

Company B Belvoir & La Boite present  
**GWEN IN PURGATORY**



Photo: Michael Corridore

Written by **Tommy Murphy**

Directed by **Neil Armfield**

A co-production with **La Boite Theatre Company**

Teacher's Notes

**Freehills**

## Company B Belvoir



Company B Belvoir sprang into being out of the unique action taken to save the Nimrod Theatre building from demolition in 1984. Rather than lose a performance space in inner city Sydney, more than 600 arts, entertainment and media professionals as well as ardent theatre lovers, formed a syndicate to buy the building. The syndicate included nearly every successful person in Australian theatre.

Company B Belvoir is one of Australia's most celebrated theatre companies. Under the artistic leadership of Neil Armfield, the company performs at its home at Belvoir St Theatre in Surry Hills, Sydney, and from there tours to major arts centres and festivals both nationally and internationally. Company B Belvoir engages Australia's most prominent and promising playwrights, directors, actors and designers to present an annual artistic program that is razor-sharp, popular and challenging.

Belvoir St Theatre's greatly loved Upstairs and Downstairs stages have been the artistic watering holes of many of Australia's great performing artists such as Geoffrey Rush, Cate Blanchett, Susie Porter, Richard Roxburgh, Max Cullen, Bille Brown, David Wenham, Deborah Mailman and Catherine McClements.

Landmark productions like *Cloudstreet*, *The Diary of a Madman*, *The Alchemist*, *Hamlet*, *Waiting for Godot*, *Gulpilil*, *The Sapphires*, *Stuff Happens*, *Keating!*, *Parramatta Girls*, *Exit the King*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and *Toy Symphony* have consolidated Company B Belvoir's position as one of Australia's most innovative and acclaimed theatre companies. Company B also supports outstanding independent theatre companies through its annual B Sharp season.

In 2010 we welcome respected theatre maker Ralph Myers (set designer for *Toy Symphony*, *A Streetcar Named Desire* & *Measure for Measure*) as Associate Artist. He will spend 2010 programming the Company's 2011 season, before taking over as Artistic Director in 2011.

For more information visit [www.belvoir.com.au](http://www.belvoir.com.au)

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NEXT IN THE UPSTAIRS THEATRE –

## NAMATJIRA

Written by Scott Rankin

Directed by Scott Rankin & Wayne Blair

**SCHOOLS PERFORMANCES** at 11.30am: -

**Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> October**

**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> October**

**Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> October**



***Each schools performance is followed by a Q&A session with the cast***

*Company B Belvoir and La Boite Theatre Company present:*

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# **GWEN IN PURGATORY**

Written by **TOMMY MURPHY**  
Directed by **NEIL ARMFIELD**

Set Designer **STEPHEN CURTIS**  
Costume Designer **BRUCE MCKINVEN**  
Lighting Designer **DAVID WALTERS**  
Sound Designer **PAUL CHARLIER**  
Dramaturg **EAMON FLACK**  
Assistant Director **CRISTABEL SVED**  
Rehearsal Observer **DINO DIMITRIADIS**  
Stage Manager **MARK LOWREY**  
Assistant Stage Manager **SOPHIE BAKER**

With

**NATHANIEL DEAN** Daniel  
**GRANT DODWELL** Laurie  
**SUE INGLETON** Peg  
**MELISSA JAFFER** Gwen  
**PACHARO MZEMBE** Father Ezekiel

*The Company B Belvoir production of Gwen in Purgatory opened at Belvoir St Theatre on 4 August 2010.*



Melissa Jaffer

Photo: Heidrun Löhr

## ***GWEN IN PURGATORY: Characters***

GWEN, 90

DANIEL, 32

FATHER EZEKIEL, 28

PEG, 65

LAURIE, 59

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## ***GWEN IN PURGATORY: Synopsis***

Gwen is sitting in a lone armchair in a brand new house, surrounded by cardboard boxes. She attempts to read the user's manual for several new appliances but keeps nodding off. She is woken up by the phone ringing, but keeps missing the call because of the limitations of her 90 year old frame. She eventually manages to answer the phone, despite the series of strange banging noises outside and speaks to grandson Daniel (who she calls Ducky). It's him banging on the door as he's still in the area after helping her out when she crashed the car earlier.

Daniel comes in – it was him making the banging noises and they chat awkwardly, as if they haven't seen each other in a while. He is concerned Gwen is too old to be driving. Gwen refuses to give up her licence and instead asks Daniel to teach her about 'blind spot', as she failed her last test. Daniel demonstrates her 'blind spot' to Gwen, a lesson during which it becomes clear that Gwen is a hazard on the road. Daniel suggests it might be safest if she stops driving. He produces a memory of his grandfather promising the car to him as a teenager. It's clear he'd like the car. Gwen refuses, and dismisses his memory as a bit unlikely.

Gwen mentions that the local priest (Father Ezekiel) is due that afternoon to bless her house. He is from Africa, and Gwen donated money to help bring his mother out to attend his ordination in Queanbeyan. As they discuss the priest the generational difference between them becomes clear, as Gwen's comments seem quite racist to Daniel even though she is oblivious that anything she says could cause offence.

To change the subject Gwen tells an idealised story about Daniel's real mother, Wendy, during her childhood. It's a story she's clearly told many times before. Wendy died from a drug overdose when Daniel was a child. Daniel then went to live with his aunt Peg, who the family now refers to as his mother. He disagrees with Gwen about how much he's able to remember about his life with his real mother before going to live with Peg. Daniel has a daughter the same age as he was then, so he's sure he's right but Gwen is uncomfortable with talking about Wendy as an addicted adult and the possible effect on Daniel.

Father Ezekiel arrives at the house. He and Gwen struggle to communicate – Gwen can't understand what he is saying, but pretends she can, replying with answers that don't make much sense. Daniel falls into the role of interpreting between the two of them. Father Ezekiel blesses the house with Daniel in tow, Gwen listening from the lounge room. Gwen says that she was after a last game of tennis at her old house before the court gets ripped down. The priest suggests he and Daniel go with her to play, much to Daniel's chagrin.

