

**SYDNEY
THEATRE
CO
EDUCATION**

**LORD
OF
THE
FLIES**

WILLIAM GOLDING'S



On Cue

LORD OF THE FLIES

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Compiled by Jacqui Cowell.

The activities and resources contained in this document are designed for educators as the starting point for developing more comprehensive lessons for this production. Jacqui Cowell is the Education Projects Officer for the Sydney Theatre Company. You can contact Jacqui on jcowell@sydneytheatre.com.au.

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About On Cue and STC

ABOUT ON CUE

STC Ed has a suite of resources located on our website to enrich and strengthen teaching and learning surrounding the plays in the STC season.

Each school show will be accompanied by an *On Cue* e-publication which will feature essential information for teachers and students, such as curriculum links, information about the playwright, synopsis, character analysis, thematic analysis and suggested learning experiences.

For more in-depth digital resources surrounding productions, please visit the STC Ed page on our website.

Such resources include:

- Director documentaries
- Design sketchbooks

ABOUT SYDNEY THEATRE COMPANY

In 1980, STC's first Artistic Director Richard Wherrett defined STC's mission as to provide "first class theatrical entertainment for the people of Sydney – theatre that is grand, vulgar, intelligent, challenging and fun."

Almost 40 years later, that ethos still rings true.

STC offers a diverse program of distinctive theatre of vision and scale at its harbourside home venue, The Wharf; Roslyn Packer Theatre at Walsh Bay; and Sydney Opera House, as its resident theatre company.

STC has a proud heritage as a creative hub and incubator for Australian theatre and theatre makers, developing and producing eclectic Australian works, interpretations of classic repertoire and great international writing. STC strives to create theatre experiences that reflect Sydney's distinctive personality and engage audiences.

Strongly committed to engagement in the community, STC's Education and Communities programs aim to inspire theatre appreciation and participation not only in theatres but also in schools, community halls; wherever people get together. STC offers an innovative School Drama™ program; partners with groups in metropolitan Sydney, regional centres and rural areas; and reaches beyond NSW with touring productions throughout Australia. Through these partnerships and initiatives, STC plays a part in ensuring a creative, forward-thinking and sociable future by engaging with young people, students and teachers.

The theatre careers of many of Australia's internationally renowned artists have been launched and fostered at STC, including Mel Gibson, Judy Davis, Hugo Weaving, Toni Collette, Rose Byrne, Benedict Andrews and Cate Blanchett.

STC often collaborates with international artists and companies and, in recent years, the company's international profile has grown significantly with productions touring extensively to great acclaim.

STC is assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, by its arts funding and advisory body, and by the New South Wales Government through Arts NSW.

sydneytheatre.com.au

Curriculum Connections



SUITABLE FOR

Students in Years 7 to 12

SUBJECTS

DRAMA

Dramatic Traditions and Performance
Styles: Realism/Scripted Drama

ENGLISH

English Stage 4 and 5
NESA Suggested Texts for the English
Syllabus 7-10: Classic Texts

