

PRESENTED BY LA BOITE

NAKED & SCREAMING

By Mark Rogers



EDUCATION NOTES

By Maddie Nixon & Ari Palani

LA BOITE



La Boite Theatre Company is assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its funding and advisory body



La Boite Theatre Company is supported by the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland

ABOUT THE SHOW

SYNOPSIS

New parents Emily and Simon are struggling. With Simon in LA for work, a sleep-deprived Emily is left alone to care for baby Dylan, triggering a chain reaction that will alter everyone's lives forever.

Audiences are in for a heart-stopping thrill ride, not knowing who to trust and who to believe, as the couple's relationship unravels.

The world premiere of ***Naked & Screaming*** is a new Australian family tragedy with a savage script by award-winning playwright Mark Rogers (2019 Griffin Award, 2019 Patrick White Playwrights Award).

It takes a searing look at the dynamics of new parenthood and throws a dagger into the heart of relationships.

Strap in as acclaimed Queensland actors Emily Burton (***Single Asian Female***) and Jackson McGovern (***Death of a Salesman***) unflinchingly unravel Emily and Simon's worlds in this two-person dramatic comedy.

CAST AND CREATIVES

Playwright Mark Rogers

Director Sanja Simić

Set & Costume Designer Chloe Greaves

Lighting Designer Ben Hughes

Composer & Sound Designer Guy Webster

Stage Manager Nicole Neil

RECCOMENDED FOR

Suitable for grades 11-12

WARNINGS

- Moderate Course Language
- Adult Themes
- Contains family themes that may be difficult for some viewers
- Contains abortion storyline



MARK ROGERS WRITER

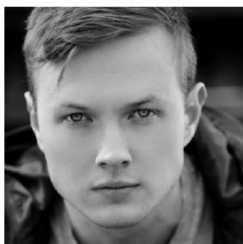
Mark Rogers is a multi-award winning playwright and theatre-maker. In 2019 he won both the Griffin Award and Sydney Theatre Company's Patrick White Award. That play, *Superheroes*, was also shortlisted for Stuckemarkt at Theatertreffen as a part of the Berlin Festspiele in 2020. He has produced celebrated work with some of Australia's most innovative independent companies: Woodcourt Art Theatre, Applespiel, Bodysnatchers and re:group. His previous work as a writer includes: *Superheroes* (Griffin Theatre) *The Pecking Order* (Shopfront), *Tom William Mitchell* (Merrigong Theatre Company), *Plastic* (Old 505 Theatre), *Target Audience* (Novelty UK), *The Buck* (Rock Surfers, Bondi Feast), *Soothsayers* (Brisbane Festival: Under The Radar), *Blood Pressure* (Rock Surfers, Old Fitzroy Theatre) and *Gobbledygook* (PACT, AC Arts Adelaide). His play *Blood Pressure* is published by PlayLab. His work on projects with the performance collective Applespiel, 2008-present, include seasons at major theatres nationally and internationally. He holds a PHD from the University of Wollongong.



SANJA SIMIĆ DIRECTOR

Sanja Simić is a Theatre Director and Creative Producer. As a Director, she has created work for La Boite, Tamarama Rock Surfers, Brisbane Festival, Griffin Theatre Company, Merrigong Theatre Company, PACT Theatre, Sydney and Adelaide Fringe Festivals, and more. Other directing credits include Timberlake Wertenbakers' *The Grace of Mary Traverse* (2016), Bernard Marie Koltes/Martin Crimp's *Roberto Zucco* (2012), and Howard Barker's *Wounds to the Face* (2010). As a Creative Producer for La Boite Theatre Company, she has worked across numerous projects including the programming and delivery of consecutive HWY Festivals (2017-present), Steven Oliver's *From Darkness* (2019), multiple seasons of Michelle Law's *Single Asian Female* (2018-20), the national tour of Future D Fidel's *Prize Fighter* (2018), and multiple seasons of *The Village* (2017, 2018).

