



Education Mini-Pack

2 OCTOBER — 6 NOVEMBER 2019

Southbank Theatre, The Sumner

About the Play

Charlotte Gibson is a lawyer with a brilliant career ahead of her. As her father Ray says, she could be the next female Indigenous Waleed Aly. But she has other ideas. First of all, it's Christmas. Second of all, she's in love. The thing is, her fiancé, Francis Smith, is not what her family expected – he's unemployed, he's an experimental composer ... and he's white! When the families come together at the Gibson's ritzy holiday home, the stage is set for a riotously funny struggle for dominance where insults fly, secrets come flooding out and sacred cows of all descriptions are mercilessly skewered.

About the Playwright

Nakkiah Lui is a writer/actor and Gamilaroi/Torres Strait Islander woman. She is a co-writer/star of *Black Comedy*, creator/writer/star of *Kiki and Kitty* (ABC), creator/co-host of the podcast *Pretty for an Aboriginal* (Buzzfeed), and regular panellist on *Screentime* (ABC). She has been an artist in residence at Griffin Theatre Company (2013), playwright in residence at Belvoir (2012–2014) and a member of Queensland Theatre's National Artistic Team (2015–2017). In 2012, Nakkiah was the first recipient of The Dreaming Award from The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Arts Board of the Australia Council. The same year, she was the inaugural recipient of the Balnaves Foundation Indigenous Playwright award. Nakkiah's writing credits include *This Heaven* (Belvoir/Finborough Theatre), *Blak Cabaret*, (Sydney Festival/Malthouse Theatre), *Kill the Messenger* (also as Actor) (Belvoir), *#KillAllMen*, (NIDA), *How to Rule the World* and *Power Plays* (STC), *Blaque Showgirls* (Malthouse Theatre). Directing credits include *An Octoroon* (Queensland Theatre). Her dramaturgical credits include *The Sovereign Wife*, (MTC NEON), *Lilith: the Jungle Girl*, (MTC). Nakkiah is also an active social commentator, with contributions to *The Guardian*, *The Saturday Paper* and *Junkee*. She has appeared on Q&A, *The Drum* and *The Project*. Nakkiah was STC's 2018 Patrick White Playwrights Fellow.

Genre

Contemporary Australian comedy

Cast

Ray Gibson Tony Briggs
Narrator Luke Carroll
Marie Smith Vanessa Downing
Dennison Smith Geoff Morrell
Rose Jones Tuuli Narkle
Joan Gibson Melodie Reynolds-Diarra
Francis Smith Tom Stokes
Charlotte Gibson Miranda Tapsell
Sonny Jones Anthony Taufau

Creative Team

Director Paige Rattray
Set & Costume Designer Renée Mulder
Lighting Designer Ben Hughes
Composer & Sound Designer Steve Toulmin
Tour Director Julia Patey
Voice & Text Coach Charmian Gradwell
Production Manager Lauren Makin
Stage Manager Natalie Moir
Assistant Stage Manager Vanessa Martin
Tour Head Mechanist Joseph Gleeson
Tour Head Electrician Corinne Fish
Tour Sound Supervisor Luke Davis
Tour Head Carpenter Nick Horne
Rehearsal Photographer Grant Sparkes-Carroll
Production Photographer Prudence Upton

Running Time

Approx. 2hrs and 30min including a 20min interval

Attendance Information

This production contains coarse language, nudity and drug use. For detailed information, please visit www.mtc.com.au/production-content-guide



Turn the page for activities, and discussions.

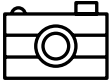
MTC MELBOURNE
THEATRE
COMPANY

Before the Show



Read more about Playwright Nakkiah Lui at mtc.com.au/backstage and her inspiration for writing *Black is the New White*. 'I also wanted to present a family of Aboriginal people that hasn't been seen before,' says Lui, 'I wouldn't just say on stage, but within the Australian canon of work across different platforms.' Make a list of plays, films and TV shows that include Aboriginal characters and make notes about how they're presented.

Download the show programme at mtc.com.au/backstage to read about how Director Paige Rattray used improvisation during rehearsals for this production.



Black is the New White is a Sydney Theatre Company production, originally performed in 2017. Research previous productions online to see photos of the cast in rehearsal and on stage. Make predictions about how the set will be used.



Watch the trailer for *Black is the New White* at [YouTube.com/melbtheatreco](https://www.youtube.com/melbtheatreco). Make predictions about the story and the actor-audience relationship.



This play has been described as *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* meets *The Family Stone* meets *Meet the Fockers* meets *Grand Designs*. Discuss these films and TV shows and make predictions about *Black is the New White's* story, performance style, and design.

Discuss your own perception and experience of Christmas, or how you've seen it depicted in films and TV. How might this time of year be presented in the play?

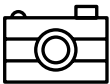
Post-show Activities



Discuss how the narrator was used in the play. How did the narrator affect the actor-audience relationship?

Which moments made you laugh? Which moments made you feel uncomfortable? Which moments did you find shocking? What have you taken away from watching this play?

Discuss how Nakkiah Lui makes the audience think about class, gender, race, and generational divides in this play.



Look at the production photos at mtc.com.au/backstage. Discuss how the set and costume designs (by Renée Mulder) were used to communicate character and help tell the story.

Think about how Steve Toulmin's lighting design was used to enhance the production. Identify practical lights on stage and discuss how they were incorporated into the design.

Make a list of the props you can remember being used in this play.



Playwright Nakkiah Lui has described this play as a romantic comedy. Discuss what the conventions of this style are, and identify moments in the play that demonstrate these. Discuss how black comedy is used in the play.

Download the show programme at mtc.com.au/backstage to read about the cast and creatives who worked on *Black is the New White*. Research roles that you're unfamiliar with and think about how they contributed to this production.

Identify symbols in the play and design your own poster for *Black is the New White* that incorporates three.

Melbourne Theatre Company acknowledges the people of the Kulin Nation, First Peoples of Country on which Southbank Theatre stands. We pay our respects to all First Peoples of the land on which we meet, create and perform – their ancestors and Elders, and to our shared future.



@melbtheatreco #mtcBlackIsTheNewWhite



MTC Education

MTC is a department of the University of Melbourne

