

MALTHOUSE

EDUCATION



NOSFERATU

VCE DRAMA UNIT 3
PROMPT PACK B

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the support of the Malcolm
Robertson Foundation.

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**MALTHOUSE THEATRE
ACKNOWLEDGES THE
UNCEDDED LANDS OF
THE KULIN NATION. WE
ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR
SOVEREIGNTY AND
THEIR SONGLINES. WE
PAY RESPECT TO THEIR
ELDERS AND THEIR
CHILDREN. WE EMBRACE
AND CELEBRATE THE
OLDEST CULTURE IN
THE WORLD.**

Malthouse Theatre presents Nosferatu.

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DESIGN / Hours After

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Malthouse Education Coordinator

NOSFERATU

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ICON KEY



LINKS



VIDEO



Introduction

YOU'VE CROSSED THE THRESHOLD...

I hope you enjoyed our Malthouse production of *Nosferatu*—and that it's given you plenty of exciting things to discuss!

This Prompt Pack B picks up where Prompt Pack A left off, and is separated into three main chapters: **Putting It Together** re-introduces you to our team, and compiles interviews and notes from several of our cast; **Page To Stage** revisits some of the contexts, intended themes and performance styles of the script, asking us how effective their interpretation onto stage was; and **Oh, The Drama!** is a series of guided analyses of scenes, moments and character arcs from the play, focussed on the application of students' knowledge and terminology to discuss and evaluate the production's demonstration of performance and expressive skills, dramatic elements, and production areas.

Remember that our Prompt Packs do not provide definitive answers; rather, students should use these insights and information to springboard into their own further study and discussion.

If there's one thing I've been reminded of since I started this job last year, it's that teachers are a generous, supportive bunch. I encourage you to reach out to others, join Drama Victoria and utilise their expansive network of knowledge, and create or join a Facebook page or group chat where you can ask your questions, receive support, and assist others as you (and your students) all tackle VCE Drama together.

And of course, I highly recommend classes book in for Malthouse Education's digital *Revisit The Play* workshop later in the year in preparation for final exams.

Whether it's related to this production, Drama in general, or even their wider school life, remember to keep alert to your students' wellbeing in this stressful time of their lives, and remind the classroom of the support offered by the organisations below.

As always, please get in touch with me on lbrooks@malthousetheatre.com.au if you have any questions, concerns, queries or quandaries!

All the very best, and see you again soon.

LYALL BROOKS

Malthouse Education Coordinator

WARNINGS AND SUPPORT

BEYOND BLUE

1300 224 636

beyondblue.org.au

HEADSPACE

headspace.org.au

REACHOUT

au.reachout.com

LIFELINE

13 11 14

lifeline.org.au

KIDS HELPLINE

1800 55 1800

SUICIDE CALLBACK SERVICE

1300 659 467

suicidecallbackservice.org.au

Putting It Together

Cast & Creative Team

CAST



MAX BROWN
KNOCK

Max Brown was a top 6 finalist for the 2022 Heath Ledger Scholarship. Max is best known for his roles of Nathan Wong in the HBOMax TV series *The Tourist* opposite Jamie Dornan; and as Oscar Wolfe in the Starz detective series *The Gloaming*. Max's other leading TV credits include the roles of David Goldman in the award winning *Glitch* on ABC and Netflix; James Hoang in the SBS series *Hungry Ghosts* and Kevin Dang in *Secret City* for Netflix. Max's further TV credits include *Bad Mothers*, *Home and Away*, *Neighbours*, *Bringing Our Stories Home*, *Retrograde* and *Fisk*. Max's feature film credits include *We're Not Here to F**k Spiders* and *The Tender Hook*. Max's recent theatre credits include *Cybec Electric 2021* and *Torch The Place* both for Melbourne Theatre Company. Max will next be seen starring in the Australian feature film *From All Sides* directed by Bina Bhattacharya.



JACOB COLLINS-LEVY
ORLOK

Jacob was last seen on Melbourne stages in Lanford Wilson's *Burn This* at fortyfivedownstairs. On screen he can be seen in series such as *Barracuda* (ABC), *The White Princess* (STARZ), *Doctor Who* (BBC), *Young Wallander* (Netflix) and the upcoming *Nautilus* (Disney+) as well as in films such as *Holding the Man*, *Joe Cinque's Consolation* and *True History of the Kelly Gang*.

Nosferatu is his Malthouse debut.



KEEGAN JOYCE
TOM

Keegan's Malthouse Theatre credits include *Because the Night*, *Solaris*, and *Cloudstreet*. Other theatre credits include *Rules for Living* (Sydney Theatre Company), *Vivid White* (Melbourne Theatre Company), *Evie May* (Hayes Theatre Company), *Once* (Gordon Frost Organisation), *Edges: The Musical* (James Anthony Productions), and *Oliver!* (Cameron Mackintosh/IMG). Film credits include *Greg's First Day*, *Wall Boy*, and *Superman Returns*. Television credits include *Rake* (Season 1 – 5), *Please Like Me* (Season 2 – 4), *Spreadsheet*, *Rescue: Special Ops*, and *K9*. Keegan released his debut album *Snow on Higher Ground* in 2016 and recently embarked on a new music project alter echo. Keegan has a degree in Musicology from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

