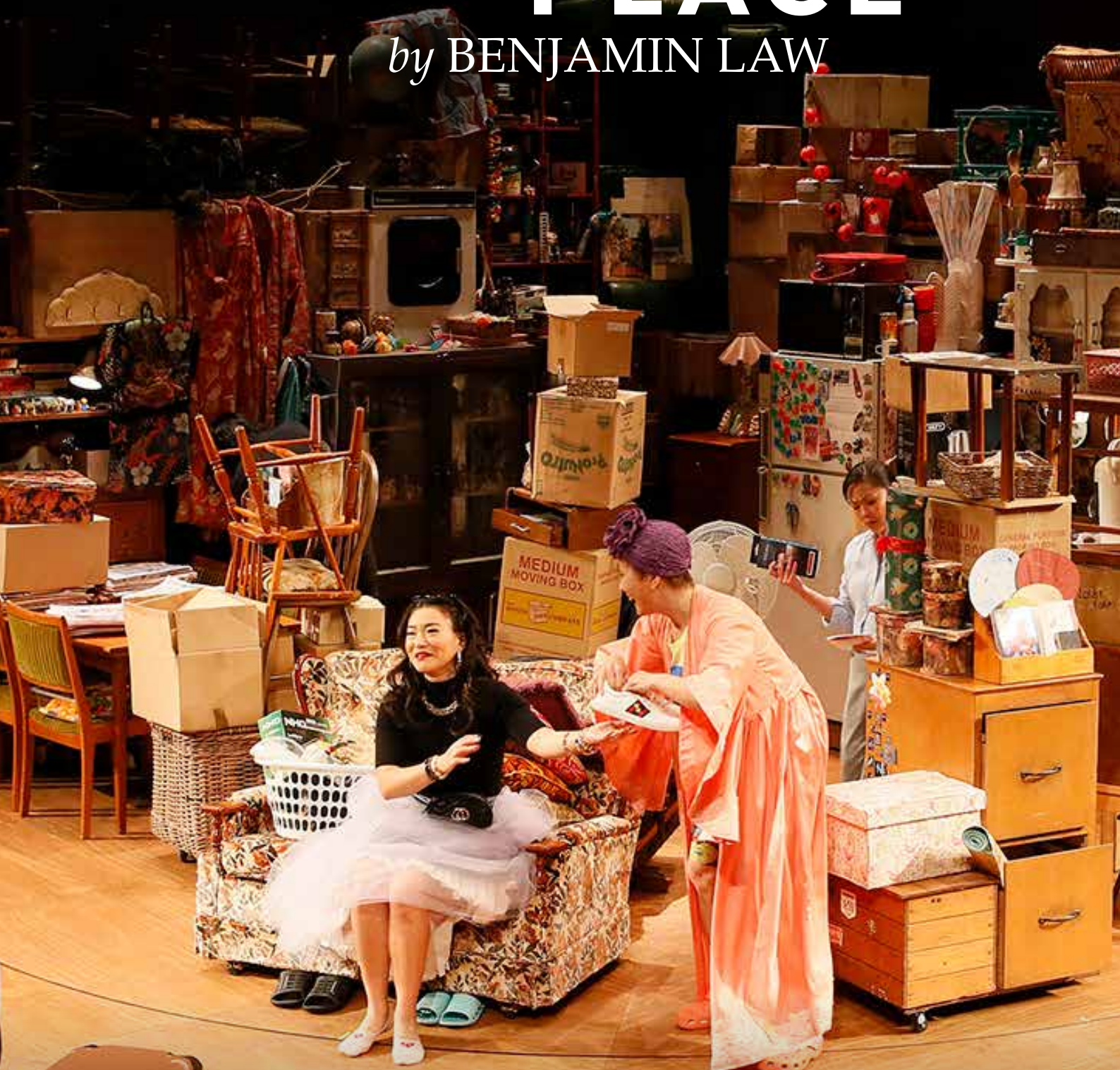


MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY  
— EDUCATION PACK PART B —

AN MTC NEXTSTAGE ORIGINAL

# TORCH THE PLACE

by BENJAMIN LAW



8 FEB — 21 MAR

ARTS CENTRE MELBOURNE, FAIRFAX STUDIO

MTC MELBOURNE  
THEATRE  
COMPANY

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Throughout these notes, look out for these icons for opportunities to learn more:



**Activity**



**Discuss**



**Interview**



# — WELCOME —



We are thrilled to be premiering Benjamin Law's debut play and even more so that it's the first of four NEXT STAGE Originals appearing in our 2020 Season.

A prolific talent across many disciplines, Benjamin's dramatic writing is defined by an effortless and razor-sharp wit that's underpinned by honesty and reality. The experiences he writes about are fundamentally human and relatable, and his ability to handle light-hearted comedy as skilfully as he does more serious subjects is key to his stature as one of Australia's most exciting literary artists. He is also a master of character and dialogue from his extensive television-writing experience.

Benjamin has brought all this to the table in *Torch the Place* and the result is a poignant, deeply moving and very funny story that gives a beautifully humane insight into a complex mental health issue.

MTC Education helps you to get the most out of your visit to the theatre and to make meaningful connections between the work we do at MTC and your studies. We hope this world-premiere production inspires your own creative work, and we look forward to continuing the conversation with you throughout the year.

Enjoy the show,

**Brett Sheehy AO**  
Artistic Director & CEO

**Virginia Lovett**  
Executive Director & Co-CEO

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Melbourne Theatre Company acknowledges the Yalukit Willam Peoples of the Boon Wurrung, the First Peoples of Country on which Southbank Theatre and MTC HQ stand. We pay our respects to all of Melbourne's First Peoples, to their ancestors and Elders, and to our shared future.

