lines that didn't make the cut. One of my faves was: "you know me and we haven't met, so I bought your spit on the internet". RIP.

JW: Also there used to be a fourth friend at school called Sophie (RIP). And Edna's mum used to only be a voice we heard from offstage. A lot changed.

## ACTIVITY

Read through the script excerpts on pages 16 to 21. The first excerpt was written in 2017 and is an early draft of the scene. The second excerpt is from 2020, after the production had been performed at Belvoir St Theatre and Queensland Theatre.

1. What are the differences between the two versions?  
Describe as many variations as you can find.
2. Why do you think these changes were made?
3. How did you respond to the scene written in 2017 (page 16-18) and  
How did you respond to the scene written in 2020 (page 19-21)?  
For example, did you have an emotional reaction? Did you laugh?
4. What character/s did you identify with?
5. What is the impact of the rewritten dialogue between Edna (Magda) and her mother  
in the 2020 version?
6. How do the changes affect the way you view the characters?
7. What difference does the line

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>CAROLINE</b>  | <b>Edna? Dinner's in five -</b>                                    |
| make to the characterisation of Edna's mum, Caroline (2020), compared to |  |
| <b>MUM</b>   | <b>Magda. Do you have any bowls cause there's none left in the</b> |
|  | <b>kitchen. At all. Dinners in five -</b>                          |

# ACT 1

## PRE SHOW – EXT. // ALLEYWAY // NIGHT TIME

---

**Looks Like:** A dim and damp alley way in a city. Barely lit.

**Sounds like:** A city at night. Sirens & cars & distant kebab shop music?  
+ An indistinguishable drone/ dark pad texture. This will surge up into clarity to become:

## ACT 1 - SCENE 1a - EXT. // ALLEYWAY // NIGHT

---

**SOUND:** 'LET THEM' Vamp

*A teenage boy in a damp alley. Black hoodie. Long hair. He's nervous. Keeps checking his phone. Can't keep still. Suddenly, at full speed, a girl in a black hoodie runs on stage towards him, clutching a rucksack to her chest. She's terrified.*

*The boy leaps out and pulls her out of sight. They wait. It's okay now. She's clear. He kisses her head. Holds her until her breath stills. Wrapped in him, she opens her rucksack, and like two kids at Christmas, they discover what she's just nicked from a 7 eleven. Tinned food, some bread. These are survival goods.*

*She presents ultimate steal - a KIT KAT. She opens it with great care and holds it to his mouth. He takes a bite. It's Ecstasy. He wraps his hands around hers, and he tries to feed her a bite of it but she wants him to have it. Maybe this escalates into a tickling war, maybe he picks her up - whatever happens, they end up forehead to forehead, eye to eye.*

\* NOTE = I have a few alternate ideas for action in this scene.

## ACT 1 - SCENE 1b / SONG 1: "LET THEM"

---

*This is the most intense amazing romance we've ever seen.*

**MAGDA:** *I was not real before*



*It's scary to know that now  
To feel so sure  
Those lives we lived  
Lay them to rust  
Let them all say we're wrong  
Cause now the only real thing  
Is us*

**HARRY:** *I'm not who I thought I was  
I'm not who they decided*

**MAGDA:** *I was only half alive*

**HARRY:** *Always felt like an echo of nothing  
I learned just how to hide it*

**MAGDA:** *Set it all on fire*

**HARRY:** *Destroyed all that*

**BOTH:** *Never going back  
Let them all say we're wrong  
Cause now the only real thing  
Is us*

*Is Us  
Only us  
Just Us  
Just Us*

*The track's pitch wilts & becomes horrifying*

#### **ACT 1 - SCENE 2a – INT. // BEDROOM // NIGHT**

---

**MUM (O/S):** Magda do you have any bowls in your room?

*MAGDA and HARRY look at each other, horrified & desperate.*

**MUM (O/S):** Magda. Do you have any bowls cause there's none left in kitchen.  
At all. Dinners in five-

MAGDA: GO AWAY MUM.