Prior to La Boite, Sanja held positions at the Australia Council for the Arts (International Projects) and Australia's leading organisation for interdisciplinary arts and experimental performance, Performance Space. Her most recent directing credits include Claire Christian's *Lysa & The Freeborn Dames* for La Boite and Bodysnatchers' production of Mark Rogers' *Plastic* for the Old 505 in Sydney.



JACKSON MCGOVERN

SIMON

As an actor, Jackson's stage credits include: Happy/Howard (*Death of a Salesman* - Matilda Award Nomination Best Supporting Actor); *The Owl and the Pussycat* (Matilda Award Winner Best Supporting Actor); Bob (*American Buffalo* - Matilda Award Nomination Best Supporting Actor); Doug (*Cosi*); Jon (*Tick, Tick...Boom!*); Hugh (*Reagan Kelly*); Warren (*This Is Our Youth*); Claude (*Hair*); Hunter (*title of show*); Mark (*Rent*); Josh (*Nineteen*); and The Baker (*Into the Woods*). In 2020, he also made his directorial debut for the children's opera, *There Once Was A Puffin*, for which he also wrote the libretto. Initially speech and drama-trained, Jackson toured with the Grin & Tonic Theatre Troupe for two years, and continues to work for Queensland Theatre, La Boite, Little Match Productions and various other companies throughout Queensland as an actor, teaching artist and freelance writer.



EMILY BURTON

EMILY

Emily Burton is an actress, theatre-maker, playwright and teaching artist. Production credits include: *Storm Boy* (Melbourne Theatre Company/Queensland Theatre); *Single Asian Female* (La Boite Theatre Company/Belvoir); *The Seagull*, *Oedipus Doesn't Live Here Anymore*, *The Fledglings*, *Riley Valentine* (Queensland Theatre); *The Wider Earth* (Queensland Theatre/Sydney Festival/Dead Puppets Society); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (La Boite Theatre); *A Tribute of Sorts* (Monster's Appear). Emily has performed nationally with numerous acclaimed Independent Theatre groups including Dead Puppets Society, Imaginary Theatre Company, and Grin and Tonic Theatre Troupe. Awards include: Matilda Award for Best Actress in a Lead Role in *A Tribute of Sorts*; A recipient of Queensland Theatre Independents Resources funding; and a proud participant in the Playlab Incubator playwriting program. Throughout 2019, Emily an Artist in Residence with La Boite Theatre and co-commissioned to develop a new work, *Motive* that was shortlisted for the QPDA. Emily was also co-commissioned by Playlab to write a new work called *RISING*. She has worked as a teaching artist across Australia and is passionate about bringing the arts to regional areas.

CURRICULUM LINKS

FORM, STYLE AND CONVENTIONS

Contemporary Performance

Realism

Hybridisation

Cinematic Theatre

Australian Theatre

SENIOR SYLLABUS UNITS

Unit Two: Reflect

Unit Four: Transform

THEMES

Motherhood and Parenting

New life

Gender

Conflict

Parenting/Family laws in Australia

Grief

Mental Health

Contemporary Perspectives

Communication

Trust

PRESHOW ACTIVITIES

CLASS DISCUSSION

Themes and Ideas – Parenthood: Past, Present and Future.

Becoming a parent is not a singular journey – it is unique to every individual and never exactly the same way for anyone, but two things are common to new parents: a brand-new human who is naked and screaming.

- What do you think this title means? What could it mean to the characters who are not a new-born child?
- How do you think having a child would transform a person's life?
- Families come in all shapes and sizes, but new life, babies and parenting are more complex topics than just biological and societal processes – what other factors may impact this conversation? How has this changed through history?
- As a young person, what do you think being a parent would be like? What are some literal elements you would experience (caring for a new baby, lack of sleep, bottles and nappies)? What about emotionally, or mentally (senses of responsibility, pride, anxiety)? What are some abstract or conceptual changes you might find (creating life, family lineage, the human experience)?

TASK: DESIGN A RESEARCH TREE

Being a parent is a complex task with many aspects leading from one to another.

Design a research tree exploring these diverging elements, beginning with 'parenting' and seeing what this leads to.

- Provide a time limit of 5-15min to create these trees from a singular beginning point and see where they branch off to. Discuss the line of enquiry that led to these conclusions.