CREATIVES



SOPHIE ROSS
KATE

Sophie is an actor, theatre maker and cultural change advocate who lives and works on Wurundjeri and Boon Wurrung country. She has appeared for Malthouse Theatre in *The Lockdown Monologues*, *The Real and Imagined History of the Elephant Man* and *Revolt. She Said. Revolt Again!*; for Melbourne Theatre Company in *Golden Shield*, *What Rhymes with Cars & Girls*, *The Waiting Room*, and *Cock*; for Sydney Theatre Company in *Disgraced*, *Gross und Klein*, *Before/After*, *Hamlet*, *Blood Wedding*, *Money Shots*, *Vs Macbeth*, *Oresteia*, *Comedy of Errors*, *Leviathan*, *Mysteries: Genesis*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *Waikiki Hip*, and *Woman in Mind*; for the Royal Court in *Narrative*; for B Sharp/ Small Things in *Ladybird*; for Griffin in *The Bleeding Tree* and *Stoning Mary*; for Arena in *The Sleepover*; and for Lab Kelpie in *Broken*. Sophie is co-founder and co-director of Safe Theatres Australia and is a proud member of Actors Equity.



SHAMITA SIVA
ELLEN

Shamita is a multifaceted performance artist and theatre maker specialising in movement. Shamita is thrilled to make her debut appearance with Malthouse. Recent theatre credits include *The Marvellous Life of Carlo Gatti* (Wildefang), *Mara Korper* (Citizen Theatre) and *Let Me Tremble* (The Danger Ensemble); Screen credits include *FOE* (Garthe Davis, Amazon), *La Famiglia* (Tom Conyers) and *Coconut* (Saloni Chopra). Shamita has won Best Supporting Actor Awards for films *Dashboard Dogs* and *Someone Else*, and has written and produced the dance film *Twin Flame*. As a professional dancer Shamita recently featured in and choreographed for Shimmery Couture's hit show, *Burlesque Melbourne* (Gasworks).



BRIDGET BALODIS
DIRECTOR

For Malthouse, Bridget has directed *Stay Woke*, was Assistant Director on *Because The Night*, and directed the digital productions of *The Lockdown Monologues* and *Hello, World!* Her other recent directing credits include *HYDRA* (Darebin Arts), *She is Vigilante* (Theatre Works), *MORAL PANIC* (Darebin Arts), *Desert, 6.29pm* (Red Stitch Actors' Theatre/Wuhzen Theatre Festival), *GROUND CONTROL* (Next Wave/Brisbane Festival), *Jurassica* (Red Stitch /Critical Stages), and *Kids Killing Kids* (Next Wave). Bridget was Assistant Director on *The Dream* (Bell Shakespeare) and *The Histrionic* (Malthouse Theatre/Sydney Theatre Company). In 2015 and 2016 she lived in New York, where she worked with downtown legends Elevator Repair Service and for Wooster Group alumna, Anna Kohler. She was a part of the inaugural MTC Women Director's program in 2014 and has received the Ian Potter Cultural Trust Award, Mike Walsh Fellowship, and Dame Joan Sutherland Award.

CREATIVES



KEZIAH WARNER
WRITER

Keziah Warner is a playwright and dramaturg based in Melbourne. She won Sydney Theatre Company's Patrick White Playwrights Award, has been shortlisted for the Griffin Award, the Martin Lysicrates Prize, the Rodney Seaborn Playwrights Award and the Max Afford Award, and longlisted for Soho Theatre's Young Writers' Award. Her credits include: *Poona* (Next Wave, 2021), *Control* (Red Stitch Actors Theatre, 2019), *Help Yourself* (MTC's Cybec Electric, 2019), *Luna* (VCA, 2019), and *Her Father's Daughter* (Hotel Now, 2018). Keziah is an alumna of Melbourne Theatre Company's Women in Theatre Program, Malthouse Theatre's Besen Family Artist Program, Red Stitch Actors' Theatre's INK Program, Playwriting Australia's Post-Production Program, and Soho Theatre's Writer's Lab, UK. Keziah co-created Malthouse's upcoming immersive show *Hour of the Wolf* with Matthew Lutton, which will premiere in 2023 at the Malthouse Theatre.



ROMANIE HARPER
SET & COSTUME DESIGNER

Romanie Harper is a designer based in Naarm/Melbourne. Recent design credits include *Australian Realness*, *Trustees*, *Good Muslim Boy*, *Little Emperors* and *Turbine* (Malthouse); *8/8/8: WORK* (Ring Festival); *Hercules* (Arts House); *The Cherry Orchard* and *Packer and Sons* (Belvoir St Theatre); *What Am I Supposed to Do?* and *Equinox* (Deep Souful Sweats); *The Violent Outburst That Drew Me To You* (MTC); *Die! Die! Die! Old People Die!*, *We All Know Whats Happening* and *Never Trust A Creative City* (Arts House); *Contest* and *Moral Panic* (Darebin Speakeasy, 2018); and *Runt*, *This Is Eden*, *Resident Alien* and *Triumph* (fortyfivedownstairs).



KELLY RYALL
COMPOSER & SOUND DESIGNER

Kelly is an award-winning composer, musician and sound designer for theatre, dance and film. Compositions for stage include: *Brothers Wreck*, *Edward II*, and *The Shadow King* (Malthouse); *A View from the Bridge*, *Working with Children*, and *Di Viv and Rose* (Melbourne Theatre Company); *Triple X* and *Boys Will Be Boys* (Sydney Theatre Company); *Romeo and Juliet*, *As You Like It* and *Macbeth* (Bell Shakespeare); *The Boys*, *And No More Shall We Part*, and *Dreams in White* (Griffin Theatre); *Title and Deed*, *Nora*, and *Hedda Gabler* (Belvoir); *Scenes from a Marriage* (Queensland Theatre); *You Animal, You* (Force Majeure); *Animal* (Theatre Works); *The Bacchae* (Fraught Outfit); *10,000 Small Deaths* (Dance Massive); *Pieces For Small Spaces* (Lucy Guerin Inc); and *Piece For Person* and *Ghetto Blaster* (Nicola Gunn). He is the winner of 4 Green Room Awards and a Melbourne International Arts Festival Award.



