

MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY

EDUCATION PACK – PART A



MUSIC BY **JEANINE TESORI** BOOK AND LYRICS BY **LISA KRON**
BASED ON THE GRAPHIC NOVEL BY **ALISON BECHDEL**
DIRECTED BY **DEAN BRYANT**

7 Feb—5 Mar 2022
Arts Centre Melbourne, Playhouse

MTC MELBOURNE
THEATRE
COMPANY

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



Activity



Discussion



Reading



Video

Notes prepared by Nick Tranter **Select activities** by Brodi Purtil
Design by Daniel Corder **Rehearsal photography** Charlie Kinross

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 MTC



The cast of *Fun Home* in rehearsal

Melbourne Theatre Company is Melbourne's home of live storytelling, producing an annual mainstage season of plays, and a suite of signature programs including the NEXT STAGE writers' program, MTC Education, MTC Digital Theatre, First Peoples Young Artists Program, Cybec Electric play reading festival, and more artist access programs.

MTC is one of the major performing arts companies in Australia, and one of the largest theatre companies in the English-speaking world. Founded in 1953, MTC is also the oldest professional theatre company in Australia, and is a department of the University of Melbourne.

As Australia changed, MTC has changed with it. We like to think that we have frequently been at the forefront of Australian culture, introducing new ideas and new ways of looking at our lives, our society and the world; helping to explain a swiftly evolving landscape as we moved through it. Today, with Southbank Theatre as our performance home and our headquarters in Sturt Street, Southbank, MTC strives to present Melbourne audiences with the best drama from Australia and overseas to the highest standards.

Our Vision: To enrich lives with understanding and empathy through the storytelling power of the finest theatre imaginable.

Our Artistic Purpose: To produce classic and contemporary Australian and international theatre with style, passion and excellence in order to entertain, challenge and enrich audiences.



MTC HQ Virtual Tour

Walk the halls of MTC HQ in this virtual tour and explore the spaces where plays are rehearsed, sets are built, costumes are sewn and wigs are created one strand of hair at a time.

Cast & creatives

CAST

Roy / Mark / Pete / Bobby Jeremy Euan Fistrovic Doidge
Joan Emily Havea
Alison Lucy Maunder
Bruce Bechel Adam Murphy
Helen Bechdel Silvie Paladino
Medium Alison Ursula Searle
Christian Bechdel Jai D'Alessandro
Small Alison Flora Feldman

John Bechdel Jasper Hall
Small Alison Sophie Isaac
Small Alison Teja Kingi
John Bechdel Luka Sero
John Bechdel Sebastian Sero
Christian Bechdel Edgar Stirling
Christian Bechdel Aidan Synan

CREATIVE TEAM

Director Dean Bryant
Associate Director Clemence Williams
Musical Director Mathew Frank
Choreographer Andrew Hallsworth
Set & Costume Designer Alicia Clements
Lighting Designer Matt Scott
Sound Designer Nick Walker
Voice & Dialect Coach Amy Hume
Associate Designer Isabel Hudson
Musical Director (Sydney Season) Carmel Dean
Intimacy Coordinator Amy Cater
Assistant to Musical Director Jack Hollander
Choreography Assistant Henry Jaksetic

Stage Manager Jess Maguire
Deputy Stage Manager Whitney McNamara
Assistant Stage Manager Millie Mullinar
Head Chaperone Jillian Green
Chaperone Jack Dawson
Rehearsal Photography Charlie Kinross
Production Photography Jeff Busby
Guitar Samuel Ainslie
Drums/Percussion Tom Doublier
Cello Fiona Furphy
Reeds Ryan Lynch
Bass Oliver Powell
Violin/Viola Lynette Rayner

ATTENDANCE INFORMATION

This production contains coarse language, mature themes, sexual references and references to suicide. For detailed information about the production's content, visit our [production content guide](#).