# — ABOUT THIS RESOURCE —

Part B of the *Torch the Place* Education Pack for is designed to help you analyse and evaluate the production in relation to your VCE Theatre Studies curriculum. This is a post-show resource, and is best used in combination with Part A of the Education Pack. Teachers and students should consult the VCE Study Design and VCAA documents for information about assessment tasks and examinations.

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## Revisit Part A

Revisit Part A of this Education Pack for information about context, setting, characters, theatre styles, and the playwright.

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## VCE THEATRE STUDIES UNIT 3 AREA OF STUDY 3 OUTCOME 3

In this area of study students analyse and evaluate an interpretation of a script in a production from the prescribed VCE Theatre Studies Unit 3 Playlist. Students analyse and evaluate the relationship between the written script and its interpretation on stage. In doing so, students study ways the interpretation on stage draws on and interprets the contexts in the script. This includes the decisions that have been made when interpreting the script, for example decisions about acting, direction and design and the use of theatre technologies and elements of theatre composition.

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse and evaluate the creative and imaginative interpretation of a written script in production to an audience. To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 3.

### KEY KNOWLEDGE

- ways to analyse and evaluate a theatre production
- the contexts of the written script and how they have been interpreted in the production
- theatre styles in the written script and in the play in performance
- evidence of decisions taken by a creative team of theatre practitioners to interpret the written script for performance
- production roles and their application in developing the written script for performance
- theatre technologies and their use in the production
- elements of theatre composition and their use in the production
- terminology and expressions used to describe, analyse and evaluate a theatre production.

### KEY SKILLS

- analyse and evaluate ways in which the contexts of a written script were interpreted creatively and imaginatively in performance to an audience
- analyse and evaluate the application of production roles to develop the written script for performance
- analyse and evaluate the use of theatre technologies in the production
- analyse and evaluate the use of elements of theatre composition in the production
- use appropriate theatre terminology and expressions.

# — CHARACTERISATION —

## MUM

Mum – also called Diana – is played by Diana Lin. Lin says her character is a first generation migrant who feels frustrated by not knowing the language she is surrounded by. ‘English is the language her children speak,’ says Lin, ‘and the only language her neighbours speak.’ Lin describes Mum as a lively, often genuinely cheerful, person, ‘but there will always be something alienating about the difference in language.’



### Diana Lin (Mum)

‘Diana wants people to think she’s strong and outspoken, but the kids don’t always understand her. She is distressed, lonely, and carries trauma with her, which feeds the hoarding. At the end of the day, she really just wants to be understood by the people she loves: her family.’



### Mum’s Motivations

Consider Lin’s comments above and reflect on your own interpretation of the script. How would you describe Mum’s motivations? Reflect on the context section of Part A of this Education Pack.

Lin says *Torch The Place* is about grown-up children who have to deal with their mother and her hoarding disorder. ‘The kids only really get to know more about mum and her mind once they start cleaning,’ explains Lin. At the outset, both the children and the audience perceive Mum as a bit strange, but as the play progresses, and everything Mum has lived through comes to light, we develop an understanding. ‘This is the first play I’ve ever read that describes my life experience put on stage,’ says Lin. ‘A lot of people, myself included, can relate to this story of a migrant family and the tension of children growing up in Western culture. Australia is multicultural and migrants make the country so strong – not just Asians migrants, but many cultures.’



### Diana Lin (Mum)

‘My first language is Chinese, so it’s a challenge to be doing the show in my second language. That’s why I wanted to do it as well – I wanted my own personal challenge. With these types of roles, it’s often Australian-born actors putting on migrant accents. It’s rare to have actual migrant actors genuinely just speaking in their own voices, telling their own stories. That makes this play a real landmark achievement.’



Diana Lin and Charles Wu



Dina Lin and Michelle Lim Davidson

To portray Mum's characteristics, Lin has interpreted the script using her acting skills. The expressive skills of voice and gesture are particularly important for Mum:



### Diana Lin (Mum)

'Diana is a quite neurotic character. I use wringing hands, small nervous ticks, and some moments with regular repeated movements. To show her age, I hunch over a little bit but what is more important is that she's a very youthful character. She is bursting with energy and that is reflected in how energised her voice and gestures are when she speaks. She loves to talk and she loves to express herself so when she's excited and happy, she speaks higher and faster. When she's in an especially good mood, I use a sing-song quality in her speaking voice. Where your heart is, the voice follows. In the quiet moments there's more stillness, her voice and movements are a little more considered, gentle, and vulnerable. It's a very nice contrast to the more frantic moments.'



### Analyse Mum

Consider Lin's comments above and reflect on your memory of the performance. Write a paragraph that analyses how Lin used her acting skills to portray Mum, and incorporate some of the language Lin uses in her description.



### Read more from Diana Lin

Read the extended Q&A with Diana Lin at [mtc.com.au/backstage](http://mtc.com.au/backstage).



## TERESA

Teresa is played by Fiona Choi. Choi says her character is driven by both external and internal forces. ‘Teresa is the eldest daughter and has been looking after her Mum since she was a teen,’ explains Choi, ‘so feels a real responsibility to make sure her Mum is OK. She feels strongly that living in the hoarders mess is affecting her Mum’s mental and physical well-being.’ Choi says Teresa longs to be free of feeling responsible for her mother so she can focus on her own life, but ‘there is also the external pressure of complaints from neighbours, a threat from the local Council, and this is the only weekend she has been able to gather the rest of her siblings together.’



### Fiona Choi (Teresa)

‘Teresa is a straight-laced school teacher who likes to be in control so at times a righteous, patronising tone creeps in. Often exasperated, impatient and constantly planning ahead also gives her jerky staccato-like body language. Costuming is very conservative & practical.’



