



ODE TO NONSENSE

"As the owl and the pussycat knew, happiness is seldom logical"



Photograph by Andy Rasheed eyefood

World Premiere Season

Presented by Slingsby and State Opera of South Australia
in association with Adelaide Festival Centre

Her Majesty's Theatre, Adelaide
26 April - 4 May 2013

About Slingsby:

Slingsby is an Adelaide-based theatre company producing original, emotionally complex productions for school and family audiences. Its work is sought worldwide with a recent sold-out season on 42nd Street, New York.

Slingsby's stories are told through images and music, as much as they are through words. The company's work acknowledges the sunshine and shadows of human experience and ultimately reminds the adult in all of us, of the potential joy, infinite possibility and wonder of the universe.

Led by Andy Packer (Artistic Director) and Jodi Glass (Executive Producer) the company's productions are conceived by Andy and developed in collaboration with Artistic Associates Quincy Grant (composer) and Geoff Cobham (designer) alongside teams of artists from a range of artistic disciplines.

"If more theatre were like this, the world would be a magical place indeed."

"It is theatre like the work Slingsby produces which makes us all imagine a better and happier world."

Australian Stage Online (March 2010)

Ode To Nonsense:

After five years of planning, writing, composing and dreaming, Slingsby – in association with State Opera of South Australia and the Adelaide Festival Centre – will premiere ***Ode to Nonsense*** at Her Majesty's Theatre, Adelaide, on Friday 26 April 2013. *Ode To Nonsense* is a new Opera based on the life, work and insights of Edward Lear (1812-1888). Lear is famous as the author of "A Book of Nonsense" and of the timeless children's songs "The Owl and the Pussycat" and "The Jumblies". Yet, for this gentle genius, infectious merriment mingled with a deep sadness. Although he toiled in his life to be recognised as a great oil painter it is for that which came most naturally to him that he is remembered – Nonsense. This original family opera, celebrates creativity, genius and the search for happiness.

'nonsense is the breath in my nostrils'
Edward Lear

Company History:

Slingsby's award winning inaugural production [*The Tragical Life of Cheeseboy*](#) premiered in the Adelaide Festival Centre in January 2008. Since then, the production been performed 220 times in 40 venues in 25 cities across eight countries. Seasons include: the Sydney Festival, Children First Festival in Singapore, Festival Teatralia in Madrid, Imagine Festival in Edinburgh, The Egg at Theatre Royal Bath, Sydney Opera House, the ASSITEJ 2008 World Congress and Performing Arts Festival in Adelaide and a five-week tour of regional and metropolitan South Australia and a seven week tour of North America including two week long sold-out season at The Duke Theater on 42nd Street, New York. Slingsby's debut international tour, the 2009 world tour of *The Tragical Life of Cheeseboy*, won a Ruby Award for "Leadership in Arts Enterprise".

[*Wolf*](#), the company's second production, was largely developed and subsequently premiered in Mount Gambier in regional South Australian. *Wolf* premiered in May 2009 in Mount Gambier's Sir Robert Helpmann Theatre after which the production toured for three weeks to 10 regional South Australian towns and performed a week-long season in the 2009 Come Out Festival for young audiences. In 2011 *Wolf* toured to the Sydney Opera House.

Slingsby's third production, [*Man Covets Bird*](#), took its inspiration from a sketch by American artist and musician John Lurie and the art of Australian industrial photographer Wolfgang Sievers. The production incorporates animation, live music and beautiful prose to tell a tale that blends equal measures of melancholia and sunshine. *Man Covets Bird* premiered in March 2010 for the 2010 Adelaide Festival and Adelaide Festival Centre's InSpace program, receiving unanimous critical and audience acclaim and winning a variety of awards. In August 2012 *Man Covets Bird* toured to The Arts Centre, Melbourne, Sydney Opera House and Centenary Hall, Goolwa in regional South Australia.

[*Ode To Nonsense*](#) is Slingsby's fourth production.

Slingsby and Closer Productions have produced a short three-episode video on ***The Making of Ode To Nonsense***, with interviews with the creative artists and cast and 'behind-the-scenes' vision of rehearsals.

See the ***Episode 1: A Celebration of Creativity***, ***Episode 2: The Music***, and ***Episode 3: The Design World*** at vimeo.com/slingsby

For more information on Slingsby visit slingsby.net.au.

To watch Slingsby artists discussing the ideas behind the company's work watch the [Slingsby company video](#).

Slingsby's Awards:

2010 Awards

Slingsby

Business SA Export Award (Arts & Entertainment)

Man Covets Bird

Ruby Award (Best Work)

Curtain Call Award (Best Show: Comedy)

Curtain Call Award (Best Technical: Production Design) – awarded to Geoff Cobham & Wendy Todd

Sunday Best Award (Festival)

The Tragical Life of Cheeseboy

Perth International Arts Festival Children's Choice Award (Most Emotional)

Perth International Arts Festival Children's Choice Award (Best Kiddish Show)

Perth International Arts Festival Children's Choice Award (Most Awkwardest Voice)

2009 Awards

The Tragical Life of Cheeseboy

Ruby Award (Leadership in Arts Enterprise: 2009 World Tour)

AWGIE (Children's Theatre) – awarded to Finegan Kruckemeyer

Wolf

The Advertiser's Best Shows (Wolf)



Photograph by Andy Rasheed eyefood

Ode To Nonsense Team:

CAST

Principals

Nicholas Lester *Edward Lear {Baritone}*

Johanna Allen *Gussie Bethell {Soprano}*

Adam Goodburn *Giorgio {Tenor}*

Youth Chorus

Daniel Cropley *Young Lear*

Bella Baggio

Leah Michele

Tayla Coad

Angelique Diko

Harry Fiedler

Lawson Hansberry

Camryn Jordans

Mitchell McGarry

Samuel G. P. Miller

Connor Olsson-Jones

Martha Gwen

Sophia Habel (cover)

Jacob Maiolo (cover)

Acrobats

Josh Croall

Lisa Goldsworthy

Dylan Phillips

Orchestra

Adelaide Art Orchestra:

Stephanie Waterhouse *Clarinet*

Tim Keenihan *Trumpet*

Jamie Adam *Percussion*

Andrew Georg *Piano*

Julia Maly *Violin*

Natalie Maegraith *Viola*

Henry South *Bass*

Creative

Andy Packer *Director/Scenario*

Quincy Grant *Composer*

Jane Goldney *Librettist*

Timothy Sexton *Musical Director*

Geoff Cobham *Set & Lighting Designer*

Ailsa Paterson *Costume Designer*

Wendy Todd *Art Finishing*

Cindi Drennan/Illuminart *Projection Design*

Luku Trembath *Animation*

Christopher Petridis *Associate Lighting*

Designer & AV Systems Designer

Larissa McGowan *Choreographer*

Andrew Georg *Repetiteur*

Elena Carapetis *Dialect Coach*

Mark Francis RN *Epilepsy Centre Consultant*

Nicola Keene *Production Manager*

Stephanie Fisher *Stage Manager*

Marie Docking *Assistant Stage Manager*

Robyn Hood *Dresser & Wardrobe Maintenance*

Alex Green *Youth Chorus Chaperone*

Samuel McMahon *Youth Chorus Chaperone*

Andy Ellis *Illustrator & Graphic Designer*

Lucy Markey *Marketing Manager*

Liz Dunmurphy *Marketing Coordinator*

Natalie Ciccocioppo *Public Relations*

Andy Rasheed (eyefood) *Photography*

Donna Tripodi *Programming Coordinator*

Simon Bryant *Nonsense Menu Maestro*

Jodi Glass *Executive Producer*

Set and Costumes constructed by State Theatre Company of South Australia.

Lear's and Giorgio's Costumes made by State Opera of South Australia

Ode To Nonsense was commissioned and produced by Slingsby with the assistance of State Opera of South Australia.

Synopsis:

In 1812, age seven, Edward Lear sees a travelling circus. He briefly experiences joy and wonder like never before.

Now it is 1888. Edward is old and unwell. He returns home to San Remo, Italy with his faithful manservant, Giorgio. Lear hopes some major oil paintings will finally earn him fame and money.

Lear and Giorgio are met by Gussie, the woman Lear has loved for many years. Giorgio urges Lear to propose. Giorgio and Lear sing of exotic travels and pursuit of artistic glory. Giorgio and Gussie enjoy Lear's nonsense works but the artist dismisses it, and himself, as foolish. He falls into an epileptic seizure and enters his enchanted 'Gromboolian Plain' where he finds some peace from his creative turmoil.

On the brink of proposing to Gussie, the two find a mutual understanding before Lear collapses and dies. In a nonsense world, as 'Owl and Pussycat', the couple is united forever.



L to R: *Edward Lear* {Nicholas Lester, Baritone}, *Gussie Bethell* {Johanna Allen, Soprano}, *Giorgio* {Adam Goodburn, Tenor}
Photograph by Andy Rasheed eyefood

Director's Notes by Andy Packer:

Edward Lear lived an extraordinary life full of adventure and adversity. And despite significant personal impediments he triumphed and his creative gifts live on for us to enjoy today. His life experience offers us a model to consider how to live our lives.

Edward was born 20 of 21 children, was raised by his sister Ann and never knew the love of his mother. From age four he lived with epilepsy and at age seven experienced his first bout of depression or what he termed 'the morbid'. This was a condition that was to plague him throughout his life. He also suffered from recurrent respiratory infection, which was the catalyst for him leaving London for most of his adult life, chasing better weather through the Mediterranean.

Many of us would be emotionally obliterated by these trials and yet Edward Lear managed to find a path through life that was lit by creativity. He seems to have inhabited two worlds; one being the reality of the Victorian era where he toiled and enjoyed a moderate level of success as a painter and writer of travel journals; and another that was his unique Nonsense, the Gromboolian Plain in which he cast a host of strange and magical creatures.

Lear described Nonsense as 'the breath in my nostrils'. It is in this world, through his imagination, that he was able to marry the 'pussy-cat' that he so loved. Gussie Bethell was the object of Edward Lear's affection for many years and despite how deeply he loved her, and several plans to ask her to marry him he never found the courage – considering himself to be too fat, poor, unwell and depressed to burden her with. However she reciprocated his love and would most certainly have accepted his invitation for marriage. And despite not finding the courage in life in the Owl and the Pussy-cat the two are eternally wed.

In this premiere production of *Ode to Nonsense* we explore the two worlds that Lear inhabited and how he managed to slip between them.

At the beginning of *Ode To Nonsense* we discover Edward as a seven year old boy enjoying a Mummers Play at a Victorian Fair on a field on the edge of town. As the Fair passes little Edward is searching, looking for the children of the travelling players, wanting to play with them. They are just beyond reach as they seep from reality into the Gromboolian Plain – a bright glowing place in Edward Lear's mind. The Gromboolian Plain represents happiness and becomes a world that Edward dips into but never manages to maintain a constant grasp on.

Through the opera we slip back and forth between these two worlds as we observe Lear's last hour on earth aged 76, his attempt to find the courage to ask Gussie to marry him and witness him assessing the value of his life. Eventually, through communicating with the imaginary Gromboolian creatures in the midst of an epileptic seizure, Lear becomes aware that all along he has possessed access to happiness. He finally understands that the golden glowing light of joy has not been beyond him but within him. The key to it is his creativity.

Relieved by this new understanding he sings a celebratory Ode to Nonsense before dying and finally crossing over eternally to the Gromboolian Plain where everything is possible. In this glowing world of he is finally able to marry his Pussycat as he is transformed into the Owl, the wise observant bird of the night.

Composer's Notes by Quincy Grant:

Our ambition with *Ode To Nonsense* since its inception has been to create a piece of theatre that captures in a strange stylised form the character of the odd and beautiful Mr Lear. And it seemed that opera, the most stylised and emotional form of all, would be the right choice. I hadn't written an opera before, but I've done decades of music for theatre, of writing songs, of cabaret. So I felt that though I didn't know how to write an opera, I knew how to write all its constituent parts – and that I had a good feel for shaping a narrative with music. So the main challenge was to build a scenario that would give us a strong shape to what is a basically static situation – three characters talking about themselves for an hour. Once we developed this it then became pretty easy to find songs for each of the moments: a comic scene, a travel scene, a celebration of birds, an 'I'm ugly and want to die' moment, a fantasy-land scene, etc. And the wonderful thing about this piece is that so much material is provided by the subject himself: we have his words, his nonsense, his illustrations and paintings to draw on. So Jane and Andy could draw on this to flesh out the scenarios and we could build a dramatic flow into the story. It has been an enormous task: 100s of hours to write and orchestrate the music – 430 pages of score – it's like writing a novel I guess. But it has been brilliant; could one find a happier occupation in all this world?

