

CURRENT THEATRE SERIES

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Us or Them in its original form was first presented by actors and students at Childers Street Hall, Canberra on 1 November 1977, with the following cast:

TOM QUIRK	Steve Payne
MARY SMITH	Marte Newcombe
PRIM CARLOS	Anne Cowrie
GARRETT SWAN	Brian O'Brien
SARAH CROSSMAN	Anne Payne
ROBERT WHITCAN	Ned Manning
DAVID NEYLAND	Jeremy McGrane
TRISH RENDLE	Cherie Ellison
WENDY RAE	Brona O'Brien
SALLY MCKENZIE	Kerrie Deane
STEVEN WILKIE	Haydn Muir
PAUL PAYLING	Danny Miles
MR MAHONEY	Gary Roberts
SAM SNAPE	Ed Dittmar
PETER RICKARD	Chris Raft
JANE McNAUGHTON	Ross Dadd
RONALD CARLOS	Richard Maloney
SID SMITH	Charlie Willocks

Lighting by David Ellis
Stage Manager Carolyn Page
Designed by Bronwyn Bancroft
Directed by Ern Steffan

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Us or Them has undergone many changes since its original production in Canberra. It was read and workshopped by members of the Griffin Theatre Company as part of the company's 1983 play-reading season. Prior to the 1984 production by the Griffin Theatre Company it was workshopped with the director and designer and then with the cast and company writers. Much of the rewriting took place during this period with the author working in consultation with the company.

The first professional production, by the Griffin Theatre Company at the Stables Theatre, Kings Cross, Sydney, opened on 21 February 1984 and transferred to the Phillip Street Theatre on 18 April 1984.

CHARACTERS

Year Eleven students:

STEVE WILKIE
WENDY RAE
SALLY MCKENZIE

Teachers

MARY McNAUGHTON, in her mid-twenties
DAVE NEYLAND, the English Master, fortyish
GARRETT SWAN, about the same age
ROBERT WHITCAN, in his mid-twenties
TOM QUIRK, about the same age
PRIM CARLOS, a little older than Mary

Tom and Prim may be played by the same actors who play Steve and Wendy.

SETTING

There are three playing spaces: the staffroom, the corridor and the party area.

The staffroom consists of desks, chairs, teaching materials and a coffee space; the corridor is connected to the staffroom by a door or by lighting.

The staffroom is a bunker for the teachers, the corridor is a battlefield.

The party area is separate, having no connection with the school.

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

The students in the playground.

STEVE: Bugger the exams, they're a waste of time.

WENDY: Only if you don't study for them.

SALLY: They're a means to an end.

WENDY: You're stupid, Steve, you could've copied my assignment.

SALLY: Which *you* copied from Janice Beaumont.

WENDY: I didn't copy it—I used it as resource material!

SALLY: Anyway, the exams are only worth half the marks—if you did your assignment, Steve, you'd give yourself a chance.

WENDY: Might have to turn up to class first!

STEVE: God, you two crap on—give me the shits, you're like a couple of teachers.

WENDY: Don't get poohey.

SALLY: If you copied Wendy's you'd at least have got them in on time.

STEVE: Can't you get it into your head I couldn't give a fuck about assignments? Jeez. Why would I want to learn about that crap? Waste of time.

WENDY: OK. We get the message.

STEVE: You only do yours to please Whitcan, anyway.

SALLY: Bullshit!

WENDY: Whoa!

STEVE: Little Miss Actress, aren't we?

SALLY: Get stuffed.

WENDY: Hey, did you get that answer in Art History?

SALLY: Oh . . . about architecture. What was it?

WENDY: Gothic.

SALLY: Yeah.

WENDY: Gothic architecture—Janice Beaumont knew all about it.

SALLY: Trust you to copy.

WENDY: Jealousy is a curse.

STEVE: You'll get caught one day.

SALLY: Yeah, and the shit'll hit the fan.

STEVE: Which'll leave a hell of a mess.

WENDY: Which Swan'll have to clean up.

SALLY } : Yeah!
STEVE }

WENDY: You better watch him, Steve, he's after you.

STEVE: He doesn't worry me. He's a nobody.

SALLY: A nurd.

WENDY: A what?

SALLY: Nurd.

WENDY: Oh. Hey—going to the pub tonight?

SALLY: Nuh, can't. Got some work to prepare.

STEVE: Oh, yeah, that'll be the day.

SALLY: I have.

WENDY: First time for everything, I suppose. Hey, did you ask Tom about netball?

SALLY: Yeah. He can't take us.

WENDY: Who'll we get, then?

STEVE: Why don't you ask your mate Whitcan?

WENDY: Yeah, he'd be OK.