### Become Teresa

Consider Choi’s comments above and reflect on your memory of the performance. Using a script excerpt, try inhabiting Teresa using your acting skills in the way Choi describes above.

Choi says *Torch the Place* is a play about family and learning how to truly accept your loved ones as they are rather than how you would like them to be. She says the story will resonate with many people, also because ‘it is about bridging the disconnect between generations and across cultures, as typically happens in immigrant families. Plus it really has something to say about personal versus societal versus structural responsibility – when someone like Teresa’s Mum becomes a hoarder, what is the real cause and what really is the best way forward?’



### Fiona Choi (Teresa)

‘Having to play piano live on stage is a nerve-wracking challenge - it’s quite integral to the plot that Teresa was a child piano prodigy, and I am nowhere near that level of competency, especially for those few times when I have to play with ease while exchanging dialogue during some scenes.’



### Read more from Fiona Choi

Read the extended Q&A with Fiona Choi at [mtc.com.au/backstage](https://mtc.com.au/backstage).



Diana Lin and Fiona Choi

## NATALIE

Natalie is played by Michelle Lim Davidson. Natalie is the middle child of the family, and has starred in a children’s television series. ‘From there she started modelling and her public profile increased,’ says Davidson. Natalie describes herself in the script as a “brand ambassador”, and Davidson says that while it’s not clear to her family members exactly what she does for a living, Natalie believes she is promoting ethical fashion, eco-friendly beauty products and sustainable travel. ‘Natalie thinks she has the ability to create positive change in people’s lives,’ says Davidson, ‘by inspiring her followers – the ‘NatPack’ – to be mindful of what they are consuming.’

Natalie has been lured home by Teresa to help with the surprise clean up. ‘She doesn’t genuinely believe it’s going to work,’ says Davidson, ‘this isn’t the first time they have tried to clean the house. She expects to spend a few days at home, do some fun things and be off again doing what she wants to do.’ As the play unfolds, it becomes clear to Natalie that maybe her financial support isn’t enough.



### Michelle Lim Davidson (Natalie)

‘Natalie is used to having people pay attention to her and is constantly aware of how she is presenting herself, so I’m working that into my physicality. She is always photo ready. Natalie doesn’t just sit on a chair; she makes sure she is always in a flattering model-like position. Gradually throughout the play she becomes more relaxed and focuses less on how she presents herself. I wear a big skirt in the first half of the play and I have a rehearsal version of my costume to practise in so I know how I can move around the set. We wear slides/slippers in the show, so we have been rehearsing in those shoes too so that we feel comfortable. I have also been watching influencers online and incorporating their vocal qualities and tone into my performance.’



### Analyse Natalie

Consider Davidson’s comments above, then write a paragraph that analyses how she portrayed Natalie on stage using acting skills and design elements.

Davidson says she loves doing new work because it’s what she’s most passionate about as an artist. ‘New work is challenging because the script is changing throughout the rehearsal process,’ says Davidson. ‘There are some things you can’t find out until you actually get the play up on its feet and start working with the script on the floor, so you need to remain open and flexible throughout the process.’ Davidson notes that Previews (the first performances with an audience ahead of Opening Night) are an important part of the process, especially on a show like *Torch the Place* with so many props and a revolving stage. ‘Previews are the first time all of the creative elements come together,’ says Davidson. ‘The director can see the production as a whole and together everyone works to make sure the play connects to the audience.’



### Read more from Michelle Lim Davidson

Read the extended Q&A with Michelle Lim Davidson at [mtc.com.au/backstage](http://mtc.com.au/backstage).



Charles Wu, Diana Lin and Michelle Lim Davidson



## TOBY

Toby is played by Charles Wu. Wu says Toby's motivation evolves throughout the story, so that by the play's end he wants a clean house, and for Mum to be happy with it. 'He is of course motivated by love for his mother,' says Wu, 'and the momentum generated by his siblings and Paul. They all agree Mum has a hoarding problem but disagree on its cause and appropriate solution.' Wu says Toby blames capitalism for his mum's obsessive hoarding. 'Toby believes people living under capitalism are incentivised to earn more in order to buy more, which means they're always plagued with a surfeit of material goods and yet are never satisfied, hence the state of Mum's house.'

Wu points to clues in the script that guided his characterisation as Toby:

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### Charles Wu (Toby)

'Toby is described as 'sickly' and constantly sneezes, scratches, and snatches at breath throughout the play. He has a lot of trouble with physical exertion and emotional duress. Teresa and Natalie take great joy out of mocking Toby's gloominess, his glum voice an especially constant trigger. He wears his influences on his sleeves – T-shirts with political slogans de rigueur.'

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### Analyse Toby

Consider Wu's comments above, and analyse how he uses his expressive skills in combination with design elements to portray Toby. Discuss the interrelationship between acting and design.

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Wu says *Torch the Place* is a reminder that it's important to listen to your parents, and that problems need time, space and understanding to solve. He says the latter is 'especially prescient with two of the bigger challenges we face today arguably being climate change and socio-political partisanship. ... It all starts with listening.'

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Charles Wu



### Charles Wu (Toby)

'Our stage is, as Toby points out, 'plagued with stuff'. Everywhere you look there is furniture both used and unused, and an overwhelming clutter of toys, clothing and bric-a-brac. Real estate is at a premium and the thrust stage combined with towering blocks of set means sight lines have to be a constant consideration. I am excited by the constant challenge of navigating and mining gold from an unorthodox and potentially tricky set, and finding the truest and most theatrically satisfying version of every moment.'

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### Read more from Charles Wu

Read the extended Q&A with Charles Wu at [mtc.com.au/backstage](http://mtc.com.au/backstage).