Librettist's Notes by Jane Goldney:

There once were three people whose names were Andy, Quincy and Jane, and they all felt the time had come to celebrate Edward Lear by way of an Opera. So they bought a quantity of shortbread with chocolate-covered ends by way of sustenance, and quite surrounded themselves with coffee and two thousand and fifty nine books about Edward Lear, and nothing else, save for a large butter-churn. Into this they emptied words and musical notes until they perceived it quite full, upon which they tied it securely with pinky paper. They procured the services of an elderly Quangle Wangle, who churned it violently whilst playing tunes over it on an accordion, until an Opera was made directly, with which they expressed themselves pleased on the whole, having all its parts in copious and rural harmony. (*An earnest token of my sincere and grateful infection for Mr Lear.*)

Set & Lighting Designer's Notes by Geoff Cobham:

In designing the world for *Ode To Nonsense* we drew inspiration from the Victorian era Lear lived in. We loved the crazy follies, mazes and topiary that blossomed during this period. To provide a palette for the projection of Lear inspired animations we have created a giant flying hedge. This hedge provides the architecture for the locations of the Opera and the audio visual components and lighting add the atmosphere. The simplicity and flexibility of this set allow the cast and their rich costumes designed by Ailsa Paterson to be the focus for the audience.



L to R: Quincy Grant {Composer}, Andy Packer {Scenario/Director}, Jane Goldney {Librettist} and Geoff Cobham {Set & Lighting Designer}

Lear and Food:

In his journals and creative writing, Edward Lear obsessively references food. He wrote nonsense poems about eating and noted in his journals dishes that he'd eaten or that his Manservant Giorgio had cooked for him on their travels. Often these dishes were quite indigestible, such as the Dish of Roasted Squirrels, which they ate on a particularly unpleasant journey and the Pale Pellucid Periwinkle Soup. Lear even wrote recipes but as was his wont – and sheer brilliance – these recipes are simply nonsense, involving ingredients and methods that render the dish inedible. On realising the importance of food in Lear's work, we were inspired. We commissioned Simon Bryant, an outstanding South Australian chef passionate about seasonal local produce, to devise a menu inspired by Lear's nonsense food for Slingsby to serve at the world premiere performance of *Ode To Nonsense* and to write recipes for a few dishes such as Gosky Patties that adults and families can cook at home. *Find out more on Simon, Slingsby and nonsense food at www.slingsby.net.au*

*"They dined on mince and slices of quince which they ate with a runcible spoon."
The Owl and The Pussy-cat by Edward Lear*

Ode To Nonsense Company Biographies:

Nicholas Lester Edward Lear (Baritone)

Australian born and London based, Nicholas Lester trained at the Elder Conservatorium of Music in Adelaide, the Young Artists Programme at the State Opera of South Australia and the National Opera Studio in London. He was the recipient of the Anne Woods/Johanna Peters Award and of an Independent Opera/National Opera Studio Postgraduate Voice Fellowship. While at the National Opera Studio he appeared in concert with the Welsh National Opera Orchestra and *L'elisir d'amore* for the Welsh National Opera. Other operatic credits include: Starek/*Jenůfa* and Schaunard/*La Bohème* for Glyndeoubourne on Tour and Nationale Reisopera, Netherlands; Kuligin/*Katya Kabanova* and Doctor, Shepherd/*Pelléas et Mélisande* for Opera Holland Park; Justizrat/Robert Storch *Intermezzo* and Der Sprecher/Papageno *Die Zauberflöte* for the Scottish Opera; The Count/*The Marriage of Figaro*, Theseus/*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Title Role in *Eugene Onegin* and Figaro *Il barbiere di Siviglia* for the English Touring Opera; Diarte/*Erismena* for North Carolina Opera; Aeneas/*Dido and Aeneas* for the Adelaide Festival of Arts; Don Alfonso/*Così fan tutte* and Theseus/*A Midsummer Night's Dream* for CoOpera; and Marcello/*La Bohème* for State Opera of South Australia.

I promise to blow bubbles in my drink and slurp noisily!

Johanna Allen Gussie Bethell (Soprano)

Johanna has established a career as one of Australia's most versatile Singer/Actors. She has a Bachelor of Music Performance (Honours in Voice) from the Elder Conservatorium of Music and Bachelor of Arts in Drama from Adelaide University. She undertook further study in New York at the Actors Studio and with Daniel Ferro (Classical voice) at the Juilliard School. Her professional credits include music theatre, opera, film, television and stage, most recently: *The Threepenny Opera* for Sydney Theatre Company; *Baker's Wife/Into the Woods* for Capitol Theatre Sydney; *Wicked*, original cast, Melbourne and Sydney; Tonya (understudy)/*Dr Zhivago*, Kate/*The Pirates of Penzance* and Pitti Sing/*The Mikado* for Opera Australia; Constanza/*Amadeus*, New York; Lady Macbeth/*Macbeth* for the New York Theatre Project; *Agata/Angel* and the Red Priest for the Adelaide Festival of Arts; *Il Trovatore (Inez)* and *The Old Lady/Candide* for State Opera of South Australia; and Mrs Lovett/*Sweeney Todd* for New York Opera Concert series. She has worked extensively as a concert artist across all musical genres collaborating with David Helfcott, Anthony Warlow, David Hobson, and Suzanne Vega. She has appeared as a soloist with *Carols by Candlelight*, *So You Think You Can Dance*, the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and the Adelaide Art Orchestra. She has a long association with the Adelaide Cabaret Festival, most recently performing her sell out show *Mixtape*.

I promise to always go on the swings in the playground and never ever give up seeking the joy.

Adam Goodburn *Giorgio (Tenor)*

Adam completed his Bachelor of Music degree for vocal performance at the Elder Conservatorium of Music in 2003. He then trained in London with vocal coaches at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Adam made his operatic debut as a principal in the role of Amon in the State Opera of South Australia and Leigh Warren & Dancer's production of Philip Glass's Opera, *Akhnaten*. Adam's performing highlights have been performing the role of Nanki Poo/*The Mikado* for Opera Australia; Goro/*Madame Butterfly*, Pang/*Turandot*, Don Basilio/*The Marriage of Figaro*, the comic roles Nathanael, Cochenille, Pittichinaccio and Franz/*The Tales of Hoffmann* and Orpheus/*Orpheus in the Underworld* for State Opera of South Australia. In 2007 Adam performed the role of Mahatma Gandhi in Philip Glass's opera *Satyagraha* for State Opera of South Australia, Adelaide Vocal Project and Leigh Warren & Dancers. This role earned him a Helpmann Award nomination for Best Male Performer in an Opera. Adam is a co-founder of SINGular Productions and produced: *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change* for the 2007 Fringe Festival; *Elegies: A Song Cycle* for Opera Studio in 2008; *Different Fields* for Opera Studio in 2010 and *It's a dad thing: The Musical* for Opera Studio in 2011.

I promise to pull a funny face every day.

