

Sydney Theatre Company Education present



**By Wesley Enoch and Deborah Mailman**

**With Lisa Flanagan**

**Directed by Leah Purcell**

**Teacher's Resource Kit**

**Written and compiled by Robyn Edwards and Samantha Kosky**

**[sydneytheatre.com.au/education](http://sydneytheatre.com.au/education)**

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## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

# The 7 Stages of Grieving

By Wesley Enoch and Deborah Mailman

### Season

22 February – 20 March 2008

### Venue

Wharf 2, Sydney Theatre Company  
Pier 4/5 Hickson Road, Walsh Bay

### Touring

*The 7 Stages of Grieving* will tour to Griffith Regional Arts Centre (2 April), Wagga Wagga Civic Theatre (4, 5, 7 April) and Albury Performing Arts Centre 9, 10 April).

This tour has been made possible by Arts NSW through the ConnectED programme.

Sydney Theatre Company would like to take this opportunity to warn members of the audience that this production contains names and visual representations of people recently dead, which may be distressing to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. All care has been taken to acquire the appropriate permission and show all proper respect.

The performance time is approximately **one hour**. Please note there will be **no interval** and latecomers will not be admitted.

We respectfully ask teachers **discuss theatre etiquette** with students prior to attending the performance.

We respectfully ask that you discuss theatre etiquette with your students prior to coming to the performance.

### Running Late?

Please contact Sydney Theatre Company's main switch on 9250 1700 and a message will be passed to Front of House.

### Booking Queries

Please contact Barbara Vickery on 02 9250 1778 or [bvickery@sydneytheatre.com.au](mailto:bvickery@sydneytheatre.com.au)

### General Education Queries

Please contact Helen Hristofski, Education Manager, on 02 9250 1726 or [hristofski@sydneytheatre.com.au](mailto:hristofski@sydneytheatre.com.au)

## Sydney Theatre Company

Sydney Theatre Company (STC) produces theatre of the highest standard that consistently illuminates, entertains and challenges. It is committed to the engagement between the imagination of its artists and its audiences, to the development of the art form of theatre, and to excellence in all its endeavours.

STC has been a major force in Australian drama since its establishment in 1978. It was created by the New South Wales Government, following the demise of the Old Tote Theatre Company. The original intention was to better utilise the Drama Theatre of the Sydney Opera House and the new Company comprised a small central administration staff, technical staff, workshop and rehearsal facilities. Richard Wherrett was appointed Artistic Director from 1979 to 1990.

The Wharf opened on 13 December, 1984 by Premier Neville Wran, which allowed all departments of the Company to be housed under one roof for the first time. The venue was to become the envy of the theatre world. From 1985, the Company could perform in two locations throughout the year, the Drama Theatre and The Wharf. From 1990 to 1999, Wayne Harrison served as Artistic Director. A third regular venue, Sydney Theatre, administered and operated by STC, opened in 2004.

The predominant financial commitment to STC is made by its audience. Of this audience, the Company's subscribers make a crucial commitment. The Company is also assisted annually by grants from the Federal Government through the Australia Council and the New South Wales Government through the Ministry for the Arts. STC also actively seeks sponsorship and donations from the corporate sector and from private individuals.

**To access detailed information on Sydney Theatre Company, its history and productions please contact our Archivist Judith Seeff at [jseeff@sydneytheatre.com.au](mailto:jseeff@sydneytheatre.com.au)**

## Sydney Theatre Company Education

Sydney Theatre Company is committed to education by programming original **productions** and **workshops** that enthuse and engage the next generation of theatre-goers. Within the education programme Sydney Theatre Company produces its own season of plays as well as collaborates with leading theatre-for-young-people companies across Australia.

Often a young person's first experience of theatre is facilitated by teachers. STC ensures access to all of its mainstage productions through the **Schools Day** programme as well as produces and tours theatre specifically crafted to resonate with young people.

STC works to support educators in their Drama and English-teaching practices. Every year dynamic **workshops** are held by leading theatre practitioners to support curriculum content, detailed resources are provided for all productions and an extensive work-experience programme is available to students from across the state.

The annual Sydney Morning Herald and Sydney Theatre Company **Young Playwright's Award** continues to develop and encourage young writers. The winning students receive a cash prize and a two-day workshop with a professional director, dramaturg and cast – an invaluable opportunity and experience.

Sydney Theatre Company has an extensive **on-line resource** for teachers and students. Visit [www.sydneytheatre.com.au/education](http://www.sydneytheatre.com.au/education).