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## PAUL

Paul is played by Max Brown. Brown says Paul is driven by the desire to take care of others, ‘whether that’s making sure the people he loves are happy, or a house he builds is solid, or that his family’s investments are secure or that everyone ends up with nicely electronically dried shoes.’ In particular, Brown says Paul wants to make sure that he takes care of his wife Teresa, even when she throws herself into trying to take care of her mother and family.

To portray Paul on stage, Brown manipulates his acting skills, particularly voice:

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### Max Brown (Paul)

‘A lot of my characterisation is vocal; I get to Paul’s voice by “closing off” the back of my throat when talking and letting it get a tad growly, broadening the vowels, dropping the “g” on the end of some words. Luckily, I grew up in Western Sydney, so Paul is very familiar to me. From his voice, things like physicality and point of view start to flow.’

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### Analyse Paul

Reflect on Brown’s comments above, and analyse the actor’s use of voice to portray Paul. Be as descriptive as you can when describing his vocal rhythm, timbre, pitch etc. Reflect on Brown’s performance and your initial reading of the character from the script.

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### Max Brown (Paul)

‘The most exciting challenge for me is to find the “size” of stage acting as opposed to TV or film acting while still making it feel real. Whenever I catch myself sounding or acting like anything else but a genuine human being, I know it’s something that needs extra work and attention.’

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Charles Wu and Max Brown

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### Read more from the director

Read the Q&A with director Dean Bryant online at [mtc.com.au/backstage](https://mtc.com.au/backstage) to learn more about the development process.

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# — COSTUME DESIGN —



Costume Designer  
Kat Chan



## Kat Chan (Costume Designer)

Learn more about Kat Chan's work on *Torch the Place* in this Q&A.

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**How would you describe the costume designs you're creating for *Torch the Place*? What is the world of this play?**

'I would describe the world of the play and the design, as heightened naturalism - the design reflects this by how deliberately the costumes tells you each character's distinct occupation, tastes and personalities via what they're wearing.'

**What kinds of garments/fabrics/art finishing are you using in your design?**

'The main art finishing for the costumes is light ageing and breaking down for some items - especially the Mother's costume and Paul's work clothes. Diana's clothes are supposed to look lived in or a family item of clothing from when the kids were growing up. The only fabric that had to be somewhat specific was Diana's green maternity dress, as it is inspired by one of Princess Diana's maternity dresses.'

**In your opinion, what is *Torch the Place* about? How do your designs support the play's big ideas?**

'*Torch the Place* touches upon a lot of themes but I think it's about familial responsibility, culture and dealing with trauma.'

**Could you give an example of how you're using costume to differentiate the characters?**

'Each character is very distinct in their personality and position within the family unit, for example, Natalie is the successful, model jet setting daughter who is the most removed from the family in many ways, so her costume is made up of designer clothes that look incongruous to the domestic setting and other characters.'

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## Analyse and evaluate Natalie's costume

Reflect on Chan's comments above, look at the production images in this resource, then write a paragraph that analyses and evaluates Natalie's costume.

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**Are there any particular aspects of the Fairfax Studio that impact your design?**

'We were hyper aware of how the wigs would read in a more intimate space - especially Diana's post-treatment hair. They have to read as real, otherwise it could be distracting for the audience to see them as wigs.'

**Is there a particular moment in the play that you're especially excited about?**

'There are a couple of quick change and reveals for fantasy/flashback sequences that I always look forward to, they were the most fun (and sometimes challenging) during the making process. Of course, the Princess Diana maternity look is also a favourite.'

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## Discuss costumes and function

Discuss how the costumes functioned in the performance to assist with the storytelling. How did quick changes work? Did the actors make use of pockets, buttons, and other design elements in their performance?

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### Discuss the development stage

You may notice some differences between the design drawings and the costumes seen on stage. Discuss why these changes might have been made during rehearsals in the development stage, and what influenced those decisions.



### Read more from the costume designer

Read the Q&A with costume designer Kat Chan online at [mtc.com.au/backstage](http://mtc.com.au/backstage) to learn more about the development process.



*TOBY*



*DIANA*



*TERESA*



Max Brown, Charles Wu, Diana Lin, Fiona Choi, Michelle Lim Davidson





NATALIE



Costume design by Kat Chan; Michelle Lim Davidson

# — SET DESIGN —



Set designer  
Isabel Hudson



## Isabel Hudson (Set Designer)

Learn more about Isabel Hudson's work on *Torch the Place* in this Q&A.

**In your opinion, what is *Torch the Place* about? How does your design support the play's big ideas?**

'For me, at the core of this story is idea of family and the changing the dynamics of family relationships. Specifically, for Teresa, this is going from being cared for by Diana, to caring for her mother. I also think this play is about perspectives, and how everyone can be looking at the same thing but see different things. Diana, sees her house as her "museum" but her children see it as a hazard, as a pile of junk. In designing this play, I wanted to create a sculpture out of household items that we recognise, that could be viewed in both of these perspectives. Dean and I looked at sculptures like "The Swimming Cities of Serenissima", designed by the visual artist SWOON. The floating sculptures use recycled materials and have a sense of wonder and awe to them, while repositioning the viewer to reconsider this 'junk' as something else, something playful and beautiful.

As the play unfolds, we see why Diana is attached to all these objects, which at its heart is her familiar relationships and an attempt to hold onto them. From the beginning of the process, the Director and I spoke in length about how to create a contrasting space. How to go from a claustrophobic space to an open clean space. This was part of the decision to break the junk trucks apart and clear the space, so that there was an unveiling of the space to the audience that reflected the character's journey in the play.'

**How would you describe the set design you've created for *Torch the Place*? What is the world of this play?**

'The world of the play is really something that oscillates between a hoarding nightmare, pile of junk or room of requirement. Part of this design was to create an overall pile of stuff that looked dangerous, that could tumble at any time and be visually overwhelming. We wanted to create a world that was hard for the actors to move around in and create a sense of anxiety in the audience.'