After the blessing, Daniel and Father Ezekiel are left alone (which excites Ezekiel more than Daniel) while Gwen is getting changed into tennis gear. They embark on a tricky conversation which touches on subjects from the popularity of tennis in Nigeria to the lack of young men in the Queanbeyan church community. Hearing how long it takes to play tennis with Gwen, Father Ezekiel worries that he will miss an arranged skype session with his family who are travelling by bus to Lagos to speak to him that afternoon. He's torn between his duty as a priest and as a young man to support his elders (in this case, Gwen), and his duty and desire to speak with his family who live on the other side of the world.

Daniel takes the chance to indicate he doesn't think Gwen should be driving anymore. Where he's from, Ezekiel responds, they don't tell their elders what to do. Something in the situation, maybe Ezekiel's openness or the priest's collar he wears, causes Daniel to start gradually revealing all his secrets and shames. He admits that he didn't want to read out the Bible during the blessing of the house, because he isn't good at reading out loud – at school he had to wear special coloured glasses to combat the problem.

Determined not to get trapped into playing tennis, Daniel suggests he might unpack some boxes. He tells Ezekiel about his work, and his attempts at rebellion during adolescence, as if he was in confession. Daniel blurts out that his marriage is crumbling, and his wife Bel is threatening to move away with their daughter Mykaela to Forbes, where her parents live. What Daniel doesn't let on is that this has already happened.

Moved by the sheer accumulation of all that Daniel has admitted Ezekiel asks if he can say a prayer over Daniel – Daniel doesn't really want him to but Ezekiel urges him to accept which he does eventually. Meanwhile strange sounds are heard banging on the roof and at the windows. Daniel goes to see what it is and finds his Mum Peg, throwing tennis balls into the gutters as a fire safety procedure.

Peg enters in her nurse's uniform, flustered by Daniel having shouted at her. She greets Father Ezekiel and is shocked and upset when she learns the blessing has already taken place. She rushes out again immediately until Daniel makes her come back inside. Very little can stop Peg talking continuously and the others watch and listen to her as if observing some kind of emotional whirlwind.

Gwen enters wearing her tennis gear, determined to play, but Peg tries to dissuade her as it's dangerous. She turns the conversation to the Home up on the hill where she visits the old people, urging Gwen to go visit some of them sometime soon, before they depart this world for the destination of heaven.

Peg realises her sister Naomi has thrown out a lot of Gwen's old kitchen things and replaced them with new ones. Peg is distressed as she didn't have any say in the culling and wanted to hold onto things for sentimental reasons. These are clearly old grievances against her siblings, it's also apparent that Peg's manic energy frustrates Daniel who eventually berates her for never sitting down or calming down.

Laurie, Gwen's son, phones and Gwen finds out that he has already had the tennis court dismantled so as to have all the fruit trees cut down, with a view to securing a better price for the property. Gwen can't conceal her disappointment at missing out on her last ever game of tennis on the old family court. Laurie enters almost immediately once Gwen has hung up, much to their surprise – he called from his mobile outside. They talk business about the sale of the old house. Laurie has a fine from the council for cutting down the trees without authorisation.

Daniel breaks his promise to his grandmother, he tells them all about Gwen's car crash and claims the car. The family bicker about their memories of their father (Daniel's grandfather), and about Wendy. Father Ezekiel listens awkwardly and tries to get Daniel to leave. Daniel physically attacks his uncle Laurie when he refuses to believe Daniel has memories of his mother. They argue longer but eventually agree on taking the car to get valued, much to Gwen's anguish. Laurie takes her car keys and the decision has been made.

Peg realises that her family have decided she'll move in with Gwen to be her carer and that the spare room is intended for her. She tells Gwen that she has to say 'no', having said yes to every other cry for help throughout her whole life. Gwen seems reluctant to hear what Peg is saying. Laurie and Daniel return from the garage having made a deal about the car. Peg tries to reason with Laurie about the car, but realises the decision has been made. She informs them that she won't be taking up residence in Gwen's spare room. Laurie argues that it's logical if Peg takes it on. Daniel defends Peg's right to say no. Meanwhile Gwen berates Laurie for taking her car and accidentally suggests that she wishes he'd died instead of her son

Frank. What she means is that she wishes she'd died before her husband did. Laurie is hurt to the point of tears, Gwen is appalled but she can't really console him and he leaves upset.

Noticing everyone's sadness, Daniel tries to cheer them up by ringing his four year old daughter Mykaela up (in Forbes) and getting her to sing a trashy song for her 'grandmas'. It works a treat and means a lot coming from him, as he rarely opens up to his family or allows them access to his life, ever since his mother died. After the call to Mykaela has ended, Daniel drives off in Gwen's car.

Peg is determined to leave too, but gradually the realisation that she does not have a choice seem to sink in, her love for her mother and sense of responsibility mean that she will give up her own independence to care for her mother and do what everyone expects. She leaves, with the promise to return early next day.

Father Ezekiel is left there with Gwen, and a Skype date with his own family to get to, but he senses Gwen is in need of company – he offers to sit with her a bit longer, but she urges him to get to the library. They try to work out a date for him to come round, but he is unable to pin one down, despite her eagerness. In her attempt to fix the airconditioning she inadvertently triggers the alarm, which beeps an ominous red light.

Gwen is left alone in her armchair, wearing her tennis gear and a dressing gown. She starts to doze off. The burglar alarm goes off, which wakes and befuddles her. She makes it painfully to the alarm but can't punch in the right code to turn it off. She is alone in this alien place, surrounded by boxes, with the decibels of the nauseating alarm increasing each second. Nothing her children left for her helps. She is caught in purgatory.



Melissa Jaffer (Gwen)

Photo: Heidrun Löhner

## The playwright: Tommy Murphy

*Strangers in Between* (2005) and *Holding the Man* (2006) premiered at Griffin Theatre Company, where **Tommy** was writer in residence. These plays won the NSW Premier's Literary Award in successive years. *Strangers in Between* toured nationally in 2008. *Holding the Man* was remounted for the 2007 Sydney Mardi Gras Festival before transferring to Sydney Opera House, Company B Belvoir, Melbourne Theatre Company and Brisbane Powerhouse. *Holding the Man* also won the 2007 Australian Writers' Guild Award (AWGIE) and the Philip Parsons Young Playwright's Award. It opened on London's West End in April this year. *Saturn's Return* premiered at the Sydney Theatre Company Wharf 2 in 2008 and transferred to the main stage in 2009. Tommy's other works include young people's theatre pieces *Troy's House* (1998), *Precipice* (2007) and an adaptation of Marlowe's *Massacre at Paris* (2001). He is a graduate of the National Institute of Dramatic Art (Director's Course), a past president of Sydney University Dramatic Society and a current board member of Australian Theatre for Young People. His plays are published by Currency Press and Nick Hern Books London.