*Magda's fantasy world rips away.*

MUM (O/S): Magda-

MAGDA: I'M DOING HOMEWORK GO AWAY

MUM (O/S): Mags can you just pass me the bowls, I've gotta be on the ward by seven.

MAGDA: STOP DISTURBING MY STUDIES DO YOU EVEN

MUM (O/S): I'm coming in on a rescue mission

*We see MAGDA's bedroom door. The floor in front of it is covered in a soup of clothes. MUM is on the other side. MUM goes to open the door but the clothes on the floor stop it from opening more than a couple of inches.*

MADGA: NO, JUST, FAR OUT MUM CAN YOU ACTUALLY NOT. STOP INVADING ME WHILE I'M TRYING TO LEARN

*MAGDA grabs 3 dirty bowls from various locations around her room and thrusts them through the door.*

MUM (O/S): See that wasn't so hard. See you in five-

MAGDA: I'm not hungry

MUM (O/S): Mags you haven't left your room since you got home from school

MAGDA: KAY BYE NOW.

MUM (O/S): Mags-

MAGDA: BYEEEEEEEE-AAAAAAAAAA

*The doors slams and we suddenly see a bit more of MADGA's room. It tells us that she can't be more than 14. Frustrated, MAGDA grabs her pillow and pulls it tightly around her face so she can barely breathe. She screams into it.*

*SOUND: Low subwoofer rumble, minor chord to a major. Chopped and reverse choir samples pan and spin around us.*

# HOW IT ENDED - THE START OF ACT I - 20 OCTOBER 2020

## ACT 1

### SCENE 1 - A DARK ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

---

*Dramatic strings rise up. The sound of police sirens fills the space. Two COPS run on with flashlights.*

COP 1:           You sure he went this way?

COP 2:           It looked like him.

COP 1:           *(Into chest radio, annoyed)* Alley is clear. He's not here.

RADIO (V/O):   Any sign of the girl?

COP 1:           *(Into chest radio)* Nowhere. They're probably on the road by now.

RADIO (V/O):   I'll get the choppers on it.

COP 1:           *(To COP 2)* C'mon newbie.

*COP 1 exits. COP 2 begins to follow, but then she sees it: a big bin. Alone now, she kicks it. She lifts the lid when...*

*EDNA pops out of it. She pounces on COP 2 and clamps a hand over her screaming mouth. They struggle. COP 2 manages to throw EDNA to the ground.*

*Bu then, HARRY appears, holding a knife. He grabs the cop and stabs her repeatedly. She crumples. HARRY lifts her limp body over his shoulder.*

HARRY:           Bin!

*EDNA holds the bin steady while HARRY folds COP 2's body into it. Sirens sound.*

HARRY:           Run.

*Hand in hand, they run. Strings swell up.*

*Instantly - they appear elsewhere. Safe now. As they sing to each other, they dance a duet. This is the most intense young love you've ever seen. It's hot.*

---

**SONG: "LET THEM"**


---

**VERSE 1**

**EDNA:** *I was. Waiting. For my life to begin  
Homesick. For a place. I had never been*

*In just one look, I realised.  
I found that place, was in your eyes  
And now I'll never feel alone again*

**VERSE 2**

**HARRY:** *Fake smiles. Tight chest. Trapped in his own skin*

**EDNA:** *You were just like me*

**HARRY:** *Dreamt of. Running. From everything that was 'him'*

**EDNA:** *I had to set you free*

**HARRY:** *In just one look, could not deny*

**HARRY + EDNA:** *Without you/me, I'd only been half alive  
Now I'll never feel alone again*

**PRE CHORUS**

*Let them all say we're wrong  
Let's leave them in our dust  
Cause now the only real thing...  
is ...(they giggle)*

*An epic choir joins them.*

**CHORUS 1**

EDNA

***Is us  
Just us***

***Just us  
Uu-u-u-us  
Uu-u-u-us  
Just uuuuuu-***

HARRY

***Is uuuuus  
Just us***

*(Starts riffing impressively)*  
***Baby you know it's just u-u-u-us  
You set me fre-e-e-ee,  
And I will never let you go, no-o-o-o  
Just uuuuuu-***

*Right as they're about to kiss:*

---

**SCENE 2 - EDNA'S BEDROOM**


---

CAROLINE (O/S): EDNAAA????