PAUL JACKSON
LIGHTING DESIGNER

Paul Jackson is an award-winning lighting designer who works across Australia and internationally. Credits include: *The Return, Cloudstreet, Melancholia, Bliss, Black Rider, Away, Picnic at Hanging Rock, Meow Meow's Little Mermaid* (Malthouse); *Solaris* (Malthouse, Lyric Hammersmith London and Royal Lyceum Edinburgh); *Death of a Salesman, The Beauty Queen of Leenane, Mary Stuart* (Sydney Theatre Company); *Cyrano, The Sound Inside, Home, I'm Darling, Arbus and West, The Children* (Melbourne Theatre Company); *Stop Girl, Galileo* (Belvoir); *Happy End, Cassandra, Lorelei, Don Giovanni, Lorelei* (Victorian Opera); *Carmen* (Opera Australia); *La Traviata* (Opera Queensland); *Our Town* (Queensland Theatre) and *On, Humans 2.0* (Circa). Paul has received a Helpmann Award, two Sydney Theatre Awards, four APDG Awards, seven Green Room Awards and a Critics' Award for Theatre in Scotland.



MARK PRITCHARD
DRAMATURG

Mark Pritchard is a dramaturg, arts programmer, and the former New Work Manager at Malthouse Theatre. Recent credits for Malthouse Theatre include— *Atlantis, K-Box, The Return, Stay Woke, Because The Night, Hello, World!, Atomic, Going Down, Heart is a Wasteland, Little Emperors, Turbine, and Blak Cabaret*. He was also dramaturg on *Mormon Girl* (Hot Mess Productions) and *Wael Zwaiter: Unknown* (Next Wave Festival). He co-directed *Shotgun Wedding, The Séance, and Unfinished Business* (NO SHOW). Mark is the former chair of the Green Room Awards Association Independent Theatre Panel, a recipient of the Mike Walsh Fellowship, and an alumnus of the Australia Council's Future Leaders Program. He is one half of the Centre for Dramaturgy and Curation.



BERNADETTE FAM
PRODUCTION DRAMATURG

Bernadette Fam is an interdisciplinary dramaturg, director and theatre-maker who is currently working as New Work Manager for Malthouse Theatre. As Dramaturg and/or Director of new work Bernadette has worked with a range of companies including but not limited to: Playwriting Australia, PYT Fairfield, Sydney Chamber Opera, Poetry in Action, Critical Stages Touring, Green Door Theatre Company, Rogues Projects and Antipodes Theatre. Bernadette has worked as a script assessor for Sydney Theatre Company and Griffin Theatre Company. Previously she has worked as Literary Associate for Belvoir Theatre Company, Creative Producer for Critical Stages Touring and is a past recipient of the Create NSW Young Creative Leaders Fellowship. As well as working at Malthouse Theatre she is currently a Creative Producer for Green Door Theatre Company and a member of TNA's inaugural Leadershift cohort.

PRODUCTION



CECILY RABEY
STAGE MANAGER

Cecily has relocated to Melbourne and is a graduate from The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama in London. This is her third production at Malthouse Theatre. Cecily has worked nationally and internationally as a stage manager and production manager. Selected credits include *Because The Night* and *Wake in Fright* (Malthouse Theatre), *Daddy* (Arts House), *FLIGHT* (Darkfield/Realscape Productions), *Angelo* (Little Angel Theatre), and *Lost Lending Library* (Punchdrunk).



HARRY DOWLING
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

Harry Dowling (he/him) is an emerging creative producer and arts manager. He is a 2021 graduate of Monash University with a Bachelor of Arts in theatre and performance, and is also the co-founder and general manager of independent live-arts company Fever103 Theatre. Recent Stage Management credits include *Low* (Theatre Works), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Melbourne Shakespeare Company), and *Body Horror* (Melbourne Fringe). As a producer his work has included *Treats* (Fever103/Southbank Theatre), *Kill Climate Deniers* (MUST/MPAC), and *Brittany & The Mannequins* (Fever103/Northcote Town Hall Arts Centre).

ADDITIONAL CREATIVES

LYNDALL GRANT
FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHY

SUZANNE HEYWOOD
VOCAL COACH

CESSALEE SMITH-STOVALL
INTIMACY CHOREOGRAPHY

HOLLY-JANE COHLE
BESEN PLACEMENT
(SET & COSTUME DESIGN)

GIOVANNI YATE-GONZALEZ
BESEN PLACEMENT
(LIGHTING DESIGN)













In Their Words

SOPHIE ROSS & JACOB COLLINS-LEVY (ACTORS)



Click on the above image to watch the whole interview, or use the links to specific questions below. The whole video with timecodes of individual questions can also be found at

vimeo.com/malthouse/NOSActors01

- Tell us about your characters.  [Link](#)
- What dramaturgy do you carry out to help you develop your characters?  [Link](#)
- What are some of the challenges in the play, and what skills do you utilise to overcome them?  [Link](#)
- How do you manipulate and maintain the actor-audience relationship?  [Link](#)
- How do the production areas support you in your performances?  [Link](#)
- What excites you most about this production?  [Link](#)



MAX BROWN & KEEGAN JOYCE (ACTORS)



Click on the above image to watch the whole interview, or use the links to specific questions below. The whole video can also be found at vimeo.com/malthouse/NOSActors02

→ Tell us about your characters.

