



WORKING WITH CHILDREN

BY NICOLA GUNN

Education Mini-Pack

30 AUGUST – 29 SEPTEMBER

Southbank Theatre, The Lawler

About the Play

Imagine a woman who works with children. Now imagine a man who works with children. The woman has a secret she is incredibly ashamed of, while the man says and does things in private that he wouldn't want made public ... *Working With Children* uses the moral and ethical ambiguities of working with children to explore the relationship between language and the (sexualised) body, and between naming and authority.

About the Playwright

Nicola Gunn is an award-winning writer, director, performer and designer, who combines text, choreography and visual art to make contemporary performance in response to a self-generated impulse to tell a story or explore a form. Her work has toured across Europe, North America, New Zealand and throughout Australia. Most recently she created *Mermermer* with choreographer Jo Lloyd for Chunky Move; *Piece for Person and Ghetto Blaster* for Performing Lines/Mobile States; *A Social Service* for Malthouse Theatre; *Green Screen* for MTC's NEON Festival; *The Interpreters for Field Theory* at Alliance Française; and *In Spite of Myself* for Arts Centre Melbourne/Melbourne Festival. She has performed in the works of Ridiculusmus and Tamara Saulwick; dramaturged dance works by Luke George and Jo Lloyd; and written for Jessica Wilson and Ian Pidd. Nicola is the recipient of an Australia Council for the Arts Creative Australia Fellowship and a Churchill Fellowship. She holds a Masters of Art (Art in Public Space) from RMIT.

Attendance Information

Contains coarse language, adult themes, nudity and strobe effects. Recommended for ages 16+. For detailed information, please visit www.mtc.com.au/production-content-guide

Creative Team

**Concept, Text, Direction,
Design & Performance** Nicola Gunn
AV & Spatial Design Nick Roux
Music & Sound Design Kelly Ryall
Lighting & Spatial Design Bosco Shaw
Costume Design & Co-Set Realisation Eugyeene Teh
Associate Artist Sarah Aiken
Script Dramaturg Jon Haynes
Stage Manager Meg Richardson
Rehearsals Assistant Stage Manager Emma Barbaro
Rehearsal & Production Photographer Sarah Walker

Genre

Contemporary Performance

Running Time

Appx. 75 minutes without an interval



Turn the page for activities,
and discussions.

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Before the show



Read the About the Play section overleaf, and then watch the interview with Nicola Gunn at [youtube.com/melbtheatreco](https://www.youtube.com/melbtheatreco). Make a list of predictions about what you might see and hear on stage.



Download the show programme at [mtc.com.au/backstage](https://www.mtc.com.au/backstage) to read more about the creative team involved in making *Working With Children*. Research what these roles entail, such as dramaturg, and lighting and spatial design.

Read the attendance information overleaf, and think about the themes in this performance. Why might nudity be involved? What kind of 'adult themes' might the performance include?

Read the Q&A article at [mtc.com.au/backstage](https://www.mtc.com.au/backstage) where Nicola Gunn discusses the themes in *Working With Children*. What insight does this interview give you into Nicola's work?



View the rehearsal gallery at [mtc.com.au/backstage](https://www.mtc.com.au/backstage) and make a list of props you can see. Some of these items were used in development but may not appear in the final performance. What kinds of materials and items are the creative team experimenting with? How do you imagine they might be used?

Post-show Activities



Discuss the pattern of movements and gestures that Nicola Gunn performed. How did you interpret these? Recreate some in the classroom, and discuss what they might represent.

Download the show programme at [mtc.com.au/backstage](https://www.mtc.com.au/backstage) to read an article by Sarah Austin (PhD candidate at the Victorian College of the Arts) about the implications of featuring children in theatre.

When have you seen children perform in theatre, television or film? How do you think these young performers would be treated differently to adult performers?



Nicola Gunn describes *Working With Children* as 'contemporary performance' without a linear plot and very little artifice. How would you describe the style of *Working With Children*?

Think about the venue where you saw *Working With Children*. Do you think this performance could easily tour to other venues? What kinds of things would you need to organise to transfer this production to a venue in Sydney, for example?

Choose a moment from the performance that you found particularly interesting or effective. What was special or unique about this moment? What ideas does it give you for your own theatre-making?

Working With Children features one performer, Nicola Gunn. Discuss how the performer used her voice, movement, facial expressions and gestures to manipulate the actor-audience relationship.

Melbourne Theatre Company acknowledges the Yalukit Willam Peoples of the Boon Wurrung, the Traditional Owners of the land on which Southbank Theatre and MTC HQ stand, and we pay our respects to Melbourne's First Peoples, to their ancestors and Elders, and to our shared future.



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