### WRITER'S NOTE

I am remembering now that my original proposal to Company B Belvoir was to write a play dealing, somehow, with memory. At the time I was reeling from the recent news that someone close to me would lose their memory. As sometimes happens, these real life circumstances were too raw so I let the play evolve in a new direction. The character suffering from memory loss was not granted his entrance beyond the first draft. I focussed my attention instead on the other figures that were beginning to populate my play. But a fascination with memory seems to have remained.

Science and literature have long struggled to explain memory. Plato's image of memory as a wax tablet remains in our language today when we describe "impressions". These attempted analogies shift with the advent of technology; perhaps memory is like the computer I am typing on right now or the voice recorder from which I am transcribing these words. But, of course, as I type, I am tampering with the words. How do we account for memory as the reconstruction of life replete with the unreliability, the subjectivity, the editing, the colouring and the exaggerations? How do we describe recollection as a creative act?

Memory is like writing a play.

After about a year of writing, something clicked in the story and I was surprised to discover that much of the play is in fact underpinned by disputed memories. Perhaps this is a likely conflict in a family, among people who may have opposing interpretations of their shared history and shared identity. The voices in this play stem from people I know and love but as soon as they found their way to the page they were characters bending according to dramatic impulses and artistic imperatives. Now that they reach the stage, the characters are merely impressions of those inspiring people. A play is a rectified account of life.

That said, I do know a beautiful woman who played her last game of tennis in her backyard court at age ninety. I have also encountered people fearful that they will find themselves in a kind of purgatory, abandoned by family at, the cruellest moment, the twilight of life. I have interviewed priests from developing nations, several from Nigeria, who like Father Ezekiel have been brought to Australia to fill the gap left by dwindling priest recruits. They expressed feelings of isolation and regret for the "individualism" of Australia. They seemed homesick for a church that relishes greater influence over its community. To me these missionaries stand for the church's resistance of bigger questions about its place in Australian society.

### Tommy Murphy

## The Director: Neil Armfield

Neil graduated from Sydney University in 1977 and became Co-Artistic Director of Nimrod Theatre in 1979. He joined South Australia's Lighthouse Theatre before returning to Sydney in 1985, where he was involved in the purchase of Belvoir St Theatre and the formation of Company B Belvoir, becoming its first Artistic Director in 1994. For Company B Belvoir he has directed *Signal Driver*, *State of Shock*, *Aftershocks*, *Master Builder*, *The Diary of a Madman*, *Diving for Pearls*, *The Tempest*, *Ghosts*, *Hate*, *No Sugar*, *Hamlet*, *The Blind Giant is Dancing*, *The Alchemist*, *WASP*, *The Seagull*, *The Governor's Family*, *As You Like It*, *Up the Road*, *The Judas Kiss*, *The Small Poppies*, *Suddenly Last Summer*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Emma's Nose*, *Aliwa!*, *My Zinc Bed*, *Waiting for Godot*, *The Underpants*, *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, *Gulpilil*, *The Spook*, *Stuff Happens*, *Peribanez*, *Keating!*, *Toy Symphony*, *Scorched* and *Gethsemane* as well as numerous joint productions including *Dead Heart*, *Night on Bald Mountain*, *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*, *Cloudstreet*, *A Cheery Soul*, *It Just Stopped*, *The Adventures of Snugglepote & Cuddlepie* and *Little Ragged Blossom*, *Exit the King*, *The Seed* and *The Book of Everything*. He has directed for all of Australia's state theatre companies, Opera Australia, Welsh National Opera, the Bregenz Festival in Austria, Zurich Opera, Canadian Opera, Houston Grand Opera, English National Opera, Chicago Lyric Opera and the Royal Opera, London. For film Neil has directed *Candy*, which premiered in competition at the 2006 Berlin Film Festival. He has won numerous awards including Sydney Theatre Critics' Circle Awards for both Best Director and Best Production, and the Major Award for Significant Contribution to Sydney Theatre; Green Room Awards; Helpmann Awards; Australian Film Institute Awards for Best Director for the mini-series *Edens Lost* and for Best Adapted Screenplay with Luke Davies for *Candy*; and the Sidney Myer Performing Arts Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Performing Arts in Australia. International awards include Best Production, Dublin Festival for *Cloudstreet*; Best Director and Best Musical, Dora Mavor Moore Awards, Canada for *Billy Budd*; and Best Opera Production, Barclays Award for *Billy Budd*. In 2007, Neil was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia for his service to the arts.

### DIRECTOR'S NOTE

We are only two weeks into rehearsals so it is difficult to say where we're going to land by opening night, but it has been immensely pleasing watching Tommy Murphy's play, over the past two years, take flesh.

Or rather take home because Tommy always had the flesh, what wasn't there was the structural framework that connected the work together. In fact he deliberately resisted imposing story too soon. His process is really the reverse of how most playwrights seem to construct story. He has the characters, and in this instance, the house, the room in which they meet, and, well, the result, but the skeleton of action has been found over months and months of work, frequently with actors reading and discussing. Sometimes with me and Tommy or Eamon and Tommy reading to each other, mostly with Tommy and his computer and his cat Narelle.

But what has emerged is a beautifully rendered study of these five complex Australian characters. Falling somewhere between Ayckbourn and Beckett, and nudging Checkov along the way, *Gwen in Purgatory* is actually *sui generis* – I really don't know another play like it. But I feel its truths in every movement of its journey. Through laughter and insecurity and denial and belief and self-interest and the varying demands for respect and acknowledgement, an extraordinary history is revealed: we're reminded once again of the inexhaustible well of humour, love and pain that is family. We are all frail.

Neil Armfield, July 2010



## Rehearsing *GWEN IN PURGATORY*

*Gwen in Purgatory* rehearsed for 5 weeks in the rehearsal room at Company B Belvoir's Administration & Production Warehouse at 18 Belvoir Street in Surry Hills. Rehearsals took place from 10am to 6pm Monday to Friday. A sixth week was spent in technical production rehearsals, on stage in the Upstairs Theatre at Belvoir St Theatre. *Gwen in Purgatory* is a professional theatre production and the actors, director and crew are paid for the rehearsal period.