 [Link](#)

→ Do you carry out any research to help you realise your performance?

 [Link](#)

→ What performance skills do you utilise to transition through the emotional and physical states in your characters' dramatic journeys?

 [Link](#)

→ How do the production areas support you in your performance?

 [Link](#)

→ What excites you most about this production?

 [Link](#)



BRIDGET BALODIS (DIRECTOR)

You can revisit our interview with director Bridget Balodis in Prompt Pack A by heading to vimeo.com/malthouse/NOSDirector

Real life on stage can be such a trap for artists, you sometimes find yourself chasing accuracy and convincing simulation, instead of truth. They're not the same thing. You can easily labour over cinematic realism, investing time in a task that may or may not add meaning to the story.

I love working with genre because it's an immediate release from that trap. As a director, it's permission to play, permission to find truth by looking sideways at something. Genre is a playground for your brain, letting you push ideas around in a place where you're not as confined by the constraints of logic, culture, or history.

It's also (I hope) a release for the audience, an agreement between you and us, the creative team, where there is absolute pleasure in knowing the players, the world, and the rules of the game (or most of them).

When I first read this play, I was struck by Keziah's treatment of the vampire horror genre— it at once satisfies and challenges, it isn't scared to engage with tropes but there's also a subversion of our expectations. Keziah's writing contains both an acknowledgement of tradition and a clear defiance of it. It is this kind of approach that allows these myths to persist—their ability to contain the present moment, to show us a mirror, and to evolve with us.

BRIDGET BALODIS

Nosferatu show program



Page to Stage

Contexts & Themes

This chapter aims to support you to recollect your experience of the performance, structure your analysis, and begin to articulate your evaluation of how effective you thought the actors and the various production areas helped convey the intended meanings of the play and the representation of its characters.

Consider how the **actors**, **director** and each **production area** contributed to the performance you saw, and remember to keep these **key questions** in mind:

- HOW DID IT HAPPEN?
- WHY DID IT HAPPEN?
- WHAT DID I THINK OF THAT CHOICE?
- WHAT EFFECT DID THE CHOICE HAVE ON THE AUDIENCE?
- WAS THE EFFECT POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE?

Following are some of the contexts and themes of *Nosferatu* provided in Prompt Pack A—and that you may have further researched prior to seeing the show, together with a small selection of simple provocations to get you going.



THE VAMPIRE MYTH

In Prompt Pack A, we briefly summarised the centuries-long staying power of the blood-consuming monster myth, the genesis of the modern vampire character, and how it is often linked—with barely-concealed xenophobia—to calamity and community misfortune.

Did this context find its place in the stage production? How was the character of the vampire interpreted on stage? How were they portrayed as an outsider—both within and beyond the script? How did design elements support this idea of the deadly outsider? Conversely, was there any instance of Orlok being played or presented as someone who was very much part of the community he had infiltrated?

‘There’s something embedded in the Australian psyche to do with two things. There’s the horror of the small town, the frightening locked-in feeling ... everybody knows everybody’s stuff and there’s no escape. Then there’s the fact that this land was taken by force and therefore particularly as white settlers we have this history of it not being ours by right. There’s a sense that any outsider poses a threat that’s very much a part of what it means to be Australian. That I don’t actually own this place and anyone who comes here might want it.’

BRIDGET BALODIS

Nosferatu Director

VAMPIRE RULES

Look back over the vampire rules mentioned in Prompt Pack A—both traditional (p25) and our Malthouse version (p30). How many of these were indicated in the dramatic production? How? In what ways did actors’ performances or the direction show them? Did the design ever reference these rules—either literally or symbolically?

THE SOURCE MATERIAL

In Prompt Pack A you got an impression of the enduring cultural impact of Bram Stoker's original *Dracula* (and its facsimile—our inspiration, *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror*.)

Did any element of the story's place in popular culture translate to the stage production you saw? Did it feel as if this adaptation was part of the vampire's historical literary lineage? How were these resonances portrayed on stage?

How different or similar were the five characters to what you know of their original F. W. Murnau counterparts? What about the original *Dracula* equivalents? How were their individual archetypes changed or echoed? (Perhaps think about gender, and real or perceived ethnicity, in particular.)

Think of who was in the audience at the performance you attended. What ages and identities made up the house? What was their reaction? What did you hear in the foyer after the show?

In conclusion: was this particular context effectively interpreted in the production? Why or why not? What performances, skills, direction or production roles were most effective in interpreting the context, and how?

'Monsters are metaphors. Zombies tap into our fear of the mindless mob, werewolves warn of our uncontrolled animal side, ghosts are the past that refuses to go away. But metaphors shift with the times, and vampires are perhaps the most flexible of terrors.

'In the century or so since Dracula first sank his fangs into our collective unconscious, the vampire has variously represented anxieties about predatory elites, addiction, sexual transgression and much more. We've seen biker vampires, superhero vampires, queer, camp and comic vampires.