Fiona Choi, Charles Wu, Michelle Lim Davidson, Diana Lin



**What was behind the decision to include a revolve in the design? How does it help to tell the story?**

‘One of the initial staging tools that the director (Dean Bryant) and I spoke about was the revolve. In the design the revolve functions as a way to move the story from momentum and sometimes acts as a way to represent time passing. It also provides momentum and movement showing us different perspectives of the set, and allows us to move with the actors, like a camera, as they move from room to room in the “house”.’



**Discuss the revolve**

Discuss how the revolve theatre technology assisted with the storytelling in this production. Which direction did it move in? At what speed? At which moments in the play was the set revolving?

**Could you give some examples of hidden surprises in your design?**

‘Glitter boxes: There is a game show fantasy that one of the characters has during the show. In this moment, 3 glitter boxes come out of household appliances that light up to reveal some racist Australian memorabilia objects.’

Clothes drop: At the end of one scene we drop clothes from the grid, to add to the chaos of a scene.

Secret entrances: Out of the display cabinet and from under the kitchen sink. We use these two entrances to get actors on discretely and also as a surprise in another moment.’

**Are there any particular aspects of the Fairfax Studio that impact your set design?**

‘The corner space of the Fairfax with its size and intimacy impacted the design greatly. It became a huge challenge in this venue to design this play but we ended up using the small amount space to our advantage. By pushing the walls forward and creating these tall walls of junk this helped creating the sense of claustrophobia and anxiety that we wanted the audience to feel.’

**Could you give an example of an action/stage direction in the script that has been challenging to solve?**

‘The hoarding and the clearing was definitely the hardest thing to solve in this play. To go from something massive (the hoarding) and to go to nothing with not much wing space, especially with the mezzanine level was a huge challenge. But that was very venue specific. Another section of the script that was difficult to stage was the portrait getting on fire and the fire hydrant that gets sprayed. For this to all happen live and safely was huge effort from every department.’



**Design glossary**

Read over the interviews with the set and costume designer, and circle all the terminology that you could use to describe the design elements. Make a glossary of design terms that you can use in your analysis, and use these terms to annotate the design drawings and production photos in this resource.



Fiona Choi, Diana Lin, Charles Wu, Michelle Lim Davidson





Set designs by Isabel Hudson.

# — LIGHTING DESIGN —



Lighting Designer  
Amelia Lever-Davidson



## Amelia Lever-Davidson (Lighting Designer)

Learn more about Amelia Lever-Davidson's work on *Torch the Place* in this Q&A.

How would you describe the lighting design you're creating for *Torch the Place*? What is the world of this play?

'The writer, Benjamin Law, has been very specific in setting of *Torch the Place* in a house in suburban coastal Queensland during the summer months. This season and location lends itself to a particular quality of light, that very particular kind of bright, brilliant daylight seen in that part of the world. However, mum exists in her home with all the curtains shut, unreachable, with the brilliant Queensland sunshine beating down upon the home. The lighting design will be trying to create the distinction between these two worlds, juxtaposing the oppressive and claustrophobic interior of Mum's house against the sun filled outside world.'

What kinds of lights are you using in your design?

'*Torch the Place* makes use of a large number of practical lights within the set. There is an assortment of lamps, chosen by the set designer and I, which adds to the chaos of the junk onstage, and helps bring a bit of visual aliveness to it. A number of appliances and pieces of furniture in the set need to transform in the fantasy sequences, and are fitted with LEDs to help them take on magical properties. Because these practicals are mounted to portable trucks on a revolve, they are battery power and wirelessly controlled to allow them to operate without being plugged into anything.'



### Lighting technology

Reflect on Lever-Davidson's comments above about practical lights, LEDs and battery power. Annotate the images in this section to identify these theatre technologies in the design. Choose one and analyse how it enhanced the performance.

In your opinion, what is *Torch the Place* about?  
How does your design support the play's big ideas?

'*Torch the Place* addresses ways in which we can deal with and address trauma. Mum suffers from a hoarding disorder as a result of a traumatic experience, and the play centres around her three children returning home to help "fix" the problem. The play deals specifically with hoarding as a disorder, but also suggests ways in which we can best address mental illness, supporting we address the issue with empathy, understanding and most of all, patience. The greatest change the lighting needs to support is from the house from its hoarding state to the final scene where the junk has been moved to the shed. The lighting will have previously been helping to create a claustrophobic interior, and once the junk has cleared, the audience should finally be able to experience a sense of light and space. Mum refers to her home as "like a palace" when she first moved in, and the lighting in this scene should help the audience finally see it as she does.'



Michelle Lim Davidson



**How are you using lighting to differentiate the interior world from other fantasy moments?**

‘The lighting will make use of colour to help transform the world for the moments of fantasy in the play. The colour palette for the play isn’t overly saturated, and these fantastical moments will allow us to embrace a more whimsical style, especially through colour. A number of appliances also take on a magical realism quality, lighting up in magical and unexpected ways.’

**Are there any particular aspects of the Fairfax Studio that impact your lighting design?**

‘The most challenging aspect of lighting for the Fairfax is the shape of the stage, as the audience are almost in the round. I will try to ensure that the actors are appropriately lit so all audience members can see the performers, but still try to keep dynamics and shape within the design.’



**The venue**

Reflect on Lever-Davidson’s comments above and consider what other members of the creative team have said about the venue’s unique constraints. Discuss how the design elements affect the actor-audience relationship.



**Is there a particular moment in the play that you’re especially excited about re lighting?**

‘The fire! Live fire onstage is a really exciting element, and it will be my task to help sell the moment, but let the live flame take centre stage.’