*The music cuts. EDNA and HARRY look at each other, horrified.  
EDNA's mum calls through her bedroom door.*

CAROLINE: Edna? Dinners in five-

EDNA: I'M BUSY MUM!!!!!!

*Snap: we are in EDNA's bedroom. EDNA is at her laptop, a pop song blaring out of her headphones. CAROLINE bursts in.*

CAROLINE: What are you looking at?

EDNA: Homework! Mum! CAN YOU KNOCK!?

CAROLINE: Well. Come get some dinner

EDNA: I will later mum I'm just REALLY busy. So? *(Puts her headphones on)*

CAROLINE: Ed - *(Lifting a headphone)* C'mon I wanna hear about your day before I leave for work

EDNA: MUM! I have homework! Do you want me to lose my scholarship? OH MY GOD?!

*EDNA's headphones blare. She ignores CAROLINE.*

CAROLINE: Ed?... Okay. See you in the morning.

*CAROLINE goes. Behind her back, EDNA pulls a frustrated face at her mum. EDNA refocuses on her laptop and begins to type feverishly.*

*A subwoofer rumbles. The sound of whispering teenage girls spins around us, and rises into the sound of a church organ.*

## ON WRITING MUSIC

### PROGRAM

#### **What's your process for writing the songs?**

YB: To write the lyrics, I did lots of 'free-writing'. It's where you write a messy stream of consciousness without pausing or editing. I free-wrote pages of random lyrics about the themes of the show, and then together, Johnny and I highlighted all our favourite lines so that I could use them somewhere later (stuff like "We want Justice, Harry, and your Kneecaps").

### TEXT

I composed the music in a similar way. I would make a STACK of little musical 'loops' on my laptop (Eg. just 16 seconds of a church organ playing four chords). Then, to build the songs, I would listen to my favourite loops on repeat and sing my favourite lyric bits over the top of them until something stuck. Eventually, I'd cobble together a first draft of a song that had five too many verses, and then I'd send that to Johnny & ask him what to cut.

For this show, I then took my re-drafted songs to a music producer (David Muratore), who expanded my rough tracks and made them sound like real pop songs. I also collaborated with a Vocal Arranger (Alice Chance), who added rich vocal harmonies to the score.

### DESIGN

#### **What instrument did you write the show on?**

YB: I can't play any instruments, so I write all my songs on my computer. I use a program called Ableton Live, which I taught myself how to use off YouTube. When I need to put a melody or some chords into my computer, I hum each individual note and then press different letters on my qwerty keyboard until I find the note that matches the one in my head. If I can write a 2.5 hour musical this way, anybody can do anything.

### PRODUCTION

#### **How does a Dramaturg help shape the songs?**

JW: For this show, because we wanted the story to move at a rapid pace, I would constantly encourage Yve to avoid repeating information in her lyrics. This was challenging, given that Yve's score was inspired by pop music, in which songs often use a lot of repetition on purpose.

In a musical though, songs need to be just as informative as scenes, so every line of a song should give the audience a new piece of information.

### PROMOTION



## FINAL SONGLIST

### ACT I

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| LET THEM           | Edna & Harry                               |
| NOBODY             | Company & Global Fan Chorus                |
| WAIT & SEE         | Edna                                       |
| FEELS SO TRUE      | Saltypringl, Edna & Ensemble               |
| SET YOU FREE       | Edna                                       |
| ACTUALLY DEAD      | Company                                    |
| GOT NO CHILL       | Edna, Saltypringl & Ensemble               |
| DON'T EXIST        | Ash, Lily, Saltypringl & Global Fan Chorus |
| NIGHT OF OUR LIVES | Jules & Brianna                            |