We encourage teachers to subscribe to regular e-news to keep informed as well as access **heavily discounted** tickets and special offers/

**For further information on STC Education programme, please contact the Education Manager Helen Hristofski at [hristofski@sydneytheatre.com.au](mailto:hristofski@sydneytheatre.com.au)**

## Production Credits

### **The 7 Stages of Grieving**

By Wesley Enoch and Deborah Mailman

The Woman

Lisa Flanagan

Director

Leah Purcell

Designer

Bruce McKinven

Lighting Designer

Luiz Pampolha

Sound Designer

Brendan O'Brien

Production Manager

Terri Richards

Stage Manager

Annette Dale

Assistant Stage Manager

Larna Burgess-Munro

Touring Stage Manager

Georgia Gilbert

Touring Assistant Stage Manager

Pheobe Collier

Leah Purcell comes to Sydney Theatre Company courtesy of Bungabura Productions

This production opened on 25 February 2008 at Wharf 2, Sydney Theatre Company.

## MEDIA RELEASE

Sydney Theatre Company Education presents

### THE 7 STAGES OF GRIEVING

By Wesley Enoch and Deborah Mailman

Friday 22 February - Tuesday 18 March 2008

Wharf 2, Sydney Theatre Company

One of Australia's most popular and celebrated Indigenous plays, *The 7 Stages of Grieving* by Wesley Enoch and Deborah Mailman, makes a welcome return to Sydney Theatre Company this year. An all new production directed by Leah Purcell and starring Lisa Flanagan, takes audiences on an emotional journey through love, anger, humour and loss, at Wharf 2 from 22 February to 18 March 2008.

The groundbreaking play, chronicling one woman's grief and exploring issues of forgiveness and reconciliation, integrates traditional and contemporary forms of storytelling, movement and song. Paralleling Elisabeth Kubler-Ross's 5 Stages of Dying with the 7 Phases of Aboriginal history and the processes of grieving, the return of this empowering work is particularly timely. Having first appeared in 1995, the play went on to be a massive hit and tour internationally before a final scene was re-written and the piece re-staged to incorporate the historic 'reconciliation' or 'sorry' march across the Sydney Harbour Bridge. With a formal apology by the government proposed as a first item of business for federal parliament on 13 February 2008, the play again looks set to evolve in a changing Australian context.

Open to both school groups and the general public, *The 7 Stages of Grieving* is the first production of Sydney Theatre Company's 2008 Education programme.

Making her Sydney Theatre Company debut, Leah Purcell co-wrote and acted in *Box The Pony*, which played in Sydney, Edinburgh and London. As an actor she is known for the films *Lantana*, *Somersault*, *The Proposition* and *Jindabyne* and she wrote and directed the documentary *Black Chicks Talking*, which won a 2002 Inside Film Award. Stage credits include *The Story of the Miracles at Cookies Table* (nominated for Best Actress award, 2007 Sydney Theatre Awards) *Parramatta Girls* and *Stuff Happens* (nominated for Best Actress award, 2006 Helmann Awards).

Lisa Flanagan has numerous film and television credits, including *Australian Rules*, *Black and White* and *All Saints* and theatre credits including *Parramatta Girls*, *My Girragundji* and *The Sapphires*.

Sydney Theatre Company Education delivers a specially designed programme for up to 30,000 young people each year, including four major productions, a range of workshops, professional development opportunities for teachers and a range of other activities including the Sydney Theatre Company Sydney Morning Herald Young Playwrights' Award.

Following its Sydney dates, the production also tours to Griffith Regional Theatre (opens 2 April), Wagga Wagga Civic Theatre (opens 4 April) and Albury Performing Arts Centre (opens 9 April).

Cast Lisa Flanagan  
Director Leah Purcell  
Designer Bruce McKinven  
Lighting Designer Luiz Pampolha  
Sound Designer Brendan O'Brien

Venue	Wharf 2, Sydney Theatre Company
Season	Friday 22 February – Tuesday 18 March
Price	\$20 per student
Bookings	02 9250 1777
Information	<a href="http://sydneytheatre.com.au/education">sydneytheatre.com.au/education</a>
Media	For further information, images, interviews please contact: Tim McKeough (02) 9250 1703 / <a href="mailto:tmckeough@sydneytheatre.com.au">tmckeough@sydneytheatre.com.au</a> Wesley Slattery (02) 9250 1705 / <a href="mailto:wslattery@sydneytheatre.com.au">wslattery@sydneytheatre.com.au</a>

*The 7 Stages of Grieving* is an exploration of the personal and political history of Indigenous Australia as an expression of our grieving.