TASK: RESPOND TO THE FOLLOWING QUOTES ABOUT MOTHERHOOD / PARENTING

- As writer Samantha Hunt said about a fictional story she published in The New Yorker in 2017: "When I became a mom, no one ever said, 'Hey, you made a death. You made your children's deaths.'" Death comes for all of us, even your child, and nobody knows when it will arrive.
- "I had not been alone in a decade. I had not been alone because I am a mother, and a mother is never alone. When she is washing, sleeping, raging, she is not alone. For a mother, this is the state of things. Children hang from your clothing. They pummel you with questions. Like a gunfight, like the most consuming love, like an apocalypse: they take up all of the available space." - Claudia Dey

REALISM & CONTEMPORARY PERFORMANCE

Putting real life on stage seems like an impossible thing to achieve, but Realism and Contemporary Performance seeks to do so by chronicling the human condition, informing audiences about real lived experiences and reflecting the subtleties of natural psychologically motivated actions in a fictional scenario.

Through the use of elements like fragmentation, intertextuality, open and hybridized forms, and performance technologies like audio design, contemporary performance is playing with reality in new ways.

- What narratives have you seen lately that aim to show a 'slice of life' on stage or screen – how has this changed over the years? What constitutes 'real' now?
- Many popular narratives have also explored parenthood (*Juno*, *Bump*, *Knocked Up*), each through a particular perspective or lens. Discuss how parenthood, pregnancy and new life is explored through a contemporary lens.

Contemporary family life has also changed quite dramatically due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. Discuss how this affected –

- How household dynamics changed.
- Did spending time as a family become more or less enjoyable?
- With a major shift to digital access, did you feel more or less connected?
- How did social dynamics change?

CONNECTING WITH DIFFICULT CONTENT AND MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Naked and Screaming by Mark Rogers paints a very real picture of what becoming a new parent can feel like – anxious, hopeless, lack of sleep, panic, intrusive thoughts and confusion. These pressures vary for everybody and at times may make it difficult to be present for the positive aspects of parenthood such as warmth, empathy, hopes for the future and playfulness. At times it may feel like you are alone.

It is important to know that there is always help, whether it be from family, friends or communities, but also through confidential professional counselling helplines and programs:

- Parentline Queensland - 1300 30 1300 (8am-10pm 7 days a week, cost of a local call)
- Kids Helpline – 1800 55 1800 (24/7, free call)
- Queensland Family & Child Commission - <https://www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/>
- Women's Infolink – 1800 177 577 (8am-6pm Mon-Fri, free call)
- Mensline – 1800 600 636 (9am – Midnight, 7 days a week, free call)

If a young person aged 12-25 is experiencing a tough time there are also a range of 24/7 online chat, call and helpful information services provided through <https://headspace.org.au/ehespace/>

Before seeing the performance a reminder about the themes and issues of the piece, and these services will help to support your students, yourselves and the wider community we are all a part of.

POSTSHOW ACTIVITIES

Now that you've seen the show, use your knowledge and audience perspective to explore the following:

RESPONDING: ELEMENTS OF DRAMA

Using the table below, recall an example of each Element of Drama from the and note how it was used. We've provided a table of examples for you to fill in and some points to get you started.

| Element of Drama | Example of Use |
|--|--|
| Characters Personal qualities, depth, histories, traits and intentions. This can also include the role of the character – their position in the larger structure of the narrative. | <i>Emily and Simon are the only characters seen onstage, all others, including Baby Dylan are referred to.</i> |
| Relationships The connections, interactions and reactions that the characters go through as the narrative progresses. | |
| Time Time of day, year, history or the future. Changes of time within scenes, between scenes and over the entire piece. | |
| Place Where the dramatic action takes place and the factors that help define these environments. | <i>Stage action predominantly set inside the home onstage, elements occurring outside are played offstage.</i> |
| Symbols Design elements, props and costume etc. that convey a deeper layer of meaning to the narrative and action onstage. | |
| Tensions Dramatic action can be created by the problems of achieving a certain task, making the right or wrong choice, stresses in relationships, the unexpected and mystery. | |