**Is there a particular challenge that you’ve enjoyed solving?**

‘Aside from the challenge of the shape of the Fairfax stage, the other challenge I’m looking forward to is lighting the revolve. I am wanting to embrace the scene transitions as more sculptural moments, and really enjoy lighting the revolve and the junk trucks as a sculpture.’



**Interrelationships**

Discuss the interrelationship between set design and lighting design, using examples from Lever-Davidson’s comments above.



Max Brown, Diana Lin, Fiona Choi

# — COMPOSITION & SOUND DESIGN —



Composer and  
Sound Designer  
Clemence Williams



## Clemence Williams (Composer and Sound Designer)

Learn more about Clemence Williams's work on *Torch the Place* in this Q&A.

How would you describe the composition/sound design you're creating for *Torch the Place*? What is the world of this play?

'Much like the play, the sound design transports us through time and place. It's filled with nineties nostalgia with a tinge of family trauma.'

What kinds of instruments/sounds/genres are you using in your work?

'The play begins with oldest sibling, Teresa, playing the ancient and dilapidated family piano. This was the genesis of the sound design/composition. Many of the underscored moments use leitmotifs from popular Rachmaninoff and Chopin piano pieces but often rearranged, texturally thickened and with a modern twist.'



### Music research

Research the composers Williams mentions above and listen to their music. Recall the sound design in the play, and discuss the interrelationship between the design and acting, particularly regarding the piano.

In your opinion, what is *Torch the Place* about? How does your composition/sound design support the play's big ideas?

'For me, *Torch the Place* is about that moment in everyone's life where they swap positions in the parent/child relationship, where they have to learn to accept and love their parents at their most vulnerable. This switch comes at different moments for each child and therein lies the tension. This, at times, is represented through discordant notes played by the broken piano, as well as the juxtaposition of classical pieces with contemporary drum loops.'



Fiona Choi

What technology do you use in your work? E.g. software/recording equipment etc.

'I use a mixture of real recorded instruments and software instruments. In order to write music that sounds like it's using the piano on stage, I needed to record each note of the piano individually to recreate a software keyboard.'

Could you give an example of how you're using diegetic and non-diegetic sound?

'Diegetic sound: The sound coming from the radio, the TV, the skip arriving. Non-diegetic sound: The underscoring, the scene transitions. Where it can get a bit confusing: *Mulan* starts out as being on the TV only (diegetic) but then expands out to the whole theatre like we are all inside the movie (non-diegetic).'



Charles Wu and Michelle Lim Davidson (downstage), Max Brown and Fona Choi (upstage)



### Diegetic and non-diegetic sound

Reflect on Williams' comments above and evaluate how the sound design enhances the scene where the family watch *Mulan*.

Is there a particular moment in the play that you're especially excited about re sound design?

'Spoiler alert, but the game show is a lot of fun. It's as close as I will ever get to working on The Voice.'

Is there anything else about your composition and sound design that you'd like to share with students?

'The challenge of sound design and composition is to knit together the two energies of scenes. Have a think about how the music lifts/deflates the mood and tension at the end/beginning of a scene.'



### Create your own sound design

Choose a transition moment from the play and create your own sound design, thinking above Williams' comment above. Write a short rationale to explain your choices, then analyse a moment from the play where you can clearly remember how sound was used.



## — ANALYSIS QUESTIONS —

The following analysis questions are offered to help you unpack the performance and make connections between components of the VCE Theatre Studies Study Design. These questions should be considered as a starting point. Discuss your responses with your peers and explore how other members of the audience may have perceived the performance differently. Make sure you use specific examples and evidence from the production to support your ideas. Always consult VCAA documents when preparing for examinations.



### "Everything in this house belongs to one of these bins."

- Analyse how the theatre composition element of motion was manipulated in this moment.
- Discuss how design and acting are interrelated in this moment.
- Discuss this moment in relation to the entire production, regarding cohesion.



### "My old hair..."

- Evaluate how theatre technologies were used to enhance this moment.
- Analyse how one actor used two acting skills in this moment.
- Discuss how the theatre composition element of variation was manipulated in this moment.

Max Brown, Diana Lin, Charles Wu



### "She's dumpster diving!"

- Identify how the theatre composition element of contrast is demonstrated in this scene.
- Discuss the interrelationship between rhythm and one area of design in this scene.
- Discuss how one actor used two acting skills in this moment.

Audience member, Charles Wu, Diana Lin (downstage), Max Brown (upstage), Fiona Choi and Michelle Lim Davidson



### "I did not sign up to be in this fantasy sequence!"

- Analyse how the theatre composition elements of rhythm and emphasis were manipulated in this scene.
- Evaluate how lighting design enhances this scene.
- Discuss the actor-audience relationship in this scene.



# — CAREERS AT MTC —



## Many hands make a show

The production you've seen on stage is the product of many people's work over many months.

Read the list of jobs below, research what each role entails, and discuss what work they did on this production.

### BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Jane Hansen AO (Chair)  
Tony Burgess  
Professor Barry  
Conyngham AM  
Patricia Faulkner AO  
Jonathan Feder  
Larry Kamener  
Janette Kendall  
Sharmistha Law  
Professor Duncan Maskell  
Susan Oliver AM  
Brett Sheehy AO  
Virginia Lovett

### FOUNDATION BOARD

Janette Kendall (Chair)  
Paul Bonnici  
Liz Chappell  
Virginia Lovett  
Louise Myer  
Leigh O'Neill  
Hilary Scott  
Rupert Sherwood  
Tracey Sisson  
Richard Tegoni

### EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT

**Artistic Director & CEO**  
Brett Sheehy AO  
**Executive Director & Co-CEO**  
Virginia Lovett  
**Executive Assistant to the Artistic Director & CEO**  
Nick Doherty  
**Executive Administrator to the Executive Director & Co-CEO**  
Kathleen Higgs  
**Manager Special Projects**  
Dale Bradbury  
**Receptionist**  
David Zierk