Fun Home deals with content that some audience members might find distressing. If you or someone you know needs information or support, these organisations are there to help:

BEYOND BLUE Call 1300 22 4636 or visit beyondblue.org.au

LIFELINE Call 13 11 14 or visit lifeline.org.au

HEADSPACE Visit headspace.org.au

QLIFE qlife.org.au

DURATION

Approx. 1hr40min, with no interval.



Read the programme

Download the programme for this production to read about the cast and creative team, and see more photos from the rehearsal room, at mtc.com.au/programmes.

Co-Producer



In association with



Media Partner

The Monthly
The Saturday Paper
7am

About the play

Fun Home is a musical adapted by Lisa Kron and Jeanine Tesori from Alison Bechdel's graphic memoir of the same name. The story concerns Bechdel's discovery of her own sexuality, her relationship with her closeted father, and her attempts to unlock the mysteries surrounding his life. It is told in a series of non-linear vignettes connected by narration provided by the adult Alison character.

A successful and well-regarded cartoonist in her middle age, Alison looks back on her childhood, spent in Pennsylvania in and around the funeral home operated by her father, and her first year of college. As she sits to create her memoir, in the form of a graphic novel, she slips between the past and present and begins to see the stories, secrets and tensions that dogged her family life and her own journey of self-discovery and sexual awakening, in a new light. In an attempt to reconcile with past tragedies, Alison delves deeper into her relationship with her father, a complex man, and there emerges a heartbreaking but ultimately uplifting story



Sensitive content

Be aware that this production explores homophobia and contains references to suicide. Prepare yourself by reading the script and discussing theatrical solutions to solving challenging moments on stage, particularly Bruce's death in the song *Edges of the World*. Read the Context section of this Education Pack and discuss these events in a historical context.



Emily Havea and Ursula Searle

About the creators

ALISON BECHDEL (GRAPHIC NOVEL)

Alison Bechdel is an American cartoonist and graphic novelist who is best known for her comic strip *Dykes to Watch Out For* (which introduced the so-called Bechdel Test for evaluating movies on the basis of gender inequality), and her graphic memoir *Fun Home*. Born in 1960 in Pennsylvania USA, Bechdel's childhood was as it is described in *Fun Home*. Her parents were teachers, and her father was a part-time funeral director. At 19 years old, just months after she had revealed to her parents that she was a lesbian, her father was struck and killed by a truck. After graduating from Oberlin College, she moved to New York City. Bechdel's *Fun Home* (published 2006) won the Eisner—the most-prestigious award in the comics industry—for best reality-based work, and was adapted for the stage in 2013.

JEANINE TESORI (MUSIC)

Jeanine Tesori is the most prolific and honoured female theatrical composer in history, with five Broadway musicals and five Tony Award nominations. Her major works include *Fun Home*; *Caroline, or Change*; *Shrek The Musical*; *Thoroughly Modern Millie*; and the animated film *Mulan II*. She won the 2015 Tony Award for Best Original Score for *Fun Home* (shared with Lisa Kron). She was also named Pulitzer Prize for Drama finalist for *Fun Home*.

LISA KRON (BOOK AND LYRICS)

Lisa Kron is best known for writing the lyrics and book to the musical *Fun Home* for which she won both the Tony Award for Best Original Score (shared with Jeanine Tesori, making them the first female writing team to win that award) and the Tony Award for Best Book of a Musical. Her work has been widely produced in the USA and internationally. Lisa is a founding member of the legendary OBIE and Bessie Award-winning collaborative theatre company *The Five Lesbian Brothers*.

Sources: *Alison Bechdel* on britannica.com; *Jeanine Tesori* on ibdb.com; *Lisa Kron biography* on lisakron.org.



Sebastian Sero, Jai D'Alessandro, Adam Murphy, Sophie Isaac, Lucy Maunder and Silvie Paladino

Context

Alison Bechdel was growing up during a time of great change for the LGBTQ community in the United States. When Alison was born, homosexuality was illegal throughout the United States, and Illinois became the first state to decriminalise homosexuality in 1961. On June 28, 1969, Police raided the Stonewall Inn in New York City. Protests and demonstrations began, and it later became known as the impetus for the gay civil rights movement in the United States. In *Fun Home*, Alison visits New York with Bruce a few weeks after this incident.