SYDNEY THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS

Lord of the Flies

By William Golding

Adapted by Nigel Williams

SIMON
Joseph Althouse

HENRY
Justin Amankwah

BILL
Nyx Calder

MAURICE
Yerin Ha

ROGER
Daniel Monks

SAM
Mark Paguio

PIGGY
Rahel Romahn

ERIC
Eliza Scanlen

JACK
Contessa Treffone

PERCIVAL
Nikita Waldron

RALPH
Mia Wasikowska

BOY
Liam Barnsley
Shae Luckman

DIRECTOR
Kip Williams

SET DESIGNER
Elizabeth Gadsby

COSTUME DESIGNER
Marg Horwell

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Alexander Berlage

COMPOSER &
SOUND DESIGNER
James Brown

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Heather Fairbairn

MOVEMENT &
FIGHT DIRECTORS
Tim Dashwood
Dr Lyndall Grant

DRAMATURG
Eryn Jean Norvill

VOICE & TEXT COACH
Charmian Gradwell

PRODUCTION MANAGER
Sarah Cowan

STAGE MANAGER
Natalie Moir

DEPUTY STAGE
MANAGER
Katie Hankin

ASSISTANT STAGE
MANAGER
Jennifer Parsonage

WIG, HAIR & MAKE-UP
SUPERVISOR
Lauren A. Proietti

COSTUME COORDINATOR
Sam Perkins

BACKSTAGE WARDROBE
SUPERVISOR
Carol Chor Khim Tee

COSTUME
MAINTENANCE
Nyok Kim Chang

DRESSER
Alicia Brown

LIGHTING SUPERVISOR
Corinne Fish

HEAD ELECTRICIAN
Harry Clegg

LIGHTING OPERATOR
Oscar Gruchy

SOUND SUPERVISOR
Hayley Forward

FOH SOUND OPERATOR
David Trumpmanis

SOUND TECHNICIAN
Lauren Peters

RADIO MIC TECHNICIAN
Kevin White

HEAD MECHANIST
Chris Fleming

HEAD OF FLYS
Kane Mott

MECHANIST
Ash Lyons

CHILD CHAPERONE
Anne Carroll

REHEARSAL
PHOTOGRAPHER
Hon Boey

PRODUCTION
PHOTOGRAPHER
Zan Wimberley

1 HOUR, 55 MINUTES
(NO INTERVAL)

PRODUCTION PATRON

FRANCES ALLAN & IAN NAREV
ALAN JOYCE & SHANE LLOYD



SYDNEY
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The Director In Conversation

Kip Williams discusses his vision for *Lord of the Flies*

When did you first decide on gender-blind casting for *Lord of the Flies*?

It never felt like an option to do it any other way. Because I've directed *Lord of the Flies* twice before – once with an all-male cast, once with an all-female – this is like a completion of those investigations.

When we were putting together the 2019 season last year, it felt as though the political climate – both nationally and internationally – lent itself to revisiting this story, which serves as a warning against dangerous types of leadership and political systems, and the propensity that society has had to silence, disempower and ostracise certain people, whilst privileging others.

The characters in this story are all boys, who, in the absence of adults, play out problematic ideas of masculine authority. Part of the intention behind casting actors of all genders is to throw light on this.

How have these casting choices manifested in the energy of the rehearsal room? Is there a different dynamic than usual?

It does change the rehearsal room dynamic: this is the most considerate rehearsal room I've ever been in. We start the day with a check-in, we end the day with a check-out. People are acutely aware of the needs of each other, and very sensitive to the emotional impact of the material. It's wonderful, and very supportive.

It's also a super playful rehearsal room. Inherent in the design is the idea of play and imagination, so [Set Designer] Elizabeth Gadsby and I contrived it specifically so that the cast is encouraged to play and invent a lot in the room, so it's been a really inventive space as well.

What impact do you imagine your casting decisions will have on the audience's experience of watching this production?

I hope that people will see themselves reflected on stage in the storytellers, and be inspired by that. The story is upsetting, confronting and challenging. My hope is that the audience, seeing this group of people who represent a more inclusive idea of who we are as a community, uses that as a positive affirmation for what we could be, in response to how the play depicts what we shouldn't be.

There is also something powerful in seeing adults play children in this story, because it is so darkly adult in its action. Something special happens to the audience when they are allowed to forget that these characters are children, and then face moments where they are starkly reminded.

Speaking more generally, why is it important to make these kinds of casting decisions moving forward?

It is so important. I feel really positively about the generation of directors that is currently in positions of influence at the moment in Australia, because it feels that there is a great collective movement towards this kind of casting; that it is not a one-off, but the new norm.

One of theatre's greatest strengths is that it allows you to imagine the experience of someone who is not like you. But it also does something else really powerful, in validating your experience by putting it on stage. Seeing yourself on stage is a really important part of feeling that you are valid in your world, and that goes for all forms of identity and lived experience. It's something I am very passionate about, something I feel like many artistic leaders in Australia are passionate about, and, whilst there's plenty of work still to be done, we are heading towards making this the new normal.

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Gender and Perspective

A PERSONAL NOTE FROM A PROUD MEMBER OF THE LORD OF THE FLIES CAST NYX CALDER

My name is Nyx Calder. I am a non-binary and transmasculine actor, artist and storyteller. I am also privileged enough to be a member of the *Lord of the Flies* ensemble, in which I play the role of Bill. I've been invited to meet, collaborate and explore alongside brilliant and incredibly diverse actors in order to bring this classic to life in a cutting-edge fashion.

Lord of the Flies is a story about power, fear, order, chaos and authority. It is also about masculinity seen through the eyes of children and the destructive nature of their efforts to emulate the men in their lives. As such, it is incredibly important as actors in the piece to consider the lens with which we ourselves view masculinity, a subject on which I feel I have a unique perspective.

At times in my life I've been seen as female, sometimes I've been seen as male, and other times I've been seen as a disruptive question that other people feel obliged to answer. I've been the victim of toxic masculinity one day then treated as 'one of the boys' the next - this history has been invaluable in forging my artistic identity both as a daring artmaker and as a staunch believer in safe practice. It's also been the foundation upon which my interpretation of my character has been built.