### ARTISTIC

**Director of Artistic Operations/Senior Producer**  
Martina Murray  
**Associate Artistic Director**  
Sarah Goodes  
**Associate Director**  
Petra Kalive  
**Literary Director**  
Chris Mead  
**Literary Associate**  
Jennifer Medway  
**CASTING DIRECTOR**  
Janine Snape  
**CASTING ADMINISTRATOR**  
Carmen Lai  
**Associate Producer/ Senior Company Manager**  
Stephen Moore  
**Company Manager**  
Leah Milburn-Clark  
**Programs Producer**  
Karin Farrell

### CATERING

**Catering Manager**  
Andrea Purvis  
**Café Staff**  
Bev Reinmuth  
Andrea Ruiz

### DEVELOPMENT

**Director of Development**  
Rupert Sherwood  
**Events Manager**  
Mandy Jones  
**Annual Giving Manager**  
Chris Walters  
**Major Gifts Manager**  
Sophie Boardley  
**Philanthropy Coordinator**  
Patrick Crummy  
**Partnerships Manager**  
Katie Taylor  
**Partnerships Executive**  
Isabella Wren  
**Partnerships Coordinator**  
Alice Fitzgerald

### EDUCATION

**Head of Education & Families**  
Jeremy Rice  
**Learning Manager**  
Nick Tranter  
**Education Administrator**  
Isobel Taylor-Rodgers  
**HUMAN RESOURCES Director of People & Culture**  
Peter Wade  
**HR Administrator**  
Christine Verginis  
**Health & Safety Coordinator**  
Liz Mundell

### FINANCE

**Finance Director**  
Liz Chappell  
**Finance Manager**  
Andrew Slee  
**IT & Systems Manager**  
Michael Schuettker  
**IT Support Officer**  
Darren Snowdon  
**Assistant Accountant**  
Irene Budiono  
**Payroll Officer**  
Julia Godinho  
**Payments Officer**  
Lisa Maundrell  
**MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS Marketing & Communications Director**  
Vanessa Rowsthorn  
**Marketing Manager**  
Shelley King  
**Digital Manager**  
Daniel Coghlan  
**Marketing Campaign Manager**  
Bonnie Leigh-Dodds  
**Marketing Executives**  
Riley Charles  
Rebecca Lawrence  
**Lead Graphic Designer/ Art Director**  
Emma Wagstaff

### Graphic Designers

Helena Turinski  
Victoria U  
**Senior Manager, Communications & External Relations**  
Rosie Shepherdson-Cullen  
**Senior Publicist**  
Georgia Fox  
**Communications Content Producer**  
Melanie Sheridan  
**Communications Coordinator**  
Jacqui Bartlett  
**Contributing Writer** Sarah Corridon

### TECHNICAL & PRODUCTION

**Technical & Production Director**  
Adam J Howe

### PRODUCTION

**Senior Production Manager**  
Michele Preshaw  
**Production Manager**  
Abe Watson  
**Production Coordinators**  
Michaela Deacon  
Marta Losiewicz  
**Props Buyer/SM Swing**  
Jess Maguire  
**Production Administrator**  
Alyson Brown

### TECHNICAL

**Technical Manager**  
**Lighting & Sound**  
Kerry Saxby  
**Senior Production Technician**  
Allan Hirons  
**Production Technicians**  
Nick Wollan  
Geoff Adams  
Marcus Cook  
Gemma Rowe  
Mungo Trumble  
**Technical Manager - Staging**  
Andrew Bellchambers  
**CAD Drafting**  
Jacob Battista  
Alexander Rothnie  
**Staging Supervisor HQ**  
Nicholas Stace

### PROPERTIES

**Properties Supervisor**  
Geoff McGregor  
**Props Maker**  
Colin Penn  
**Props Hire**  
Kasey Gambling  
Jacinta Keefe  
Yasmin Mole  
Emma Palackic

### SCENIC ART

**Scenic Art Supervisor**  
Shane Dunn  
**Scenic Artists**  
Tansy Elso  
Laurie Davidson  
Colin Harman

### WORKSHOP

**Workshop Supervisor**  
Aldo Amenta

### Acting Workshop

**Supervisor**  
Andrew Weavers  
**Set Makers**  
Ken Best  
Brian Eastale  
Nick Gray  
Philip de Mulder  
Simon Juliff  
Peter Rosa

### WARDROBE

**Wardrobe Manager**  
Keryn Ribbands  
**Wardrobe Staff**  
Jocelyn Creed  
**Costume Coordinator**  
Sophie Woodward  
**Costume Hire**  
Liz Symons  
**Wardrobe Buyer**  
Kate Seeley  
**Millinery**  
Phillip Rhodes  
**Wigs & Make-up**  
Jurga Celikiene  
**Art Finishing**  
Josephine Johnson  
**Wardrobe Maintenance**  
Josephine Johnson  
Stella Cadzow  
**Wardrobe Casuals**  
Ellen Figgis  
Lyn Molloy  
John Van Gastel

### STAGE MANAGEMENT

Christine Bennett  
Ben Cooper  
Brittany Coombs  
Lisette Drew  
Jess Keepence  
Jess Maguire  
Whitney McNamara  
Millie Mullinar  
Meg Richardson  
Julia Smith  
Lucie Sutherland  
Pippa Wright

