

HYDRA

By Sue Smith
Directed by Sam Strong

A State Theatre Company of South Australia co-production



About the Play

They were writers, dreamers and free spirits. In the 1950s, Australian authors Charmian Clift and George Johnston fled halfway across the world to the idyllic Greek island of Hydra, determined to carve out a bohemian living as artists.

As they revel in their picturesque community, far off the world's literary map, inspiration for the great Australian work strikes. But a manyheaded monster of jealousy, infidelity, illness and alcoholism also rises from the crystal blue waters of their sun-kissed island home.

Award-winning Sue Smith weaves the original writings of two of Australia's literary icons into a moving relationship drama. She conjures the passion and intensity of the near mythical 'King and Queen of Hydra' as they follow their dream, only to end up in a Greek tragedy of their own making.

Information

CURRICULUM LINKS

Years 11-12; Tertiary

Syllabus link:

Realism, Storytelling

For studies in:

Drama, English/English Literature

SUITABILITY

This play contains high level, frequent coarse language; adult themes including sexual references, references to identity, loss and suicide. This production contains smoke, haze and use of herbal cigarettes.

RUNNING TIME

Approximately 105 minutes.

CAST

RAY CHONG NEE

Jean-Claude/Tony Katsikas/Doctor

Anastosopoulos

TIFFANY LYNDALL-KNIGHT

Ursula/Lorelei

ANNA MCGAHAN

Charmian Clift

NATHAN O'KEEFE

Martin Johnston

HUGH PARKER

Vic

BRYAN PROBETS

George Johnston

CREATIVES

SAM STRONG

Director

MERLYNN TONG

Assistant Director

VILMA MATTILA

Designer

NIGEL LEVINGS

Lighting Designer

QUENTIN GRANT

Composer/Sound Designer

KAT O'HALLORAN

Stage Manager

YANNI DUBLER

Assistant Stage Manager

HYDRA

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Paradise Love Story Expats Term 1

Before the show

Read

Before you see the show read about George and Charmian Clift and their time on the Greek island of Hydra. leonardcohenonhydra.com.au/the-story-of-george-johnston-and-charmian-clift/

Download

Download a copy of the *Hydra* program.

Watch

Before you come to see the show watch the following videos.

Sam Strong (Director) and the cast of Hydra speak about what to expect from the show.

vimeo.com/319671987

A short video about the Greek island of Hydra

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=11zKgIs9gNs>

Discuss

Why are stories, in particular personal stories about the lives of Australian artists, so important to theatre in 2019?

Do

"I feel that our job in the theatre is to give voice to dead people. There are people who didn't finish their sentences, people who didn't have a chance." (Anne Bogart)

In small groups choose from one of the following (or one of your choosing) deceased celebrities and research their life:

- ✗ Whitney Houston
- ✗ Chris Cornell
- ✗ Alan Rickman
- ✗ Heath Ledger
- ✗ Kate Spade
- ✗ Florence Henderson
- ✗ Robin Williams

Identify parts of their life that appear to be untold. Using what you have learnt from the research and using creative licence, brainstorm ideas for a script about your chosen celebrities' life.

What part(s) of their story do you think needs to be told?

Insight

When you come to see the show, keep an eye out for the following dramatic conventions:

The Fourth Wall is broken frequently throughout the play. Discuss the impact of this on the dramatic meaning created and the development of tension.

The story of Charmian and George is largely narrated and recalled through the memories of their son, Martin. Discuss why you think writer, Sue Smith has chosen to use the character of Martin to retell the story.

The characters on *Hydra* are very contrasting characters. Discuss the contrasting roles and relationships in the play.

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