



ASTROMAN

BY ALBERT BELZ

Education Mini-Pack

27 OCTOBER – 8 DECEMBER

Arts Centre Melbourne, Fairfax Studio

About the Play

Step back in time to the '80s. Gary Ablett has just signed with Geelong. Cyndi Lauper blares through the stereo. Thirteen-year-old Jiembra Djalal and his brother Sonny are the new kids in town, and while Jiembra may be a video game whizz and maths genius, he's always getting into strife. A friendship with the owner of the local arcade and a chance at gaming glory could see him change his life forever, but could also mean leaving behind what means most – his brother and adoring mother.

Against a backdrop of BMX bikes, Michael Jackson, Gary Ablett, Donkey Kong and Friday night Kentucky Fried Chicken, *Astroman* explores the highs and lows of growing up in Geelong, the exhilaration of learning and what it means to be truly courageous.

About the Playwright

Albert Belz is a director, screenwriter, award-winning playwright and lecturer from New Zealand, and has written for television, theatre, print and radio for over a decade. His unique voice has crossed datelines and divides since very early in his career, having had his work performed in London, New York, Lille, Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide and even Otaki. He has also been Writer in Residence at both Victoria (Wellington) and Waikato Universities in New Zealand. His other plays include *Yours Truly* (Chapman Tripp Award for Best New New Zealand Play) and *Raising the Titanics* (Auckland's Metro Magazine Award for Best New Zealand Theatre). Albert also won the prestigious Bruce Mason Playwriting Award in 2006. Having returned to New Zealand from Melbourne in 2015, he currently resides in Auckland where he lectures in Writing for Screen and Stage at the Faculty of Creative Arts, Manukau Institute of Technology.



Turn the page for activities, and discussions.

Cast

Michelle Djalal Elaine Crombie

Mick Jones Nicholas Denton

Jiembra Djalal Kamil Ellis

Natalie Djalal / Mrs Taylor Tahlee Fereday

Mr. Pavlis Tony Nikolakopoulos

Sonny Djalal Calen Tassone

Creative Team

Director Sarah Goodes

Associate Director Tony Briggs

Set & Costume Designer Jonathon Oxlade

Lighting Designer Niklas Pajanti

Composer & Sound Designer Jethro Woodward

Associate Sound Designer Tom Backhaus

Breakdance Teacher Aaron Vidot

Video Designer Jamie Clennett

Fight Choreographer Lyndall Grant

Set & Costume Design Secondment Jeremy Pryles

Stage Manager Christine Bennett

Assistant Stage Manager Brittany Coombs

Stage Management Secondment Lucie Sutherland

Rehearsal Photographer Deryk McAlpin

Production Photographer Jeff Busby

Genre

Australian drama

Running Time

Approx. 2hrs 20min including interval

Attendance Information

Contains coarse language, sexual references, mature themes, use of herbal cigarettes, haze and strobe effects. For detailed information, please visit www.mtc.com.au/production-content-guide

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Before the show



Watch the video with director Sarah Goodes and associate director Tony Briggs at mtc.com.au/backstage. Goodes says, 'at its core, it's a coming of age story', and Briggs says 'you get to reminisce a lot about the 80s'. Discuss these comments and what insight they give you to the story told in *Astroman*.



Download the show programme at mtc.com.au/backstage and read the article from playwright Albert Belz. What do you learn about the play's inspiration and evolution?



Analyse the advertising material for the production, and discuss the quote 'The ultimate love letter to the 80s'. What predictions might you make about the stagecraft elements, such as music and design?



See the rehearsal gallery at mtc.com.au/backstage and make predictions about what is happening in each scene being rehearsed.

Post-show Activities



What moment would you identify as the dramatic climax of the play? Discuss how this scene was directed, and what stagecraft elements were being manipulated in this moment.

As a class, make a mind map of themes explored in the play. For each theme, provide an example from the play.



See the gallery of production photos at mtc.com.au/backstage. Annotate each image with details you recall from the play, such as notes about mood, contrast, sound and space.



Choose one character and create a mood board to demonstrate your own costume design concept. Think about Jonathon Oxlade's costume designs and how they communicated character. Annotate your mood board to explain your creative choices regarding colour, fabric, accessories etc.

Download the show programme at mtc.com.au/backstage and read the article about associate director Tony Briggs. Discuss the similarities between Briggs and Jimmy growing up in the 1980s, and Briggs' contributions to the rehearsal process for *Astroman*.

Choose one character and write your own epilogue for the play as a monologue from their perspective.

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



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MTC Education

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