'Closer to home, F. W. Murnau's classic is also the inspiration for a very contemporary tale. When playwright Keziah Warner was pitching her latest work to Malthouse Theatre, she was sure someone else would have pipped her to the post. She couldn't have been the first to notice the parallels between the parasitic undead and the new breed of ruthless entrepreneurs bleeding life from local communities and the planet itself?'

JOHN BAILEY

The Age



Performance Styles

AUSTRALIAN GOTHIC

'One really interesting thing about this story is that it feels very Australian... without being overtly 'iconically' Australian. There's nothing 'ocker' in it, there's nothing intensely clichéd, but it still feels like a deeply Australian investigation. The relationship to the land in an imagined Tasmania. The relationship to trespassing and who you invite in. The denialism in it... Some of it's global, but also particularly colonial Australian. It feels like its psyche is Australian but without being illustratively Australian—and I think that's very smart.'

MATTHEW LUTTON

Artistic Director and Co-CEO, Malthouse Theatre

Look back over the activity on p31 of Prompt Pack A, exploring and identifying the inherent tropes, archetypes and symbols of Australian Gothic—a style evolved from 19th Century Gothic exploring the uniquely Australian spectre of our history or identity. Themes emphasise the terrors of isolation in this postcolonial land and expose a tormented communal psyche weighted by dark secrets.

Below is a non-exhaustive list of Australian Gothic conventions; how many of these did you recognise in the Malthouse production of *Nosferatu*? Where? How were they presented, performed or referenced? How effective were they? What was your response to these, as an audience?

- The environment as participant (or the landscape as a 'character')
- Supernatural intrusions
- Themes of violence and escape
- Exploration of the colonisation of Australia.
- Foreboding mood
- Intertextuality (references to or interdependence on other texts in the genre)
- The 'lost child'
- Supernatural elements that haunt and stay, as opposed to visit and leave
- Use of sound and/or lighting to build or underscore tension
- Protagonist who confronts the nightmare alone
- Doubled or 'shadow' characters (either two parallel/opposite characters, or an internal duality/division of one character)

REALISM & MAGICAL REALISM

It's always a good idea to be reminded of traditional Realism before exploring Magical Realism, as it can be argued the latter style sits somewhere under the former.

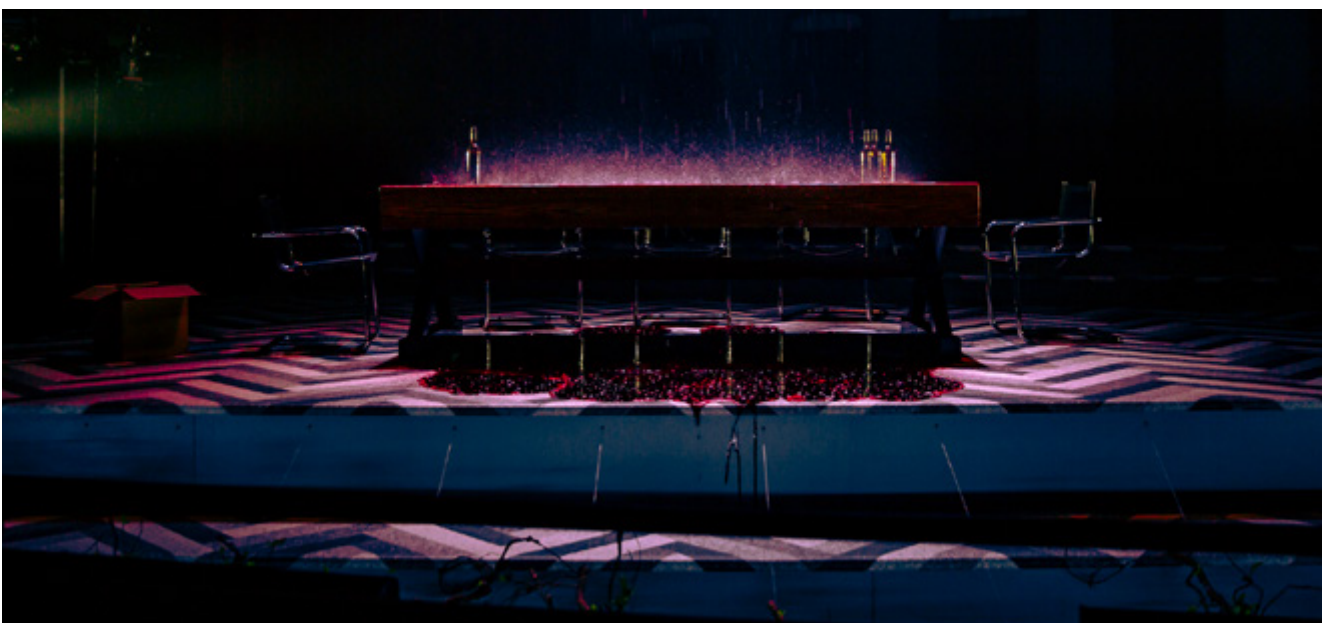
You will already have a good understanding of Realism being a style of drama crafted to create believable representations of life, with roles and characters in drawn from real-life or life-like motivations. Some conventions include:

- Fourth wall
- Three-dimensional characterisations
- Subtext and the inner-life / psychologically motivated action
- Objective and super-objective, and beats and units of action
- Given circumstances

Magical Realism, conversely, is a form of theatre in which the real and the fantastical, the natural and the supernatural, coexist on the stage in a realistic setting. It is exemplified by:

- supernatural intrusions into the fourth wall
- surreal transformations
- breaking out of realist action
- use of non-human characters and/or characters who possess supernatural powers
- a sense of eeriness, mystery or magic
- strong, fluid shifts in either time or place
- the presentation of extraordinary events.

