

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



The Flats

by Georgia Keighery

EXTRACT

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Characters:

Jay	male
Sarah	female
Dee	female
Vince	male
Elle	female
Drew	female
The DJ	male/female

Staging:

Against the up-stage wall are 6, 1 square meter boxes, stacked two high and three across. The audience-facing side of each box is a door with a handle. To one side of the flats is a window, through which the DJ, turntable & production equipment are visible.

Music:

The presence of the DJ in the walls of the Flats creates two main layers of audio texture: Firstly, each character has an identifying track played in the lead in of their monologue which musically describes them. The DJs mixing and intermingling of the identifying tracks should reflect the shift in mood from character to character. Secondly, the DJ creates the aural flavor of the tenement itself (acting as a live sound technician) - the sound of drops of water into a metal bucket early in scene one, is unhidden as the DJs production and Once introduced the dripping sound remains throughout the show, however the DJ can adjust the volume and/or tempo to feed into or out of the character tracks. The drip continues throughout the characters' speeches although may be adjusted in volume. The DJ also increases the tempo of the drips with each monologue.

Scene 1:

[The door to one of the flats swings open. Inside JAY is on the phone]

JAY: ...Yes I'll hold ... It's quite urgent ... All of my mail is being delivered back to me. All of it ... No, no you see, it's not even getting to them. I post it and it bounces straight back. Well if you could put me through to ... yes ... yes. But we're both aware of the fact that you are a customer services clerk. And that is as good a career as any I assure you. However, we are both just as aware that your role within the postal service is to make customers feel better, and enable them to feel that enough has been set in motion to vindicate whatever gripe they're calling for. You and your fellow Customer service people, can save an organisation billions of dollars a year in legal fees – Just by subduing unhappy customers ... So I am aware of the value of what you do ... But I need to be put through to someone who can tell me what little glitch at your end has completely castrated my ability to correspond in writing ... None of my letters are reaching anyone ... So this is quite frustrating and untenable ... yes ... good, do that ... I'll expect it to be rectified tomorrow. **[he hangs up the phone]**

It is important to speak up, and to have your voice heard. That's important. And most of the time people appreciate it. They really do. Most of the time people are desperate for feedback. When I was ten years old I wrote to my local MP and congratulated him on his environmental policy. I got a very encouraging letter in response. He said that the interest I was taking in politics was very promising for one so young. He added that the world needed more citizens like me who were willing to respond ... to 'stand up and be counted'. I have that letter framed on the wall in my room.

I wrote back to thank him for his prompt response and sketched some possible strategies to encourage primary school age children to take up their political concerns, as young people. Politics is one arena where a strong voice is appreciated. He sent back an invitation to join the Young Liberals.

When I was 16, I had been in communication with the local courts, making a series of phone calls suggesting improvements that could be made to the judicial system at a local level. At first they seemed pleased to have feedback. I got to know the name of the lady at the courts, Alison ... it seemed they only had one public affairs person ... So, I learned her name ... Alison Moyle. Anyway, after a month or so she began to get rather upset at me when I'd call. She'd say I was clogging up their system ... that there were people who *really* needed to use this service, and that she'd been late home every second day because she had had to catch up on work that she'd slipped behind on. Well, I calmly pointed out that the system she accused me of clogging was obviously an inefficient one, as I was just the sort of person it was meant to be serving. I also suggested that if she used a laptop and worked on the train during her trip from the office to Ryde, then perhaps she wouldn't fall behind ... Well, that was it, she