On June 28 1970 community members in New York City marched through the streets to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the Stonewall riots. This event, named Christopher Street Liberation Day, is now considered the first gay pride parade.

In January 1973, Maryland became the first state to statutorily ban same-sex marriage, but by December of that same year, the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from its list of mental disorders in the DSM-II Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.

In January 1978, Harvey Milk was inaugurated as San Francisco city supervisor, the first openly gay man to be elected to a political office in California. Ten months later, he and Mayor George Moscone were assassinated. The first rainbow flag was designed around this time by Gilbert Baker a symbol of pride and hope for the LGBTQ community. On October 14, 1979, the first National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights took place with an estimated 75,000 to 125,000 people marching for LGBTQ rights. These events were happening around the time Bechdel started college and came out as lesbian.

In the 1980's through the 1990's, the LGBTQ community was devastated by the AIDS crisis, which was largely ignored by the US government under President Ronald Reagan. California became the first state to deem gay marriages constitutional in 2008, and gay marriage became nationally recognised as lawful in the United States following a landmark Supreme Court decision in 2015. Bechdel married Holly Rae Taylor, a painter, in July 2015. Bechdel has said that 'the secret subversive goal of my work is to show that women, not just lesbians, are regular human beings.'

In Australia, homosexuality was only decriminalised in all states in 1997 when Tasmania's Upper House passed gay law reform, by one vote (South Australia was the first state to decriminalise male homosexuality 22 years prior in 1975). In 2017, Australians voted in favour of marriage equality via a postal survey, and on 9 December that year, the Marriage Act 1961 was updated to allow for marriage equality. The Act defines marriage as 'the union of two people to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life'.

Sources: CNN Editorial Research (2021) *LGBTQ Rights Milestones Fast Facts* on edition.cnn.com; Joost, W. (2000) *Sing Lesbian Cat, Fly Lesbian Seagull: An Interview With Alison Bechdel* in *The Guardsman*; Australian Government, Attorney General's Department (2022) *Marriage Equality in Australia* on ag.gov.au; ABC (2015) *Timeline: 22 years between first and last Australian states decriminalising male homosexuality* on abc.net.au

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Queerness, making sense, and musical theatre

Read a personal response to *Fun Home* by queer writer, performer and director Margot Tanjutco at mtc.com.au.

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Graphic tableaux

Fun Home is based on a graphic novel. Draw a key moment in the script as a comic with three cells. In small groups, turn these comics into three tableaux to share with the class.

Characters



Teja Kingi, Lucy Maunder and Silvie Paladino

ALISON

Alison is 43 years old, a cartoonist based on the real-life Alison Bechdel, and is the narrator of the story. This self-aware Alison reflects on her life through the telling of this meta-memoir, all the while trying to understand her relationship with her father.

MEDIUM ALISON

This is Alison Bechdel at 19 years old. She is a freshman (first year student) at Oberlin College, a liberal arts university in Ohio, USA. An intelligent and well-read teenager who is discovering her sexuality, Medium Alison is also socially awkward (particularly around Joan).

SMALL ALISON

This is Alison Bechdel as a child, around 9 years old. Small Alison is precocious, opinionated and doesn't like wearing dresses.

BRUCE BECHDEL

Alison's father. A high-school English teacher and funeral home director, Bruce spends his spare time restoring historic homes. Bruce cares deeply for his family, but has repressed his sexuality for many years and can be short-tempered and prone to angry outbursts.

HELEN BECHDEL

Alison's mother. Helen is frustrated and exhausted by her tumultuous marriage. She has spent her life trying to be a good mother and wife while turning a blind eye to her husband's dalliances.

JOAN

A student at Oberlin College who exudes confidence. Unlike Alison, Joan is comfortable in her skin and openly identifies as a lesbian.

CHRISTIAN BECHDEL

Alison's big brother, around 10 years old. Christian is the eldest of his siblings and strives to be the leader, but is often eclipsed by Alison.

