

LB BOITE THEATRE PRESENTS

A GRIFFIN THEATRE COMPANY PRODUCTION

WHITEFELLA YELLA TREE

CONTENT ADVISORY NOTES

GENRE

- Historical Drama
- Romance / Queer Romance
- Coming of Age / Young Adult
- First Nations Drama
- Tragedy and Conflict / Colonisation
- LGBTQ+
- Political / Social Justice Drama

AUDIENCE RECOMMENDED: Recommended for audiences aged 15+

The production of Whitefella Yella Tree contains content and effects that may be distressing or triggering for some audience members, especially those within the first nations communities. Please review the information below to help inform any decisions.

ABOUT THE PLAY

Once in a blue moon, in the middle of nowhere, two teenage boys meet under a lemon tree. When they look at each other, it's tense, exciting, and strange.

Ty and Neddy fall madly in love, as teenagers are wont to do. After a rough start, a fragile friendship fruits into a heady romance.

If history would just unfurl a little differently, the boys might have a beautiful future ahead of them. But without knowing it, Ty and Neddy are poised on the brink of a world that is about to change forever.

It's the early 19th century. Ty is River Mob. Neddy is Mountain Mob. And the earth they stand together on is about to be declared 'Australia'.

Featuring Pertame and Tiwi actor **Joseph Althouse** (The Visitors) and **Danny Howard** (Jacky), who has Barrd, Yamatji, Noongar, Bunuba and Ngadju ties, Whitefella Yella Tree is the La Boite debut of award-winning Palawa playwright **Dylan Van Den Berg**, winner of the Griffin Award, the Rodney Seaborn Playwrights Award, the David Williamson Prize and two NSW Premier's Literary Awards.

Co-directed with subtlety and sophistication by Griffin Theatre Company's Artistic Director **Declan Greene** and Wiradjuri and Worimi theatremaker **Amy Sole**, Whitefella Yella Tree is a heart-warming and heartbreaking story about love, Country, and Blak queerness.

CONTENTS AND THEMES IN THE PLAY

The following information that discusses in-depth content and themes within the production contains spoilers from the show.

DEATH/DYING

Early in the story, Neddy picks lemons from under the tree and mentions giving them to his sister to use with her collection of dead bugs. This moment references death in a light-hearted and childlike context, reflecting the innocence of the characters' early friendship.

GENOCIDE & MURDER

Earlier in Ty and Neddy's relationship where the exchanges are happening between the mobs about the whitefellas, they come across a hat they believe may belong to a whitefella. Uncertain and slightly uneasy about its presence, they ease the moment through humour and playful banter.

Another moment during their exchange earlier in the play, they speak about how whitefellas are taking over each other's mob, a reference to the historical and ongoing impact of colonisation. Ty also mentions that the elders are worried, subtly invoking concerns around cultural survival, violence, and intergenerational trauma. This then becomes a reality in the end where Ty states to Neddy who's then been influenced by the Whitefellas that all the elders, aunties and uncles are gone during to murder, genocide and diseases.

KIDNAPPING

In an exchange with Ty, Neddy reveals that whitefellas have rounded up members of his mob and have taken his sister. He describes, in distressing detail, how they grabbed her by the hair. This moment is a key emotional driver for Neddy, and the loss of his sister remains a recurring reference throughout the play, as he expresses a desire to bring her back. In the end, it's a realisation that Neddy is never going to find her sister, as she has presumably died.

NAKED FLAME

A simulated flame is used during a scene between Ty and Neddy to represent a fire pit, intended to keep them warm during their conversation. This effect is theatrical and not a real open flame but may involve lighting or visual elements that resembles fire.

REPRESENTATION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE WHO HAVE DIED

In an exchange, Ty shares with Neddy that a member of their mob was found dead in the river. He recounts the discovery with vivid detail, describing how there was blood in the water and that the person had a visible wound to the shoulder, believed to be caused by a gunshot. The moment is quietly harrowing, reflecting the violence their community has been subjected to.

At another point, Ty fears that Neddy may have died, having not seen him for some time, reflecting the anxiety and uncertainty surrounding loss within their relationship.

During an unexpected exchange in the play, Ty reveals to Neddy that while he has been out of contact, many members of their mob have fallen ill. He emphasises that the sickness has particularly affected the elders, aunties, and uncles and key figures in their community. Ty expresses the heavy responsibility he feels to carry their memories forward as those around him continue to pass away. This moment alludes to the devastating impact of introduced diseases referred to as “the bumps” brought by whitefellas during the period of settlement, highlighting the ongoing toll on Indigenous communities.

SEXUAL REFERENCES AND SEX SCENES AND ABUSE

In an early moment of storytelling between Ty and Neddy, Neddy humorously describes a whitefella’s sexualised interpretation of nature and animals, likening them to body parts. The conversation is light-hearted and comedic in tone, with Ty offering his perspective that it could be seen as a romantic interpretation. While the dialogue includes sexual references, it is presented in a playful and non-explicit manner.