### ACT II

|                   |                             |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| CONCERT MEDLEY    | Harry & True Connection     |
| PANIC             | Ensemble                    |
| BECOME BRAND NEW  | Edna & Harry                |
| LIFE OR DEATH     | Ensemble                    |
| DISGUSTING        | Jules, Brianna & Edna       |
| BRAVE THING       | Caroline                    |
| JUSTICE           | Brianna & Ensemble          |
| SILLY LITTLE GIRL | Edna                        |
| THE WOODS         | Edna, Jules & Brianna       |
| NOBODY (REPRISE)  | Company & Global Fan Chorus |
| MAYBE WE'RE MORE  | Company                     |

# PRODUCTION ELEMENTS

PROGRAM

The elements of production are the technical and visual elements used to manipulate the elements of drama in order to effectively tell a play's story.

In these notes we are going to look at *FANGIRLS*

Costume renderings

Set model box

## DESIGNER'S NOTE

**DAVID FLEISCHER**

TEXT

The process of designing *FANGIRLS* has been, in some ways, a creative expedition. Into the minds and sparkly eyes of teenage girls for one, but also into the rich and complex systems of storytelling that Yve and her team have created. From the outset, it felt integral to find a spatial and visual language that could expand and explode in the ways that the musical production and vocal arrangements do. Yve, Alice and David's work, as you will hear, is texturally super-rich and multilayered, so having a source of ever-changing visual ideas and infinite possibilities that video-screens provide felt very fitting. The challenge with all of this though is how Paige, Emma, Justin, Jonathan and I would use said technology to still tell a story that effectively has a single protagonist at its centre.

DESIGN

The narrative in this piece traverses many modes - and at some speed as well - from the naturalism of scenes between mother and daughter, or between school friends in the school yard, to the semi-abstraction of those friends texting each other at home; the online chat 'conferencing' between strangers in a fan fiction forum to the direct messaging between long distance BFFE's; as well as being inside a fictional fan-fic story and the slippages into experiencing a character's fully-blown immersive fantasy - and then there are all of these with the added bonanza of singing and dancing! All these modes needed to be encapsulated within a clear yet incredibly plastic vocabulary.

PRODUCTION

The fluidity between these IRL sites of living, and online dreaming and communication is a central idea in this piece as well. The muddling of the cybersphere and reality is a potent backdrop... The way young people, and all people for that matter, exist in the world is so multimodal, so the job in many ways was to design not what it looks like to be a teenage fangirl, but to design how it feels to live inside all those fangirl universes.

PROMOTION

With that all sorted... then it gets fun. Lava lamps, holographic book contact, blow-up glitter armchairs, curly straws, handball courts, Beyoncé-inspired concert fantasies, Instagram filters, fictional Harry merchandise, satirical boy band logos, bowl-cuts, anything iridescent! A thirsty pop concert worthy of thousands of girl-crushes - the endless amount of visual joy that the piece offers was such a thrill to interrogate and realize on stage. But all this may just be a sparkly phonecase for a work overflowing with intelligence, a bit of welcome audacity and a stack of ideas worth listening to.



## INTERVIEW WITH DAVID FLEISCHER

### How did the overall concept come about?

A lot of the design concept came from the simple necessity to have a space that could shift and change quickly and dynamically - there are so many 'worlds' in this work - the real world, the online world, Edna's fantasy world, inside her fiction stories, the world of social media and phone communication. Being able to traverse all of these with ease and theatricality became the function for the space. Similarly, the music that Yve, Alice and David created is so incredibly, texturally rich, the 'backdrop' for these worlds had the opportunity to be as detailed and layered and complex. Whether it be colour changes, changes in content from instagram filtered photography to the slightly animated online landscape to the appearance of live-feed, from laptop computers or that alongside huge arena concert graphics - everything on them could be a reflection of the image saturated world these characters live in.