JOHN BECHDEL

Alison's younger brother, around 6 years old. He has a vivid imagination and looks up to his siblings.

ROY / PETE / MARK / BOBBY JEREMY

One actor plays all these roles. Roy is a young man who babysits the Bechdel children and assists Bruce with gardening. Pete is a mourner who visits the funeral home. Mark is a high school junior (equivalent to Year 11 in Australia). It comes to light that Bruce had relationships with Roy and Mark, among others. Bobby Jeremy exists in Alison's imagination as the lead singer of a band on television.

THE SUSAN DEYS

Additional imaginary television characters in the same scene as Bobby Jeremy. The Susan Deys are played by the actors playing Medium Alison and Joan.



Being Alison

Alison is depicted by three different actors throughout the show. Discuss the purpose, objective, motivation and status of having the same character at different point in their lives.



Embodying the character

Choose one character and describe three strategies you could use to develop the character. Explain two ways you might interpret this character in the excerpt/s.



Hear from the cast

Read the cast Q&As on the MTC website, and learn more from the actors in Part B of the Education Pack.



Adam Murphy, Luka Sero, Ursula Searle, Euan Fistrovic Doidge, Flora Feldman, Emily Havea, Jai D'Alessandro and Silvie Paladino

Directing

DIRECTOR'S NOTE



Dean Bryant

'I began planning *Fun Home* in early 2019, my final year as Associate Director at MTC. The company snagged the rights to produce (with Sydney Theatre Company) this incredible award-winning piece and by March 2020 we were ready to go – in fact, we'd just chosen the nine children to join our adult cast. Then the world stopped and *Fun Home* went into the limbo we've all been living with on and off since then.

Theatre returned to Sydney many months earlier than Melbourne, and we were lucky when that enabled STC to take the risk of reprogramming the show early in 2021. We recast (another nine children) and made the show in Sydney, in a time that seems idyllic in comparison to now (no masks in rehearsals!) and had a blissful season.

The lead up to MTC finally premiering the show we've fought to bring our audiences has been challenging, yet once back in the rehearsal room and inside the glorious minds of Alison Bechdel, Lisa Kron and Jeanine Tesori, the stress slips away as the music and the magic takes over.

I've devoted my life to making musicals, and *Fun Home* could be the most satisfying one I've had the privilege of working on. Alison Bechdel's courage, generosity and ability to find connections created her groundbreaking graphic novel and the musical is a miracle of adaptation, spare and funny, theatrical and truthful, moving between darkness and light in seconds. After a successful few weeks of rehearsals – with another nine children! – to finally open the theatre doors to our Melbourne audience, I'm grateful that I got to work on this unicorn of a musical, and that MTC had the vision and passion – and above all, the tenacity – to get it to the stage of the Playhouse for you to experience.'



Emily Havea, Ursula Searle, Euan Fistrovic Doidge, Adam Murphy and Jasper Hall

Q&A WITH THE DIRECTOR

What is the world of this production of *Fun Home*?

'The world of this production of *Fun Home* is based on the idea of being based on a graphic novel, as well as being a memory play - memories and ideas float through Alison Bechdel's mind, which she then puts into frames in her art. We use the design of a typical artist's studio where spare pieces of furniture tell us we're in a living room, a college dorm, a car...all the places the musical goes to. It's like a refined naturalism in terms of style, but the writing of the piece is so concise, that we only ever get the bare minimum necessary to tell the story.'

How does the musical theatre style influence your directing choices?

'Like all theatre, musicals are in different styles. Generally, though, the addition of actors singing their thoughts means we are already in a heightened style. *Fun Home* has three actors sharing the role of Alison Bechdel (at ages 9, 21 and 43) and we change timeframes within a single sentence. The design and look of the show are spare, with images coming in and out of light, but the acting style, even within the songs, is naturalism. There is a fantasy number, *Raincoat of Love*, where Alison imagines her family doing a musical number in her favourite TV show.'

What examples of motifs or symbols are in this production?