### SOUTHBANK THEATRE

**Theatre Operations Director**  
Mark D Wheeler  
**Building Services Manager**  
Adrian Aderhold  
**House Services Manager**  
James Cunningham  
**Production Services Manager**  
Frank Stoffels  
**Bar Manager**  
Claire Marsh  
**Lawler & Events Technical Supervisor**  
Tom Brayshaw  
**Lighting Supervisor**  
Richard Gorr  
**Staging Supervisor**  
Grant Kennelly  
**Sound Supervisor**  
Terry McKibbin  
**Head Flyman**  
James Tucker  
**Stage & Technical Staff**  
Matthew Arthur  
Sam Berkley  
Simon Bond  
Ash Buchanan

Michael Burnell  
John Carberry  
Dale Cook  
Kieran Daniels  
Nathan Evers  
Kylie Hammond  
Adam Hanley  
Chris Hubbard  
David Jenkins  
Louis Kennedy  
Robert Larsen  
David Membery  
Bianca Moran  
Stephanie Morrell  
Sophie Norfolk  
James Paul  
Will Patterson  
Thomas Roach  
Nathaniel Sy  
Michelle Thorne  
Raff Watt  
Max Wilkie  
Tom Willis  
Joy Weng

### HOUSE & BAR SERVICES

**House & Bar Supervisors**  
Matt Bertram  
Paul Blenheim  
Sarah Branton  
Kasey Gambling  
Daniel Moulds  
Paul Terrell  
Drew Thomson  
Bella Vadiveloo  
**House & Bar Attendants**  
George Abbott  
Rachel Adams  
Aisha Aidara  
Faida Angaika  
Danillo Arantes  
Stephanie Barham  
Tanya Batt  
Bear Baxter  
Briannah Borg  
Max Bowyer  
Zak Brown  
Sam Diamond  
Leila Gerges  
Evan Lawson  
Laura Lethlean  
Thomas McCracken  
Will McRostie  
Natasha Milton  
Yasmin Mole  
Ernesto Munoz  
Ben Nichol  
Emma Palackic  
Sam Perry  
Adam Rogers  
Sophie Scott  
Rain Shadrach  
Myles Tankle  
Olivia Walker  
Alison Wheeldon  
Rhian Wilson  
Jamaica Zuanetti  
**TICKETING Director of Ticketing Operations**  
Brenna Sotiropoulos  
**Customer Service Sales Manager**  
Jessie Phillips  
**VIP Ticketing Officer**  
Michael Bingham  
**Education Ticketing Officer**  
Mellita Ilich

### Box Office Supervisor

Kieran Gould-Downen  
**Subscriptions & Telemarketing Team Leader**  
Peter Dowd  
**Box Office Attendants**  
Brent Davidson  
Kasey Gambling  
Min Kingham  
Evan Lawson  
Jean Lizza  
Bridget Mackey  
Ross MacPherson  
Debra McDougall  
Laura McIntosh  
Danielle Nicolaidis  
Daniel Scaffidi  
Tain Stangret  
Lee Threadgold

### CRM & AUDIENCE INSIGHTS

**Director of CRM & Audience Insights**  
Jeremy Hodgins  
**Database Specialist**  
Ben Gu  
**Data Analyst**  
Dale Menz

### COMMISSIONS

**The Joan & Peter Clemenger Commissions**  
Kylie Coolwell  
Judith Lucy  
Damien Millar  
Ross Mueller  
Magda Szubanski  
Anthony Weigh  
**Other Commissions**  
Hannie Rayson (with Manhattan Theatre Club)  
Barham  
Tanya Batt  
Bear Baxter  
Briannah Borg  
Max Bowyer  
Zak Brown  
Sam Diamond  
Leila Gerges  
Evan Lawson  
Laura Lethlean  
Thomas McCracken  
Will McRostie  
Natasha Milton  
Yasmin Mole  
Ernesto Munoz  
Ben Nichol  
Emma Palackic  
Sam Perry  
Adam Rogers  
Sophie Scott  
Rain Shadrach  
Myles Tankle  
Olivia Walker  
Alison Wheeldon  
Rhian Wilson  
Jamaica Zuanetti  
**NEXT STAGE Residents**  
Declan Furber  
Gillick  
Dan Giovannoni  
Elise Hearst  
Andrea James  
Phillip Kavanagh  
Melissa Reeves  
Natesha Somasundaram  
Chris Summers  
Kylie Trounson  
**NEXT STAGE Commissions**  
Van Badham  
Angus Cerini  
Patricia Cornelius  
Aidan Fennessy  
Joanna Murray-Smith  
Joe Penhall  
Leah Purcell  
Ellen van Neerven  
Chris Ryan  
Megan Washington  
Mark Leonard Winter  
Malcolm Robertson MTC  
**Foundation Commissions**  
Angela Betzien

### OVERSEAS REPRESENTATIVE

**New York**  
Kevin Emrick



# — ATTENDANCE INFORMATION —



Diana Lin and Michelle Lim Davidson



When you visit the theatre, share your experience on Twitter and Instagram with the hashtag **#mtcTorchThePlace** and tag **@melbtheatreco**



Like MTC Education on Facebook for behind-the-scenes information about our Education Program and discover ways for you to get involved with **MTC**: [facebook.com/MTCedu](https://facebook.com/MTCedu)

## CONTENT

MTC recommends *Torch the Place* for ages 15+ / Year 10+. This production contains frequent coarse language, sexual references, mature themes, references to mental health issues, references to the loss of a child and the use of herbal cigarettes. For detailed information, visit [mtc.com.au/production-content-guide](https://mtc.com.au/production-content-guide)

Part A of this Education Pack is available on our website: [mtc.com.au/education-packs](https://mtc.com.au/education-packs)

## DURATION

Approximately 90mins (no interval).

## BOOKINGS

Email [schools@mtc.com.au](mailto:schools@mtc.com.au) or phone 03 8688 0963.

## GENERAL ENQUIRIES

Email [education@mtc.com.au](mailto:education@mtc.com.au) or phone 03 8688 0974