### Why do designs change throughout the process?

Sometimes they do, sometimes they don't. In this case the design was very pre-meditated and detailed early on and we changed very little from the main core of how we imagined the piece leading up to rehearsals. However, we always keep ourselves open to changes and opportunities to make things better - and we also keep gaps in the there in order to fill in, for when we know how some other things are working. For example a certain prop and how and actor might use that, or a certain beat that we wish to highlight in the music. Another thread to the development of the designs is how the costume design may change through rehearsals. Once you have actors on the rehearsal room floor, inhabiting the characters, your preconception of how that character might look could certainly change. And even more so, the best collaborations between designer and actor in communicating this whilst the characters are being 'built' is an invaluable process as well.

### What advice would you give to a student hoping to go into Set/Costume design?

See as much theatre as you can. And then go see as much of everything else out there too - don't stop going to art galleries, or flicking through photography books, seeing films, or listening to music.



*Paige Rattray, David Fleischer*

# COSTUME DESIGN

## BOYBAND



'Boyband' Costume renderings for FANGIRLS by David Fleischer (2019)



'Boyband' Reference images for FANGIRLS by David Fleischer (2019)



'Boyband' Production costumes for FANGIRLS by David Fleischer (2019)

PROGRAM

TEXT

DESIGN

PRODUCTION

PROMOTION

# FAN FICTION FORUM



'Fan fiction forum' Costume renderings for FANGIRLS by David Fleischer (2019)



'Fan fiction forum' Reference images for FANGIRLS by David Fleischer (2019)

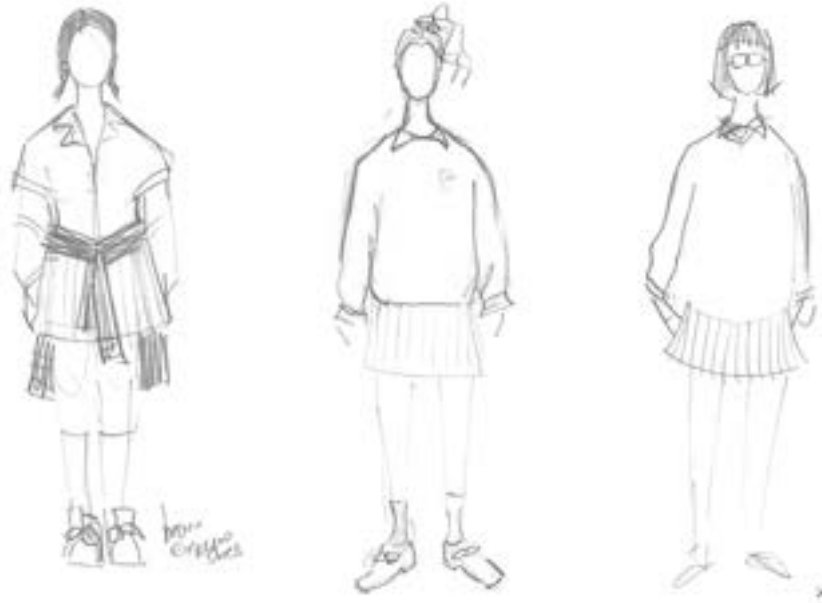


'Fan fiction forum' Production costumes for FANGIRLS by David Fleischer (2019)

# SCHOOL UNIFORMS

PROGRAM

TEXT



'School uniforms' Costume renderings for FANGIRLS by David Fleischer (2019)

DESIGN



'School uniforms' Reference images for FANGIRLS by David Fleischer (2019)

PRODUCTION

PROMOTION



'School Uniforms' Production costumes for FANGIRLS by David Fleischer (2019)

# VIGIL



'Vigil' Costume renderings for FANGIRLS by David Fleischer (2019)



'Vigil' Reference images for FANGIRLS by David Fleischer (2019)



'Vigil' Production costumes for FANGIRLS by David Fleischer (2019)