Timothy Sexton *Musical Director*

As a composer, conductor, arranger, singer, writer, adjudicator, public speaker and ABC broadcaster, Timothy is one of the most prominent musicians in South Australia. He has composed more than 200 works, ranging from opera to film scores. Conducting credits include *Don Pasquale*, *The Mikado*, *Riders to the Sea*, *Mavra*, *Treemonisha*, *Mahagonny Songspiel*, *The Turn of the Screw*, Philip Glass's *Akhnaten*, *Einstein on the Beach* and *Satyagraha*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Undertow*, *The Station*, *Bastien and Bastienne*, *La Voix Humaine*, *Little Women*, *Inkata*, *Different Fields*, *Maria de Buenos Aires*, *Orpheus in the Underworld* and the Australian premiere of Jake Heggie's *Moby Dick*. Orchestral conducting credits include the Auckland Philharmonia and the Symphony Orchestras of Queensland, Western Australia, Canberra and Adelaide. In late 2001 Timothy founded the Adelaide Art Orchestra. He has been awarded the Henry Krips Memorial Conducting Scholarship, a Centenary of Federation Medal for Services to Music, a Ruby Award for *Sustained Contribution to the Arts by an Individual* and was the 2009 South Australian of the Year (Arts Category). Timothy is the current CEO and Artistic Director of the State Opera of South Australia.

I promise to view the world around me each day, as if I'm seeing it for the first time.

Adelaide Art Orchestra

The Adelaide Art Orchestra (AdAO) was founded in 2001 by Timothy Sexton and Carolyn Lam. Over the last 12 years, it has become a major player in Adelaide's dynamic, professional music scene.

Highlights over this time include film scores for *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Till Human Voices Wake Us*, *The Old Man Who Read Love Stories* and *The King Is Dead* and the musicals *South Pacific*, *The Mikado* with Anthony Warlow, *The Pirates of Penzance* with David Hobson and David Campbell and most recently, *A Chorus Line*. The **AdAO** has backed such Australian musical icons as Rachael Beck, Andy Seymour, Tim Campbell, Christine Anu, Sylvie Paladino, Doug Parkinson, Glenn Shorrock, Todd McKenney, Bernard Walz, Rhonda Burchmore, Marina Prior and the late Rob Guest. The **AdAO** has also played for ballets and plays regularly for the State Opera of South Australia. The AdAO has been involved in every Adelaide Cabaret Festival since its inception, supporting such international artists as Michael Feinstein, Lea Salonga, Maltby and Shire, Jason Robert Brown and Sherie Rene Scott. AdAO

has been broadcast internationally on Foxtel's Ovation channel in Cabaret Festival concerts with Bernadette Peters, Natalie Cole and Olivia Newton John. In 2013, the AdAO featured in three different concerts in the Adelaide Festival and also performed the spectacular *Twilight Concert* in the Bundaleer Festival.

Andy Packer Director and Artistic Director, Slingsby

Andy lives and works in Adelaide. He has worked as a performer, writer, conceiver and director of theatre and opera productions, creative producer of multidisciplinary arts programs, producer of large-scale outdoor events and as a festival director. Alongside his role as Founding Artistic Director/CEO of Slingsby, Andy also directs productions for other companies including the 2012 Adelaide Festival production of Leonard Bernstein's *Mass* featuring the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and more than 120 singers. He has also directed productions for Adelaide Cabaret Festival, Windmill Theatre, Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, Adelaide Cabaret Festival, Restless Dance Theatre, Urban Myth Theatre of Youth, State Opera of South Australia, Come Out Festival (2007, 2003 and 2001) and Ricochet Theatre Company. Andy has also enjoyed roles as Creative Director of COME OUT Festival 2011, Creative Producer of the Adelaide Fringe's family programs in 2007 and 2008, Creative Producer of Programming at Carclew Youth Arts (2003-2006), Program Manager for Come Out Festival 2003 and Youth and Education Program Coordinator for Adelaide Fringe 2002. Most importantly he is Dada to Charlie Ferris, Jasper Switters and Clement Barnaby.

I promise to play forever.

Quincy Grant Composer and Artistic Associate, Slingsby

Quincy's classical background, honed at the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music and the Elder Conservatorium of Music, is complemented by an abiding affair with world music including Arabic, tango, Indian and klezmer/gypsy. He has composed for the concert hall, pub bands and film, composed, recorded and performed for live theatre. Quincy's impressive body of work wanders widely stylistically from the most minimal sound installations, through world music and all the way to gigantically romantic orchestral works. In 2008 he received an Arts SA Fellowship to assist his travel to Germany to write, rehearse and experience performances of his orchestral compositions. Quincy's music theatre credits include *Man Covets Bird*, *Wolf* and *The Tragical Life of Cheeseboy* for Slingsby; *When the Rain Stops Falling* and *This Uncharted Hour* for Brink Productions/State Theatre Company of South Australia; *Miss Lily's Fabulous Pink Feather Boa* for Adelaide Symphony Orchestra; *Birthday Party* for Flying Penguin Productions. He was composer, performer and sound designer on *Drums in the Night* for Brink Productions/State Theatre Company of South Australia; co-composer and performer on *Night Letters* for State Theatre Company of South Australia. He plays with a band of despicable gypsy musicians called Golonka, a band of salty ruffians called Mumpsimus, and also with The Firm, for whom he is Co-Director, a cabal of secret Schubert devotees and Australia's most prolific presenter of new solo and chamber musical works. Quincy's compositional work has been performed by orchestras, ensembles and soloists in Australia and around the world. Quincy lives in Adelaide with four dear ones: Anna, Arland, Clara and Miranda.

I promise to wink at death on every full moon.

Jane Goldney Librettist

Jane is a word nerd with a Bachelor of Arts in English, Drama and Philosophy and many years of singing the middle-and-high-bits in choirs. In her 'proper' career she has received awards for crafting evily persuasive advertising copy. Children's literature, including Edward Lear's Nonsense, has always held a special place in her heart. As mother of three young boys Jane is able to indulge in reading all her favourites aloud. Her 10 and 11 year-olds have even sat patiently through the entire of *Anne of Green Gables*. Together with her husband Andy Packer, Jane has developed a love of opera and is passionate about introducing younger audiences to the artform. Working her own words together with Edward Lear's mastery for the *Ode To Nonsense* libretto has been a thrilling responsibility. In her 'spare' time, Jane is business partner in a new fabric and sewing shop venture, The Drapery.

I promise to look for faces on man-made objects.