RESPONDING: FORM STYLE AND CONVENTIONS

Using the table below, recall some examples of conventions from the show. What impact did they have on your experience of the narrative journey? Again, we have provided a table of examples for you to fill in and some points to get you started.

| Form, Style and Convention | Example of Use |
|--|--|
| Contemporary Performance Fragmentation, openness of form, intertextuality, hypertextuality, appropriation, non-linear forms. | <i>Shifting from moment to moment, scene to scene is sometimes fluid and sometimes structured.</i> |
| Realism Believable representations of life, roles and characters that draw on real-life or life-like motivations. Conventions of the Fourth Wall, communication of subtext and inner-life/psychologically motivated action, objective, super-objective, beats and units of action. | |
| Hybridisation Incorporation of aspects of other styles, forms and conventions. | |
| Cinematic Theatre Filmic qualities such as abrupt cuts, jumps, transitions, shifts in perspective, space and scale that enhance the onstage action. | |
| Australian Theatre How does this work reflect Australian identities? | |

TASK: VISION BOARDS

Emily and Simon find themselves under an immense amount of pressure being new parents, not just from the lack of sleep and mountains of laundry in need of washing and folding. Expectations play a big part in the psychological journey of these characters. It can be hard to understand these pressures but by mapping them through a vision board they become clearer.

1. In small groups create a mind map answering a question/provocation from the teacher.

For example: ***What are the expectations of being a parent in 2021?*** Consider examples that are internal (***wants, desires, hopes***) and others that are external (***the realities of parenthood to old and new routines, laws and responsibilities, changes to relationships, traditional expectations of gender roles***).

2. When you are finished, individually translate these maps into a vision board or digital poster full of pictures, gifs, videos, colours, drawings, quotes, statements, words of wisdom, that reflect your answers. In addition, it may be helpful to suggest pathways to seeking help when these pressures become overwhelming or problematic.
3. Share your work with your group, giving short explanations of why you chose some of the things on your board and what the consensus of these perspectives are within your communities.

TASK: DESIGN - ABSENCE & PRESENCE

In the play we do not see a baby onstage, instead we see Simon and Emily hold, move, speak to and acknowledge the presence of the infant without ever showing him. The child is apparent through artefacts such as toys, a pram, a baby carrier etc., but never in physical form. This does not diminish baby Dylan's presence though – rather by highlighting his constant presence in the characters' lives the impact of his absence becomes even more meaningful.

Using this convention come up with other examples of how set, props, sound, projection and action onstage can craft the presence of a character who may never actually be seen. How could this be used to represent -

- A parent or grandparent
- An older or younger sibling
- A pet
- A figure of immense authority.

What other texts are you studying that could use such a role to drive the dramatic tension and meaning?

TASK: DRAMATIC DISTANCE

The two characters within the play navigate a journey from happy times through to difficult ones. Their emotional closeness within this psychological drama can be explored within a physical space to see its possibilities as actors and creative devisors. In pairs explore the simple scene below at 3 different distances: firstly, explore the scene at a natural distance between the performers. Let this be your benchmark from where these characters can grow from.

A: Hey, can we...?

B: Yeah, sure. What's up?

A: I've been meaning to tell you... I'm-

B: Actually, no, I don't think I want to hear it.

A: Please.

(pause)

B: I'm sorry **(leaves)**.

Next, take this same conversation to an unnaturally close distance. Squeezed side-by-side on a crowded bus, or snuggled on the lounge together watching a movie – what changes? How does the meaning inside of the punctuations transform because of their proximity? Now what happens when you take this relationship in the other direction and have it played as far apart from one another?

The words are the same but changing something as simple as distance can easily transform a scene. Distance is a useful tool in the rehearsal room to explore psychologically motivated action between actors. By increasing and decreasing the space between two actors' elements such as trust, shock, denial and familiarity can be exposed easily – essential for the crafting of Realism onstage.

CHECK IT OUT

Below are some articles and websites for yourself and your students. These can be used as further research, pretexts or intertextual references.

