



Education Resources Pre-Production

STC Ed presents a Windmill and Big hART production

NYUNTU NGALI

(You We Two)

by Scott Rankin



Photo: Tony Lewis

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KEY



AIM of exercise or section



Extension Exercises



Download and watch



Drama Exercises



English Exercises



Play online

NYUNTU NGALI

Sydney Theatre Company Education Resources 2010

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ABOUT SYDNEY THEATRE COMPANY

www.sydneytheatre.com.au/about

ABOUT STCED

www.sydneytheatre.com.au/stced/about

CREATIVE TEAM

Writer and Director – Scott Rankin

Musical Director and Community Producer – Beth Sometimes

Lighting Designer – Nigel Levings

Choreographer – Gina Rings

Objects Designer – Elliot Rich

AV System Designer – Nick Higgins

Project Advisors – Pantjiti McKenzie, Simon Tjiyangu, Dora (Amanyi) Haggie, Impiti Winton, Nyinguta Edwards, Angkuna Tjitay

CAST

Roam – *young Aboriginal man aged 14* – Derek Lynch

Eva – *young Anglo woman aged 15* – Anne Golding

Man – *Narrator figure, the voice of the baby Petrol* – Trevor Jamieson

Musician – Jennifer Wells

“

PETROL: You can't live without him.

EVA: Can't live without him.

ROAM: We don't care if you kill us, do we little one.

Nyuntu Ngali
Scene Five – Who are you?

”

ABOUT WINDMILL

We produce and present an annual season of bold, live theatre for children, teens and family audiences.

Since our inception in 2002, we have performed across Australia and the world winning a swag of state and national awards. By creating art that is engaged with the vibrancy, sophistication and inventiveness of young people, we are active in the national and international conversation that defines the future of theatre practice. With our stable of productions now in repertoire and in production, we are continuing our touring profile with national and international tours each year.

Our seasons bring stories that beg attention and theatre that surprises, provokes and entertains. With a philosophy that creative expression is fundamental to humanity and vital for navigating the contemporary world, our mission is to make theatre a dynamic meeting space between the imagination of the artists and the audience.

<http://www.windmill.org.au/about-us>



ABOUT BIG HART

Big hART is committed to the arts and social change. We are also committed to experimentation and innovation and as such the style, shape, size and work of the company is always changing. Big hART works to:

- make sustained changes with disadvantaged communities
- take the issues faced by these communities and make them visible in the public sphere
- influence social policy
- create high quality cultural activity which drives personal, community, and regional development
- produce critically acclaimed, high quality art for local, national and international audiences.

Since 1992, Big hART's programs have assisted over 6,500 people experiencing severe disadvantage in 32 communities across Australia, helping them to make sustained changes in their lives.

Big hART is made up of community builders, field workers, researchers, artists, arts workers, and producers.

<http://www.bighart.org/public/>



NYUNTU NGALI

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www.sydneytheatre.com.au/stced

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NYUNTU NGALI (Pitjantjatjara for **You We Two** is a term used for lovers)

It is the 22nd century in central Australia. Everyday life is basic in this future world. The post-climate change environment demands that skills for living return to the way they were for thousands of years before the fast-paced period of just 10 generations, which resulted in global warming, and the near destruction of the planet.

The drama is built around the life and death predicament of a young couple who are driven out by their families, speared and clubbed for their relationship because of their wrong skin marriage. She is pregnant and the environment in which they live is the harsh, post-climate South Australian desert. The drama builds from the opening scene, where the young mother gives birth under duress and decides she must kill their newborn baby for her own survival. Their subsequent decision to keep the child and their struggle for survival in this desert environment takes us towards reconciliation with family. But the baby does not survive.

The narrator figure is the baby. He arrives on the set pulling a large set of boxes. The boxes seem to contain the cultural knowledge of the past. As the story progresses, the narrator slowly unpacks each box, one by one, firstly setting up a Wiltja (shelter) then comes the baby, and then objects for survival.

The story is told in Pitjantjatjara and English, but it is not text based. It is highly visual, using film, animation, dance and shadow images created live. The choreography is based on hand signals and minimal gestures’.

Warning: The baby is presented as sickly due to the premature birth and with little or no food and water. Eve cannot nourish the baby and it eventually dies.

Synopsis, **Windmill Teacher Notes**, Arts Education Program 2009.

“

PETROL: In our past
“Just do it” world,
People were slaves,
To bosses called “A.T.Ms,

”

Nyuntu Ngali
Scene Six– Chase is over.

THEMES

Young love, birth and death, wrong skin marriage, survival, post-climate environment, traditional life skills, past and present, sacrifice

NYUNTU NGALI

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HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF THE PLAY

“

SCOTT RANKIN: [*Nyuntu Ngali*]
is physically and verbally very
poetic, a little like being
encased in a song.