I've been asked to portray an eleven year old boy, but am exhilarated to say that the creative team has leant heavily into embracing my identity within the musculature of the show. Not once has Kip nor anyone else prescribed what being 'male' is to me, allowing my instincts and impulses to trump any preconceived notions of 'what boys are like'.

This is nothing short of revolutionary for someone like me. In the past I've found myself constrained not by my identity, but by archaic notions of gender roles and gender performance enforced by those in positions of power, whether within an institution or audition room. My authentic self is often seen as an inconvenience that must be covered up to preserve the supposed sanctity of the work. Luckily for me, this time it's been made clear that my authentic self is an integral reason for my casting as well as a considered element of the show itself.

The collaborative nature of this production cannot be understated. As young actors we have been seen, heard, validated, empowered and threaded together into a marvelous patchwork cast of diverse artists with deep and varied lived experience. This is the future of our industry. To continue to uplift and bolster the voices of the marginalised and invite them to share the stage.

I invite the audience to see past the binary when I am seen on stage. To think upon what gender has to offer, but also what bending and breaking it can achieve, to consider the moments where what you see may come at odds with what you expect to see. I firmly believe that any form of storytelling, theatre or otherwise, is a matter of tension between the art and the artists.

The friction between actor and character, or between the established space and the bodies that inhabit it. We should seek to find opposition and extremes as much as we search for similarity. When the balance is struck and enough pieces fall into place you find yourself with bottled lightning; beautiful and utterly unreplicable.

There is no doubt in my mind that we've achieved just that, and I hope that many will agree.

Sincerely and excitedly,
Nyx Calder

Synopsis

In the midst of war, a plane evacuating a group of schoolboys from Britain is shot down over a deserted tropical island. With no adult survivors, the boys, ranging in age from six to twelve, are left to fend for and govern themselves.

At first it feels like a game. A conch shell is found, and bestowed the symbolism of a 'talking stick'. A leader is elected in Ralph, who assigns duties to ensure the group's survival. A hunting party is formed, with Jack at its head. But soon Jack is jealous of Ralph's power, and begins to cause divisions amongst the boys, prioritising bloodthirsty pig-hunting over Ralph's more practical shelter building.

The situation escalates when a strange flying shape is mistaken for a beast, and the boys begin to be afraid. Innocent parties like the philosophical Simon or the hapless Piggy will be caught in the crossfire as Jack and his followers grow increasingly savage in their actions. More than just pig's blood will be spilled before long.

Context & History

William Golding wrote *Lord of the Flies* in 1950. The novel was rejected by several publishers. However, a young editor at Faber and Faber rescued the novel from the rejection pile and the company published the novel in 1954. The novel has sold millions of copies around the world (more than 25 million in English alone) and has been translated into thirty-five languages. *Lord of the Flies* was also made into a film by Peter Brook in 1954. The novel has been translated for radio and adapted as a ballet by Matthew Bourne.

William Golding was born in 1911, in Cornwall England. He wrote the critically acclaimed *Lord of the Flies* and was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1983. Golding also wrote critically acclaimed novels including *The Inheritors* and *Rites of Passage*. He worked for a short time as an actor and writer before training to be a teacher. In 1935, he started teaching English and Philosophy in Salisbury, and temporarily left the profession to join the Royal Navy during World War II.

In the seminal biography by John Carey, *William Golding: The Man who Wrote Lord of the Flies*, Carey explains how Golding liked to stir up antagonism between his students in order to observe their reactions. In class discussions he encouraged students to adopt opposing political views that were extreme. He admitted to using some 'experimental science' in his classroom in the 1950s with his young, male students. He gave his students unchecked freedom, setting up experiments to see how they would act in different situations.

Golding describes his experiments: "Well I gave them more liberty, and I gave them more liberty, and more, and more, and more - I drew further away. My eyes came out like organ stops as I watched what was happening" (Carey, 2009, p. 127). Apparently, Golding had to intervene with one particular experiment as the situation between students became life threatening.

There is not a lot of evidence about the experiments he undertook with students. The students who gave recollections of their experiences of Golding as a teacher reflect that they felt manipulated and observed. An anecdotal story from a student cites an excursion to Figsbury Rings, a Neolithic site near Salisbury, where Golding instructed the boys to form two groups: one to attack the enclosure, the other to defend it. He then let them battle it out to see who would win.

Context & History (Cont.)

Golding was very interested in dynamics between people when placed in threatening and terrifying situations. He was interested in what humans were capable of doing to others and what they would do to survive. Dangar (2019) explains that World War II had a lasting impact on Golding as a writer, citing Golding's statement; "The war produced one notable effect on me. It scared me stiff... It was the turning point for me. I began to see what people were capable of doing. Where did the Second World War come from? Was it made by something inhuman and alien - or was it made by chaps with eyes and legs and hearts?" (Dangar, 2019, p. 1).