REHEARSAL PHOTOGRAPHY: Heidrun Löhr



Melissa Jaffer & Nathaniel Dean

Photo: Heidrun Löhr

During rehearsals, the dimensions of the Upstairs Belvoir St stage are taped out on the Rehearsal room floor including all the exits being used in the production so that the actors become accustomed to the proportions of the Upstairs Belvoir St stage during the rehearsal process. This production used the 'vom' exit, which is directly through the audience, as the exit to Gwen's garage, as well as a main door exit, situated through some flats.

The rehearsal room set is an approximation of the eventual full production set, which includes the most necessary set elements (such as doors) and a whole range of props and furniture as close as possible to the eventual props and furniture being used.

Actors wear a combination of their own clothes and approximated costumes during rehearsals but sometimes choose to wear outfits that approximate to something they feel a character might wear. For example, Pacharo Mzembe chose to wear a priest's blue shirt and collar for a lot of the rehearsal period as part of his character preparation.

*Gwen in Purgatory* is a new Australian play, written especially for Company B Belvoir, so the playwright Tommy Murphy was able to sit in on rehearsals and make changes to the play as discoveries were made in the rehearsal room. Usually, the cast spend the first week of the rehearsal period in reading the play together and discussing every aspect of the text. Tommy was present for this whole week and also watched other rehearsals during the process, particularly towards the end of the rehearsal process and while the play was previewing prior to Opening.

## AN INTERVIEW WITH TOMMY MURPHY

**An interview between Tahni Froudist, Education Coordinator at Company B Belvoir, and Tommy Murphy, playwright of *Gwen in Purgatory* at Belvoir's Warehouse on Tuesday 22 June, 2010.**

**TAHNI: You've said previously that you came to this script with an idea for the beginning & end, how did you take those ideas and put them into a play? Do you have a specific intention for this play?**

TOMMY: It's always strange the way a play emerges, even for the playwright. I've always found writing plays to be very intuitive. That means that I sometimes don't know my deeper needs for writing the play. Sometimes I can trace those things during a process, but sometimes it's actually a retrospective thing. Sometimes I look back at plays and I can see my deeper needs for writing. Also beyond those introspective things I think I'm able to spot what I was responding to in the world around me. Those things aren't always clear to the playwright. That's why I think playwrights can't write in isolation; playwrights require the sort of process we've used here at Belvoir where we meet regularly with the director and the dramaturge. I met with actors to try a performance, a closed room performance, a reading of the play, so we can see what's actually going on in the work. And sometimes what's going on at the heart of the play is something that is more than the playwright's intentions. You seek out those moments when an actor or the director or the dramaturge, or any one of other collaborators in the process tell you what your play is about or how your play is functioning.

**In terms of the title, *Gwen in Purgatory*, did that come after the play was written or was it something you always had?**

That came certainly after I had a few drafts. And when I put it on the front of the draft, it was just a working title, because it was a way for me to clarify what I thought was happening in the play. It was a way of clarifying for me where Gwen had found herself, and I found that it not only clarified Gwen's predicament but the entire play. And I've gone on to find that all the characters are experiencing a kind of purgatory.

**Did you create those characters to aid in Gwen's story, or even if it wasn't deliberate to place them in purgatory?**

They all evolved to serve the drama and the drama centres on Gwen, they all evolved according to that purpose I have to say. In simple terms, the play did emerge for me character first. Most of the work early on was a character study. And of course as you find character, the plot evolves with them, because you find character through their actions. What they do to each other to get what they want – that is how we know them in the play, in any play.

**In terms of your process generally, is that something - do you start with the character studies always, or has this been a very kind of individual work?**

Every play has its particular requirements so the process changes project to project. The first thing that I really had was an image of this elderly person trying to answer a phone, and that remains the opening image of the play. The next glimpse of the play that arrived was the final moment of the drama, and that also remains. In between that I tried many, many options. I even had characters that found their way on to page that were discarded before we reached the stage. They didn't hold their place in this work. Lots of different possibilities were attempted, for who would come to Gwen's house on this day and what would eventuate.

**In terms of it being set in Queanbeyan, how does it fit, how true to your experience of the town is it?**

Well I hope that if people from Queanbeyan see the play they will spot something accurate, and hopefully something respectful of my home town. My parents still live there and my grandmother, and I go there a lot, and there's a great theatre in Queanbeyan too. I guess the thematic reasons why the play is set there is that Queanbeyan was this little town that happened to be the place next to where they built the nation's capital. So within her lifespan, Gwen would have experienced that change. This place of national importance was just plonked on the limestone plains near Queanbeyan. The landscape where the play takes place is emblematic somehow of Gwen's experience of change. Gwen has embraced change, particularly recently. Her husband has recently died and she has sold up, or is in the process of selling up the family home. But on day one in this new house, she finds that not being able to operate the telephone or microwave or the new TV, stands for a lot more and she finds herself in purgatory. Some of her experiences of change are about resistance and some of them have been courageously embracing change. Ezekiel is also dealing with parallel problems including a recent change. Canberra is a lonely place in his eyes, heightening his isolation and inability to connect with community in Australia.

**In terms of the religious content, by naming it *Gwen in Purgatory*, that gives it a definite, 'this is going to touch on religion'. Can you talk about that?**

I was trying to paint a picture of the Australian Catholic Church right now, drawing on my own experience. I believe the church is challenged with its potential irrelevance right now, and evidence of that is the lack of younger people wanting to join the priesthood. Rather than dealing with those questions of its relevance, rather than dealing with big questions, like whether to change the celibacy laws or to invite women to be priests or to invite priests who have left the priesthood to return, rather than even considering for a moment those options, the church is going to developing nations where there is a surfeit of young priests. They're bringing these young men to fill the post, particularly in regional Australia. I interviewed a lot of priests in that situation, several of them from Africa, a couple from Nigeria where my character is from, and I sensed they're suffering from chronic homesickness. They came from a church that is booming. They held a position of influence in their community, and now they come here to experience a very elderly congregation, very thin on numbers, and probably a less celebratory version of the liturgy, probably a more progressive version of Catholicism than they find comfortable. So all of these things are confronting for them I felt it would be interesting if Gwen's priest isn't from her own generation, someone she has access to emotionally and culturally, but that it's a young Nigerian priest that comes to the door to bless the house this day. She struggles to communicate with him, she struggles to understand him and I think she's also struggling with this sense of being abandoned today.

