

BARBARA AND THE CAMP DOGS

By Ursula Yovich and Alana Valentine

A rock'n'roll family reunion
that will break your heart
and fill it with songs

Bille Brown
Theatre

1 —
25 May

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Alana Valentine

Troy Jungaji Brady, Elaine Crombie

Contents

Information	3
Cast and Creative Team	4
About the play	5
Pre-Show Activities	6
Post-Show Activities.....	7
Possible Assessment Tasks.....	9
Production Elements	10
Reference List.....	12
Appendices.....	13

Information

VENUE

1 – 25 May

Bille Brown Theatre,
Queensland Theatre

Play Briefing: Monday, 29 April 6pm

(FREE EVENT - Opportunity for teachers to be given greater insight into the play from the creative team)

ATTENDANCE INFORMATION

Barbara and the Camp Dogs

will run for approximately

100 minutes with no interval.

WARNINGS

This play contains high level, frequent coarse language; adult themes including sexual references. The use of photographic or recording equipment is not permitted inside the theatre.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Queensland Theatre would like to acknowledge the Jagera and Turrbal people who are the Traditional Custodians of this land. We pay our respects to their Elders both past and present, and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

RECYCLE THIS PROGRAM

Support Greening Queensland Theatre and recycle this program after the performance in the recycling bins provided in the foyer. Read the program before the show at

queenslandtheatre.com.au

CURRICULUM LINKS

Years 11-12; Tertiary

SYLLABUS LINKS

DRAMA GENERAL SENIOR SYLLABUS 2019	DRAMA SENIOR SYLLABUS 2013
<p>Unit 1: Share</p> <p>How does drama promote shared understandings of the human experience?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ Cultural inheritances of storytelling ✘ Oral history and emerging practices ✘ Range of linear and non-linear forms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ Realism ✘ Contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander theatre forms
<p>Unit 2 Reflect</p> <p>How is drama shaped to reflect lived experience?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ Realism ✘ Associated conventions of styles and texts 	

PURPOSE	CONTEXT	THEMES	21ST CENTURY SKILLS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ Challenge or provoke ✘ Empower ✘ Celebrate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ Sociological ✘ Historical ✘ Political ✘ Personal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ Family ✘ Identity ✘ Belonging ✘ Culture ✘ Loss 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ Critical thinking ✘ Creative thinking ✘ Personal and social skills ✘ Communication

Form and style

- ✘ Storytelling
- ✘ Contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Theatre Forms
- ✘ Contemporary Realism

Key Conventions and Storytelling Devices

- ✘ Direct Address/Breaking the 4th Wall
- ✘ Narration
- ✘ Song
- ✘ Audience Engagement
- ✘ Non-linear
- ✘ Monologue
- ✘ Comedy

Cast and Creative Team



URSULA YOVICH
Co-Writer/Songwriter



ALANA VALENTINE
Co-Writer/Songwriter



LETICIA CÁCERES
Director



ADM VENTOURA
Songwriter/Musical
Rehearsal Director



VICKI GORDON
Co-Producer



STEPHEN CURTIS
Set Designer



CHLOE GREAVES
Costume Designer



KAREN NORRIS
Lighting Designer



STEVE TOULMIN
Sound Designer



MATT COX
Lighting Realiser



RAINE PAUL
Audio Engineer



GARY DRYZA
Sound Technician



RILEY SPADARO
Assistant Director



CECILIA NELSON
Stage Manager



BROOKE KISS
Assistant Stage Manager



TROY JUNGAJI BRADY
Joseph



ELAINE CROMBIE
René



**SORCHA
ALBUQUERQUE**
Lead Guitar



JESSICA DUNN
Performing Musical
Director/Bass



MICHELLE VINCENT
Drums



SHAKIRA CLANTON
Barbara Understudy

* Vicki Gordon also contributed music to 'Tick Sista', Merenia Gillies contributed to 'Chained to You' and James Warwick Shipstone contributed to 'Pieces'.



Elaine Crombie, Ursula Yovich

About the play

SYNOPSIS

Hitting the big time is tough when the only booking your kick-ass band can score is a pub gig. But the boisterous, bolshie Barbara and her rockers the Camp Dogs are in it for the long haul.