Mia Wasikowska in STC's *Lord of the Flies*, 2019. Photo © Zan Wimberley

Character Analysis

THE 'BEACH CREW'

RALPH

Ralph is described in the novel as a 12 year old boy with fair hair and determination; "There was a stillness about Ralph as he sat that marked him out. There was his size, and attractive appearance" (Golding, 1954, p. 19). Ralph is mature, logical and has a strong moral compass. In the play, he makes a plan to create a fire, after this is put out, he creates a better fire with rocks. He also gets the boys to build shelters. His plans to get rescued are thwarted by Jack, who kills the fire, destroys the shelters and finally sets fire to the island.

Ralph takes on the role of leader at the beginning of the play, elected by the boys who are impressed by his leadership, his ideas and calm nature. They are also influenced by the power of the conch which he uses to call the boys to the beach to talk about his plans to get rescued.

Ralph is conflicted about whether to side with the 'hunters' or Piggy in Act 1. He wants to befriend Jack and be popular with the other boys. However, he likes Piggy's rationality and sensibility and also wants to protect him as he is bullied by the other boys. Ralph is not one of the Godstone boys from a private school. He is 'other' to the other boys but tries to fit in with them in Act 1 and part of Act 2.

SIMON

Simon is a soft and gentle character who shuns violence. He is the only pure character in the play who is not corrupted by Jack or carried away with the tribal and ritualistic acts of the boys. Piggy eats the meat off the pig and both Ralph and Piggy, get drawn into the tribal actions of the boys which results in the death of Simon. Simon is brave and curious and doesn't have a fear of the unknown, which we see when he finds the dead parachutist. As one of the boys from the private school, Simon has had his masculine identity prescribed to him. However, he but goes against the status quo and the image of masculinity the group represent.

Simon refuses to join Jack's hunting crew. Instead he aligns himself with Ralph and the boys on the beach, supporting Ralph's leadership. He is bullied by Jack and his crew and has to constantly defend himself and find his own way/



Joseph Althouse in STC's *Lord of the Flies*, 2019. Photo © Zan Wimberley

Character Analysis (Cont.)



Rahel Roman in STC's *Lord of the Flies*, 2019. Photo © Zan Wimberley

PIGGY

Piggy is orderly, soft, loyal, truthful and ethical. He stands up for what is correct and moral, right up until his death.

Piggy asserts himself as a natural but unlikely leader early on but is not taken seriously by the other boys. At the beginning of the play, it is Piggy who identifies the need for a structure to their meetings, stating “whoever holds the shell means that person is talkin’” (Williams, 1996, p. 14) He is not taken seriously because of his name, because he doesn’t go to a private school and because he is different. Ralph and Jack are resistant to the rules he introduces, but eventually agree. He makes a brave speech at the end of the play, even though he knows by making this speech, he could be killed by standing up for what is right. He states; “I’ll tell the truth. What’s right is right. It’s the conch and it’s precious, This is stronger than I am and more important” (Williams, 1996, p. 102). He functions in the play as an ethical voice which is ultimately shouted down and disrespected by the other boys until his death symbolising the failure of order and civility. When Piggy is killed and the conch is shattered, the savage masculinity of the other boys prevails.

PERCIVAL

Percival is 8 years old, the youngest of the boys. Percival is hopeful, innocent and easily influenced by the older boys. He is often scared and looks to Ralph and Piggy for reassurance and security. He is impressionable and innocent, and after Piggy is killed, he has no choice but to join the hunters and follow Jack’s orders.

Jack tells the boys that the beast is in Ralph as the beast can move from person to person. He creates this mythology that the beast is not a physical beast but is inside of people. Percival innocently turns Ralph in as they are looking for him, saying “I can hear Ralph” (Williams, 1996, p. 118). Percival is confused by whether the hunting is a game or real life, saying “What game is it?” (Williams, 1996, p. 116).

Character Analysis (Cont.)



Daniel Monks, Justin Amankwah Contessa Treffone, Nyx Calder and Yerin Ha in STC's *Lord of the Flies*, 2019. Photo © Zan Wimberley

THE 'HUNTERS'

JACK

Golding describes the character of Jack: "He was tall, thin, and bony, and his hair was red beneath the black cap. His face was crumpled and freckled and ugly without silliness. Out of this face stared two light blue eyes, frustrated now, and turning, or ready to turn, to anger" (Golding, 1954, p. 16).