During a playful interaction, Ty flexes his muscles and poses confidently, teasing with the phrase, “You like what you see.” The target of Ty’s gesture is left ambiguous. Neddy interrupts the moment by startling Ty, then adds sexual innuendo, further heightening the intimate and flirtatious tone of their exchange. This includes suggestive actions, such as licking a stick Ty is holding, contributing to the scene’s subtle but clear sexual undertones.

During a moment of underlying intimate tension, Neddy initiates a kiss with Ty, sparking a moment of curiosity and connection between them. The scene gradually evolves into

a more intimate exchange, featuring a choreographed sequence where they share close physical contact and proximity. This intimate interaction is clearly portrayed on stage for the audience to see. However, it is important to note that no nudity is involved in the performance.

During a somewhat heated yet comedic exchange between Neddy and Ty, Ty expresses frustration that Neddy hasn't met up with him for their regular catchups over the past few moon cycles. In a playful tone, Ty jokes about spending time with other members of their mob instead, humorously suggesting that he will have them carve their names onto his thigh as a sign of loyalty and connection.

At the close of the exchange between Neddy and Ty, as their comfort with one another grows, they share a kiss on the lips. This tender moment then transitions into a brief choreographed movement sequence that highlights their physical closeness and intimacy, seamlessly leading into the next scene.

During an exchange where Neddy and Ty have been apart for years, their reunion becomes intimate, beginning with a kiss and progressing to close physical proximity as Ty prepares to initiate foreplay. However, before the moment escalates, a sudden sound cue which is a branch falling that interrupts them, causing the interaction to halt. In response, Neddy shifts into a different persona, one that Ty is unfamiliar with and begins engaging in conversation with a whitefella, adopting a dialect similar to theirs.

During a heated exchange, with Ty unwell and Neddy influenced by the whitefellas, Ty attempts to reconnect by reminding Neddy of a past moment when their bodies were close. He reflects on the memory, expressing that the closeness felt comforting and meaningful to him.

TERMINAL ILLNESS

After a moment in which Ty has killed several whitefellas, he lifts his shirt to reveal red spots covering his chest to Neddy, indicating a visible and serious illness. This physical symptom is a significant element in the story, symbolising Ty's deteriorating health.

As the play nears its conclusion, Ty's health continues to decline, a result of the sickness brought with the arrival of the whitefellas. This ongoing deterioration creates a deeply emotional and painful moment in his relationship with Neddy, as it becomes clear that Ty is not recovering. The scene underscores the lasting impact of colonisation on Indigenous communities and personal relationships.

STYLISTED FIGHTING & VIOLENCE

In the early stages of Ty and Neddy's friendship, there is a moment of playful, stylised fighting accompanied by light-hearted banter. This interaction is non-violent in nature,

not forceful or graphic, and is used to reflect their growing bond and familiarity with one another.

In this instance, Ty tells Neddy that a member of their mob was found in the river. He describes the scene in detail, mentioning that there was blood in the water and a hole in the person's shoulder caused by a gunshot. This moment is conveyed through dialogue only and it is described in conversation and not visually depicted on stage.

During a reflective moment by the river, Ty speaks about the responsibility he feels to preserve the stories of his people, as elders, aunties, and uncles around him are dying. This emotional scene is punctuated by a flash of lighting and an abrupt sound effect, revealing Ty covered in blood. It is implied through text that he has killed the whitefellas, though the act itself is not explicitly shown on stage. It is referenced rather than performed.

LANGUAGE

There is intermittent use of strong language throughout the production. The following is a current draft list of the language used, though it is subject to change as a new script like this evolves throughout the process:

- Fuck(ing)(s)(ed)(in') – 42 instances
- Shit(ting) – 31 instances
- Stupid – 1 instance
- Shut Up – 7 instances
- Bullshit – 7 instances
- Pube(s) – 1 instance
- Sexy – 1 instance
- Kill(ing)(ed) – 9 instances
- Boner – 1 instance
- Ball(sack)(s) – 2 instances

THEATRICAL EFFECTS

LOUD NOISE AND BLINDING LIGHTS

Blinding lights are used intermittently throughout the production, particularly during intense or chaotic scenes, to heighten dramatic moments and emotional tension.

The sound design features sudden, distorted, and layered audio elements that contribute to the immersive atmosphere of the play. This includes ambient sounds such as breaking branches and distant, distorted dog barks used to evoke both natural and psychological landscapes.

While the play is set during the colonisation period, the soundscape offers a contemporary interpretation, designed to shift between unsettling, climactic moments and more tender, heartwarming tones. These elements support the evolving relationship between Ty and Neddy and help guide the emotional transitions across the work.

GUIDENCE FOR EDUCATORS & PARENTS

This production is recommended for mature secondary students in Years 9–12. It features an intentionally provocative tone and employs a satirical, absurdist style to explore complex contemporary issues. While irreverent in approach, the work is grounded in compassion and designed to encourage critical thinking, empathy, and meaningful discussion.

We strongly encourage pre and post-show conversations to help students unpack key themes, navigate emotional content, and reflect on the broader social and personal issues raised in the work.

If you have any specific concerns regarding student or patron wellbeing, or if you wish to discuss content, access requirements, or context in more detail, please don't hesitate to contact La Boite Theatre Company directly.