When a family tragedy beckons, Barbara and her sister (and fellow muso) René set off on a long and winding motorbike adventure from Sydney, through Darwin, and finally to Katherine – where the bickering pair come face to face with some home truths.

Part madcap buddy comedy, part electrifying rock gig, and part clarion call against the taint of inequality, this effervescent play with songs sold out its original season at Sydney’s Belvoir Theatre. Now it’s set to charm the pants off Brisbane.

CHARACTERS

- ✘ Barbara
- ✘ Rene
- ✘ Joseph
- ✘ Camp Dog 1, 2 and 3

WATCH

As a class watch the *Barbara and the Camp Dogs* trailer from the 2017 season of the show. Consider why John Shand from the Sydney Morning Herald said that the show, “will light the path to reconciliation.”



LINK:
[youtube.com/watch?v=pM9SGZnk3rU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pM9SGZnk3rU)

READ

Before attending the performance read the news article and interview, *Barbara and the Camp Dogs*: how one woman’s anger became a rock show, published in The Guardian in 2017.

LINK:
[theguardian.com/stage/2017/dec/18/barbara-and-the-camp-dogs-how-one-womans-anger-became-a-rock-show](https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2017/dec/18/barbara-and-the-camp-dogs-how-one-womans-anger-became-a-rock-show)

LISTEN

Step behind the scenes with co-writers Alana Valentine and Ursula Yovich, and actor Elaine Crombie as they discuss this powerful new work.



LINK:
<https://omny.fm/shows/belvoir/barbara-and-the-camp-dogs-backstage>

*Please note that there is some strong language used in this podcast.

Produced by Zoe Ferguson for Belvoir

Pre-Show Activities

DISCUSS

“Community is more important than the singular and I’ve always been proud of my mob for that”. (Ursula Yovich)

Discuss what you think Ursula means by this statement. Do you think the idea of ‘community’ over the individual is as important in white Australian culture? Justify your responses with examples.

ALTER EGO

Ursula Yovich has stated that ‘Barbara’ is her ‘alter ego’.

Ask students to create their own ‘alter-ego’ character. Provide students with a blank character outline and encourage them to brainstorm their ideas.

For example:

- ✗ Costume
- ✗ Skills
- ✗ Attributes
- ✗ Personality
- ✗ Career

Discuss as a class what personal attributes from themselves remain and what changes. Why?

This activity could be extended upon by students creating a fictitious social media account for their alter ego (Pro formas for these are easily found online)

SOUNDTRACK

Imagine you were writing a soundtrack for your life story, come up with 5 song titles that would appear on the soundtrack. Your songs must be original and unique titles for your story. Eg Persist through the Pain, The Rollercoaster, Take Me Back.

PRE-SHOW THEMES

Barbara and the Camp Dogs powerfully explores a number of key themes. Ask students about their current understanding of the themes below. What words and images come to mind when they hear them?

- ✗ Family
- ✗ Identity
- ✗ Belonging
- ✗ Culture
- ✗ Loss

This could be presented in groups as freeze frames or as a wordle

Wordle™

(<http://www.wordle.net/>)

--Note: This same activity could be revisited post-show in conjunction with the activity below. Has their understanding been broadened? Changed, etc.?



Elaine Crombie



Michelle Vincent



Troy Jungaji Brady

Post-Show Activities

THEMES

Engage students in a discussion about which themes from *Barbara and the Camp Dogs* were most apparent to them and why.

Following the discussion ask students to complete the table (Appendix 1) identifying key moments from the performance and what themes were evident in that scene. Encourage students to provide information about the narrative, roles and relationships, set design and costume to provide as much detail as they can. Explain that this process is a way of gathering information to then be used as evidence in an extended written task.

CONVENTIONS

Conventions of selected forms and styles are used to create dramatic action and meaning.

Ask students to choose 3-4 key conventions utilised within the performance. Analyse and evaluate how effectively they were manipulated to contribute to the dramatic meaning.

This could be presented as a mind map or table (Appendix 2).

See below for some example probing questions:

- ✘ The characters Barbara and Rene often break the fourth wall. What was the impact of these moments?
- ✘ How is humour used in the production to lighten moments and to provoke thought on serious issues?
- ✘ Songs were used as internal dialogue for characters. Was this effective?