Wesley Enoch

The play follows the experiences of an Indigenous “everywoman” and chronicles the grief present in her life and the means of expressing it. The stories acknowledge real events, family histories and personal experiences to create a mixture of fact and fiction. The histories and lives explored cover over 200 years of political relationships with migrant Australia – a history of “... grief, misunderstanding and injustice.” [Enoch] One story is created from many, a universal theme is told through the personal experiences of one character.

## Social/Political/Cultural Context:

*The 7 Stages of Grieving* is about politicising the content and the exploration in form from a traditional/contemporary Murri viewpoint. This exploration is part of the continuity of Indigenous cultures and is important to the development of a modern, uniquely Australian voice.

Wesley Enoch 1996

*The 7 Stages of Grieving* brings to the stage many social, political and historical issues concerning Australians.

Issues of past and present, from discrimination, injustice, family unity and oppression, loss, the stolen generation, loss of culture and land/home, to reconciliation, fighting for survival and deaths in custody are given theatrical expression.

### Exercise:

**BRAINSTORM:** Using the list of themes and issues provided, divide them into 3 categories: social, political and cultural.

**DISCUSSION:** In groups, choose 3 from each category and analyse how Purcell presented and dealt with them in the STC production. Evaluate how these themes are given theatrical expression. How effectively do her directorial choices engage the audience and realise Enoch’s intentions?

This play has had several successful seasons on stage in Australia and overseas since 1996. The play’s issues are so imbedded in Australian culture, policy and history, but what do you think allows them to be powerful and evocative over time and on an international stage?

### Exercise: Introduction to Contemporary Australian Theatre

**BRAINSTORM:** What experiences of Australian theatre have you had? Define what makes all these examples “Australian”. What would you define as Australian theatre?

Think about: images, characters, themes and issues, symbols and metaphors, language, setting and landscape, cultural and political context, comedy and irony, atmosphere, element of biography and Australian identity (Hint: If it was performed overseas how would other audiences identify it as Australian AND when performed here what do Australian audiences identify with on a variety of levels?).

### Exercise: Historical Context Workshop

Following a physical warm up, students use two distinct props e.g. fabric and grey drama box; as puppet characters to express the following narrative. The students should give the puppets the focus, using non-verbal performance skills to create images and status and dynamic relationships between the metaphoric characters.

- Character 1 is “Dreaming”
- Character 2 “invades” Character 1 whilst in this dreaming state
- Character 1 experiences “Genocide” at the hands of Character 2
- Character 2 asserts “Protection” over Character 1
- Character 1 is “assimilated” by Character 2
- Character 1 separates themselves from Character 2 through “self-determination”
- Character 1 and 2 “reconcile”

**Reflection:** What narratives were communicated/told? Who were the characters portrayed? With reference to the elements of drama such as images, dramatic moments, movement, symbols, describe how this style of theatre engaged as an audience.

### Exercise: Personal Response

Using the handout of the 7 phases of Aboriginal History, identify the phases you have experience personally and write briefly what that experience was. Identify all the phases you have experienced in a broader sense (family, community, cultural). Outline briefly what that experience was. Finally identify the phases you know have occurred to humanity in some time in history. You may like to use a different colour for each of the 3 tasks in mind map form.

Many Aboriginal people have personal experience of each of these acts. How can theatre invite an audience into experiencing these in an empathetic way? What dramatic techniques does *7 Stages* employ to enable an audience to experience these emotions to gain a genuine understanding of grief?

### Exercise: Time Line

Present students with the 7 phases of Aboriginal History (in non-sequential order). Students are to sequence these phases chronologically from their own knowledge and the timeline found in the introduction to the play; place approximate dates, government policies or descriptions beside each one. Students share their discoveries to develop an informed response.

### Exercise: Thematic Concerns

Select 5 thematic concerns and explain HOW these issues are dramatised by Enoch and interpreted by Purcell. Name the theatrical and dramatic techniques used to give expression of the themes, the impact this expression had on you as the audience and what it made you think about as a result.



## Dramatic Form – Monodrama

*“All plays demonstrate at least one thing in common, the basic human need to give voice to stories that communicate something of value or something one has experienced or learned... the function of the story teller ... is to make his or her experience the experience of those who listen or watch.”*

(James Hillman, in introduction to *The 7 Stages of Grieving*)

This is the term used to refer to a one woman show. In *7 Stages* there is only ever one actor on stage. She performs a number of monologues and transforms into or role plays a variety of other roles/characters as she recalls them from her memory.