Interview with Louise Nunn
'Weaving Outback Magic'
The Advertiser, 2007

”

Nyuntu Ngali is a new theatre work emerging as a legacy to the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* project* and co-produced by Windmill Performing Arts - who have had a three-year working relationship with the Pitjantjatjara community at Mimili. The work has been inspired and informed by a series of community workshops and trips run throughout 2009.

Younger and senior members of the Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara community have been invited to consult on the development and performance and take part in workshops over the year. One talented young performer, Jennifer Wells of Ernabella joins the cast as musician and shadow-maker for the Adelaide 2009 season after developing her musical skills through Big hART workshops. Workshops have included music recording, song-writing, film-making, instrument building, story-recording, multi-generational trips to sacred-sites of relevance to the story and dance and have taken place in Ernabella and Mimili.

Nyuntu Ngali which translates as **You, we two** will be an intricate examination of traditional Central Australian survival methods through the framework of a post-apocalyptic love story which examines themes of climate-change, endurance, culture and dependence.

<http://www.bighart.org/public/?p=61>

*Taking its name from the Pitjantjatjara concept of exchange and reciprocity *Ngapartji Ngapartji* is a long-term inter-generational language and arts project based in Alice Springs. The project works with Abbots, Karnte and other town camps in Alice as well as Pitjantjatjara communities such as Ernabella, Mimili and Docker River across the region.

The project comprises an online Pitjantjatjara language site, touring theater works and a campaign for a national indigenous languages policy.

Read more: <http://www.ngapartji.org/>

NYUNTU NGALI

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Transcript - Playwright Profile - Broadcast: 19/03/2004

Reporter: Angela Cameron

It wasn't so long ago people were leaving the North-West to chase work.

Playwright Scott Rankin was one of them.

In the early 1980s he was a youth worker who wrote the occasional play to help boost the confidence of young people. He moved to Sydney and found success by writing plays about Australians who've been hard done by. But Rankin and his family got sick of the rat race and recently bought their own piece of paradise in Boat Harbour on the North-West Coast. But as Angela Cameron found out there's no slowing down for the playwright just yet.

SCOTT RANKIN, PLAYWRIGHT: There is nothing more interesting than art that moves people and has and makes a real impact about the way people think about issues. That's what I want to do and that's, you know, basically what the last 20 years have been about.

ANGELA CAMERON: It's rare to find someone as passionate about their work as Scott Rankin. Then again not many people have a backdrop like this for inspiration. Scott Rankin is one of Australia's leading playwrights. His scripts have won countless awards and some have earned international success. His journey started nearly 20 years ago in Burnie when he wrote a play called 'Regardless'. The idea came from the downgrading of the Burnie pulp mill and the effect unemployment was having on the town.

SCOTT RANKIN: It really changed the sort of economics of the town and the family life of the town and then the young people. And, you know, a lot of pressure in families means there can be more violence and I saw the consequences of that because I was doing youth work. To address that issue, a play which is funny and sad and moving and tells those stories can be a good way to bring it to people's attention, I suppose.

ANGELA CAMERON: The performers were young people affected by domestic violence, drugs and confidence issues. For more than 10 years he continued working with young people on similar theatre projects.

JAMES: Before the program came along I had nothing to do. Probably I was low in self-confidence. There wasn't really much to do where I live so I just sit about and do nothing, practically.

SCOTT RANKIN: The structure of the project changed the way in which the federal government thought about young people, isolation and domestic violence. They now do business differently -- and that has happened a lot. There is a current project with Centrelink we're about to perform for Kay Patterson and during Youth Week in Parliament House she'll be there, we'll have an audience with her and our intention will be young people who use Centrelink for various reasons will influence policy and that's what we try to do.

ANGELA CAMERON: Mr Rankin is talking about the organisation Big Art. He set up the business to work with and inspire disadvantaged kids. It's now grown well beyond its North-West roots. Nearly 4,000 young people across Australia have taken part in various projects.

SCOTT RANKIN: What we do is try and set up a project, work with a community, bring skills to the community and then provide a conduit for projects to continue in the community.

ANGELA CAMERON: Scott Rankin has put pen to paper to write about many marginalised groups. The play 'Riverland', performed at this year's (2004) Adelaide Festival, centred on the story of an Aboriginal family and its connections with the Murray River.

WESLEY ENOCH, 'RIVERLAND' DIRECTOR: It's very rare to get family work -- work for young people in a festival, a mainstream festival like the Adelaide Festival. So it's a great kind of coup.