'Musicals generally have motifs built in, as their scores are built of repeated ideas, and *Fun Home* has a lot of this - "Not too bad if I say so myself" "Welcome to our house on Maple Avenue" "Maybe not right now" are all lyrics and melodies we hear different characters take ownership of at different times in the story. From a design point of view, the three Alisons share the colour teal green for their costumes - we chose this because the original graphic novel has a teal green cover. Light is a symbol for the show as well - the desk lamp that Alison uses at her drawing desk becomes a larger metaphor for her overall desire to bring light to her family's secrets and to her past - we have motifs of lamps and window light all through the show, and we build to blasting Bruce with light from doorways and windows (and blinders) in the final dramatic act of the musical, him stepping in front a truck.'

What is an example of a rehearsal technique you used with the cast when creating this production?

'The rehearsal process for the cast of *Fun Home* was similar to any process I've used. We had the challenge of rehearsing three sets of children in (9 kids playing 3 parts) - originally we used three of the adults to set the child blocking before the actual child actors joined the production. We did walking/moving exercises with all the actors playing Alison to ensure they had a shared body language, posture, walking, and voice.'

Anything else you'd like to share about *Fun Home*?

'*Fun Home* is a great example of a piece where the power of the story is less about narrative (this happened, then this happened, then this happened) and instead comes from the accumulation of moments and scenes that allow both the grown-up Alison and audience to build an emotional and intellectual understanding of what her life has been. Much like a cartoon, the reader/ audience gets to make their own sense of how elements interact. It is quite a spare piece, really, with only what is necessary being shown, yet building an entire world up from these fragments.'



Director's vision

Annotate Bryant's comments to highlight notes about theatre styles and elements of theatre composition (e.g. cohesion among the actors playing Alison; using light for emphasis; rhythm and repetition of lyrics and motifs).

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR



Clemence Williams

Dean Bryant is assisted by Clemence Williams on this production of *Fun Home*. The pair have previously collaborated on MTC's *Torch the Place*, for which Williams was the Composer and Sound Designer. Learn more about Clemence Williams's work as Associate Director for *Fun Home* in this Q&A.

What does the role of Associate Director entail?

'Associate Director is a wonderful job because your ultimate goal is to support the artistic vision of the director. It changes every day, depending on what the director might need. On this show, sometimes Dean needed me to work directly with the children cast, so he could continue working with the adults. As we had to triple cast the show, the job often entitled making sure each child cast was up to date and well-rehearsed with the blocking for the show.'

How would you describe the themes of *Fun Home*?

'*Fun Home* deals with themes of identity, coming-out, queerness and family trauma. It's about how we know and understand ourselves through the complicated lens that is our parents. It's such a clever piece dramaturgically as it jumps seamlessly between three time zones, allowing the shudders of self-knowledge and understand to rupture through Alison's identity as a whole.'

How is rehearsing a musical different to rehearsing a play?

'The obvious answer is that there's songs. This means we get to slow down inside emotional moments and really sit inside the inner life of a character - you don't always get that with theatre. The other thing is that due to the amazing musical material, we get to work with a choreographer! This is someone who sculpts the musical moments, sometimes into dance, but on this show, it was about supporting Alison's memories and storytelling.'

What perspective does your background in sound and composition give you as a director?

'My background in sound and composition really helps in understanding the musical dramaturgy of the piece. The composition quite cleverly repeats themes across the show - for example Small Alison sings "I despise this dress. Why can't I wear boys shirts and pants" and we hear this melody later when Alison sings with her father "since like five, I guess, I preferred to wear boys shirts and pants", trying to connect with him. This melody connects her identity across the two time periods.'

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On the lookout

After reading the Q&As from Bryant and Williams, make a list of things they mention that you can watch and listen for when you see the production on stage. For example, repeated melodies, the use of teal green in costumes, and symbolic use of light.

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In conversation

Learn more about the directors' vision for this production by reading an interview between Dean Bryant and Clemence Williams in the show programme at mtc.com.au.