PARENTING AND MOTHERHOOD

1. Managing the juggle of parenting and a screen career (IF Magazine)

<https://www.if.com.au/managing-the-juggle-of-parenting-and-a-screen-career/>

IF Magazine is an independent publication for screen content professionals in Australia and New Zealand. In this article cinematographers Tania Lambert ACS, Sky Davies and director Hailey Bartholomew are interviewed about navigating parenthood and their creative careers.

2. Death Was a Theory, Until I Became a Mother (New York Times)

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/14/parenting/baby/existential-crisis-motherhood.html?auth=login-google>

In the New York Times, Danielle LaSusa recollects her experience of raising her 3-year-old daughter during a global pandemic, and the existentialist discovery that death is the inevitable response to life, and that one day her daughter will eventually die.

3. Many Mothers Don't Enjoy Motherhood, and That's Ok (Makers India)

[https://in.makers.yahoo.com/many-mothers-dont-enjoy-motherhood-and-thats-ok-](https://in.makers.yahoo.com/many-mothers-dont-enjoy-motherhood-and-thats-ok-041449074.html?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xILmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAALyVTeEa6CkME4S_I_QPNUEF5tSH6f4cwLic3n6bFxSftTVSgFX5wX9R4q6pvQnXH30GdKZa_M8lUEHc1r5klrBIO-5zMPJOkempAzSD0S43bCiDYoyrsrdPoxTnpnivGWSK8-B4LsPohJd1SwrvPk1uOEdWEkpxzKZDJKUvrhH2)

[041449074.html?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xILmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAALyVTeEa6CkME4S_I_QPNUEF5tSH6f4cwLic3n6bFxSftTVSgFX5wX9R4q6pvQnXH30GdKZa_M8lUEHc1r5klrBIO-5zMPJOkempAzSD0S43bCiDYoyrsrdPoxTnpnivGWSK8-B4LsPohJd1SwrvPk1uOEdWEkpxzKZDJKUvrhH2](https://in.makers.yahoo.com/many-mothers-dont-enjoy-motherhood-and-thats-ok-041449074.html?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xILmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAALyVTeEa6CkME4S_I_QPNUEF5tSH6f4cwLic3n6bFxSftTVSgFX5wX9R4q6pvQnXH30GdKZa_M8lUEHc1r5klrBIO-5zMPJOkempAzSD0S43bCiDYoyrsrdPoxTnpnivGWSK8-B4LsPohJd1SwrvPk1uOEdWEkpxzKZDJKUvrhH2)

MAKERS India is a media brand that exists to accelerate women's movements in India and globally by sharing real-life experiences, positivity and to ignite action. In this article, Subha Chandrasekaran shares the difficulties that come with parenthood, failing to meet others' expectations and societal pressures to be the 'perfect' mother.

FAMILY COURT IN AUSTRALIA

1. Former Family Court judge slams 'nonsense' push to double divorce wait time (3WA)

<https://www.3aw.com.au/former-family-court-judge-slams-nonsense-push-to-double-divorce-wait-time/>

Melbourne based radio station 3AW News Talk interviews former Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia, Alasdair Nicholson, discussing the proposed changes to divorce rules in Australia. Audio Interview running 04:03 mins.

2. **Big money and endless acrimony: Family Court reform to rein in 'dreadful' litigants, lawyers**

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/big-money-and-endless-acrimony-family-court-reform-to-rein-in-dreadful-litigants-lawyers-20201208-p56llr.html>

Harriet Alexander, for Sydney Morning Herald, explores the changes to powers within the ever over-burdened Family Courts to stop litigants who waste court time and use unfair strategies.

3. **The family law system in Australia (Legal Services Commission)**

<https://lawhandbook.sa.gov.au/ch21s01.php>

An excellent summary of the laws associated with the family law systems – including the 1961 Marriage Act and the 1975 Family Law Act. Links to more information regarding Child Support and family dispute resolution are also included.

CONTACT US

CURRICULUM & WORKSHOP ENQUIRIES

Visit laboite.com.au/education or contact La Boite's Youth & Education Producer, Ari Palani, via ari@laboite.com.au.

SCHOOL BOOKINGS ENQUIRIES

Visit laboite.com.au/education or contact our team via schoolbookings@laboite.com.au or 3007 8600.