Jack plays out the stereotype of toxic masculinity and how he thinks a man should act in the terrifying situation they are placed in. The ideas of masculinity that Jack acts out are problematic. His power is extrinsic and gained through socialisation. He attempts to gain power amongst the boys by referencing his status as a prefect at the private school many of them attended.

Jack wants to be leader and is devastated when the other boys vote Ralph as leader. He is attracted to power and doesn't like it when someone tries to take power away from him. He can't compete with Ralph at the beginning of the play. He says to Ralph; "I hate you. You and your stupid shell" (Williams, 1996, p. 83)

After Simon's death, Jack becomes more reckless and tribal. In Act 3, Jack and the other 'hunters' stay on the mountain. They add more tribal make-up, wear masks made from found objects such as shoes, smear blood on their face, carry hand made weapons, becoming increasingly rogue and tribal. Jack violently takes the leadership from Ralph. His explanation is that as he hunted and killed the pig, he should be leader.

After Piggy's death, Jack makes the decision to hunt and kill Ralph, the other boys follow his order. His justification for hunting Ralph is saying the beast is in him: "I can tell when the Beast is in someone. It's in Ralph and we'll have to hunt Ralph" (Williams, 1996, p. 113).

Character Analysis (Cont.)



ROGER

Roger is compulsive, aggressive and influenced by his peers. His loyalty to Jack stems from a need to belong and be part of a group. Roger is a realist and a pessimist. He says that they may not be rescued as there is a chance there is no one is left in the world after the war and the bomb: "There won't be any of them left, will there? There probably isn't a Queen left. Or any of those things. Just us" (Williams, 1996, p. 23). Dangar (2019) explains that Golding himself identified Roger as a Hitler figure, saying it was only the naval officer's arrival that stops Roger from dominating the whole thing. After Roger mercilessly kills Piggy, he goes on a mission to hunt and kill Ralph with Jack. While Jack acts out of a desire for power, Roger's nature is far more sinister; he seems to be driven purely by a desire to hurt others.

ERIC/SAM/BILL/AURICE/HENRY

Bill, Maurice and Henry follow Jack as part of the 'Hunters' crew. Eric and Sam are part of the beach crew, following Ralph.

Style, Symbolism and Theatrical Conventions

STYLE: CASTING (INCLUSIVITY AND DIVISIVENESS)

Sydney Theatre Company's 2019 production of *Lord of the Flies* uses the script adapted from Golding's novel by English playwright Nigel Williams. Kip Williams directed Nigel Williams' adaptation previously at Malthouse Theatre in 2013, with an all-female cast as part of the Helium Festival. The inclusive casting by Kip Williams for *Lord of the Flies* creates a unique style. He has cast 11 exciting young actors as the young boys; four of the actors are straight out of drama school and two actors have never been in a professional theatre production before.

Daniel Monks, who plays the powerful and violent character of Roger, lives with disability and Nyx Calder, who plays Bill, identifies as non-binary.

Daniel Monk in Morris' article describes the roles he usually plays as meek and vulnerable characters, feeding into 'disabled' stereotypes. He explains the significance of having a disabled body on stage as a symbol of power rather than tragedy. He uses his crutch as a weapon in the play, subverting the typical symbolism of a crutch in a powerful way.

Two female actors have been cast as Ralph and Jack, the two most powerful and high-status characters. Contessa Treffone plays Jack and Mia Wasikowska plays Ralph, the two leaders of the boys at different times in the play. Contessa Treffone states, "We're all playing against type. No one's sitting within a role that they would usually play or get cast in, which is not only challenging as an individual but as a company it's quite liberating to come together under that understanding that we're all breaking stereotypes" (Morris, 2019, p. 1).

Morris (2019) explains that not a single stereotype has been left standing as Kip Williams has cast against type, gender, race and ethnicity for the roles of the British boys in the play. The casting decisions made by Williams alter the style of the play to create an energetic, physically driven piece which reexamines the play's content, themes and issues with a fresh perspective.

THEATRICAL CONVENTIONS/STORYTELLING

The world of this production of *Lord of the Flies* is constructed with the working elements of the theatre prominent in the design. We are in the world of the theatre with a large scaffold as the main set and props including stage boxes, rehearsal chairs, theatre wiring and costuming including masks. There is a sense of the actors playing as well as 'putting on a play' and stepping into the characters of *Lord of the Flies*. In Act 1, there is an exciting energy as the boys elect Ralph as leader and start to discover the island. Stage boxes are pushed around the space and the scaffold is brought on.