Did you spot any of these Magical Realism identifiers in Malthouse's *Nosferatu*, and how effective were they?



ECLECTIC

We have looked at conventions of Australian Gothic, Realism and Magical Realism that may be present in the staging of *Nosferatu*—but you may want to describe the performance style as Eclectic (as this is likely the predominant form you are working in in VCE Drama).

Acting Smart Drama (v8, p15) has a terrific checklist of elements of the Eclectic performance style, and you are encouraged to discuss how many of these were (or weren't) recognisable on stage.

It's also good practice to never label a production as 'Eclectic' without being able to articulate the specific other performance styles and their aspects that contribute to and justify this 'eclecticism.' To the right are some conventions of specific performance styles that you may have noticed in either the script, contexts, or dramatic production.

→ How many of these conventions did you identify in the **written script** of the play?

If you have a copy of the playtext, or a detailed summary, take a scene and underline any instance of the conventions to the right. Work in a group, or take a solo pass at the scene before comparing your work with a friend and discussing.

→ How many of these conventions did you identify in the **dramatic production** of the play?

Using a scene from the stage play, consider each production role's contribution and give examples of any of the listed style conventions that were evident. Were they clear? Were they effective in supporting the other production roles/elements, and ultimately the interpretation?



REALISM

- Naturalistic costumes
- Believable, relatable characters
- Realistic movement
- Un-heightened speech and everyday dialogue
- Psychologically driven drama
- Protagonist rises up against the odds and triumphs

NATURALISM

- Exploration of harsh topics (ie death, environmental destruction, poverty)

SYMBOLISM

- Transformed or symbolic props (ie a table that acts as a desk, kitchen table, or banquet table)
- Lighting as atmosphere indicator
- Supernatural, dreamlike or stylised atmosphere
- Symbolic or abstract set (ie flooring disappearing into a large downstage pit)
- Archetypal characters
- Use of shadows or silhouette

EXPRESSIONISM

- Surreal atmosphere
- Abstract scenery (ie raining blood/wine)
- Use of bold or garish colours or patterns

BRECHTIAN/EPIC

- Traditional proscenium arch theatre (even without a literal prosc)
 - Mix of realistic and non-realistic movement
 - Direct audience address
 - Multi-purpose set elements (ie the doors)
 - Visible lighting equipment
-

Actor~Audience Relationship

Describe one or two moments during the performance when you felt the most engaged or 'part of the story'. What about moments where you felt you were more distantly 'observing'? Do you think these were intended?

How did the actor-audience relationship enhance your understanding of the intended meanings, themes, and story of the play?

How did the way different scenes and spaces were established or delineated affect the actor-audience relationship?

Provide examples of moments during the performance when you felt a strong connection to one of the characters in the play. How did the actor playing the character create a strong actor-audience relationship?

Describe any other strong actor-audience relationships that you witnessed during the play.





Oh, The Drama!

The purpose of this chapter is to refresh students' memories and assist them in discussing their own ideas and opinions about the play, sharing the (perhaps) differing impacts it had on each of them, and analysing how—and how effectively—they believed the production communicated the characters and intended meanings.

It aims to avoid the questions that populate many teachers' resources—ie “how did the actor use their expressive skills to convey their character?”—valuable and fundamental, to be sure, but exercises you are likely to carry out with the class anyway, and framed much better in textbooks such as the wonderful *Acting Smart* series. This chapter will instead focus on guided analyses of specific scenes, sequences, or ‘moments’ in the professional performance.

There are a handful of observations and suggestions—but not definitive answers!—given under each title. You may wish to take the chapter and lead your own written or verbal activity, or simply have an open-book discussion—letting students agree or disagree with their classmates (and me!).

Encourage students to utilise, incorporate and justify all the **appropriate terminology** they have leaned thus far in Drama to craft their responses to each moment's interpretation.

Orlok's Mansion

FOCUS (STILLNESS, FACIAL EXPRESSION), ENERGY, ACTOR-AUDIENCE RELATIONSHIP // CONFLICT, CONTRAST (LOCATION), MOOD, RHYTHM (EMOTIONAL INTENSITY), SOUND, SPACE (SYMBOLISM, PERSONAL), TENSION // VOICE (TONE, INFLECTION), MOVEMENT (GAIT, PHYSICAL VARIETY), GESTURE (VOCAL, SPATIAL) // TRANSFORMATION (PLACE) // MAKEUP, PROPS, SET PIECES, THEATRE TECHNOLOGIES

Over three scenes (Act One, Scenes 5, 6 & 8), we are introduced to Count Orlok—and the immediate ‘attraction’ he has to Tom (more specifically, the opportunity he represents).

In Act One, Scene 5, consider how Keegan Joyce as Tom uses his voice and physicality to build the tension of his arrival and disorientation in the grounds of Orlok's mansion. Think about his movement up the symbolic ‘hill’ created by the steps up out of the downstage pit; also, just as his disembodied voice messages become reassuringly ‘live’ as he enters, perhaps there's something in the direction of his movement (away from us (protection), towards the upstage doors (ominous!))?. Do you remember the other production elements supporting the mood here? The dimmer lighting state; the haze; the howling (‘Do they have dingos in Sydney?’). Contrast this with Shamita Siva's Ellen, safe at home, with every voicemail from Tom her physicality suggesting deeper sleep—and more intimate contact with her book of demons.