Set & Costume Design



Alicia Clements



Isabel Hudson

The set and costumes for this production were designed by Alicia Clements with Associate Designer Isabel Hudson. As a co-production with Sydney Theatre Company, the set was designed to work in both the Roslyn Packer Theatre in Sydney and the Playhouse at Arts Centre Melbourne. The venues are similar (both are proscenium arch theatres, with audience seated in stalls and a dress circle) but the set needed alterations to fit in its second venue. Likewise, many of the costumes have been altered for new actors, as several roles were recast for the Melbourne season.

Learn more about the set and costume design for *Fun Home* in this Q&A with Associate Designer Isabel Hudson.

How did you arrive at the decision to include a revolve in the design? What challenges in the script does this resolve?

'The musical is structured like a memory play. It moves quickly between scenes and across time. The revolve helps us move between scenes quickly and reflects a fluidity in the structure of the play and the way in which Alison recollects and views events in her life. It solves for us how we move across time and memories, the movement is reminiscent of how memories are slippery, feeling present but far away.'



Set model by Alicia Clements

What references influenced the set and costume design?

'The set is grounded in the idea of Alison's art studio. New York studios and Alison's own studio were the influence and inspiration for this space. Another big source of inspiration was the graphic novel and the black vignettes in the memoir itself. This impacted the design in the black surrounds and masking, vignetting scenes in the play. For example, the morgue scene and the small black aperture that becomes the dorm room later in the play.

In terms of the costumes, these were inspired by the 1970s as well as family photos of the Bechdel family. We also drew upon the graphic novel, which is autobiographical, as well queer culture of the time.'

What is the world of this play? How is this reflected in the set and costume design?

'Alison is drawing the world. The musical is set with her writing about her past. Conjuring memories in the act of the writing. The world of the play is Alison's memories; her home, college dorm, and then back to her studio where she is writing and drawing. This is reflected in the design as we have created an artist's studio that echoes the shape of the house.

How do the Alison costumes communicate that this is one character across time?

'We use colour across all three in the colour green which connects the character. We also chose details like the fact all Alisons are wearing converse sneakers, and that their hair colour is all connected. There are also subtle things like each version of Alison has a subtle stripe.'

In your opinion, what are the big ideas being explored in this play that your design is supporting?

'There are so many ideas that this musical explores; repression and suppression, memory, family, unresolved memories, acceptance and learning to be your authentic self. In the act of writing and drawing this autobiographical story, Alison Bechdel is exploring these ideas and revisiting her relationship with her father. It was a way to be closer to him and analyse her memories of what was. The design allows these memories to be easily conjured. It supports its time and place and provides a canvas for each emotion conveyed in each song and memory to be explored so that the audience feels the emotion.'

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Design predictions

Based on the information above and the image of the set model, discuss how the set may be used during the production. Think in particular about the stage directions throughout: *SHIFT to...*