For this production, there is only one door into the space at the back of the Roslyn Packer Theatre stage. At the beginning of the play, the actors enter the space as themselves, casually sitting at the back of the stage, doing everyday actions like tying their shoelaces. They slowly step into character as the action starts. The actors start singing as a choir with Meridew (Jack) leading in his role as choir leader - it is at this moment that they step into character and into the world of the play.

Kip Williams wants to be clear that the actors are telling a story, taking responsibility for how the story is told. At the end of the play, the actors seem to step out of character and look at the audience, asking them to share the responsibility of what's been presented on stage, including the themes of toxic masculinity, divisiveness, bullying and violence.

For the closing moments of the play, there is a young child actor on stage. The child plays the naval officer who rescues the boys. Having a child play this high status and commanding role is an interesting choice. It solidifies that the characters are innocent children who have been thrown into a terrifying situation, taking on adult roles, decisions and responsibilities.

In the scene change between Act 1 and Act 2, Simon plays with the toy aeroplane. All the actors pick up the parachute and fan the parachute in a sequence with movement, voice and bright white lighting, lighting up the parachute. These elements remind us that the actors are storytellers, telling us a story of children stranded on an island during the war. These actions are like children's play and are game-like, again reinforcing the characters' age and innocence, juxtaposed against the hunting, violence and war-like actions in the story.

Style, Symbolism and Theatrical Conventions

SYMBOLISM

THE CONCH

The conch is used for different purposes in the production. The boys play rugby and games with the conch at moments throughout the play. The conch is also used by Ralph as a symbol of power; he blows into it to call the other boys on the island to come to a meeting. All the boys in the play are meant to use the conch to talk when a meeting is being held. This rule, created by Piggy, is ridiculed by some of the other boys.

The conch represents the system of order and democracy which Piggy and Ralph try to establish. Jack, Roger and the other hunters try to break this system as things descend into chaos and mayhem. Roger breaking the conch in the third act after killing Piggy symbolises a breakdown in the system and the boy's situation as things become hopeless and anarchic. Roger smashes the conch to destroy what the conch represented: order and fairness.

In Act 3, Jack makes a point of not allowing the conch in his part of the island, saying it has no power or place with the 'hunters'.

PIGGY'S GLASSES

Piggy's glasses are symbolic of his rational thinking and ability to try and solve the boys' dire predicament. Once the glasses are stolen by the boys, he is unable to help maintain the functional world he and Ralph have tried to create. The glasses also represent, on a practical level, the only way the boys can obtain fire, through refracting the sun's rays. Fire in the play is symbolic of survival and rescue.

Bullying is a main theme in the play, with teasing and jokes towards many of the boys, especially Piggy. The jokes escalate, becoming more serious towards Piggy as they make fun of his name, as well as the way he looks and talks. The boys take Piggy's glasses to light the fire in Act 1 and Act 2. In Act 3, the 'hunters' steal and break Piggy's glasses, taking away his ability to see anything but shadows. This takes away one of Piggy's senses, which they play on. The boys taunt him in Act 3, finally killing him, as Roger brutally strangles Piggy.



Contessa Treffone, Yerin Ha, Mia Wasikowska, Rahel Romahn and Justin Amankwah in STC's *Lord of the Flies*, 2019. Photo © Zan Wimberley

Themes and Ideas

TOXIC MASCULINITY

The main theme that Kip Williams focuses on in this production of *Lord of the Flies* is toxic masculinity. Many of the characters in the play have learned societal behaviours that are played out on the island. Most of the boys went to a private boys' preparatory school in London, before being evacuated, except for Ralph, Piggy, Roger and Perceval. The boys have certain societal behaviours they exhibit from the rules and expectations of school and home.

Once the boys are stranded on the island, they exhibit new behaviours and play out new roles. The group known as the 'hunters', led by Jack, exhibit primitive and savage behaviours such as hunting and killing animals, tribal chants and dances. The maniacal hunting of pigs eventually turns to hunting humans as the 'hunters' kill Piggy and hunt Ralph with a view to kill him. In the novel, Jack and the 'hunters' set fire to the whole island to smoke Jack out from his hiding place. The savage actions Jack exhibits are admired by many of the other boys. They are scared of Jack and afraid to question his actions. The behaviour escalates in Act 2 and 3, with ritualistic, wild and unchecked behaviour culminating in Simon and Piggy's death.

Previous readings of *Lord of the Flies* have suggested that, if left unchecked and unconstrained by society, humans will resort to violence and aggression. The Director Kip Williams wanted to primarily examine toxic masculinity and the way we think about boys and aggression with a fresh approach, showing the behaviour to be learned, not innate. Through casting a diverse group of young actors, including four women, a non-binary actor, an actor living with a disability and actors from a range of cultural backgrounds, he has created a new lens through which to look at the play. Kip Williams explains: "The cast comes from a generation more radical in the way they think about dividing power, in an age where Golding's examination of humanity's terrifying capacity for self-destruction has resonance" (Morris, 2019, p. 2).

