

REFUGE

a collection of four plays

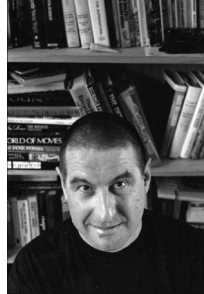
HOME \ PP Cranney
The YUM YUM ROOM \ Stephen House
CROWDED HOUSE \ John Romeril
The BRIDGE \ Chris Thompson



Currency Press,
Sydney

Home

PP Cranney



PP CRANNEY started writing professionally in the late seventies in Sydney for cabaret and pub theatre. He has since written for theatre companies, community organisations, government and corporate enterprises all over Australia. He has over thirty years experience as a freelance writer for stage, particularly for youth and community theatre, as well as for children's television, short film, radio and corporate video.

He has had eight plays nominated for Australian Writers Guild AWGIE awards and has twice won an AWGIE Award: in 1999, for *Rated X*, and in 2001, for *Home*.

In 2003 he received a Centenary Medal for services to Australian society in writing for the stage.

CHARACTERS

DOM, A DOMOVOI

LADY
BUS DRIVER

HOMELAND:

MERINDA

ALI

MOTHER

BORDER GUARD 1

BORDER GUARD 2

EMBASSY OFFICIAL

INTEPRETER

OCKER MAN

TEACHER

TONY

POLITICIAN

REFUGEES, OFFICIALS,

MEDIA, STUDENTS

SAM:

SAM

MUM

JO

MR SLEAZE

PETA

HOMELESS MEN

RANGER

CARMEN

HOON 1

HOON 2

CHRISSIE

LISA

BILLY

IN THE SUBURBS:

5 TEENAGERS

MUM

PARENTS

HOMELESS PERSON

SETTING

The stories in *Home* are held together by a displaced Domovoi (Slavic house spirit), who guides us through a space that must represent many locations including a war-torn village, a refugee camp, a suburban house, a flat, an inner-city park, back lanes and squats.

ACT ONE

PROLOGUE

Unearthly lights and thunder build up an expectation of the entrance of some fantastic mythical creature. After a few moments, anticlimactically, DOM the domovoi appears from the packing cases. He steps forward to address the audience.

DOM: In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth became home to a multitude of species—including humans, such as yourselves. And when the creator had finished creating the heavens and the earth, some of the spirits who surrounded him revolted against him. And he drove these rebellious spirits from the sky and cast them to earth below. Many of those spirits fell into the water or the forests and remained wicked, but some of us fell onto the roofs of people's houses, and through mixing with you humans, we became good spirits—a little cheeky and mischievous at times, perhaps, but basically good.

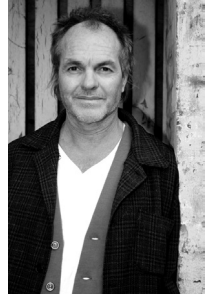
We domovoi made ourselves so much at home in the homes of you humans. We became house spirits, little divinities of home and hearth.

But please note: we weren't freeloaders or anything like that. We paid our way: we forewarned you when troubles threatened. Eh? We'd tug the missus' hair when hubby was about to beat her. That's got to be worth something. And before the death of a family member, we wept. We're only human. Well, we're not humans, not yet, but we have feelings too. We loved living near the stove or under the front doorstep. We appreciated the occasional slice of bread slipped under the stove; mention our names in the house, and we'd always bring happiness to your home.

But that was then, this is now: isn't it ironic? The master of the house is now himself homeless. And why is this? Humans don't believe in what's important anymore. Nowadays, you believe not in goblins, but in globalisation! Not in pixies, but profits! Not magic,

The Yum Yum Room

Stephen House



STEPHEN HOUSE has had sixteen plays and four short films produced, and four solo exhibitions. He has won two AWGIE awards from the Australian Writers' Guild, an Adelaide Fringe Award, and was shortlisted for the Patrick White and Queensland Premier Drama Awards. He has received International residencies from the Australia Council to Canada, USA and Ireland, an Asia-link literature residency to India and an Island of Residencies to Tasmania. He has performed in productions of his work both nationally and internationally.

CHARACTERS

TOM, around 17

DAD, around 45

ANNABELLE, around 17

MRS MAC, 75–80

SETTING

The play is set in Mount Gambier in the South East of Australia. The minimalist set needs to serve a range of places / spaces including: a small shed on a remote piece of land; the living room and kitchen of Dad and Tom's house; and Mrs Mac's front porch. There is an unnamed vacant downstage space where other action occurs.