ELEMENTS OF DRAMA DISCUSSION POINTS

ELEMENT OF DRAMA	QUESTIONS
Role/Character and Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ Which character did you identify with the most? Why? ✘ How would you describe the key characters? ✘ How did the actors show their characters through voice and movement? ✘ How was music used to denote character journey? ✘ The play explores the personal relationship between Barbara and her cousin Rene. How does this exploration draw attention to broader social concerns? ✘ Did relationships between characters undergo change?
Situation/ Narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ What key issues are explored and how were they linked to the narrative of the play? ✘ What were the pivotal/key moments? ✘ How was Barbara's journey communicated?
Place and Space (+Time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ Where did the play take place? List the locations/settings. How was this communicated on stage? ✘ The band remains visible onstage for the duration of the performance. What impact was their presence? Where was audience focus? ✘ What was the impact of having audience members seated on stage? ✘ The narrative is interspersed with songs. How did the actors transition from scene to scene?
Contrast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ Barbara and Rene are quite contrasting as characters. How did this manifest itself in the performance? ✘ What other elements of contrast are found in the show?
Tension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ Where were the moments of highest tension? ✘ How was this tension developed? ✘ Was this tension resolved?
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ Were there any lines that stood out to you? ✘ Were there any cultural references made? ✘ How was language used to shape character? ✘ Was there any subtext found within the language spoken by a particular character?
Mood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ What different moods were evident? ✘ How did music impact on the mood? ✘ How was mood developed?
Symbol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ What elements of symbol were found in the production? ✘ What symbolism was evident in the naming of the band 'Camp Dogs'?

5 KEY MOMENTS

In groups students are to represent five key moments from the performance through dramatic interpretation, using a sequence of five freeze frames. This task is useful in exploring the narrative of the performance as well as highlighting significant points of tension.

Remind students about the following:

- ✘ **Physicality** – using the body in the space to creatively represent ideas, creating abstract shapes, using all parts of the body
- ✘ **Focus** – where should the audience look? Actor focus and commitment
- ✘ **Space** – levels (high, medium and low) and proximity (distance between actors)

Extension: Ask students to play with the sequence of the freeze frames to make it a non-linear representation. Does this change anything?

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BARBARA AND RENE

Plot the relationship journey between Barbara and Rene. Consider creating a timeline – starting with Tanya (Barbara’s birth mother) abandoning Barbara (Appendix 3). Use your insight from the play to complete the activity.

- ✘ Key events mentioned in the text
- ✘ Conflict
- ✘ Status and Power
- ✘ Moments of change
- ✘ Locations of importance

GAPS AND SILENCES

“Tanya...them little ones, you can’t just leave ‘em”

The play references the moment when Barbara is abandoned by her mother and is left to be brought up by Rene’s mother Jill.

In small groups improvise and provide further information about what might have happened. Was there an inciting incident? What did the sisters talk about? How did the children react? Bring this scene to life.

Consider:

- ✘ Clear links to the narrative and themes of the play
- ✘ Well-developed roles and relationships
- ✘ Believable characterisation – voice and movement choices
- ✘ Manipulation of the elements of drama
- ✘ Use of one of the already existing conventions
- ✘ Creative exploration of space



Adm Ventoura,
Ursula Yovich,
Alana Valentine

MONOLOGUE

Barbara is a woman haunted by her past and throughout the play must face the source of her anger.

Towards the end of the play Barbara reconnects with her brother and further insight into her childhood is gained – her struggle with abandonment and her need to belong.

Write a monologue from the perspective of Barbara that explores her own character journey. If Tanya (birth mother) was there, what might she say to her? Alternatively, if she saw her father – what reaction would that garner?

Include:

- ✘ Correct scriptwriting conventions
- ✘ An engaging opening
- ✘ Knowledge of the play
- ✘ Character development
- ✘ Manipulation of the elements of drama
- ✘ A convention used within the production – eg. Breaking of the fourth wall

Alternate Monologue:

What perspective would Joseph have? Was he able to stand up to his father? He feels like he was cut from his sister and seeing her opens up that wound. Explore this further.

Possible Assessment Tasks

DRAMATIC CONCEPT

Context

In this unit, you have explored how drama can be used to celebrate, challenge, empower and share understandings of the human experience.