**And I suppose that struggle with communication is through all the characters and that creates that sense of isolation and purgatory I suppose, and the dialogue between the priest and Daniel, they communicate on that kind of younger generation level, but the religion creates the divide. It's really interesting.**

This is a family who actively rewrite history. Families are made of people who share a common history but often have different perspectives on that memory of who they are. Memory is a big part of identity, so if you have a disputed memory, you have a disputed identity in the family. Some of those disputed memories will be challenged on this day in Gwen's new house. I understand purgatory as a place on earth. Purgatory is an in-between place, it is also a place between life and death, where someone might find themselves trapped. In Dante it's via the intercession of prayers that 'shades' can find an escape from purgatory and progress to paradise, but the other thing they have to do is purge their sins. So there might be a sense that Gwen is calling out for her loved ones but also purging her sins today.

**How have you found coming from Queanbeyan, having shows on in Sydney, on the West End, how have you found your experience as a young playwright in Australia?**

Really good. I'm really grateful to find continual encouragement and nurture. That's something that happened here at Belvoir. The play came out of an award for another play I wrote. The prize was money to write this play. I think that's a really good example of how there's that sort of encouragement but also the nurture to help playwrights along. So I've been really lucky.

**What was the step between being a teenage writer and now?**

I was writing in Queanbeyan. I started when I was sixteen. There was a community group I was involved in, a sort of adult amateur theatre group, and there was a guy there who had written a play, so then I wrote a play to emulate him. He encouraged me and helped me get it to the stage as well. I eventually left Queanbeyan to study in Sydney and continued to write. I joined ATYP and SUDS before studying at NIDA.

**Is there anything you would like to say to wrap up about *Gwen in Purgatory*, or your experience as a playwright?**

I suppose I just want to say how exciting it is to be working here with this almighty cast. They just bring such insight to these roles. They're bringing the play to life. I've just been aching to begin. So it's really exciting this week to start rehearsal led by director Neil Armfield.

**Do you think that's particularly exciting with a new work, for this to be the first performance, as opposed to something that has been done, that there's room for the text and roles to evolve?**

Yes. It keeps on evolving throughout rehearsals and through the previews. It's pretty thrilling because some things you get wrong and some things you get right. It's a dangerous task but also really rewarding. There are so many things that are unpredictable. We need the audience response to help refine the play.

**Well I think that's it. Thank you Tommy.**



Grant Dodwell (Laurie), Melissa Jaffer (Gwen) & Sue Ingleton (Peg)

Photo: Heidrun Löhrr

## **BACKGROUND to *Gwen in Purgatory***

### **Queanbeyan, New South Wales (where play is set, where Gwen grew up and where her family live)**

Queanbeyan is the largest city in South East NSW but is only 15 minutes away from Canberra, capital city of Australia, part of the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). Queanbeyan currently has a population of 38 000 people and is also a regional centre (the largest big town nearby) for around 50 000 more. It was declared a township in 1838, with a population of 50 people, and the town still has some historic buildings dating back to this time. Visitors websites for Queanbeyan state that the name Queanbeyan comes from the word 'Quinbean' which is a mangling of a word in the local Aboriginal language that means clear waters. The Queanbeyan River is a tributary of the Molonglo River and part of the Murray-Darling Basin. Primarily an agricultural district for most of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, by 1972 Queanbeyan was accorded the status of a city on the basis that it had a population of over 15 000.

The main newspaper is the Queanbeyan Age, which Laurie says he'll write a clever headline for. You can find the Age's website here - <http://www.queanbeyanage.com.au/>

The Diocesan Church of Canberra & Goulburn services a Catholic population of 160, 000 across 22 ACT parishes (90,000 pop) and 35 NSW parishes (pop 70, 000) over 88, 000 square kilometres of land. You can read about the Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn here - <http://www.cg.catholic.org.au/index.cfm>

You can read a transcript of an ABC Stateline broadcast (2004) discussing the advantages of Queanbeyan entitled 'Queanbeyan Rocks' here <http://www.abc.net.au/stateline/act/content/2004/s1156601.htm>

### **Lagos, Nigeria (where Father Ezekiel's family are travelling to to speak to him via Skype)**

Lagos is the economic and unofficial capital of Nigeria and it's the second largest city in Africa (after Cairo). It was estimated by the UN to be the fastest growing city in Africa, with a population of between 7 million and 12 million people (7,937, 932 last census, estimated today 11, 800, 000) . Historically, it was a settlement of the Awon people, called Eko. In 1472 a Portuguese explorer Rui de Sequeira called it Lagos, which is the Portuguese for lakes. Lagos is now a huge city which began on a group of islands in Lagos Lagoon, protected from the Atlantic Ocean by long sand bars. It was a major centre of the slave trade between 1404-1889. The British formally annexed Lagos as a British colony in 1861 leading to the suppression of the slave trade (which the British had outlawed in 1807). They seized the remaining lands of what is now Nigeria in 1887. Lagos was declared the capital in 1914 when the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria was established, and when Nigeria won independence from Britain in 1960 it continued to function as the country's capital. In 1991 this role was taken from Lagos, and the purpose built Abuja became Nigeria's capital. There are continuing human rights issues and a large number of urban poor as well as continuing human rights issues and ongoing police brutality.

Time differences – Queanbeyan 10 hours ahead of Lagos so if it's 1pm in Queanbeyan it is 3am that day in Lagos – you can use the site below to work out <http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/city.html?n=125>

85 pg report on human rights in Lagos avail here [http://www.ecoi.net/file\\_upload/470\\_1161611888\\_joint-british-danish-fact-finding-mission-to-abuja-and-lagos.pdf](http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/470_1161611888_joint-british-danish-fact-finding-mission-to-abuja-and-lagos.pdf)

Article on police brutality and extra judicial killings in Nigeria on a website called Black Looks <http://www.blacklooks.org/2010/04/police-killings-in-ajegunle/>

BBC World News 10 minute you tube clip Hot Cities 1 Lagos Nigeria "Immigration Congestion" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Btmxb-YZuBs&feature=related>

BBC documentary entitled "Welcome to Lagos" - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T8llgvgHxHE>

Wole Soyinka (Nigerian Nobel prize winning author)'s strongly critical response to the series on the BBC <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2010/apr/28/soyinka-bbc-lagos-documentaries-criticism>

## Purgatory, between Heaven & Hell

In early Christian literature, Purgatory was conceived of as a place where the souls of those who are destined for heaven go to be purified (through suffering) before they are ready to go to heaven. It was thought of as an intermediate state, between heaven and hell.