ANGELA CAMERON: Now Scott Rankin's moved back to Tasmania it's not surprising he's got his eye on writing about more local issues.

SCOTT RANKIN: I think the Tarkine is an interesting one. And, you know, I can't be a hypocrite because I love logging trucks -- you know, I think they look fantastic. And I also love forestry stories and pioneering stories and, you know -- but I don't like the poisoning of animals and I don't like self-management of the forestry industry.

ANGELA CAMERON: But don't expect the play out straight away. Scott Rankin is already working on a handful of other scripts. He also plans to spend some time enjoying his new view with wife Rebecca and children Darcy, Lachie and Ginger. And perhaps a few jam sessions with the kids will give him a few new ideas.

ANGELA CAMERON: Are there any strange that ways you get inspiration?

SCOTT RANKIN: Tragically for the neighbours I sometimes play the guitar and I might write songs for things and, you know, watching trashy late-night television I find very useful -- having one too many coffees.

ANGELA CAMERON: So you steal ideas from late-night television?

SCOTT RANKIN: Look, yes. I mean, it's usually about creating a few hours of space each day with some creativity for myself around it beside from the actual writing.

ANGELA CAMERON: He'll have plenty of time for that down here in an environment which is constantly feeding his work.

SCOTT RANKIN: There are so many assets about working in a place like this but you get sold a kind of negative story. If it wasn't for living on the North-West Coast, I'd be still fart-arsing around drinking lattes in some inner-city Sydney coffee shop creating derivative crap and it was the North- West Coast that provided the opportunity.

Interview, **Windmill Teacher Notes**, Arts Education Program 2009.



AIM: To introduce the cross-art form approach of the production.

In *Nyuntu Ngali*, Scott Rankin often provides suggestions rather than specific stage directions.



Research and **write** a creative piece based on the production synopsis:

It is the 22nd century in central Australia. Everyday life is basic in this future world . . .

For example, drama, song lyrics, poem, editorial, prose narrative, blog etc.



Present your creative writing responses to the group.

Discuss:

1. What are the common themes or questions explored in your pieces?



Chose one of the scene titles from *Nyuntu Ngali* and write a creative response to it.

Scene 1: Just do it

Scene 2: Labour

Scene 3: Lovers

Scene 4: Mothering or smothering

Scene 5: Who are you?

Scene 6: Chase is over

Scene 7: Hungry

Scene 8: Hungry and Thirsty

Scene 9: Honey ants

Scene 10: Baking bread from grass seed

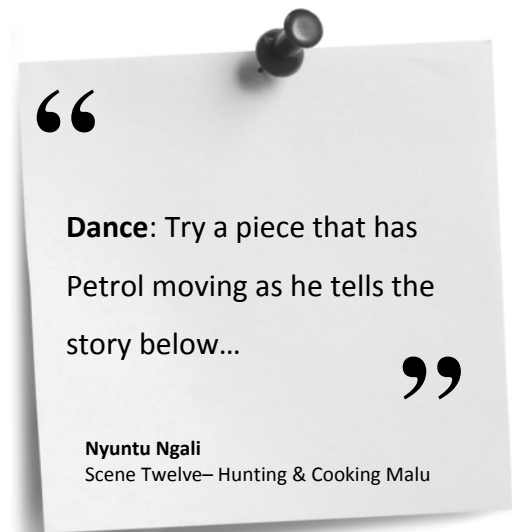
Scene 11.

Scene 12: Hunting and cooking malu

Scene 13: Initiation

Scene 14: Skinning a rabbit

Scene 15: Finished





Adapt and **develop** either your creative writing response to the 22nd century or your response to a scene title from *Nyuntu Ngali* into a non-literary form.



For example, film/video, graphic novel, mobile phone image montage/video, game, photography, drawing/painting, 3D model, drama, dance, puppetry, music/sound composition.

Present your non-literary text responses to the group.

Compare and **contrast** the selected forms of representation.



Use various methods of movement to tell the story of *We Are Going*, a poem by Oodgeroo Noonuccal.



For example, create a series of tableaux, or have one narrator and a number of performers, or create a silent movement piece.



Create a collage that represents the story of *We Are Going*, a poem by Oodgeroo Noonuccal.