In Act One, Scenes 6 and 8, consider the importance Orlok places on being ‘invited in’—Tom into the mansion, Orlok to Bluewater—and how actor Jacob Collins Levy subtly focused attention on these lines with pauses and the tone of his voice. (Orlok has many subtextual or double-entendre lines in the play, each one played with differing levels of awareness for the character and/or the audience.) Collins-Levy's vocal control, together with the unrushed energy of his movement, helps portray Orlok as a stately, measured, unflappable, and quietly powerful being. When he raises his voice, it immediately changes the mood—it feels threatening, but also unemotional, somehow strategic.

You may have noticed Joyce's physicality as Tom when he is in the presence of Orlok: submissive and obedient, yet not without confusion and resistance to the power over him. His usual gesticulation dulls, he leads slightly more with his head like someone transfixed. The two scenes give Joyce the space to show the contrast two weeks of manipulation and torture have had on Tom. Supported by a terrifying soundscape of a baby crying and Collins-Levy's intimidating energy, Joyce physicalises Tom's psychological erosion by trembling, hunching his shoulders, frantically swinging his head in search of the source of the noise, and manipulating his breathing and vocal variety to show distress—reminiscent of a trapped animal.

Kate's Arc

FOCUS (STILLNESS), TIMING, ENERGY, ACTOR-AUDIENCE RELATIONSHIP (ESTABLISH, MAINTAIN) // CLIMAX, MOOD, SPACE (CHOICE), TENSION // VOICE (DICTION, INFLECTION, PITCH), GESTURE (PART/FULL-BODY), FACIAL EXPRESSION (PURPOSE) // TRANSFORMATION (TIME) // SET, PROPS

Sophie Ross, as Kate, plays the only character not to be transformed and/or killed by Orlok, in effect becoming our only choice of reliable narrator—after the action of the story, but before the action of the play. Think back to the mood established by Ross in the Prologue—the way she balances stillness and intensity, conveys the ominous nature of the story to come, setting up the all-important relationship with the audience, but with a tempo that never lets us ‘get ahead of the text’.

Consider how Ross portrays Kate's authority and aptitude—as town GP Dr Bulwer—that we see in the earlier scenes. The posture assured, but relaxed and approachable; the constant, diligent activity; the calm, alto vocal quality; the facial expression that portrays an inquisitive—but not intrusive—nature.

Contrast this with her later scene with Knock at the Tarn (Act Two, Scene 10). With an elevation of energy, Ross turns Kate's inquisitiveness into anguish (desperate for information), and her authority into calls to action (demanding Knock take responsibility). In a production rarely straying into heightened emotional performances, in this scene we see Kate delivering a climactic speech stemming in turn from confusion, grief, and anger. Ross's vocal range traverses these emotions as she simultaneously gestures using her entire body, arms held aloft and outstretched, reminiscent of someone trying to find their way in the dark.

Tom and Ellen's Anniversary

FOCUS (PROP SYMBOLISM), ENERGY, ACTOR-AUDIENCE RELATIONSHIP (RESPONSE) // CONFLICT, CONTRAST, MOOD, RHYTHM, SPACE (CHOICE), TENSION // MOVEMENT (DYNAMICS) // PROPS, SET

Act One, Scene 3 is a wonderful example of a classic horror trope: the tension between actors performing an early scene of domestic comedy—and the seeds of impending doom being planted by other elements such as the text, lighting or sound.

Discuss how Keegan Joyce and Shamita Siva navigate the love, familiarity and conflict of Tom and Ellen's relationship in this scene: through their use of space and distance; subtle changes in vocal tone; hardening and softening of posture and movement. Did you notice how Joyce follows Siva offstage at the end of the scene, bewitched and supplicant—an early indication, perhaps, of Tom's penchant for being easily led; a precursor for his manipulation by Orlok?



Knock's Arc

CLIMAX, CONFLICT, CONTRAST, MOOD, RHYTHM (EMOTIONAL INTENSITY), SPACE, TENSION // VOICE (TONE, BREATHING), MOVEMENT (GAIT, PHYSICAL & TEMPO VARIETY), FACIAL EXPRESSION (CONVEYANCE) // TRANSFORMATION (CHARACTER, PLACE) // COSTUME, SET

Undergoing arguably the biggest transformation of the play, Max Brown's Knock is an excellent study in transformation of character. In Act One he has a more emotional arc from reluctant mayor to energised, entrepreneurial community saviour (by way of a rekindled romance potential). It is in Act Two, however, that his transformation is a more intense psychological and physiological one.

Act Two, Scene 1 sees Knock babbling while Orlok drinks his blood. Brown exhibits a vocal rhythm that moves from thought to disparate thought, never allowing a moment to land completely before moving onto the next idea. Emotions such as gratitude, jealousy, pride, confusion and awe are detected only fleetingly in his voice and facial expression—but more obvious demonstrations of pain and weakening, centred around both the abdomen and the head/eyes, are punctuated throughout. His loyalty to Orlok is established through Brown falling to his knees—an overt gesture of supplication.

After his 'death' and reawakening at the end of the scene, Brown's transformation into something 'other' is shown through animalistic actions (instinctively snapping at the fly and eating it) and a slightly stilted gait and dead-eyed stare as he lumbers off stage.