Artists envisaged it as a place of flames, like Hell, but the *purpose* of the suffering was purification, to burn away all the sins an individual hadn't managed to expiate during their life time through good deeds. In 1206 an English peasant called Thurkhill from an Essex village claimed to have been taken on a tour of Purgatory by Saint Julian and provided specific details including of all the torture chambers. His claim was recorded by a monk called Roger of Wendover. In the 14<sup>th</sup> Century, Dante Aligheri wrote an epic poem called the Divine Comedy which envisaged Purgatory as a mountain somewhere in the southern hemisphere made up of 7 levels which an individual must progress through seven terraces which correspond to the seven deadly sins.

Purgatory is a place of temporary torment. It also is a place where an individual is caught against their will, but will be released eventually, when they have suffered enough to become holy and ready for the eternal happiness of Heaven and communion with God. There is an idea of cleansing fire and undergoing torment.

According to the doctrines of the Catholic church, the soul of the individual can be punished after death for the venial sins they have committed during their lifetime (venial sin – less grave sins than mortal sins – not in opposition to the will of God). However, a late 15thC treatise by Catherine of Genoa argues that Purgatory is to be rejoiced in as when a soul suffers it, that soul is on its way to be with God.

### So what does the Catholic Church say today about Purgatory?

Pope John Paul II on Purgatory, Heaven and Hell clarified this doctrine

#### ➤ THESE ARE ALL STATES OF BEING RATHER THAN LITERAL PHYSICAL PLACES

“Pope John Paul II pointed out that the *essential* characteristic of heaven, hell or purgatory is that they are *states* of being of a spirit (angel/demon) or human soul, rather than *places*, as commonly perceived and represented in human language. This language of *place* is, according to the Pope, inadequate to describe the realities involved, since it is tied to the temporal order in which this world and we exist.”

<http://www.ewtn.com/library/papaldoc/jp2heavn.htm>

On August 4 1999 Pope John Paul II spoke about Purgatory as “Necessary Purification” saying “before we enter into full communion with God, every trace of sin within us must be eliminated and every imperfection in our soul must be corrected”. The Catholic Church says that the suffering arises from sin, rather than being imposed on the individual by a vengeful God. They also believe that it's possible for the living to alleviate the sufferings of the dead by offering prayers and having masses said for them.

### THINKING ABOUT GWEN'S PURGATORY

**“Well all I can say is God's squeezing his hand tight on me. He's made some joke of my life. You all have. You're robbing me of my car. You wretch, Laurie. Putting your mother on the bus!” p57**

**“I said God took your father before me and I don't know why. Why is he punishing me?” p57**  
Tommy Murphy, *Gwen in Purgatory* Currency Press: Strawberry Hills, 2010.

- How has the playwright put Gwen in 'Purgatory' within a modern Australian context?
- Think about the issues Gwen has with the oven/airconditioner/alarm/phones
- Does she ever get to have her cup of tea? Does anyone eat anything? Does she get to play tennis?
- What image is suggested by Gwen's line above – “God's squeezing his hand tight on me”?
- What kinds of 'sins' could be the cause of some of Gwen's suffering?
- How does she treat her children, Laurie? and Peg? How does this affect them during the play?

## RESPONDING TO THEATRE – What do I think?

One reason for reading or writing a review/ a blog/ a tweet/ a text is to TELL OTHER PEOPLE (whether your friends or strangers) what you thought of the play and whether they should go see it too.

### Putting ideas into words - Bloggers & reviewers often refer to: -

- DIRECTION – *Gwen in Purgatory* was directed by Neil Armfield
- WRITING – *Gwen in Purgatory* was written by Tommy Murphy
- SET DESIGN – the set was designed by Stephen Curtis
- COSTUME DESIGN – costumes were designed by Bruce McKinven
- ACTING/PERFORMANCE – *Gwen in Purgatory* has a cast of 5 actors  
Gwen (the grandmother) is played by Melissa Jaffer, Daniel (her grandson) is played by Nathaniel Dean, Peg (Gwen's daughter) is played by Sue Ingleton, Laurie (Gwen's son) is played by Grant Dodwell. Father Ezekiel (the minister) is played by Pacharo Mzembe

READ THE BITS OF REVIEWS BELOW, SOME FROM THE WEB, SOME FROM THE PAPER, SOME FROM STREET PRESS TO GET AN IDEA OF THE DIFFERENT WAYS DIFFERENT PEOPLE CAN WRITE ABOUT THE SAME THING.

### Do you agree with them?

#### ONLINE OPINIONS

Walking into the theatre the first thing that comes to mind when taking your seats is “this looks like my grandmother’s house, same tiles, same kitchen even the same air-conditioner and microwave!” One thing you realise about **Gwen of Purgatory** is that it is a shocking sad tale about old age and the loss of independence....

Neil Armfield has done a very good job working with Tommy Murphy’s script to recreate the difficulties experienced by an elderly person whose entire life has changed and are faced with the eventual loss of independence. With this production you forget you are watching a stage play and feel you are watching the inner workings of your family. It does make you think about what it is like to slowly lose your independence as an individual and have to constantly rely on friends and family.

Stephen Curtis has done a fantastic job creating sets that could be anyone’s house or any grandmother’s house!

<http://www.samesame.com.au/reviews/5731/Theatrehttp://www.samesame.com.au/reviews/5731/Theatre>  
- [Gwen in Purgatory Belvoir St](#)

*Gwen In Purgatory* is a play for and about all of us. It is warm, funny, sad, tragic, poignant, moving and unsettling. Just like our lives. Life on the page, or stage, doesn’t get any better than this. This is the (very) real deal. Murphy makes it possible by writing it.