# SET DESIGN

## REFERENCE IMAGERY

PROGRAM



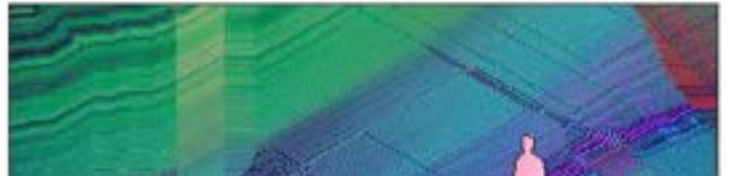
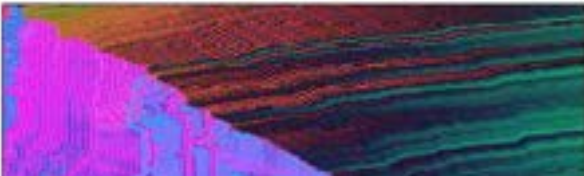
TEXT



DESIGN

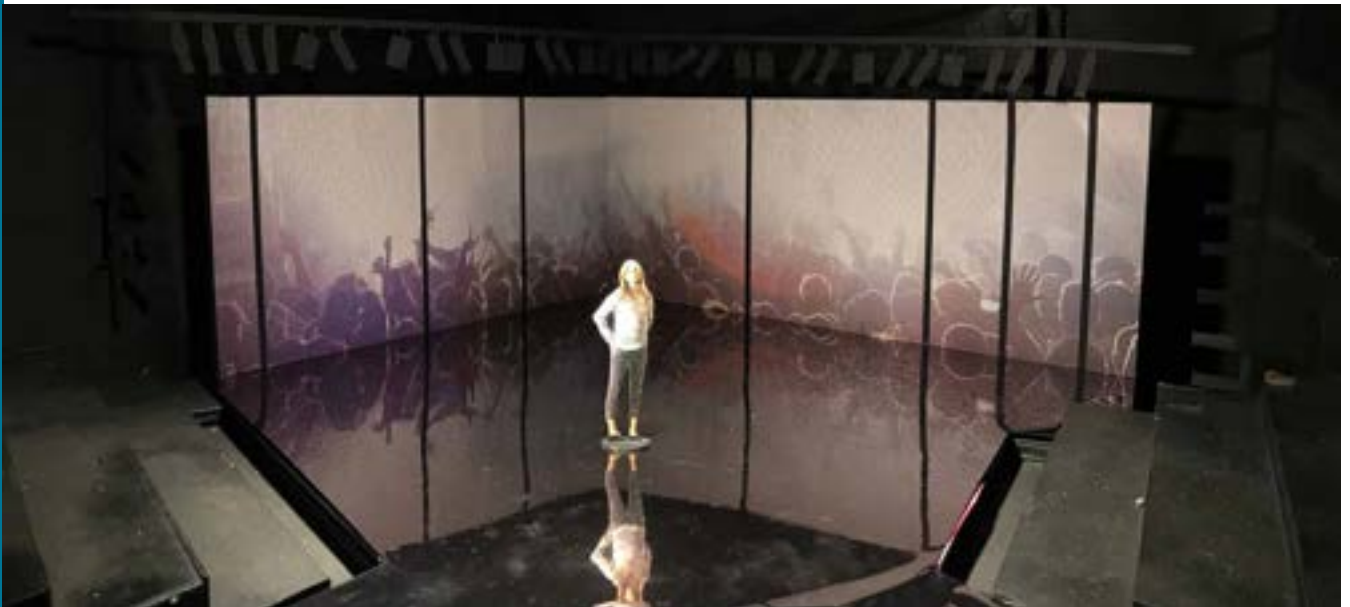


PRODUCTION



## EARLY DESIGN CONCEPTS

PROMOTION



*Slotted wall variation Set Model Box by David Fleischer*

## EARLY DESIGN CONCEPTS



*Flat wall variation Set Model Box by David Fleischer*



*Early model draft Set Model Box by David Fleischer*



*Concept model box by David Fleischer*

# STORYBOARD AV DESIGN RENDERINGS

PROGRAM

TEXT



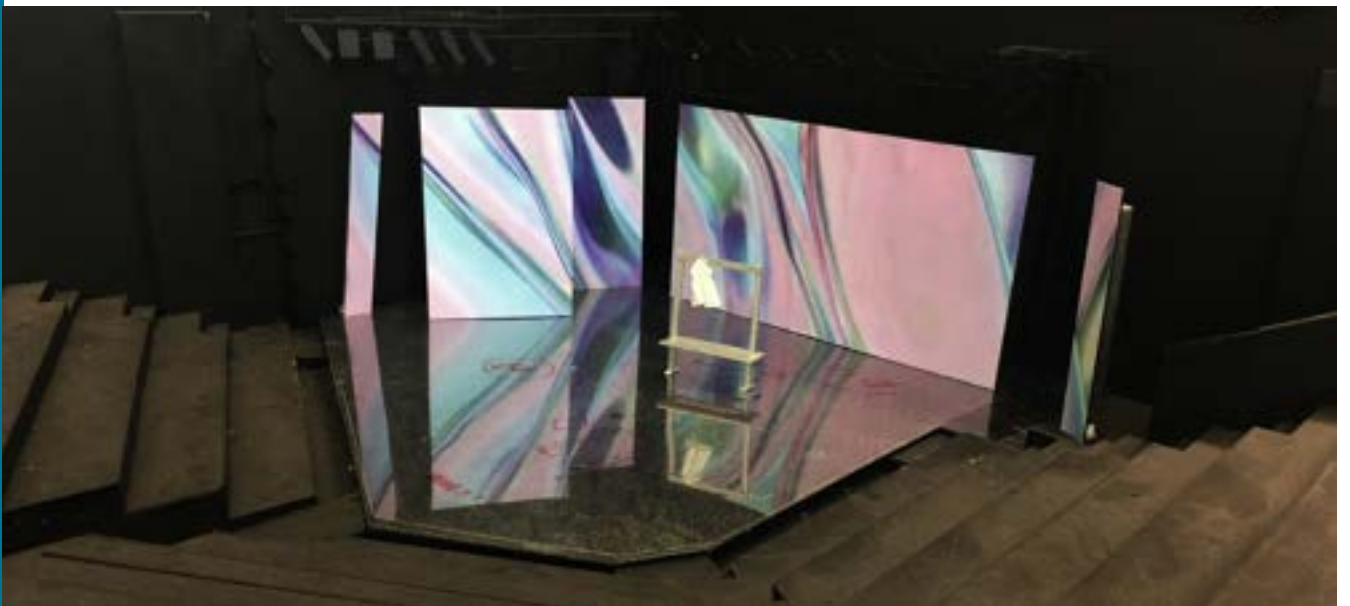
*Design Storyboard example - Scene 9: Night of our Lives by David Fleischer*

DESIGN



*Design Storyboard example - Scene 6: Got No Chill by David Fleischer*

PRODUCTION



*Final Model Box by David Fleischer*





### Questions to consider after seeing this production

1. What are the key differences between the early model box design & the final set design?
2. Why might this change have taken place?
3. How many different locations were represented in the production?
4. How were the projection screens used to represent different locations?
5. How has the designer used stage space, texture, colour and composition to enhance dramatic meaning?



The set of *FANGIRLS* by David Fleischer

# REHEARSING FANGIRLS (2019)

PROGRAM

TEXT



*Leonard Mickelo*

1. Describe what you see in the picture above.
2. Who do you think the person in this photo is and what are they doing?
3. How do you think movement and dance might tell part of this story?

DESIGN

PRODUCTION



*Ayesha Madon, James Majoos*

1. What do you think this scene might be about?
2. What evidence is there that this is a rehearsal?
3. What do you think the relationship is between these characters? Give reasons for your answer

PROMOTION



*Chika Ikogwe*

1. Describe what you see in the photo above.
2. What do you think is happening in this moment?
3. How does the actor's body language and facial expressions convey this?



*Aydan, Yve Blake*

1. Describe what you see in the picture above.
2. What do you think is happening in this scene?
3. Where might this scene be taking place? Give reasons for your answer

# POST SHOW DISCUSSION

How are the set and other production elements used to tell the story of the play?



*Sharon Millerchip, Karis Oka*

How does the production explore the importance of relationships?



