

ABOUT BLOODWOOD

Inspired by the idea that prejudice derives its roots from either fear or ignorance, Bloodwood is a contemporary poetic drama, which weaves unresolved tales through the terrain known as Bloodwood. This domain imagines a world free of violence, overpowered by the sheer power of human compassion and understanding embodied in the 'girl spirit' character of Frankie, a child whom we first meet suffering at the hands of her violent Father and anomalous Mother. When Frankie refuses to be silenced, her Father suddenly strikes her, slicing her jugular vein and killing her. As the Chorus step out to commemorate her funeral, Frankie comes to life, transcending her human senses on the flight from life to death. Now a ghost like figure, sometimes seen, sometimes invisible, Frankie takes us on her journey around Bloodwood. She travels a rugged terrain reacting to or provoking a response to some form of prejudice or fear obstructing harmony within the community. Within the duration of the play, Frankie 'grows up', and is therefore ready to let life go to peacefully return to her grave.

This Pilgrims Progress for the modern generation; this strange metaphysical world of fairytale and spirits pervades the underworld of repression and provokes the prejudice which stifles the growth of our diverse culture; race, colour, physical appeal, sexual preference, class, the abuse of power, the bluff of status and beauty, the erosion of personal relationships, homophobia and finally greed, where urban development threatens the environment.

Language and Features of the Play:

Bloodwood is a hybrid text fusing prose, poetry, music and gestic language into a whole. This variety of dynamic elements calls for a compelling style of storytelling. The actors should be free to use gesture to punctuate the text, expressing both the inner and outer life of the characters as well as what is germane to the territory; the atmosphere, the wind, the cries in the night, the slicing of flesh, the clanging of jail doors, etc. Breath and voices support the action whilst adding another level of musicality to the piece. If possible, when not directly involved in the action the actors should seat themselves amongst the audience so as to destabilize the barriers usually present between actor and spectator. In this way, the audience becomes part of this culturally mixed community, which aims to serve as a microcosm of the real world.

Dramatic form is evident in the following ways:

- Episodic storytelling
- Non-linear narrative
- Non-naturalistic form
- Post Modern elements
- Uses an eclectic range of performance styles

Techniques And Conventions in the play:

- Monologue
- Chorus
- Split Focus
- Narration
- Rhyme
- Soliloquy / Spoken Thought
- Chanting
- Song
- Music
- Sound Effects
- Transformational Acting

The Bloodwood Tree

In times gone by, this tree has provided for a variety of needs for desert Aboriginal people, producing medicine for healing purposes from the blood red sap within. You can apply the sticky gum found on the trunk of the tree directly to a sore, cut or boil, which works as an antiseptic. You can eat the plump, green grubs that live under the bark, collect honey or “sugarbag” from the hives of stingless native bees; drink from the nectar, make bowls from the bumps on the bark and collect drinking water from hollows and the roots. The red sap was also used to tan kangaroo-skin waterbags.

Set

A ladder type structure may be useful for Frankie to climb so she is able to observe and comment as a separate but integral part of the action when called for. The other actors might be placed within the audience when not directly involved in the action, creating the sounds of the environment. The cast may easily double in other parts.

Acknowledgements

Bloodwood was previously commissioned by and workshopped under the Directorship of John Howard, Australian Peoples Theatre, Sydney Theatre Co., in 1992, In December 1993, Bloodwood was workshopped and read publically with Raw Stages, STC. with Bradley Byquar, David Wenham, William Zappa, Sara Zwangobani, Di Adams, Jamie Oxenbould, Rachael Mazza, Anthony Wong, Camilla Ah Kin and Gavin Barbey as Designer, dramaturgically assisted by Kim Spinx and Paul Thompson.

In July 1994 Bloodwood was presented by Playworks for “Cakes Cops and calling the Shots: Voices of Contemporary Women”, at the International Womens Playwright Conference in Adelaide.