WE ARE GOING

by Oodgeroo Noonuccal

They came in to the little town
A semi-naked band subdued and silent
All that remained of their tribe.
They came here to the place of their old bora ground
Where now the many white men hurry about like ants.
Notice of the estate agent reads: 'Rubbish May Be Tipped Here'.
Now it half covers the traces of the old bora ring.
'We are as strangers here now, but the white tribe are the strangers.
We belong here, we are of the old ways.
We are the corroboree and the bora ground,
We are the old ceremonies, the laws of the elders.
We are the wonder tales of Dream Time, the tribal legends told.
We are the past, the hunts and the laughing games, the wandering camp fires.
We are the lightening bolt over Gaphembah Hill
Quick and terrible,
And the Thunderer after him, that loud fellow.
We are the quiet daybreak paling the dark lagoon.
We are the shadow-ghosts creeping back as the camp fires burn low.
We are nature and the past, all the old ways
Gone now and scattered.
The scrubs are gone, the hunting and the laughter.
The eagle is gone, the emu and the kangaroo are gone from this place.
The bora ring is gone.
The corroboree is gone.
And we are going.



AIM: To introduce Pitjantjatjara language and explore issues surrounding the survival of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.

How to pronounce NYUNTU NGALI

The first word sounds more like “noon two” than “none-two”.

The g in Ngali has a bit of a ‘tongue in the back of the throat’ sound, but is close to “narly.”



PETROL: (Whispered)
His **Tjuni** - tummy is all swollen,
His **Tjaliny(pa)** - tongue is cracked and dry see,
That’s why he **ulanyi**, cries!



Nyuntu Ngali
Scene EIGHT – Hungry and Thirsty



Research how many different Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages existed in Australia before colonisation.

Find out how many of these languages are still being spoken today.



Discover the different ways Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities around Australia are working to revive and sustain their languages.

Read the objectives of the Australian Government in addressing the language loss in Indigenous communities.

1. National Attention: To bring national attention to Indigenous languages – the oldest surviving languages in the world; and the pressures they face.

Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, *Indigenous Languages - A National Approach*,
www.arts.gov.au/indigenous/languages_policy

Brainstorm ways governments, communities and individuals could contribute to bringing national attention to Indigenous languages.



Sign up for some free lessons in Pitjantjatjara.

Listen to the sound of the language and learn some Pitjantjatjara words.

www.ninti.ngapartji.org

Watch these songs in English and Pitjantjatjara created by young people in the Amata community, South Australia.



www.youtube.com/watch?v=X3abBYMetjE



www.youtube.com/watch?v=cmeKNa5N7i8



Log on to UsMob, a seven-part chose-your-own-adventure series set in central Australia featuring four Aboriginal kids, Charlie, Della, Harry and Jacquita.

<http://www.usmob.com.au/>



Watch the Ngapartji Ngapartji Language SBS TV ad

<http://vimeo.com/5486304>

There has been a lot of discussion and debate on how to appropriately refer to Aboriginal people.

Download the following guidelines and discuss.

National Indigenous Languages Policy

http://www.arts.gov.au/indigenous/languages_policy

Use of appropriate language when working with Aboriginal communities in NSW.

www.community.nsw.gov.au/DOCSWR/_assets/main/documents/RESEARCHNOTES_ABORIGIN_AL_LANGUAGE.PDF

The terminology of Aboriginal Australia

www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/primary/hsie/assets/pdf/csarticles/abterminology.pdf

Working with Aboriginal people and communities - NSW Department of Community Services

www.community.nsw.gov.au/docswr/_assets/main/documents/working_with_aboriginal.pdf

“

Of the 145 indigenous languages still spoken in Australia, 110 are critically endangered.

”

Indigenous Languages – A National Approach
www.arts.gov.au/indigenous/languages_policy

VOCABULARY - Pitjantjatjara to English

sourced from *Windmill Teacher Notes, Arts Education Program 2009.*

Greetings

Wai – what’s up?

Palya – in response to how are you – good/fine/okay

Uwa – yes (said periodically to conversation to indicate you are listening)

From the script

walytja – one of the family, a relation, kinsman

inyupa – (Roan) is of kin that is forbidden to marry (Eve) – wrong way marriage

tjini - footprint

mukuringanyi - love

tjukurpa - story

mamu – ghost/spirit

wai nyangatja – look out

yaaltjin - where

ititjara – (she is) with child

ilunyi - die

waru – fire

kapi – water

mungu – night/darkness

pira - petrol

kungkawara – teenage girl

wilitja – shelter

ilkari – sky

maku – witchiti grub

malu – red kangaroo

paki – sand

kalala – hot part of the day/desert heat

mantu – the land

iriti – past

tjiritpi – sunlight

ipi – milk

tjulku – blood

nyinanyi – live

iluntananyi – kill me

wirtjapakani – run

pika – fight

kumpini – hide

ulanyi – cry/cries

kuku – food

manta – earth

kulini – listen

paltjatjaiatja – hungry

piti – traditional dish

mai – food

katji – spear

yunpa – face

liru – snake

tjiranka – boy

wati – men

tjala – honey ant

wampa – I wouldn’t know