*Karis Oka, James Majoos*

PROGRAM

TEXT

DESIGN

PRODUCTION

PROMOTION

**How did you feel at the end of the production?**



*Sharon Millerchip, Ayesha Madon, James Majoos*

**What moment in the production had the most impact on you? Why?**



*Sharon Millerchip, Shannen Alyce Quan, Aydan, Subshri Kandiah, Chika Ikogwe*

How does the production explore the themes of empowerment?



Shannen Alyce Quan, Ayesha Madon, Shubshri Kandiah, Tomáš Kantor, Sharon Millerchip, Chika Ikogwe, James Majoos

# SOCIAL MEDIA

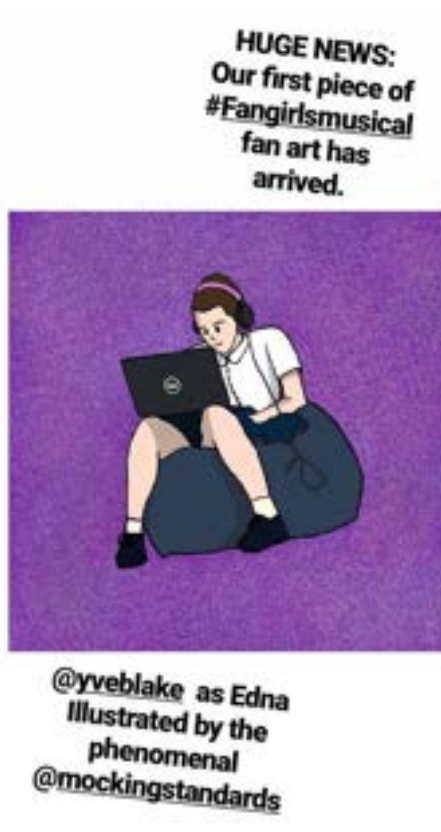
1. Who do you think is the target audience for *FANGIRLS*?
2. Does the style of the marketing grab your attention? Why or why not?
3. How would you encourage audiences to come to this production?
4. What ideas do you have for pictures / photos / memes / videos that would help spread the word about this production?



FANGIRLS GIFs



Instagram Stories posted by @belvoirst 2019



# LISTENLISTEN

PROGRAM

TEXT

DESIGN

PRODUCTION

PROMOTION



## **FANGIRLS Backstage**

Yve Blake, the writer of the book, music and lyrics of *FANGIRLS*, as well as one of its star performers, is joined by co-star Aydan, associate director Carissa Licciardello and musical director Alice Chance, to discuss the birth of the show and the much maligned demographic of unapologetically enthusiastic teenage girls. Podcast produced for Belvoir by Zoe Ferguson.

[LISTEN NOW](#)

## **Inside the FANGIRLS Rehearsal Room**

Listen to the audio from the official *FANGIRLS* - Inside The Rehearsal Room event. This includes a sneak peek of some of the wild and vibrant songs within the show, as well as talks with writer Yve Page, director Paige Rattray and musical director and vocal arranger Alice Chance, as they discuss bringing this mammoth production to life after over five years of development.

[LISTEN NOW](#)



# WATCH



## **Why are fangirls scary? Yve Blake - TEDx Sydney**

In this fun, passionate talk, writer and performer Yve Blake challenges the myth that fangirls are something to be laughed at, pointing out the long legacy of sexist derision of young women who love fully. Instead, she asks us to embrace the fangirl in all of us.

[WATCH NOW](#)



## **FANGIRLS the musical celebrates teen boyband fandom**

**The Mix - ABC, 24 Nov 2019**

The Mix is the ABC's weekly arts, entertainment and culture program. The show brings you the latest on art, television, movies, books, games, apps, festivals, gigs, events, celebrities, theatre and all things showbiz from around the country.

[WATCH NOW](#)



**FANGIRLS** Trailer

[WATCH NOW](#)



**Teaser Trailer**

[WATCH NOW](#)

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PROGRAM

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DESIGN

**Belvoir Education** would like to thank Yve Blake, Jonathan Ware, David Fleischer, Michael Kennedy and Jake Severino for their support creating these resources.

PRODUCTION

PROMOTION