Williams' directorial concept focuses on the darkness of the story, examining toxic masculinity and bullying, through a cast that represents the very opposite (Morris 2019). Williams reflects that the inclusiveness and diversity of the talented cast serve as an antidote to a narrative that is about divisiveness, persecution and silencing. The play also examines the nature of hierarchy and the societal structures in which society places its faith, causing the audience to question their own beliefs and assumptions (Morris 2019).

In the rehearsal room Kip Williams looked at shapes of leadership, masculinity and patriarchy in society. Williams and the actors looked at a different way to share leadership and the changes that needs to happen in society today. The way that a contemporary audience perceives toxic masculinity and violent behaviour is very different to how it would have been viewed in the 1950s when the novel was released. *Lord of the Flies* was written just after World War II when many women were returning to their roles as wives and mothers after being in the workforce. The lack of female characters in the novel points to Golding's view of a dominant patriarchal society in the 1950s.

Golding presents a view on masculinity in the novel, which is echoed by Nigel Williams in the play adaptation. Ralph represents a positive masculinity, displaying intelligence, maturity, a moral compass and good leadership attributes. He rationally focuses on practical activities like building fires and shelters, concentrating on getting rescued from the island.

Alternatively, as the antagonist in the story, Jack exhibits qualities that are aggressive, angry, irrational and impetuous - a different form of masculinity. Jack is described by Golding as: "Out of this face stared two light blue eyes, frustrated now, and turning, or ready to turn, to anger" (Golding, 1954, p. 16). Golding also describes how Piggy views Jack at their first meeting: "He was intimidated by his uniformed superiority and the offhand authority in Merridew's [Jack's] voice" (Golding, 1954, p. 17). Ralph questions Jack and his assumed leadership, saying "Why do you have to be in charge?" (Williams, 1996, p. 67).

As the plot develops, the stark contrast becomes apparent between Ralph's logic and intelligence and Jack's impulsiveness and violent tendencies. Jack represents negative male characteristics that are largely testosterone-driven, such as dominance and violence. Jack throws off his rationality and moral compass, as he becomes driven by the urge to gain authority and dominate the other boys and animals on the island, which he does through savagely hunting and killing. He says in the novel: "Bollocks to the rules! We're strong - we hunt! If there's a beast, we'll hunt it down. We'll close in and hunt and hunt and hunt!" (Golding, 1954, p. 91).

Themes and Ideas (Cont.)

Kip Williams comments on the casting:

“The inclusiveness and diversity of the talented cast serve as an antidote to a narrative that is about divisiveness, persecution and silencing”



Justin Amankwah, Nyx Calder, Yerin Ha and Daniel Monks in STC's *Lord of the Flies*, 2019. Photo © Zan Wimberley

Themes and Ideas (Cont.)



Contessa Treffone, Yerin Ha, Mia Wasikowska, Rahel Romahn and Justin Amankwah in STC's *Lord of the Flies*, 2019. Photo © Zan Wimberley

HUMAN NATURE

A sense of danger permeates *Lord of the Flies*, highlighted in this production. Things that are solid and safe and the values and beliefs the characters held in their lives before being stranded on the island are shattered.

Golding writes about human nature, and our capacity to make good, moral decisions as well as selfish, base and evil decisions and actions. Both good and evil traits are displayed in the characters of *Lord of the Flies*, in their words and actions. “Golding has a very keen sight and sharp pen when it comes to the power of evil and baseness in human beings... [his] novels and stories are, however, not only sombre moralities and dark myths about evil and treacherous, destructive forces, they are also colourful tales of adventure which can be read as such, full of narrative joy, inventiveness and excitement.” (The Nobel Prize Swedish Academy).

When Jack kills the pig, he puts the pig's head on a stick to keep the imagined 'beast' away as well as to remind the other boys of his victory. He also gets the 'hunters' to carry the pig to

the beach so he can gloat over his conquest to Ralph and the other boys. Jack smears the blood from the insides of the pig all over his face and body, encouraging the 'hunters' to do the same. He taunts Ralph, Piggy and the other boys on the beach by smearing blood on them. Eventually Piggy and Jack are caught up in the ritual, repeatedly chanting “Kill the Pig, Spill his blood” (Williams, 1996, p. 67). They join in the chanting and dancing, unwillingly at first, which leads to the killing of Simon.