<http://blogs.crikey.com.au/curtaincall/2010/08/09/review-gwen-in-purgatory-belvoir-street-theatre-sydney/>

## GWEN IN PURGATORY

CRITIC'S RATING **9/10**

**BELVOIR STREET THEATRE, SURRY HILLS**

UNTIL SEPTEMBER 19

TICKETS \$35-\$57

BOOKING (02) 9699 3444

DRESSED in a hot-pink pants suit, Gwen, 90, is about to sink into a nanna nap when the phone rings. She takes an eternity to shuffle over to it and it stops before she gets there. Bother. She has so many remote controls in her new-fangled house, she can't work out which one is for the airconditioner, the oven or the garage door.

And that's not all. She's had a bingle in the car, she can't find the kettle and she's told her PIN to everyone she knows.

Melissa Jaffer is hilarious as Gwen, a feisty senior citizen with selective hearing and prone to misunderstandings, both real and deliberate. The comedy is truly Australian, pitched close to vintage ABC sitcom *Mother and Son*.

But instead of a long-suffering son, playwright Tommy Murphy (*Holding the Man*) serves up a family in pain as they grapple with Gwen's twilight years. It's aged care pass-the-parcel and no one wants to be left with the responsibility.



**Age old ... Melissa Jaffer and Nathaniel Dean.** Photo: Brendan Esposito

Who will care for her? Daniel

(Nathaniel Dean), the parcel-delivering grandson with a marriage on the brink? Peg (Sue Ingleton), Gwen's super-anxious and disappointed adult daughter, or bulldozing bully of a son, Laurie (Grant Dodwell)? Could it fall to Father Ezekiel (Pacharo Mzembe), a priest arrived recently from Nigeria, a culture in which elders are still revered?

The blundering attempts at family unity here are universal. The tension and insidious passive aggression will leave you gasping. Neil Armfield's impeccable direction finds the affection and sadness beneath the prickly surface. Highly recommended.

EB

## TWEETS ABOUT GWEN

[k8tra](#) just saw *Gwen in Purgatory* at [#belvoir](#) - fabulous, bleak and funny. ouch. Best I've seen in ages.  
[miss meds](#) *Gwen in Purgatory* was beautiful. Acting was superb and I loved it. Reminded me of my own family a little towards the end. :s  
[marinamitreviski](#) Massive shout out to [@CompanyBBelvoir](#) & the cast of *Gwen in Purgatory*! Saw it tonight. So funny & witty! Just brilliant!  
[paperholly](#) *Gwen in Purgatory* [@CompanyBBelvoir](#) left me feeling...oddly somewhat uplifted. Glorious new Australian work... just... superb.

## REVIEWS FROM THE PAPER

**THE SUNDAY TELEGRAPH,  
AUG 8 2010, p131**

"Bickering over what happens next and who gets Gwen's car, the tensions and hurt of the loveless family are gradually revealed.

Murphy is a great observer of people and the play, while extremely funny, rings dark and true as he explores themes including old age, loneliness and religious faith."

**SYDNEY MORNING HERALD**

**Jason Blake, AUG 6, 2010**

"This warm yet stinging portrait of contemporary family dynamics is centred on 90-year-old Gwen. The play opens with an expertly judged comic sequence built on a pair of ringing telephones. Her muddling of the operating manuals for the fan-forced oven and the air-conditioner produces an uncomfortable atmosphere for everyone."

Review above from THE SUN HERALD AUG 8, 2010, p13





**AFTER SEEING *GWEN IN PURGATORY* –**

- What impact did the colour of the set have on you when you were watching the play?
- Did you imagine what was inside the boxes?
- Did Gwen look like she belonged in this very new, beige environment?
- Can you think of any other sort of building that this space looked like it resembled? What building?
- What did you spend most of your time looking at and responding to on stage?
- Did you believe that the garage was located through the audience, where the sound and lighting effects indicated it was?
- How did the staging of the ‘blessing the house’ scene create a feeling that the whole environment was real? Did you expect the actors to keep talking when they were off stage?
- Do you remember the moment when Gwen realised she was sitting on the remote control? How did the production use both SFX (sound effects) and LX (lighting effects) to suggest the garage and the outside environment?
- What about the moment before the character of Peg entered, what sounds did we hear and how was water used? What effect did this have on you as someone in the audience in terms of you believing in the world that had been created on stage?
- Can you think of 5 ways in which the designers, sound/lighting/set, suggested this environment as being a place of purgatory or SUFFERING?
- How did the staging indicate the separateness of each of the characters?

## COMING UP WITH OTHER POSSIBILITIES –

- Think of 3 other ways that this play could be staged differently. Draw/sketch them.
- If you were the director or the set designer *how* would you choose to do it?
- What would work better/differently about staging the play on your imagined set?
- What would be gained or lost if you chose to do it this way?
- Which parts of this production of *Gwen in Purgatory* would be lost if you changed the design?
- What important ideas of *Gwen in Purgatory* would your design or staging convey more effectively?

## FOR STUDENTS TO CONSIDER - AFTER SEEING THE PLAY

- What is your idea of what a play should do? Can you put it into one short sentence?
- Did *GWEN IN PURGATORY* do this?
- Would you tell someone else they had to see it?
- What about your own family?
- Why/why not?
- Write a text message (240 characters) or a tweet to give a friend/ follower an idea of what the experience of seeing the play was like.  
(Your purpose is to explain why they **HAVE** to see this play or why they **HAVE** to avoid ever seeing this play, depending on how you reacted to it.)

## YOUR RESPONSE TO *GWEN IN PURGATORY* –

- Write an extended response in the form of a theatre blog entry to explain why your readers should/shouldn't go see it.  
Back up your argument with specific details of the production you saw. Include performance, direction, lighting, costume and set design

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## BLOGS YOU COULD LOOK AT TO GET IDEAS INCLUDE –

Theatre Notes by Alison Croggon <http://theatrenotes.blogspot.com/>

Stage Noise with Diana Simmons <http://www.stagenoise.com/>

James Waites' blog <http://jameswaites.ilatech.org/>

The Perf (some people who think about theatre on a regular basis) <http://theperftheatre.blogspot.com/>

Guerilla Semiotics <http://guerrillasemiotics.com/>

### THINKING ABOUT THE PRODUCTION of GWEN in PURGATORY that you saw: -

- What atmosphere did the whole production have?
- Was it what you expected? Why/ Why not?
- Did anything that you saw move or upset you?
- Did you find anything really hard to understand?
- Which of the characters engaged you the most? Were these the older or the younger characters?
- Which scenes from Gwen in Purgatory do you remember the most clearly?
- Did this play end the way you thought it would?