Geoff Cobham Set & Lighting Designer and Artistic Associate, Slingsby

Geoff has worked as a Production Manager, Lighting Designer, Set Designer, Event Producer and Venue Designer. His love of light and dance has led him to work with many of Australia's top choreographers and allowed him to explore the endless combinations of colour, angle, intensity, and movement, of light. He has also lit museums, buildings, public art and freeways, including the Anzac Hall in the War Memorial in Canberra. He has produced many outdoor events and clubs for Festivals including the immensely successful BARRIO for Adelaide Festival 2012 and 2013. Geoff received a Churchill fellowship in 2010 to study outdoor theatre in Europe. As an associate artist with Slingsby, Geoff has created set and lighting designs for *The Tragical Life of Cheeseboy*, *Wolf*, *Man Coverts Bird*. Other credits include *The Flying Dutchman* for State Opera of South Australia. Recent lighting designs include *Kreutzer Sonata*, *Speaking in Tongues*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *Attempts on Her Life*, *Metro Street*, *The Goa* and *Night Letters* for the State Theatre Company of South Australia; *G*, *Vocabulary* and *Nothing* for Australian Dance Theatre; *Beetle Graduation*, *Skip Miller*, *The Hypochondriac*, *Drums in the Night*, *This Uncharted Hour* and *The Duckshooter* for Brink Productions; *Impulse*, *Stayagraha*, *Einstein on the Beach Parts 1 & 2*, *Quick Brown Fox and Ahknaten* for Leigh Warren & Dancers; *Landmark*, *Rebel Rebel*, *Starry Eye*, and *In The Blood* for Restless Dance Theatre; *Pinocchio*, *Plop* and *Wizard of Oz* for Windmill Theatre.

I promise to always make the ridiculous my top priority.

Ailsa Paterson Costume Designer

Ailsa received the Bachelor of Dramatic Art in Design from the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA), graduating in 2003. Her theatre design credits include *Hedda Gabler* (Costume Design), *In The Next Room*, *War Mother*, *The Ham Funeral*, *Three Sisters* (Costume Design), *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)*, *The Price* and *The Cripple of Inishmaan* for State Theatre Company of South Australia; *Shining City* for Griffin Theatre Company; *Hansel and Gretel* and *La Sonnambula* for Pacific Opera; *Faustus* and *Madame Melville* for BSharp (Belvoir St Theatre); *Vampirella*, *The Internationalist* and *Bone* for Darlinghurst Theatre Company; *A Couple of Blaguards* for Seymour Centre/Comedy Theatre; *Shifted* for Sydney Dance Company; *Debris* for Old Fitzroy Theatre/Melbourne Fringe; and *Twelfth Night* for Australian Theatre for Young People. Ailsa was awarded the 2011 Mike Walsh Fellowship.

I promise to relish colouring outside of the lines.

Illuminart Design Projection Design

Illuminart design and create specialised forms of projection art. Projects include: large scale building projections as architectural storytelling; exciting projection sculptures; sneaky and fun guerrilla projections; and collaborative hybrid media projects to develop innovative forms of luminous artistry. Highlights include the innovative Fractured Heart Interactive sculpture, appearing at VIVID Sydney and National Film and Sound Archive and the immersive architectural projections of the Lipson Street Projections and Port Festival 2009, 2011 and 2013. The specific illuminarty supporting Slingsby's *Ode To Nonsense* are: Luku Kukuku, a multimedia arts mercenary guerrilla-trained in design, animation, illustration, digital media and sound responsive media, who has brought Lear's drawings to life; Cindi Drennan (director of Illuminart), a digital media and projection artist preciously pursuing prim and proper pixel wrangling and bending of light round correct corners; and Alister Ferguson, a 3D animator assisting Lear's birds to escape the printed page and flutter about as directed.

I promise to stop and listen to the wind when it speaks.

Christopher Petridis Associate Lighting Designer & AV Systems Designer

Chris is a lighting and video designer from Adelaide. He has completed lighting designs for: Torque Show, MALMÖ; The Border Project, *Half Real*, *Ludwig's Fleck* and *Flecker* and *If There Was A Colour Darker Than Black I'd Wear It*, a multimedia performance project for Country Arts South Australia. He has worked in association with Geoff Cobham on *Never Did Me Any Harm* for Force Majeure and *The Kreutzer Sonata* for State Theatre Company of South Australia. He has most recently worked as lighting and technical designer on Windmill Theatre's *Story Thieves*.

I promise I will always eat pizza with my hands.

Larissa McGowan Choreographer

Larissa began her professional training at the Queensland Dance School of Excellence, and graduated from the Victorian College of the Arts. In 2000, Larissa joined Australian Dance Theatre (ADT) and toured extensively, nationally and internationally with the company. Following her 2003 Green Room Award for Best Female Dancer, Larissa continued to receive accolades in 2004 at the Helpmann Awards and the Australian Dance Awards. In 2008, Larissa was appointed as ADT's Assistant Choreographer. Her work, *Zero-sum*, made its world premiere at the 2009 WOMADelaide Festival. She was a guest choreographer on two seasons of the reality TV show, *So You Think You Can Dance* and her work *Slack* was part of Sydney Opera House's *New Breed* season. Link Dance Company toured this work to France and Holland. She created *Transducer* as part of Tasdance's 'Voltage' and choreographed *Fanatic* for Spring Dance 2012, and Sydney Dance Company's De Novo program. Movement direction includes: *Wolf* for Slingsby, *Romeo & Juliet* and *Mnemonic* for State Theatre Company of South Australia, *Harbinger* for Brink Productions, *Mass* presented by the 2012 Adelaide Festival and State Opera of South Australia. Larissa's first full-length work *Skeleton* premiered at the 2013 Adelaide Festival and Dance Massive.

I promise to smile when the sun rises.

Andrew Georg Répétiteur

Andrew Georg is a versatile South Australian musician whose career encompasses church music, opera and musical theatre, choral music, and general accompanying. Andrew is Organist and Choir Director at Christ Church, North Adelaide. He is Principal Accompanist and Deputy Musical Director for the Metropolitan Male Choir of SA, and is in demand as an accompanist around Adelaide, particularly with singers and brass players. Since 2010 Andrew has worked as a répétiteur with the State Opera of South Australia. Highlights include the Australian premieres of Ligeti's *Le Grand Macabre* and Jake Heggie's *Moby Dick*. Andrew has also worked with Co-Opera on several productions. In 2012 he attended the Lisa Gasteen National Opera School on scholarship. Andrew is a graduate of the Elder Conservatorium of Music.

I promise to make sure I laugh every single day.

Nicola Keene Production Manager

Nicola graduated in 2006 from James Cook University with a Bachelor of Theatre, majoring in Production. Since then, she has worked in production for a variety of operas, theatre companies and festivals. Nicola has stage managed for State Opera of South Australia, Opera Queensland, Queensland Theatre Company, JUTE, Adelaide Festival, Brisbane Festival, Asia Pacific Screen Awards and the Deadliest Catch National Tour. As an Assistant Stage Manager she has worked for Brink Productions and Queensland Ballet. Nicola also worked as a Production Coordinator on WOMADelaide 2013. *Ode To Nonsense* is Nicola's first adventure as a Production Manager.

