

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



The Big Bang

by Bruce Shearer

EXTRACT

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SYNOPSIS

The characters in this play are bureaucratic androids. They exist in a long forgotten, numberless room, in the bowels of the intergalactic civil service. It is their responsibility to administer a backward sector of the galaxy which includes the planet Earth, the most problematic planet of them all. The play takes place in a stuffy, paper strewn, bureaucratic office. The floor is littered with paper and files to such an extent that it has become a sort of bumpy crunching, crackling carpet, over which the characters must walk awkwardly or trip.

CHARACTERS

The characters appear to be teenagers of between 12-16 years of age and it is suggested in this that the universe is administered by adolescents, albeit ancient androids that look like teenagers.

KRELCHT Operations Officer Krelcht is a somewhat excitable, eccentric, fly by the seat of your pants sort of bureaucrat.

SABALLE Operations Officer Saballe is a calm, cautious, everything by the book sort of bureaucrat.

FAASH
LHARRE
ZIMMU Are all Intergalactic Controllers, whose task it is to provide specialist consultancy, and to pontificate on administrative difficulties.

FIRST Numero Uno. Invisible, allpowerful.

For performance purposes, additional actors could be cast to enact scenes where real video footage is unavailable and where live actors are appropriate. For example: game show host and contestants, corporate business people, fast food attendants, travel agents, loggers, miners etc.

These scenes could be pre-recorded on video or mimed alongside the main scene as determined by the plot.

Alternatively, pictures of the relevant scenes could be made into overhead sheets and projected onto wall as the script demands.

THE BIG BANG

SCENE 1.

(KRELCHT IS SLUMPED OVER ITS DESK. SUDDENLY IT PICKS UP THE PAPER AND FILES IN FRONT OF IT AND STARTS RIPPING THEM UP AND THROWING THEM AWAY. THEN A PILE OF PAPER IS LAUNCHED HIGH INTO THE AIR AND SLOWLY FALLS DOWN ON ITS HEAD VIRTUALLY OBSCURING IT FROM SIGHT.)

KRELCHT (EMITS A HIGH PITCHED MOAN)
That's it Saballe. I've had them!
I'm sick to death of them!

(SABALLE LOOKS UP FROM ITS DESK AT THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROOM.)

SABALLE I beg your pardon, Operations Officer Krelcht?

(KRELCHT THROWS ITS ARMS UP INTO THE AIR.)

KRELCHT They've had their last chance. No more. That's it!

(SABALLE LOOKS UP FROM ITS DESK ONCE AGAIN LOOKING IRRITATED.)

SABALLE Who are you talking about?

KRELCHT Sol 3, that's who. The most ignorant, excuse for life that I can think of.

SABALLE What type of life are you referring to?

KRELCHT Homicidal, suicidal, vicious, malicious, twits.

SABALLE Ah yes, they've been a problem on your books for quite a while if I remember rightly.

KRELCHT They've been MY HEADACHE for aeons. I'm tired of them.

(KRELCHT SCREWS UP ITS FACE AND ANOTHER PIECE OF PAPER AND TWISTS IT LOUDLY AND VIOLENTLY.)

KRELCHT I think it's time to let them go, Saballe.

SABALLE (GASPING) Do you think that's wise?

KRELCHT Wise? It's a stroke of genius.

SABALLE (WORRIED) Really? It's hardly standard operating procedure.

(SABALLE GETS UP FROM ITS DESK AND WALKS WITH DIFFICULTY OVER THE MOUNDS OF PAPER AND FILES THAT LITTER THE FLOOR TOWARDS AN OVERSTUFFED BOOKCASE AND STARTS LEAFING THROUGH A STACK OF ENORMOUS OPERATIONS MANUALS AND REGULATIONS WITH A CONCERNED LOOK ON ITS FACE.)

SABALLE As these manuals clearly show, termination is quite outside your responsibility. Besides, you should have recourse to all other possible methods before taking any irreversible action.

KRELCHT I've tried everything.

(KRELCHT THROWS A HEAVY MANUAL AT THE WALL.)

KRELCHT Everything in the book and out of it.
They started off badly and got worse.
They're never happier than when they're
fighting and killing each other. It's all the better
if it's for a religious cause.

SABALLE Have you tried introducing problems,
things that can bring them together,
give them a common cause?

KRELCHT The only thing that could hold that lot together is
a giant tube of glue. They seem to be continually
in search of further ways to divide themselves,
more often than not with extraordinary violence.
Any excuse will do, language, belief, colour, race!

SABALLE But have you given them anything to unite them?

KRELCHT Have I ever? Please look at the viewer.

(KRELCHT HITS A BUTTON ON A DUSTY OLD CONSOLE ON ITS
DESK AND A NUMBER OF SCREENS MATERIALISE ON THE WALL.
SABALLE WATCHES THE IMAGES OF DYSENTERY, CYCLONES,
WORLD VISION ADVERTISEMENTS, FIRES, TELEVISION GAME
SHOWS, FLOODS, FAMINES, MULTI-NATIONALS, PUBLIC
TRANSPORT, POLITICS, AS KRELCHT NARRATES EACH IMAGE
ONE AFTER ANOTHER.)

KRELCHT Dysentery, cyclones, fires, television
game shows, floods, famines, multi-nationals,
public transport, politics. . . , Nothing seems to
work.

(KRELCHT SWEEPS SOME FILES OFF ITS DESK.)

Finally I thought, what's the point? So I let them
develop a new, if primitive weapon, that could
blow the whole dungheap out of the sky.

(THE IMAGE OF A NUCLEAR WARHEAD APPEARS ON ONE
SCREEN.)

SABALLE (GASPING IN DISMAY) You didn't! You didn't?

KRELCHT I did!

(KRELCHT IS MOMENTARILY SHEEPISH AND CONFIDING.)

KRELCHT Well I know I shouldn't have, but I just couldn't
help it.

(SABALLE LEAPS UP IN ITS CHAIR IN SHOCK, IT AND THE CHAIR
TOPPLE OVER BACKWARDS ONTO A LARGE MOUND OF PAPER.
KRELCHT HURRIES OVER AND HELPS IT UP, BUT SABALLE
BRUSHES KRELCHT ASIDE.)

SABALLE (INDIGNANTLY) I don't believe it. That's totally
contrary to the whole program.

KRELCHT After a while I got used to them killing each
other, but I just couldn't stand watching them
slowly destroy the planet.