SALLY: Nuh, I don't think—
 WENDY: Why not?
 STEVE: Yeah, why not?
 SALLY: Dunno, he's not into—
 WENDY: Keeping him to yourself?
 SALLY: Don't be a dickhead.
 WENDY: Well?
 SALLY: All right, I'll ask him.
 STEVE: All you chicks do is play netball. Why don't yas go to the beach or something?
 WENDY: 'Cause I wanna make the State Team.
 SALLY: I'm going surfing in the holidays.
 WENDY: Oh yeah.
 STEVE: Hey, I've nearly got enough for me Ducati.
 WENDY/SALLY: Boring!
 STEVE: God, youse are up yourselves.
 WENDY: You're juvenile.
 SALLY: Now, now, let's not get into that again. Smoke?
 WENDY: Sure.
 STEVE: Ripper—I'm out.
 WENDY: Just for a change, OK?
 STEVE: Get rooted.
 WENDY: Hey, look who's got a new skirt. Bet that cost her a few bucks.
 STEVE: [*stutting out his cigarette*]
 Waste of a good durrty!
 [MARY enters.]
 MARY: Good morning. I thought smoking was illegal.
 SALLY: Oh yeah, it is, Miss McNaughton, we were just checking on the juniors, you know.
 MARY: I believe you, thousands wouldn't.
 WENDY: Great dress, where'd you get it from?

MARY: You like it?
 WENDY: Yeah, it's great. I like the colours, bright colours suit you.
 MARY: You reckon?
 WENDY: Yeah, goes with your personality.
 MARY: Flattery will get you everywhere.
 SALLY: She knows that.
 MARY: Bet she does. How are you, Steve?
 STEVE: Fine. And you?
 MARY: Fine.
 STEVE: What's that badge mean?
 MARY: It's an anti-nuclear badge—in support of the women at Greenham Common.
 STEVE: Where's that?
 MARY: In England, they're demonstrating against nuclear arms.
 STEVE: Oh, great. Where can I get one?
 MARY: Oh, um . . .
 WENDY: I heard about them on the telly.
 MARY: Yes. I'll get a couple if you're interested.
 STEVE: Great. Hey, marked our essays yet?
 MARY: 'Fraid so. Better be off, got lessons to prepare.
 [MARY exits.]
 STEVE: She's a spunk. I'd give anything to . . .
 WENDY: That's why you do essays in her classes.
 SALLY: Cat.
 WENDY: I'm going to be a teacher.
 SALLY: You've told us before.
 WENDY: You know how much teachers get?
 SALLY: Heaps.

WENDY: And the holidays, all on good pay.
 STEVE: Yeah, I might too.
 WENDY } : You?
 SALLY }
 STEVE: Yeah. P.E.
 WENDY: Might have to pass a few exams first.
 STEVE: God, you're a bitch. It's easy to become a teacher.
 SALLY: Must be!
 WENDY: Oh yeah? You've got to go to University first.
 STEVE: Bullshit. You go to College.
 WENDY: Not if you fail your exams, you don't.
 STEVE: Who said I'm gonna fail?
 Anyway, bet Tom didn't go too well in class and he's a teacher.
 SALLY: You two crap on! Who saw *Prisoner* last night?
 WENDY: The Freak's in for it now.
 STEVE: The Freak's fucked.
 SALLY: She is not.
 STEVE: Dunno how you watch that crap, it's so boring.
 WENDY: At least it's real.
 STEVE: Yeah, real shithouse.
 SALLY: Wait till I'm in it.
 WENDY: Be lucky if you are. Did you see Paula Duncan's house in *TV Week*? Wow!
 STEVE: Think I'll skip Maths.
 WENDY: Look out, here comes Neyland.
 [DAVE enters.]
 DAVE: Morning.
 SALLY }
 STEVE } : Morning, sir. Hello, sir!
 WENDY }
 DAVE: No loitering around here,

please. I've asked you seniors before to set the example. With the exams coming up you should be getting ready for school, checking up on homework, preparing. You can never do too much preparation.
 SALLY: Yes, sir.
 DAVE: Wilkie, please make yourself a bit presentable.
 [DAVE exits.]
 STEVE: Yes, sir . . . what a jerk.
 WENDY: They reckon he's got cancer.
 SALLY: Eh?
 STEVE: Bullshit.
 WENDY: Yeah, not long for this earth, I hear.
 SALLY: Really?
 WENDY: Would I lie to you?
 STEVE: God, you're a bullshit artist.
 SALLY: Who told you?
 WENDY: Well, he looks like he's falling apart to me—look at his mind.
 SALLY: Yeah?
 WENDY: Sucked in!
 SALLY: Got nothing on yours.
 WENDY: Yeah? Who was in Terry Wilson's panel van last school Social?
 STEVE: That was great dope you scored from him. How much did it cost?
 WENDY: In financial or physical terms?
 SALLY: Get stuffed.
 WENDY: I might do some modelling in the holidays.
 STEVE: Yeah—you can be the before in the 'before and after'.
 WENDY: Just you wait til I get me own car. You'll be the first ones scabbing