I promise to always dance in the rain.

Stephanie Fisher Stage Manager & Specialist Prop Maker

Stephanie has extensive experience as a Stage Manager working on numerous productions for the State Theatre Company of South Australia, Adelaide Festival Centre, Windmill Theatre and a variety of festivals and events. Stephanie is a designer and builder of props and puppets. Her recent credentials include co-creator of the new Haigh's Easter Bilby and specialist prop maker on the feature film *The Babadook*, due for release in 2013. Stephanie has also co-designed two giant puppets for the 2013 Adelaide Credit Union Christmas Pageant.

I promise to talk with animals.

Marie Docking Assistant Stage Manager

Marie has been working in theatre since graduating in 1996. She has a diverse range of skills from sound, lighting and stage management. Marie has recently worked as an Assistant Stage Manager at State Opera of South Australia for the past two seasons. This is Marie's first time working with Slingsby, which she sees as a great privilege. Marie's next endeavour is with Urban Myth Theatre Company on *The Visitors*.

I promise to always play with Lego.

Wendy Todd Art Finishing

Wendy is an Adelaide-based designer. Her recent set and costume designs include *Man Covets Bird* and *The Tragical Life of Cheeseboy* for Slingsby; *Land & Sea*, *Skip Miller's Hit Songs*, *Harbinger*, *The Hypochondriac*, *Beetle Graduation* for Brink Productions; *A Lion In The Night* and *The Little Green Tractor* for Patch Theatre Company; *Worldhood* for Australian Dance Theatre; *Ruby Bruise* for The Misery Children/Vitalstatistix. Wendy's Design work includes Design Coordinator of Barrio, 2012 and Assistant Designer Persian Garden 2008, 2006, (the Late Night Clubs of the Adelaide Festival of Arts). Wendy's Production work includes WOMADelaide, Windmill, ADT, State Opera of South Australia, Moon Lantern Festivals, Come Out Festivals, Adelaide Cabaret Festival and Adelaide Guitar Festival.

I promise to...

Andy Ellis Illustrator & Graphic Designer

Andy Ellis is an award winning freelance artist working in the fields of illustration, photography and video, based in the Barossa Valley, South Australia and Fukuoka, Japan. His work has featured in numerous publications around the world from *Rolling Stone* to *Harper's Bazaar* and through regular work with Slingsby Theatre Company, Andy's illustrations, photographs and designs have been showcased in critically acclaimed productions world-wide, from the theatres of New York to the Sydney Opera House.

I promise to never forget the pepper tree I turned into a castle.

Jodi Glass Executive Producer

Jodi left her hometown of Geraldton, WA, and found herself in Adelaide. Having graduated from Curtin University in 1991 with a Bachelor of Arts (First Class Hons) Jodi briefly contemplated a career in academia with post-graduate studies at Monash University. She landed a job with Geraldton's Queens Park Theatre and her childhood dream of a career in performing arts began. Jodi is now an experienced arts producer who has produced and toured original Australian theatre nationally and internationally over the past 20 years. Jodi was CEO of Australia's biggest arts festival, the Adelaide Fringe (1999-2004) and Associate Producer for Reckless Moments (1996-1999). Jodi worked in the programming departments at the Adelaide Festival Centre, for whom she was Associate Producer of Compagnie Philip Genty's *Stowaways* produced by AFC, and Tandanya National Aboriginal Cultural Institute. In 1997, she lived in Tokyo as a recipient of an Asialink Arts Management Residency and worked at the Setagaya Public Theater. In 2007, Andy Packer came a 'calling with tales of wonder and journeys to undertake and with these they founded Slingsby.

I promise to keep my head in the clouds and to love wastefully.

Some Facts About Opera:

This information is sourced from the Victorian Opera's [20 Questions About Opera](#).

What is an Opera?

Opera is a complex art form that has been around since about 1600. Nowadays there are many styles of opera performance, but basically, they all have one thing in common - an opera is a play that is sung.

What is a typical opera story?

Initially, most opera stories were taken from mythology, or were loosely based on historical events. Since then composers have taken the stories from a variety of sources including literature, history, Shakespearean plays, children's stories, real events and even Hollywood movies!

How many people does it take to make an opera?

Many. The creation of an opera involves a composer, who writes the music and a librettist, who writes the words, usually adapted from an existing story. That's the easy part. The hard part is bringing an opera to life on the stage. This can involve an army of hundreds of workers that include the artists - singers, dancers, conductors, orchestral musicians, language coaches, music staff and directors; the designers - lighting, scenery and costumes; the makers - set builders, costumiers, wig makers; the technical staff - stage managers, lighting technicians, fly operators, stage mechanists and electricians, surtitle operators, dressers; and of course the managers who coordinate all of the above. Moliere said 'of all the noises known to man, opera is the most expensive.'

What comes first - the words or the music?

Good question. In fact there is an opera about which is more important - the words or the music - Richard Strauss' *Capriccio*. The short answer is that the creation of an opera is usually a collaboration, which means the composer and librettist work closely together.

What does it take to be an opera singer?

Years of determination and training. A singer needs to possess a good instrument (the voice) to start with and then spend years developing it. You may have seen the TV series *Operatunity Oz*, which illustrated the challenging path to becoming an opera singer. An opera singer needs to be able to sing acoustically in large auditoriums and be heard above an orchestra, which can sometimes have as many as 80 players.

What are the different kinds of operatic voices?

There are five major voice types: Soprano, Mezzo-Soprano, Tenor, Baritone and Bass. There is a further delineation into categories – Coloratura, Lyric, Spinto, and Dramatic – which help to define each particular voice. The Coloratura is the highest within each voice type whose extended upper range is complemented by extreme flexibility. The Lyric is the most common of the types. This instrument is recognised more for the exceptional beauty of its tone rather than its power or range. The Spinto is a voice which combines the beauty of a lyric with the weight and power of a Dramatic, which is the most 'powerful' of the voices. The Dramatic instrument is characterised by the

combination of both incredible volume and 'steely' intensity. While the definition presented in the preceding paragraph may seem clearly outlined, many voices combine qualities from each category, thus carving a unique niche in operatic history. Just as each person is different from the next, so is each voice.

How long is an opera?

How long is a piece of string? An average opera is about 3 hours and usually has two or three acts. There are some longer and of course some shorter.

What is an aria?

This is a song for solo voice. The aria allows the singer to pause and reflect on action that has passed and express their inner thoughts and feelings.

What is a recitative?