It is unique, like the culture it represents – stressing the importance of family and where you are from and challenges our ‘western’ concept of a play’s format. It draws on traditional and contemporary arts. Cultural issues surrounding grieving are brought together using projection, contemporary performance and modern theatrics to explore a form of ‘cultural hybridity’ (Enoch).

The play provides wide range of material that is rich with opportunities for improvisation and devised theatre. The actor plays many characters, transforming before the audience. This allows her to bring to the stage not only her story but the story of her family and her people. Transformation of actor supports her presentation as the everywoman symbolically and theatrically, it engages us imaginatively and takes us into the stories told.

### Exercise: Transformation of Character

DISCUSSION: How many roles and/or characters does Flanagan present? What performance skills does she use to create these characters? What is the effect on the audience of hearing the stories from different “voices” or roles?

## Dramatic Structure – Episodic

*7 Stages* has 24 short scenes, each with its own complication. This type of structure is referred to as episodic and it greatly affects the shape and rhythm of the play (it doesn’t drive straight to a climax then have a resolution as in realism).

The episodic structure of the play influences the use of time, place, rhythm and character. It enables:

- *time* to jump between past, present and future
- *place* to shift and change without changing the set
- *rhythm* can rise and fall freely without losing underlying tension
- *character* a large variety of characters can be used, each episode can involve new characters without needing to introduce them thoroughly. The exposition stage in realism carefully introduces each character’s personality and history

The episodic structure of *7 Stages* expects the audience to make connections through a experiencing a number of different scenes which focus on the theme of grief. The structure is epic as it spans a long period of time and place. *7 Stages* makes use of some of the techniques of Brecht’s Epic Theatre such as placards, projections, time span, alienation, court report, and direct address. It is not however, Brechtian, as the production never attempts to emotionally disengage its audience.

**Exercise:**

The play is a series of “episodes”. Prepare a group response to the following questions. In your presentation, use rehearsed moments from the performance to illustrate your commentary.

How does the non-linear structure of the play contribute to its success? Why has Enoch chosen to place the scenes in this order?

**Exercise:**

Choose 3 consecutive scenes which you are very familiar with and direct another actor through top and tail of scenes’ shifts in mood, time, location/place and style. What tools do performers and directors have to shape these transitions without using the audience’s engagement?

How do we make meaning as audience, draw connections when not linear plot with recognizable, beginning middle end – so what is running through, recurring?

DISCUSSION: How does play ensure we are emotionally engaged? And we have a personal relationship with the subject matter?

## Performance Style - Non-Naturalistic

*7 Stages* employs a wide variety of performance styles. All are non-naturalistic. Each performance style has its own unique conventions including style of movement, use of voice and relationship to the audience.

The dominant performance style is of course, storytelling.

**Exercise:**

Identify all the episodes presented in this style and the conventions Flanagan employed. In groups students are allocated a number of episodes to identify the performance styles and the associated conventions.

## Actor-Audience Relationship (direct address)

To be an effective story teller and capture the audience’s belief, an actor must claim the story and the experiences of the character as his or her own. In performance, the stories are told directly to the audience. The story teller holds the audience captive through his or her physical presence and eye contact which is enhanced theatrically through the use of lighting and the stage.

**Exercise: Directing Actors**

Considering this, in your opinion is it possible for another actor other than Mailman to successfully bring the play to life?

In preparation for a “rehearsal”, student A, the performer, chooses a storytelling episode and learns the lines. Student B, the director, for the same episode, devises one rehearsal experience for the performer, to assist them in claiming the story as their own and creating belief.

In pairs, rehearse the episode and perform. Is it possible for a non-indigenous performer to bring the stories to life with integrity and meaning? Is the play still effective if performed by someone other than an Indigenous female?

POST PRODUCTION QUESTION: How convincing was Lisa Flanagan? Justify your answer.

### Exercise: Storytelling

Students bring props that hold personal significance to themselves.

Techniques of storytelling – eye contact, role play, relaxed conversational delivery, truth and connection, ownership of story. Note that this time, these are not the actors' stories.

Choose 3-4 lines and rehearse using Stanislavski's system to create belief. eg. Nana's Story, Story of a Father. Imagine that this is your story, connect with truth of what you are saying, visualize characters, and the events you describe. Present your work to partner and/or class.