In Act Two, Scene 5, Brown cycles through Knock's physical hunger pains, mental anguish, and untethering grip on reality. His whole body shakes; he holds his stomach; he squats and stays close to the floor like an animal; his voice trails into manic laughter and a child-like tone.

Later in Scene 8, recollect how Brown demonstrates the mayor's battle to hold onto his human-ness—through manipulation of the text, and snapping between the different physical energies of Knock's internal ('shadow') duality.

Finally consider how, by the end of the character's journey in Scenes 10 and 11, Brown plays Knock's insatiable hunger, heightened anguish, guilt, and desperate entreaties with his whole body and voice—at times doubled over, raging, crying, taunting or pleading.

Dinner

FOCUS (STILLNESS), TIMING, ENERGY // CONTRAST, MOOD, RHYTHM (DELIVERY, LENGTH), SOUND, SPACE (EFFECT), TENSION // VOICE (DICTION, TIMING), GESTURE (PART-BODY), FACIAL EXPRESSION // TRANSFORMATION (TIME) // LIGHTING, PROPS, SET, SOUND, THEATRE TECHNOLOGIES

In this lengthy Act One climax, Scene 12 brings the entire cast of characters together for the first time—and hints at the immense power that Orlok is eventually going to exercise over them (perhaps one of the symbolic meanings of the sudden horrifying blood rain at the end of the scene...? Discuss!)

Remember one of our vampire ‘rules’ (Prompt Pack A, p30) was that Orlok has an effect on time—‘it moves strangely around him’—and how the script states, at various points, ‘time jumps.’ Also in Prompt Pack A, director Bridget Balodis speaks of treating these moments in the script as ‘thresholds’ that are crossed. Discuss how this was presented in the Malthouse production. Consider:

- The actors ‘snapping’ into positions as a unified chorus, at the point of these ‘thresholds’
- Mirroring each other’s gestures—ie all sitting forward, or back, or holding a wine glass, or having their hand on/near their hearts—as if they are being controlled (like puppets?)
- Sound supporting each time jump—with a recognisable, almost filmic ‘*shoomp*’
- Lighting snap-changes on each jump; never returning to a ‘home’ lighting state, but cycling through a different state each time, indicating perhaps that, like a threshold, each moment is a fatalistic point of no return, descending into something new and ominous
- The diction and vocal dexterity involved in the many overlapping conversations; care and practice is required to ensure it is not just an impenetrable wall of sound, rather that the actors (under the guidance of the director) are still listening to each other, knowing when to project an idea above the others, and when to sink into the background
- There are also some lovely moments of facial dexterity by Sophie Ross that may be missed on first viewing. As the strange time jumps continue and the conversations become more overlapped, she plays with an incredibly subtle expression of confusion and curiosity; it looks like the sort of face you might make when you feel *déjà vu*—like something is going peculiarly, fundamentally awry. It pays off in the final cacophonous overlapping section when, suddenly immune to Orlok’s time warp, she is able to issue a challenge to him: ‘Is it always like this? Everyone performing for you?’

Blood & Capes

THEATRE TECHNOLOGIES

There is much more to unpack in the climactic Act One, Scene 12 than its utilisation of Theatre Technologies, but it is nevertheless a terrific scene on which to pause and discuss how the production has used traditional stage illusions to tell the story.

For Orlok, a soft blood pack and plastic tube is secured to actor Jacob Collins-Levy's arm, with a valve secreted to the upstage side of his forearm to control the flow of fake blood into a glass—or another character's mouth.

Smaller blood packs that can be pulled out of pockets and easily popped open to be poured into or smeared around the mouth are used to sell the idea of necks or arms being bitten throughout the play.

Do you know why we've traditionally associated long black cloaks with vampires? They look suitable for aristocratic 'Count', yes, but they also happened to accommodate a range of vanishing 'tricks' on early Victorian stages. A cape with a hidden frame can look like a character is still inside—while the actor slips out into a wing or into upstage darkness. Or, in our case, a floor-length cape can cover the audience's view of an actor's feet as they descend through a trapdoor, giving the illusion they are disappearing, or 'melting'. With a large cloud of smoke and some bright backlight, audience eyes have for many years blinked open to find a character vanished from the stage.



Resources

Further Resources

The following resources can be used in conjunction with those provided in Prompt Pack A to form a comprehensive bank of assets. Once again, these are a mix of resources referenced in the body of this document, and extra sources to further inform and stimulate.

Note that all resources are hyperlinked for those clicking on an interactive PDF version of this Prompt Pack but, for those holding a paper version, simple-to-type bitly links have been provided.

- **Are entrepreneurs the vampires of our time? Meet the new *Nosferatu***
John Bailey | The Age | Article, 2023 | bit.ly/NOSPress01
- **Interview with Director Bridget Balodis**
vimeo.com/malthouse/NOSDirector
- **Interview with Actors Sophie Ross & Jacob Collins-Levy**
vimeo.com/malthouse/NOSActors01
- **Interview with Actors Max Brown & Keegan Joyce**
vimeo.com/malthouse/NOSActors02

Nosferatu Resources Dropbox

In addition to the references and links above and in Prompt Pack A, you can also find a general *Nosferatu* Resources Dropbox that will be gradually populated with bonus materials as they become available—things like **set and costume design** files, recorded **Q&As**, extra reading, **reviews**, show **program**, these **Prompt Packs**, etc—so keep checking back here throughout the year:

- **Nosferatu Resources Dropbox**
bit.ly/NOSPromptPack





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