Jasper Hall, Adam Murphy, Teja Kingi, Edgar Stirling and Silvie Paladino

FUN HOME

ALISON
BECHDEL
2000's



FUN HOME

MEDIUM
ALISON
1979



FUN HOME

MEDIUM
ALISON
2
1979



FUN HOME

SMALL
ALISON
1969



FUN HOME

SMALL
ALISON
(PARTY
DRESS)
1969



FUN HOME

JOAN
1979



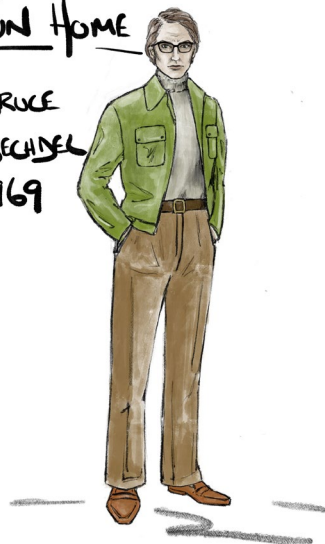
FUN HOME

JOAN
2
1979



FUN HOME

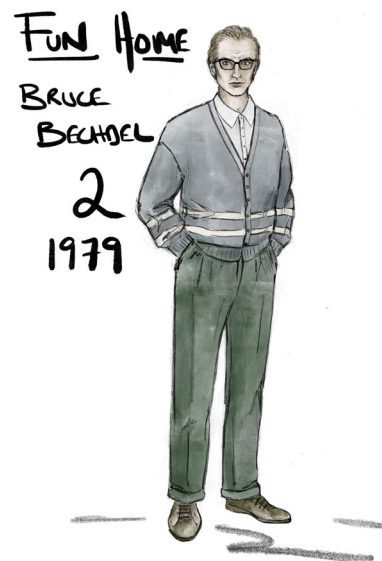
BRUCE
BECHDEL
1969



FUN HOME

BRUCE
BECHDEL
("GIRL COLOUR"
SHIRT)
1969





Costume design analysis

Annotate the costume designs above with things you notice about colours, patterns, wigs, historical context etc. What do the costumes tell you about each character?

Theatre styles

MUSICAL THEATRE

Musical theatre combines songs, dialogue, acting and dance, often with spectacular sets, costumes and lighting. In many ways musical theatre overlaps with opera, however musicals put more emphasis on the spoken dialogue whereas operas are usually entirely sung. By their very nature, musicals are highly non-naturalistic, usually depicting a wide variety of locations, actors playing multiple roles, the conventions of song and dance accepted as normal behaviour, and solo songs used as a dramatic device to tell the audience more about a character's thoughts and feelings (a soliloquy to music, in a way). Most Western musical theatre emerged in the 19th century, with many conventions and structural elements established by Gilbert and Sullivan (in Britain) and Harrigan and Hart (in the United States). *Fun Home* could also be described as a memory play in a musical theatre style.

Source: BBC (2022), *Musical Theatre* on bbc.co.uk



Ursula Searle, Adam Murphy, Euan Fistrovic Doidge, Sophie Isaac and Aidan Synan

Elements of theatre composition

The following questions, provocations and ideas are intended to help you experience and analyse *Fun Home* through the lens of VCE Theatre Studies.

COHESION

- Director Dean Bryant says the three Alisons have a shared body posture, walk and voice. Look for this in their expressive skills as an example of cohesion.
- The design team use colour and pattern to create cohesion across the three Alisons' costumes. Look for examples of this in their garments.
- Think about how the music is creating cohesion. Listen for recurring motifs.

MOTION

- Think about how the actors are navigating the set. Take note of the placement of furniture and props.
- Think about when the set revolves, and at what speed. Think about the stage directions *SHIFT to* in the script.

RHYTHM

- How might the songs manipulate the rhythm?
- As you watch, try to identify which scene has the fastest tempo and which has the slowest. Think about how this rhythm is achieved through acting, direction and design.

EMPHASIS

- Director Dean Bryant speaks about light as a symbol in this production. Look out for moments when light is used to emphasise something.
- How is our attention directed to particular parts of the stage at particular moments? Think about the interrelationship between acting, direction and design in these moments.

CONTRAST

- Look for opposites within the performance. Contrasting characters, scenes, colours, moods.
- Predict how the set will look in the play's opening moments, and consider a contrasting image for the final scene.
- Identify text in the script that is repeated in a different scene or by a different character. How will it be contrasted on stage?

VARIATION

- How might variation be manipulated in transition moments?
- How might moments of tension be broken in the play? Identify two moments from the script when you will look out for how variation is being manipulated.



Download Part B

After you've seen *Fun Home*, download Part B of this Education Pack to read more from the cast and creative team, see photos from the production, and respond to analysis questions.

MEET THE TEAM

Catch a glimpse of the *Fun Home* cast and creatives in rehearsals and discover why this is a musical like no other.

Watch the video at mtc.com.au



FUN HOME PROGRAMME

Dive deeper into *Fun Home*, a refreshingly honest, wholly original musical based on Alison Bechdel's bestselling graphic novel about growing up and coming out.

Download the programme at mtc.com.au

MEET THE ALISONS

We talk to Lucy Maunder and Ursula Searle, who both star in *Fun Home* as lead character Alison, but in different stages of her life.

Read the article at mtc.com.au