Recitative was used in 18th and early 19th century opera much like dialogue is used in music theatre of today. There are two kinds of recitative: *secco* (accompanied on a harpsichord) or *accompagnato* (accompanied by the orchestra). The opera *Julius Caesar* contains both *secco* and *accompagnato* recitative.

What is an ensemble?

This is when you have two or more singers singing together, for example in a duet or trio. A large ensemble would be called the chorus.

What is a diva?

Literally, *diva* means 'goddess,' but commonly refers to a female opera star. *Diva* is often used to describe a demanding or fussy opera star. Nowadays any ridiculously demanding person is referred to as a *diva*.

What should I expect?

Going to the opera is experiencing live theatre on large scale, so unexpected things may happen. You will see the singers on the stage and the orchestra in the pit, but there is also a large team of people behind the scenes that you won't see who all work together to create two hours of operatic magic - all live in front of your eyes. The most important thing is to allow yourself to be taken away to another place and time by the power of the music and the drama.

Online Resources and Pre-Performance Activities:

21 Reasons to Love Edward Lear:

An ongoing series on Slingsby's website containing historical, surprising and humorous insights into Edward Lear's life and work. Each entry includes suggested activities:

<http://www.slingsby.net.au/category/news/>

Historical context:

An exploration of the Romantic Period including the influence of Rousseau and the movement to Return to Nature - Simon Schama's *A History of Britain* - Episode 12: Forces of Nature:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z5sr7d2SfS0>

A compendium of Edward Lear's Nonsense:

Includes essays on Lear at the website Nonsense Lit: <http://www.nonsenselit.org/>

A Blog of Bosh:

<http://nonsenselit.wordpress.com/>

Edward Lear's Diaries:

<http://leardiaries.wordpress.com/>

Facts about Epilepsy:

The Epilepsy Centre SA website has extensive medical and social information about living with Epilepsy, including the section Kids Area: <http://www.epilepsycentre.org.au/info/index.html>

Creativity and Epilepsy:

Jim Chambliss, PhD Candidate (Creative Arts & Medicine), MA (Visual Arts), JD (Law), has undertaken extensive research into the connection between epilepsy and creative output:

<http://www.artandepilepsy.com/chambliss-jim-.html>

Slingsby commissioned Jim Chambliss to write "The Influences of Epilepsy in the Creative Expression of Edward Lear", an essay on Creativity, Epilepsy and Edward Lear. This essay will be published on Slingsby's website: <http://www.slingsby.net.au/21-reasons-to-love-edward-lear-10/>

What's in a Name? Opera, don't be alarmed, it is just another word for Musical:

Read Slingsby's Artistic Director, Andy Packer, contemplating the difference between Opera and Musical: <http://www.slingsby.net.au/whats-in-a-name/>

Post Performance Activity:

Experiencing Drama and Theatre: developing a space for communication with children & young people.

“The following workshop was developed in Denmark. Slingsby has been given approval to provide these materials to English speaking audiences. We are indebted to **Louise Ejgood Hansen** and [Randers EgnsTeater](#) for sharing this workshop with us. We believe it provides an excellent process to reflect on the powerful personal impact that art and theatre can have on each individual audience member.” Andy Packer, Artistic Director, Slingsby

Preface

This workshop aims to provide you, the teachers, with the tools to run *Experiencing Drama and Theatre* at your own school. We have tested and adjusted the concept and have arrived at something which we believe is extremely valuable. We have endeavored to accurately and correctly describe all steps and have also briefly explained the basic ideas behind *Experiencing Drama and Theatre*.

We realise that different kitchens produce different results albeit working from the same recipe. Children, theatre plays, the physical environment and the teachers are different. Nevertheless, we feel that the fundamental idea that a dramatic experience can be appreciated and expressed with the help of *Experiencing Drama and Theatre* can be brought into any classroom.

What is it that children experience when they experience drama and theatre?

Experiencing Drama and Theatre aims to accommodate the full range of drama and theatre experiences. Most theatre performances consist of subject material that can be adapted in a variety of ways. But a drama and theatre experience is more than just the subject material - maybe that is not even the primary element. It is also a social experience and a perception experience. You enter the theatre, find your seat and the performance starts. During the performance situations, characters and stories are created through lighting, script, sound and movement.

With *Experiencing Drama and Theatre* the artistic experience is dealt with afterwards. Exactly because appreciating art is not something that simply happens, it is also something that you can learn.

In *Experiencing Drama and Theatre* we ask the students: What was your main experience? And that is how we find out that the sound equipment or the best friend giggling in the row behind you are important.

This does not diminish the experience of the performance itself; on the contrary it proves that the children have a very complex appreciation of the theatre experience. They easily jump between seeing the actors and seeing the characters, and they notice and render very precise, perceived details of e.g. lighting and costumes.

The richness of these experiences is worth holding on to - and that is what we do with *Experiencing Drama and Theatre*.

Physical Warm-up

We recommend that the children do some kind of warm-up before starting *Experiencing Drama and Theatre*. The warm-up improves concentration and helps creating space for the next process.

The following plan can be used or the teacher may choose other exercises/play proven to be useful.

Start:

All form a circle

Music: play calm music at low volume (relaxation music)

Stretching:

Up towards the ceiling

Towards the centre of the circle

Down towards the floor

Shake the whole body

Respiration:

Stretch the arms towards the ceiling while taking a deep breath

Exhale while pulling the arms down to the chest

Repeat the exercise 3-4 times

Tension/Relaxation:

Stretch your hands towards the centre of the circle

Tighten your hands as much as you can. After a moment: relax!

Tighten your toes as much as you can. After a moment: relax!

Pull your shoulders right up to your ears. After a moment: Relax!

Tighten your whole body. After a moment: Relax!

Shake the whole body

Experiencing Drama and Theatre for Grades 5-10

We have been aiming to develop a concept that can be completed in 45 minutes, being the normal duration of a lesson. However, we found that a slightly longer version produces a more in-depth and higher level of reflection. The times indicated in blue colour indicate our suggestions about where to shorten the program.