You have experienced a range of linear and non-linear dramatic forms that has highlighted the potential of drama to share people's stories.

Task

Working as a theatre-maker you will view *Barbara and the Camp Dogs* by Ursula Yovich and Alana Valentine. You are to produce an original dramatic concept that expresses a clear purpose (to celebrate, challenge, empower or inform an audience) and chosen context to communicate dramatic action and meaning around the theme of **belonging** or **identity**.

Your dramatic concept must organise information under the following headings:

Analysis and evaluation (400 words)

- ✘ How was the convention manipulated to contribute to the communication of the shared human experience?

My concept (800 words, 10-12 images)

- ✘ Identify a chosen purpose and context
- ✘ Make specific reference to the original chosen convention of Storytelling and Contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Theatre
- ✘ Argue how the dramatic languages have been used to communicate dramatic action and meaning
- ✘ Develop a storyboard with explanatory paragraphs and annotations that document your dramatic ideas.

EXTENDED WRITTEN RESPONSE – SAMPLE QUESTIONS:

1. How is *Barbara and the Camp Dogs* used to celebrate, challenge, empower and share understandings of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island cultures? Support your statements with perceptive and thorough evaluation and supporting evidence from key moments in the production. Use appropriate drama terminology throughout your essay.
2. Analyse and evaluate how the dramatic languages (elements of drama, conventions of form and style, and skills of performance) were used to explore concepts of belonging and identity in the play *Barbara and the Camp Dogs*.
3. “When a family tragedy calls the sisters back home to Katherine, Northern Territory, Barbara must face the source of her anger: the loss and abandonment – both personal and generational – that has haunted her whole life.” (Guardian Australia: 2017)

Discuss and analyse how *Barbara and the Camp Dogs* addresses the themes of anger, abandonment and loss. Evaluate the effectiveness of the performance in communicating this dramatic meaning.

In preparing your response you will need to:

- ✘ Employ your detailed and specific knowledge and understanding of drama to analyse and evaluate how effectively the performance employed the dramatic languages to communicate dramatic meaning to the audience.
- ✘ Use specific examples from the performance to justify your evaluation.
- ✘ Use drama specific terminology.

Production Elements

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

SET DESIGN

Before a set is made for a production a set designer creates a design for a model box built to the scale of the theatre. Usually this model box is exactly 25 times smaller than the real size of the theatre (1:25 scale). The purpose of this step in the design process is to give the creative and production team a chance to review the design before it is constructed. The model box provides specific information about texture, materials, look and detail of a set.

Questions to consider after seeing this production:

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





Karen Norris
Lighting Designer

LIGHTING DESIGN

An interview with Lighting Designer: Karen Norris

Karen has extensive experience as a lighting designer for theatre, dance and music throughout Australia and Europe. She has worked for numerous theatre and dance companies including Belvoir, Sydney Theatre Company, State Theatre Company South Australia, Melbourne Theatre Company, Ensemble Theatre, Griffin, Sydney Opera House, Bangarra Dance Theatre, Red Shed Theatre Company, One Extra Dance Company, Powerhouse Museum and Sydney Dance Company. *Barbara and the Camp Dogs* is the third production that Karen has designed for at Belvoir.

How did you get started as a lighting designer?

I had a very interesting introduction to lighting design. I was always into the arts. I wanted to be an actor or a dancer or an artist. I always saw myself doing something like that. Then when I was really young - just out of school - my boyfriend was working as a musician and he needed someone to do the lights. That's how I started doing lighting design. For me it was another form of art. Painting with light. To start with I learned on the job. Later I did more formal training when I moved to Australia and worked at the Opera House and then I got a job at the Australian Opera. I was their first female technician. I then received an Australia Council grant to work with Nigel Levings and learn the techniques in more detail.

As a lighting designer, what do you look for during a first read of the play?

Emotion. When I sit down and read I just go with it. I'm totally visual and it's all emotive. I'm looking at the whole journey the play takes you on. I see things visually.

What were your initial thoughts when you first read *Barbara and the Camp Dogs*?

I just knew it was a winner and the songs blow it away. It takes you to so many different levels that we all identify with which makes it a special piece of work. I'm very excited to work on it.