### Reflection Questions:

1. What is the value of representing our stories in performance?
2. How is the nature of each story changed in performance? Does its meaning or significance or focus change?

## Techniques and Conventions

### Multi-media

Words and images are projected onto the performance space. This is a Brechtian technique used to enable a whole society and history to be on stage before the audience. It engages the audience's imagination encouraging them to move swiftly with the play as it moves across time and place. Projecting "1788", draws on the historical and social context, taking us immediately to the arrival of the First Fleet.

In *Wreck Con Silly Nation* it is used to emphasise the play on words and heighten the humour. Projecting the letter Z on the young girl's bare skin in *Black Skin Girl* is a highly theatrical and politically powerful expression of the forceful imposition of English language on indigenous culture. The projection of words in *Sobbing* gives expression to the woman's emotional state enabling the audience to access her feelings without having to say how or why.

Projecting photographs of family is a theatrical way of introducing us to the woman's family and history while allowing us to connect as family is something we all have.

### Exercise: "Gallery of My Home"

Students are to write and rehearse a 1 minute episode for performance with the title "Gallery of My Home". Choose a 3 – 5 photo sequence that is to be projected during the delivery.

Evaluate another performer's story. What is the impact of the photographs? How do they assist in the telling? How do they help you engage and become familiar with the characters? Do the photos support, contradict or juxtapose the story being told? How does this influence our perception of the story teller?

Where did the photographs for the STC 2008 production come from? How does this knowledge effect your appreciation of the production? How did they engage you in performance?

How did Flanagan interact emotionally and physically with the photographs? Reflect on the choices made in relation to the elements of drama (movement, space, focus, mood and atmosphere etc.)

## Language

The production makes deliberate use of Indigenous and Western language and registers to create dramatic and theatrical impact. In *Black Skin Girl*, for example, the innocent child sings in Koori. Initially this can be seen to distance a white audience; positioning them as the outsider. Alternatively, Enoch writes from first person and employs the use of "you" and modern day colloquial language to create humor.

There is a variety of types of language used: poetry, official reports and police jargon, white and aboriginal slang and swearing. Some of the language used is very typical of Contemporary Aboriginal drama; it does not rely on well constructed sentences designed for an educated white audience. There is a bastardisation of English by mixing Aboriginal words e.g. boodgie and Murri into English sentences and there are English words are changed slightly to reflect to Aboriginal slang e.g. gubberment

### Exercise: Native Tongue

Read *Purification* and *Black Skin Girl* without looking at the translation. You will find that you will struggle with the articulation, you might even laugh etc. Would you laugh in theatre? How do we feel? How did you feel in theatre?

In contrast to your experiences of reading the text, what was the mood and tone of *Black Skin Girl* as performed by Flanagan?

## Poetry

Poetry is used to make the emotional narrative very clear.

Wesley Enoch

### Exercise: Invasion Poem

In groups, read *Invasion Poem* and devise a number of tableaux to depict the key images and ideas presented in the poem. Endeavour to represent the economy of language Enoch so effectively controls. The challenge then is to perform as an individual having connected to and created ownership of the images. Think carefully about the way in which you transition between the images. You should consider these transitions as part of your performance.

## Humour

Humour is created through repetition (*Murri Gets a Dress*), parody (1788) and irony (closing lines of *Story of a Father*) and is used as the most powerful political weapon. Laughter breaks down walls, disarms the audience and makes them open, creates unity between audience members as well as between the actor and the audience. Because we are laughing we are also prevented from feeling guilty and responsible.

Underlying is the idea that past events cannot be changed or erased but our attitudes, understanding and empathy can.

## Physical Theatre

The production uses movement as expression, bodies as props and endowment of object. Dramatic meaning is created in the space using light, symbol and motif. Through physicalising ideas, the performer shifts the way the audience sees the story, moving it out of the intellect into the experience.

### Exercise: March and Walking Across Bridges

Students attempt to create the image and atmosphere of walking in a crowd through the use of space, gesture, focus, movement and sound.

How does Flanagan use the elements of drama in the STC 2008 production create the emotions connected to these historical and political events?

## Design

All elements of design supporting the ideas of and desire for change – dripping ice, soil, white dress, turned grave, for sale sign etc. The design is modern, minimalist and transformational. The location is not specific and the audience must imagine the locations. What is more important than location or place are the words of the actor.

### Exercise:

Place key items around the stage eg. for sale sign, soil, leaves and suitcase. Work with one item in object play; rotate through the objects, playing, not mimicking, and keeping in mind that anything is possible.