In the play, Simon's death happens at the end of Act 2. Simon enters the stage, tangled in the large white parachute which disguises him. He comes to the beach to tell the boys that it wasn't a 'beast' they saw, but a parachutist shot down. The set in this part of the play has the parachute hanging from the back wall in a long drape with blood on it.

Themes and Ideas (cont'd)

HUMAN NATURE (CONT'D)

Simon cloaks himself in the parachute and is mistaken for the beast by the boys. By this stage in the play, the ritual that Jack started, with chanting, dancing and blood smearing, has escalated. The boys have spears and when Simon enters the space in the dark, he is attacked and killed.

Mistaken for the beast, Simon is brutally killed by Jack and the boys as they chant repeatedly and ritualistically to kill the beast “Kill the pig, spill its blood” (Williams, 1996, p. 68). None of the boys wants to address the fact that Simon has been killed, even though it is clear what has happened. Jack refers to what has happened as ‘killing the beast’. He quickly leaves the scene to hunt, taking his followers with him. Piggy is the only one who truthfully acknowledges the brutal killing of Simon, saying “That was Simon, that was murder” (Williams, 1996, p. 72).

Dangar (2019) explains the reference to the beast throughout the play. He talks about the origins of the beast as possibly relating to the trauma of evacuation and war the boys have experienced as a result of the Cold War or World War II. The characters have experienced displacement and separation from their parents as well as witnessing the destruction caused by bombing. Dangar cites Arnold Johnson, who states

“The beast is an externalisation of the inner darkness in man’s nature” (Johnson in Dangar, 2019, p. 123).

The English school boys gradually surrender to savagery. The majority of the boys ignore the rules laid down by Ralph, including keeping the fire going and building huts. Hunting pigs becomes the main aim, with Golding writing three main hunts by the boys to kill a pig. The boys are obsessed with it. They act out the killing of pigs as a game throughout the play, with Maurice and Percival pretending to be pigs at times throughout the text. In the novel it states that Jack and the ‘hunters’ apply white and red clay along with black charcoal to paint their faces. In the play, they have masks and headwear created by Marg Horwell’s costume design to indicate their gradual surrender to savagery and tribalism.



The cast of STC's *Lord of the Flies*, 2019. Photo © Zan Wimberley

The Elements of Production



Daniel Monks, Rahel Romahn and Contessa Treffone in STC's *Lord of the Flies*, 2019. Photo © Zan Wimberley

COSTUME DESIGN

The costume design by Marg Horwell is contemporary with regular everyday clothing that has a layered look. The actors wear gym gear, shorts, jackets and trainers. As the play progresses and the characters become more tribal, the actors smear blood on their face and bodies. They put on masks made of shoes and other found materials. The clothing of the boys, especially the 'hunters' becomes more disheveled and distressed as they characters become more reckless and tribal throughout the play.

SET DESIGN

In the design presentation (STC Design Presentation, 2019) Kip Williams described the set of *Lord of the Flies* as being like a beast itself because it shapes the psychology of the people within it.

The set includes a large, black scaffold which represents the mountain. The scaffold has a gantry and a ladder. The 'hunters' use the scaffold as their base and their lookout. Jack stays at the top of the scaffold, physically representing his power, status and leadership. The other 'hunters' move between the three layers of the scaffold, as they keep watch for the beast and observe the other boys on the beach. The scaffold is upstage in Act 1 and 2. It then moves downstage in Act 3 as Jack and the 'hunters' dominate the island.

The lagoon, beach, mountain and other aspects of the island are created in the audience's imagination, through storytelling and design elements.

LIGHTING DESIGN

The Lighting Design is an integral part of the design concept for *Lord of the Flies*. Kip Williams, Elizabeth Gadsby (Set Designer) and Alexander Berlage (Lighting Designer) collaborated to create a dynamic kinetic lighting design which lights the set, creating the world of the play.

The lighting design and kinetic lighting become part of the storytelling of the play. Flares are also used to create fire. The kinetic lights create the shape of the pig in a red colour. The lights change to blue to symbolise the evening sky as the boys try to sleep. The lights become horizontal and change to blue when the 'hunters' are hunting Ralph in Act 3. The actors then use the blue lights as swords and weapons, encroaching on Ralph to kill him on Jack's orders.

There is a significant shift in lighting in the last few minutes of the play. The back door opens and white light from the outside world shines through. A young male actor appears in civilian clothing. The theatre lights switch to fluorescent working lights. This stark shift thrusts the characters and the audience back to reality as rescue seems imminent and the reality of what has happened starts to sink in. The last image is of the all the characters, including Simon and Piggy standing in a clump with the young boy in front of them, staring out to the audience, asking them audience to think about what's just happened on stage.

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