SCENE ONE

TOM stands alone in the shed. DAD stands alone in the living room.

TOM: It is a place that has always been mine.

DAD: His place.

TOM: No-one else's in the whole world.

DAD: I just let him go... I have to now, almost completely. I did then too, I suppose, in a kind of way.

TOM: I remember when it began.

DAD: Our way... him and me... here.

TOM: This place and me, coming here.

DAD: He has always wandered off alone.

TOM: I was six... nearly seven; and it was not too long after she went away... I think.

DAD: He needed too be alone then... still does... but then so do I sometimes.

TOM: Finding this place; in a paddock behind the church.

DAD: Just let him go.

TOM: By myself.

DAD: I can understand it.

TOM: What's best... still is I think.

DAD: A son grows into a man... nearly a man, and confronts every bloody thing a father says... probably what a mother would say... would've said... if she was here.

TOM looks at DAD and moves into the kitchen.

I can make my own decisions thank you very much!

DAD: [*to TOM*] I know! I know! But we're sharing a house... sharing a life; somehow.

TOM: You drive me so bloody crazy sometimes Dad!

DAD: A view of the world that is definitely not the same.

TOM: Pick, pick, pick... all the time.

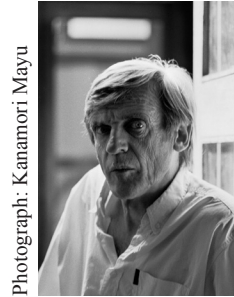
DAD: I worry... that's all it is.

TOM: Well it's my business... Okay!

DAD: Okay!

Crowded House

John Romeril



Photograph: Kanamori Mayu

JOHN ROMERIL began his playwriting career while a Monash University undergraduate with *I Don't Know Who to Feel Sorry For* (1969) and *Chicago, Chicago* (1969–70). Romeril helped found the APG in 1970 and many of his plays of the period, including *Mrs Thally F*, *Bastardy*, *The Floating World* and *Carboni* premiered there. His other plays include (from the 1980s) *Samizdat*, *Jonah*, *Legends*, *Lost Weekend*, *Top End* and *Koori Radio*. The 1990s saw his continued success with *Black Cargo*, *Crowded House*, *Reading Boy*, *Doing the Block*, *Expo: The Human Factor*, *Acronetic*, *Kate 'n' Shiner*, *Love Suicides* and *Hanoi-Melbourne*. *Miss Tanaka* premiered at Playbox in 2001 and his stage adaptation of *One Night The Moon* at Malthouse in 2009.

His screen credits include *The Great McCarthy*, *Six of the Best* (a 12-part series for ABC) and, with Rachel Perkins, *One Night The Moon* (2000).

He has been Playwright-in-Residence with a number of theatre companies and tertiary institutions. Prizes include the Canada-Australia Literary Award (1976), and the Patrick White Award (2008).

CHARACTERS

FRIEDA	EUNICE
WILL	PAUL
MORG	DELPHIE
RITA	JOHN
GIRL	ALDISS
SOCIAL WORKER	TESS
DARYL	ROSE

The play is written for four actors, two male, two female.

SETTING and MUSIC

Apart from a riot at the start, and escape bid at the end, the action of ‘Crowded House’ occurs inside a house. Trina Parker built an inner city Victorian era terrace house circa 1890s Melbourne—but to a doll’s house scale. She set that model on stage, adding a rigid steel joist, something you might see in the debris of a demolition site. It was load-bearing, and though made of wood, gave actors an elevated posi to perform from at times.

Two or three bound bundles of newspapers were provided, also for performers to stand or sit on. Arena had touring to schools in mind. Scenic items had to fit in a van, be swiftly erected and taken down.

Music was a mix of found sound, popular songs that gave chapters of the show an era feel, eg. 1930s dance hall tunes, 1960s rock’n’roll. For the riot actors worked ‘live’ to pre-recorded crowd SFX. For the ‘Crowded House’ lyric, musical director Irene Vela drilled the performers to deliver it in hip-hop a capella fashion.

SCENE ONE

A heavy urgent sound track begins: the underscore for a riot some time in the near future. Chants like 'Eat the rich!', 'Hold the line!' and 'The whole world's watching' are mixed in. Searchlights and flares come up to reveal a smoke-wreathed stage. Mayhem and confusion reign. Two women enter slowly and separately. FRIEDA is moving through a press of bodies. RITA is hunching against a wall, wearing a rucksack. Just as slowly, WILL and MORG are entering. They're together.

FRIEDA: There's smoke. Screams. Fear and confusion. A crowd pressing in. Bodies crushing up against you. People galore. But not one of 'em knows what to do.