How did objects change you, what shifts in mood, emotion with different objects did you discover? Did one make you feel angry, curious, sad, or playful? Did your relationships shift? Look at what has happened to the objects and the space at the end, once all the objects have been “played”.

### Exercise: Set Design

Examine the image of the design for the 2008 STC Production. Choose 3 scenes from the play, or students in small groups are allocated scenes. Reflect on the performance. Place the image at the centre of the page and mind map your responses to the following questions around it.

How was the set used effectively to:

- support the text?
- to emphasise themes?
- to draw focus to an emotion or idea?
- to provide a kinetic space for the actor?

## Soundscape

*7 Stages* is textured through the use of sound and music. The production employs realistic live sound, as in:

*15 Bargaining: The sound of hammering* and realistic pre-recorded sound in *17 Story of a Brother: “The sound of laughter”*. It also uses symbolic sound with the recurring “*A chair scrapes across a wooden floor, footsteps recede, a clock tick.*” and *19 Suitcase Opening: “Music fills the space. There is a feeling of catharsis and release”*. Soundscapes are also atmospheric and set location as in *4 Nana’s Story: “The story is textured with sounds of family, country music and the call of the kingfisher”*.

Soundscapes are also powerful theatrical techniques that ‘hit at the heart’, instantly engaging the audience on an emotional level. They also assist in moving the action swiftly through time and place as well as establishing mood and atmosphere. Furthermore, sounds that evoke time and place or mood create a space in which the audience uses their imagination. The repeat of the “*a chair scrapes across a wooden floor, footsteps recede, a clock ticks*” is a powerful reminder of time passing.

### Discussion Question:

How did experiencing Purcell's production alter the impact of the soundscapes on you as a member of the audience, in comparison to reading the reference to sound in the stage directions? How was the soundscape manipulated (e.g. volume, timing, complexity)? How did it underscore or draw attention to various elements of drama such as mood and atmosphere, tension, focus etc.

What is the impact of hearing soundscape in performance? What added meaning on performance? How does it support action, act as another character? Create mood and atmosphere?

### Symbol and metaphor/motif/imagery

The play makes effective, theatrical use of symbol to enhance meaning: the ice, the suitcase & photographs, the wooden cross on an open gravesite of red earth with the words 'For Sale', the earth and white border and the eucalyptus leaves are all highly evocative and sensory. However, the meaning of these symbols alters throughout the performance as they are either constantly changing (the melting ice) or the actor interacts with them (the black powder), uses them (the eucalyptus leaves), moves them (the suitcase) and/or transforms them (the earth).

The block of ice is a highly theatrical, visual metaphor employed to link the personal and social process of grieving. The melting ice dripping onto the black earth is always present and constantly changing, thus what it symbolises - the tears of a people, grieving for their land and culture, the melting of the Aboriginal people's pain, the coldness of white Australia - is altered by the episode performed in front of it.

The suitcase and photographs could represent the family heritage and the heritage of a people lying with their stories and their grief, waiting for the time to express it in a positive, caring environment. The wooden cross and earth work effectively to capture the loss and death as well as land ownership and Aboriginal land rights. The floor of the stage, black powder, red earth "framed by a scrape of white", can be seen as a constant visual expression of the encroachment of the white settlers and white culture on the Aboriginal people while the eucalyptus leaves, as a connection to nature, earth & ritual.

### Discussion Question:

The 2008 production of *7 Stages* offered a new interpretation of the set design described in the script. What changes did you notice between the written script and the production?

In your opinion, does the absence of the block of ice affect the experience of the play? Explain your thoughts

What were the dominant symbols and images employed in Purcell and McKinven's design?

How successful was the stage design in enabling the stage to transform time and place whilst also communicating the ideas in the play?

### Exercise: Endowing Objects with History

Each group is given an object referred to in *7 Stages* eg. plate, scarf, hat, picture frame, mirror. Students given one minute to create piece where prop is endowed with history, significance, culture, meaning. Create instant characters connected with the prop – use given circumstances. Perform and discuss as a result the varying performance styles and elements of drama. Discuss the differences between theatrical and dramatic elements.

## Post performance analysis

1. Choose several scenes then recall from Purcell's production the identifying thematic concerns and ideas, performance style, techniques and conventions and the impact these production choices had on you and the audience. Complete this as a table or mind map.
2. Evaluate the impact of Purcell's directorial choices on your appreciation and understanding of Enoch's text. In your answer, you should refer to theatrical and dramatic techniques.

## Set Design

By Bruce McKinven

