

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



Stop Means Go

by Chris Thompson

EXTRACT

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stop means go

A short play by Chris Thompson

Characters:

Angas (a 15 year old high school student)

Dean (an 18 year unemployed kid)

Robbo (a 21 year old mobile phone salesman)

Sam (a 22 year old musician)

Gracie (a 19 year old uni student)

Five bodies (shapes in the dark)

Two witnesses

'...another very good piece...from a company that's having a very good year. The stories are very good, they're very authentic,...the characters are terrific, and the whole thing is very nicely threaded into a very sound dramatic structure on a wonderfully effective set...'

Geoffrey Milne on Clive Stark, 3LO, August 15, 1993

'One of the keys to successful youth theatre has to be creating work which has relevance to a young audience, and (with this one) St Martins has hit pay dirt... the play has an unusual and effective structure, is peopled with believable and interesting characters, and is refreshingly free of preachiness or message.'

Fiona Scott-Norman, Inpress Magazine, August 26, 1993

STOP MEANS GO is based on the play, HEAD ON developed by Chris Thompson at St Martins Youth Arts Centre as a youth theatre performance in August, 1993.

The original project was devised and performed with Campbell Corser, Melissa Gibson, Kristel Griffiths, Sussanah Hardy, Sebastian Henry, Noyen Hussein, Chris Howlett, Tara Mulhall, Pauline Noble, Bianca Pepe, Megan Testro, Louise Trbuhovich and Pippa Bailey. It was directed by Chris Thompson and Pippa Bailey.

HEAD ON was adapted by Chris Thompson into a theatre for young audiences performance by Next Big Thing in May, 1996.

The re-worked script was developed with and performed by Michael Dalton, Margot Fenley, Louise Trbuhovich, Bradley Hulme, Sarah Kinsella and Luke Ryan with assistance from Micaela Talbot and Pippa Bailey. It was directed by Chris Thompson.

STOP MEANS GO was written by Chris Thompson in August 2004.

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1. CRASH

In the dark...

...screeching tyres, skidding vehicles, the sickening crunch and crumple of metal hitting metal...

...metal scrape of a spinning hubcap on bitumen... then...

...silence.

Light reveals the silhouette of a wrecked car on stage... bodies emerge from the vehicle, dark shapes in the shadowy aftermath... they drift away from the car towards the extremities...

As they do... they speak...

BODY 1: Saturday night, the long weekend.

BODY 2: Three AM.

BODY 3: Intersection of Dandenong and Warrigal Roads...

BODY 4: A head on crash...

BODY 5: Total write-offs. Serious injuries. Two fatalities. Just kids.

2. ANGAS & DEAN

In the dark, THUMPING METAL MUSIC, rising.

Lights up... morning.

Now the car is an old CORTINA.

ANGAS (15) sits on the bonnet. DEAN (18) is attacking the driver's side door with a coathanger. He's not having much luck

DEAN:Fuckin' thing.

ANGAS: *(to the AUDIENCE)* Sometimes Dean really scares the shit out of me, you know? I mean he can be really scary when he wants to. He got chucked out of school when he was in year ten for pissing in a can of Solo and making some year eight kid drink it. He even made the kid pay him for it. It was pretty funny... at the time.

DEAN: Come on, you mongrel.

The lock suddenly pops. DEAN ditches the coathanger, jumps in and reaches under the dash to hotwire it.

ANGAS: *(to the AUDIENCE)* That was yonks ago. He still hangs 'round, though. Mostly with us, which is kind of weird, 'cause he was two years ahead of us when they expelled him. I s'pose all the kids his own age are doing their VCE an' shit. It's kinda cool to hang out with someone older. Like he doesn't need a fake ID or anything. And his Mum's always going away with this sales-rep bloke, an' she leaves her old shit heap of a car at home. She always hides the key, but that doesn't stop Dean.

DEAN gets the car started. ANGAS jumps off the bonnet and into the passenger seat.

ANGAS: *(to the AUDIENCE)* So me and him go cruising...

The MUSIC is loud, then tapers off as the CAR starts to revolve slowly. DEAN and ANGAS are eating Maccas and hooning down the street hanging out of the windows and shouting indecipherable insults at passers-by.

DEAN: Blah blah fucken blah blah blah fucken blah fucken blah!

ANGAS: Blah blah fucken blah!

DEAN: Yeah, Fucken blah!

ANGAS suddenly pulls his head in.

ANGAS: Jesus, Dean. Cops.

DEAN: Fuck off you fucken fuck fuckers!

DEAN cracks up laughing. ANGAS is shitting himself until he's sure the cops have gone. Then he laughs along with DEAN.

MUSIC blare as the revolving CAR picks up speed. When it reaches a good, fast pace, the MUSIC dies down.

They're on the open road.

ANGAS: *(to the AUDIENCE)* I tell you, Dean's as mad as a snake. He'll crack the shits over anything. Like, we've been playing this stupid game right. Like I saw this sign that's meant to say slippery when wet. You know, this little picture of a car with skid marks and stuff. So it was raining a bit, a little while ago, and I say to Dean, '*you better be careful on this bit of road*', and he reckons to me that that's not what the sign means. He reckons it means that we should drive like that, and he bloody swings the wheel around and gets us skidding all over the place.

The CAR swerves wildly. DEAN is having a great old time. ANGAS isn't so sure.