Focus shifts to WILL and MORG.

WILL: We have rights. The inalienable rights all humans have.

MORG: Get this through your head: there are no rights. They've turned off the rights.

Focus shifts to RITA.

RITA: I get through it saying: this is a music-pub. This is a crowded hall. I tell myself people are dancing, not being gassed; the ones falling down have drunk too much.

Focus shifts back to WILL and MORG.

WILL: People think I'm mad.

MORG: You are mad.

WILL: What's my madness compared to the madness of all this?

MORG: Duck!

They shield themselves.

FRIEDA: The sweepers are coming through, firing cannisters. The god squad with their riot shields and stun guns won't be far behind. Could even be waiting for us up ahead. We're like rats herded through a maze, being driven deeper into the old part of the city.

WILL: This slaughter of the innocents must cease!

FRIEDA: The police dogs get fed—the people don't. Strange the things you think.

The Bridge

Chris Thompson

Photo: Susan Gordon-Brown



CHRIS THOMPSON is a writer, artistic director, arts educator and arts consultant. A writer for more than twenty years, Chris works in film, theatre and television. He has won two AWGIE Awards for his plays, *Shady Characters* and *The Bridge* and received nominations for *A Neutral Script* and *Spinning The Line*. He has also had a number of short stories published in anthologies for young adult readers including *If You Sleep You Die* which won the 1992 Nillumbik Alan Marshall award. His feature film work includes *Jigsaw* (Colosimo Films, 1989) and *A Slow Night at the Kuwaiti Café* (Boulevard Films, 1991).

CHARACTERS

AARON

REG

RITA

DESLEY

BUSHY

MR DONNEL

GILLIAN

DONNY (recorded voice)

REG and MR DONNEL can be doubled

DESLEY and GILLIAN can be doubled

SETTING

In the space is the bridge... an abandoned wooden bridge spanning a country railway line. Within the play other places are created with furniture and light. Act One takes place the week that Donny died. Act Two takes place the week of the deb ball.

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

Monday afternoon.

The sound of a diesel train in the distance.

AARON in his room, isolated in light, playing his bass guitar.

He plays a driving, angry riff over and over again.

The sound of a diesel train... coming closer...

The pitch of the diesel's horn shifts; the Doppler effect as it passes beneath the bridge.

A sound like a falling cry.

AARON breaks a string on his guitar.

AARON: Fuck!

The scene opens up to the family kitchen.

REG has commandeered the kitchen table, tinkering with a greasy carburettor, laid out on newspaper. His crossing guard uniform and sign are hanging nearby.

RITA is perched, awkwardly, working out something in her diary.

They're in the middle of a conversation.

REG: It's all talk, this town. Always has been, always will be. They're never gonna close that bridge.

RITA: The boy's dead, Reg. [*The carburettor is too much for her.*] Do you have to do this here?

REG: I put paper down.

RITA: I've got to finish this.

REG: I've got some news.

RITA is concentrating on what she's doing. REG waits. She tries to show interest.

Allan's offered me a couple'a days work blowing out a new dam. Pick up the gelignite, help him set the charges, that sort of thing.

Not much money, but it'll help. [*Beat.*] It'll be good to be working again.

AARON *comes into the room, an empty Coke bottle in his hand.*

AARON: We got any more Coke?

RITA: Sorry, I meant to go on the way home.

AARON: That'd be a no.

He throws the bottle in the bin.

RITA: We were just talking about... you know, the... that... that poor boy...

AARON: Donny. His name's Donny.

RITA: Donny. [*She struggles, checks her watch.*] How did the other kids take it? It's been such a hectic day, I hardly had a moment to... You know, if you want to talk you only have to...

AARON: There's nothing to drink.

RITA: There's no shame in feeling...

AARON: How would you know what I'm feeling?

RITA: That's why I... if you'd like to...

AARON *s suddenly too close to* RITA.

AARON: Okay. Let's talk. Right now.

RITA: [*taken by surprise*] Sure. As soon as I get home. I promise.

AARON: Forget it. Can I have twenty bucks?

RITA: What do you need money for?

AARON: I broke a guitar string.

RITA: I thought you got paid after Saturday?

He cuts her dead, turns to REG.

AARON: Dad?

REG: What?

AARON: Can you lend it to me?

RITA: I didn't say I wouldn't lend it to you.

REG: What?

AARON: Can I borrow twenty bucks?

REG: Have you asked your mother?

RITA: I don't think I have that much on me.

AARON *is frustrated with everything and needs an outlet. It might as well be his dad.*