Time	Activity
0.00	<p>Introduction</p> <p>The purpose of this workshop is to let the theatre experience take root. It is a fact that people in the audience will always remember different things after a performance, and that there is a difference of opinion as to what people feel was the most important. During this workshop you get an opportunity to reflect on your own experience and also to find out what other people found to be important. So, be sure to remember that other people may have a theatre experience which is different from your own.</p> <p><i>Purpose: to give students a brief presentation of the scope for the workshop. In line with the appreciative input, there is no right or wrong experience.</i></p>
0.02	<p>Physical warm-up (long or short version)</p> <p>We start with a physical warm-up. In the short version just stretching, respiratory exercise and tension/relaxation.</p>
0.07	<p>Memory exercise 1</p> <p>Sit on a chair with your eyes closed and imagine that you walk into the theatre/the place where the performance takes place. You enter the room; find your seat and the performance starts. Think as far into the performance as you can within the five minutes that is set for this exercise. Make an effort to remember as many details as possible: what did you see? What did you hear? What were you and other people in room doing?</p> <p><i>Purpose: To recall the experience in as many details and as accurately as possible.</i></p>
0.12	<p>Memory exercise 2 (leave out in the short version)</p> <p>Now, again think back to your experience of the performance, but this time also repeat your trip to the performance location physically. Therefore, go as far away from your chair as possible. You should now imagine that this is your seat in the theatre. This means that while you are walking, you should remember what you were doing and what you were noticing on your way to the performance. When you arrive at your chair and sit down, you are in the theatre and you continue to think about what happened. Once again, think as far into the performance as you can in the time given for the exercise. Try to include even more details than when doing the first exercise.</p> <p><i>Purpose: The physical repeat helps the students to remember physical experiences.</i></p>

0.25/0.12	<p>Memory exercise 3</p> <p>Now each of you has remembered as accurately as possible what you were experiencing on your way into and at the theatre. Now you have to tell each other. You are divided into pairs who are to repeat the walk to the chair. While doing so, one of you tells the other what he/she was experiencing. The other person is the interviewer and asks about different details. Remember that the person asking the questions should be curious about hearing what the other person is remembering. (You may not have had the same experiences). Afterwards you swap, so if you remember something different or more, then you can say that when it is your turn.</p> <p><i>Purpose: To give the students an opportunity to put the experience into words and gain insight into the experience of somebody else.</i></p>
0.30/0.17	<p>What did you experience?</p> <p>Divide the students into groups (4-5 in each group). The groups have 4 sheets of A3 paper with the headings (see appendix i): What did you feel? What did you hear? What did you see? What do you think about it? Everybody to write or draw one - or more - things on each sheet. The teacher to circulate between the tables and help the students proceed as well as supporting them with appreciative input regarding what each of the students have experienced.</p> <p><i>Purpose: To get the students to provide subtle details of the experience based on various senses.</i></p>
0.40/0.36	<p>The most important/strongest experience</p> <p>The spider diagrams (see appendix ii) are distributed to all students. They are asked to choose an important/strong experience related to the theatre performance, which they write in the big bubble in the centre. Then they write some details in the smaller bubbles, which describe the chosen experience: What do you think about it? What happened: How was the lighting? What did the actors do? etc. It is the student's own experience that is important. Also, no experience is better or more correct than somebody else's experience.</p> <p><i>Purpose: To give the students an opportunity to show what they think is important - also when it is a negative experience or an experience that other people think is less important.</i></p>
0.45/0.40	<p>Presentation</p> <p>Do a round of each group where you tell what you have written in the spider diagram. Afterwards you can continue talking about your different experiences. Again, the teacher supports with appreciative and curious input.</p> <p><i>Purpose: To give the students the opportunity to express what they find to be important and get an understanding of what others have chosen.</i></p>

0.55/0.43

Rounding-off and evaluation

In a group the teacher rounds off and gives the students an opportunity to reflect on what it was like to do the workshop, what they have learnt.

Purpose: To create a collaborative finish to the program and give the students praise for being able to express and share their theatre experiences.

REMEMBER:

1. Make a copy of the spider diagram for each student and one set of the four sheets with headings for each group.
2. Consider the physical setting: Space for warm-up and the walk. The exercises work best if there is some space around each individual chair. How are the groups to be placed?

Developing a space for communication with appreciative input

In order to give children and young people an opportunity to put into words their own perceptions, feelings and thoughts it is essential that both students and teachers have appreciative input to *Experiencing drama and Theatre*. Appreciation means to watch, listen and hear the other person:

- To see the other person as a competent person who wants to and is able to contribute with something constructive
- That what means something to another person is not necessarily the same as that which means something to yourself.
- To set aside own opinions, attitudes and values for a while, thereby creating space and acceptance of other opinions.
- Spoken statements can be explored by asking supplementary questions, thereby giving the stories about the theatre experiences more details and increasing value.
- In an appreciative flow there is no right or wrong answer. All answers contribute to making the stories about the theatre experience more complex and composite.

Authentic Questions

Authentic questions may keep your attention focused on the other person to improve your understanding of what the other person understands, what the other person experiences, thinks and feels.

Authentic questions:

- Is a question for which you have no answer until you have asked the other person
- Is based on the experiences and perception of the person asked. As the saying goes: *You are an expert of your own feelings, perceptions and experiences.*
- Are open and curious
- Questions may be something like "Could you give a bit more details?" or "What does it mean when you say ...?"

Children and Young People as an audience

Children and Young People are competent as an audience. From their early childhood children rely on an aesthetic mode of understanding, which they encounter in art as well. The tangible and the perceived play a crucial role in visual art as well as in plays. At school the primary focus is on the students learning to have a conceptual and abstract attitude to the world. That is important, however, by means of a sensual input, art is able to create a different space where the answers are not given and there are good opportunities for feeling, understanding and thinking. From that perspective, artistic experiences are essential for modern development, which concerns independent reflection and the ability to have a creative and collaborative attitude to the world.

***Experiencing Drama and Theatre* was developed by Postdoc. ph.d. Louise Ejgood Hansen, Aarhus University, Tine Eibye, Souschef/drama teacher at Randers Egnsteater, cand.mag. Pernille Welent Sørensen, Consultant Teatercentrum and student assistant Marie Gorm Konradsen. Along the way 8 classes from Randers have assisted us by testing and adjusting the concept. The project received support from The City of Randers, Region Middle Jutland, Scenekunstnerværket in Region Middle Jutland, Teatercentrum and Aarhus University.**

Literature and Resources:

For the development of *Experiencing Drama and Theatre* we gained inspiration from, among others:

- Matthew Reason: *Young Audiences*, Trentham Books, 2010 (analysis of children's experiences with theatre).
- Flemming Mouritzen: *Legekultur: essays om børnekultur, leg og fortælling*. Odense Universitetsforlag, 1996 as well as Beth Juncker: *Om processen: det æstetiske betydning i børns kultur*. Riswenw Akidrwe, 2006 (About child culture and children's understanding of aesthetics).
- Maja Loua Haslebo and Danielle Bjerre Lyndgaard: *Anerkendende ledelse*. Dansk Psykologisk Forlag, 2010. (about appreciative conversation).
- Olga Dysthe: *Det flerstemmige klasserum*, Klim, 1977 (about authentic questions)

What do you feel?

What did you hear?

What did you see?

What do you think about it?