### WHAT WAS THE IMPACT ON YOU OF THESE ASPECTS OF THE PLAY: -

- That all the events happened in real time, in Gwen's house, all in one day?
- Finding out about Daniel's real Mum, Wendy and what happened to her?
- Father Ezekiel being there throughout as an observer?
- No one ever finding the kettle – Gwen never getting her cup of tea?
- How the characters talked about each other before they entered – especially Ezekiel, Laurie & Peg?
- Gwen's tennis court having been pulled down?
- References to Catholicism, especially the blessing and the way Peg talked about the old people?
- Generational differences in ways all the characters talked, down to the sorts of words they used?
- Mykaela's song which they listened to on Daniel's mobile near the end?
- Knowing that Father Ezekiel had to get to the library to talk to his own family in Nigeria?
- The sound and light effects at the end when Gwen set off her own alarm?



Sue Ingleton (Peg), Melissa Jaffer (Gwen), Nathaniel Dean (Daniel) & Pacharo Mzembe (Father Ezekiel)

Photo: Heidrun Löhr

## Exploring *Gwen in Purgatory* further: -

### BOOKS TO READ OR REFER TO: -

Dante's *Purgatorio* – book two of Dante Alighieri's Divine Comedy, an epic Italian 14th Century poem in which Dante travels through the three realms of the dead – from Inferno (Hell) to Purgatorio (Purgatory) and Paradiso (Paradise). He is guided by a Roman poet Virgil through Hell and Purgatory and by Beatrice through Heaven. Purgatory has seven terraces, which correspond to the seven deadly sins. Each of these must be progressed through before Paradise can be reached.

*Happy Days* by Samuel Beckett – absurdist drama in which Winnie is trapped in the earth, first up to her waist, and then up to her neck yet remains almost continually cheerful throughout.

*The Cherry Orchard* by Anton Chekhov – compare the end of the play to the moment when Gwen finds out she can no longer play her last game of tennis on her old court.

### OTHER PLAYS by Tommy Murphy

*Troy's House* (1998)

Script extract from *Troy's House* - <http://australianplays.org/script/ASC-868/extract>

*Massacre at Paris* (2001) – an adaptation of Marlowe's play of the same name.

*Strangers in Between* (2005) – published Currency, with *Holding the Man*

*Holding the Man* (2006) – published Currency, with *Strangers in Between*

*Precipice* (2007)

Script extract from *Precipice* - <http://australianplays.org/script/ASC-991/extract>

*Saturn's Return* (2008) – published Currency: Strawberry Hills NSW, 2008.

### Resources to download:

Translated version of Dante's Divine Comedy, with illustrations <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/8800>

Listen to the podcast of Tommy Murphy's Alex Buzo lecture, given 13 Sept 2010, *A Voice Like No Other: The future of Australian drama on the international stage*: <http://www.usyd.edu.au/podcasts/>

### TOMMY MURPHY audio links

Interview on ABC Radio Canberra 9 Aug 2010 - <http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2010/08/09/2977786.htm>

Tommy Murphy on Classic FM's Mornings with Margaret Throsby: <http://www.abc.net.au/classic/throsby/>

Tommy Murphy & Melissa Jaffer on LifeMatters: <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/lifematters/stories/2010/2965414.htm>

### GWEN IN PURGATORY publicity

Actor Pacharo Mzembe in *Gwen in Purgatory* <http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/theatre/priestly-role-a-blessing-for-an-actor-dodging-stereotypes-20100803-115bo.html>

Article about Queanbeyan as the play's setting: <http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2010/08/09/2977786.htm>

Feature in SX - <http://sxnews.gaynewsnetwork.com.au/feature/tommy-murphy-super-scribe-007632.html>

Sydney Star Observer <http://www.starobserver.com.au/entertainment/2010/07/21/death-becomes-him/28373>

Q & A with Tommy - [www.stagewhispers.com.au/news/gwen-purgatory--a-q-and-a-with-playwright-tommy-murphy](http://www.stagewhispers.com.au/news/gwen-purgatory--a-q-and-a-with-playwright-tommy-murphy)

Timeout article - <http://www.timeoutsydney.com.au/theatre/event/13311/gwen-in-purgatory.aspx>

### Video clips to watch:

Publicity clip for *Gwen in Purgatory* - <http://www.youtube.com/user/Companybbelvoir#p/u/0/xZ25xCi17BY>

Bumping in *Gwen in Purgatory* - <http://www.youtube.com/user/Companybbelvoir#p/u/1/kNbLXjKPJcg>

Welcome to Lagos, BBC documentary - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T8llgvgHxHE>

(posted in several parts – is a 6 part episode)

### Australian plays and playwrights

Database of Australian playwrights and plays - <http://australianplays.org/>

PLAYWRITING AUSTRALIA - <http://www.pwa.org.au/>

## After the Show: MAKING THE MOST OF THE Q & A

After each school matinee performance at Company B Belvoir there is a Q & A session with the actors. In order to make the most of this experience, you might like to think about the *sorts* of questions you might ask before seeing the show.

### School Matinee Q & A sessions: A Guide

- Ask questions about the production you have just seen, rather than other plays, film or television programs in which you have seen the same actors.
- Think of the Q & A session as an opportunity to deepen your understanding of the production you have just seen, rather than just an opportunity to learn about the actors' careers or the profession of acting.

### Class Activity

Use a play you have seen recently when composing questions for this activity, or think of some general questions which can acquire more detail once you have seen the play.

1. Students list 3 questions that an actor might be asked by a student audience after a performance.
2. Students rank these questions from most (1) to least (3) according to:
  - Level of sophistication
  - Interest to the student
  - Cliché or what an actor would always be asked
3. Students then share their best questions with the class – most sophisticated, of most interest and the one they won't ask because it is very clichéd.
4. Ask students to reflect on the idea that the Q & A session is an opportunity to deepen their understanding of the production
5. List the areas in which students could deepen their understanding of the production such as: themes and ideas, message, the setting, costume and set design, characters, acting style.
6. Choose a play the whole class has seen.

In pairs, students are to select 2 areas of the production they would have liked to have known more about and compose 2 specific questions for each one.

7. One pair swaps their questions with another pair and composes answers for their questions.
8. Share question and answers with the class.