Could you describe the first step in your design process after you have read the script?

A really important thing as a designer is all of the technical specifications that come from the theatre and your budget. That's really important. But even more important than that is talking with your

director and your set designer and having an understanding of their journey and what they want out of the piece. So you're kind of marrying everything so that we're all on the same page because a really important thing about design is all working together. It's not about egos. Design is also about being flexible. We might get in to the theatre and something will change so you've just got to be able to be flexible with your vision as well.

Where did you go to find design references and inspiration for *Barbara and the Camp Dogs*?

I grew up in the music industry. My boyfriend was in rock 'n roll and I lit rock 'n roll before I moved into theatre. That's my beginning. So that's where my inspiration comes from.

The set design for *Barbara and the Camp Dogs* features audience seating on the stage. How did this influence your lighting design?

It's a really tricky little set because I have audience sitting on it and they are going to be lit. For the rest of the audience it will also be like being in a pub with the light spilling out from the stage area.

How does the music influence your lighting design?

Big time. It's everything. Especially this one because it goes on so many different tangents. And the music does that whole emotional journey. Especially the way that Leticia has blocked the songs on stage. Music is all emotion.

You have limited time to get the lighting design right in the theatre. What kind of paperwork and plans do you prepare for your design to ensure that everything runs smoothly once in the theatre?

We've got a very intensive drawing that

I have worked on a lot with my assistant (during the rehearsal period). That's changed about three times already. Just little things. You've got to make sure everything is to scale. When you get into the theatre you've got so many technicians working on the rig and everyone's under the pump because we only have two days for bump in then we start focusing. That drawing is everything. Everything in that show is on that drawing. All of the colours; the patching; the channel numbers. Our production manager will make sure that they have patches for every channel. The lighting operator will come in and will work on the lighting board pre-programming. So there's a lot of stuff that goes on before we even start to focus. It's tight. It's a busy and exciting process and then a week later it's all up and in the hands of the cast and the stage manager.

What advice would you have for anyone looking to pursue a career in lighting design?

The best thing that happened to me was actually going out and doing it and learning myself and learning in a good venue where you get to work on lots of different shows. That's how I learnt. Also try to find someone to learn from. I take on students and teach them and I have assistants. I love taking students on because I didn't get that until I worked with Nigel Levings. If I had had that opportunity earlier it would've made things so much quicker for me.

Reference List

Drama 2019 v1.1 General Senior Syllabus:

https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/downloads/portal/syllabuses/snr_drama_19_syll.pdf

Drama Senior Syllabus 2013:

https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/downloads/senior/snr_drama_2013_syll.pdf

Barbara and the Camp Dogs: how one woman's anger became a rock show.

'The Guardian' (2017): <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2017/dec/18/barbara-and-the-camp-dogs-how-one-womans-anger-became-a-rock-show>



Elaine Crombie, Michelle Vincent, Ursula Yovich, Jessica Dunn

Appendices

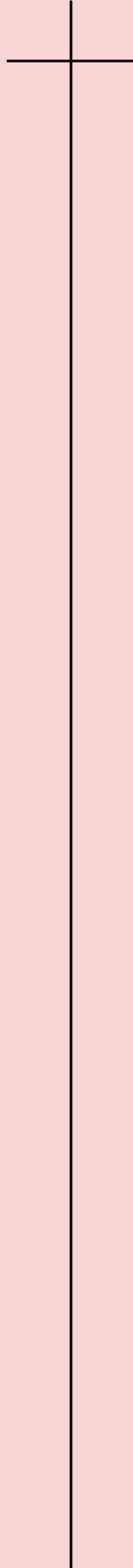
APPENDIX 1: THEMES TABLE

THEME	EVIDENCE FROM THE PLAY
Family	
Identity	
Belonging	
Loss	
Culture	

APPENDIX 2: CONVENTIONS SAMPLE TABLE

CONVENTION	SITUATION/NARRATIVE	LIGHTING/SFX	EFFECTIVENESS/ CONTRIBUTION TO DRAMATIC MEANING

APPENDIX 3: BARBARA - CHARACTER TIMELINE



Barbara is abandoned by her birth mother and left with Jill and Jill's daughter Rene.



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