

THE CHILDREN

BY LUCY KIRKWOOD



Education Mini-Pack

3 FEBRUARY – 10 MARCH

Southbank Theatre, The Sumner

About the Play

In an isolated cottage on the English coast, Hazel and Robin, two retired nuclear physicists, are living a quiet existence. Outside the world is in chaos after a devastating Fukushima-like disaster. Then one day Rose, an old friend and colleague, arrives unexpectedly, bringing buried memories of the past and a confronting challenge for the future.

About the Playwright

In 2009, Lucy Kirkwood's play *it felt empty when the heart went at first but it is alright now* was produced by Clean Break Theatre Co. at the Arcola Theatre, London. The play was nominated for an Evening Standard Award for Best Newcomer and made Lucy joint winner of the John Whiting Award 2010. *NSFW* premiered at the Royal Court, starring Janie Dee and Julian Barrett, in 2012. *Chimerica*, premiered at the Almeida Theatre in 2013 and subsequently transferred to the West End, earning the Best New Play at the 2014 Olivier and Evening Standard Awards. Sydney Theatre Company presented the Australian premiere of *Chimerica* in 2017. Lucy also writes for television. She has written for *Skins* (Company Pictures), created and wrote *The Smoke* (Kudos/Sky 1), and is currently writing a mini-series of her play *Chimerica* for Playground Productions. She also wrote and directed the short film *The Briny* and is developing projects with Clio Barnard and Lenny Abrahamson. *The Children* premiered at the Royal Court in 2016, and transferred to Broadway with its original cast at Manhattan Theatre Club's Samuel J. Friedman Theatre in 2017.

Cast

Rose Sarah Peirse

Hazel Pamela Rabe

Robin William Zappa

Production

Director Sarah Goodes

Set & Costume Designer Elizabeth Gadsby

Lighting Designer Paul Jackson

Composer & Sound Designer Steve Francis

Voice & Dialect Coach Geraldine Cook-Dafner

Movement Consultant Freya List

Wig Construction Kylie Clarke Wigmaking

Original Wig Styling Lauren A. Proietti

Stage Manager Christine Bennett

Assistant Stage Manager Meg Richardson

Rehearsal Photographer Deryk McAlpin

Production Photographer Jeff Busby

Genre

Contemporary drama

Running Time

Approximately 1hr 50min without interval

Attendance Information

Contains strong language and mature themes



Turn the page for activities,
and discussions.

Before the show



Watch the trailer for *The Children* at [youtube.com/melbtheatreco](https://www.youtube.com/melbtheatreco) and make a list of predictions about what you might see on stage



The context for this play echoes that of the 2011 Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster in Japan. Research this energy accident caused by the Tōhoku earthquake and ensuing tsunami. What impact did this have on surrounding communities? What is happening at the site now?

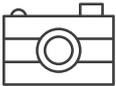


Read more from director Sarah Goodes about her choices in directing *The Children* at [mtc.com.au/backstage](https://www.mtc.com.au/backstage)



To hear from playwright Lucy Kirkwood about how she wrote *The Children*, listen to our MTC Talks podcast series at [mtc.com.au/MTCTalks](https://www.mtc.com.au/MTCTalks)

Post-show Activities



Look at the rehearsal gallery and production photos and imagine what the rehearsal process entailed. Which elements of the set, props and costumes were used in rehearsal? To see the galleries, visit [mtc.com.au/backstage](https://www.mtc.com.au/backstage)



Write an epilogue for *The Children*. This could be from the perspective of characters unseen in *The Children*, such as Hazel's sons.



Read a Q&A with Lucy Kirkwood to gain more insight into the script, at [mtc.com.au/backstage](https://www.mtc.com.au/backstage)

As an Associate Director at MTC, Sarah Goodes will direct two more productions for the Company in 2018. Read about her year ahead at [mtc.com.au/backstage](https://www.mtc.com.au/backstage)



Consider what you would do in these characters' shoes. Use the following words as stimuli for discussion: responsibility; life experience; survival; guilt.

Recall Elizabeth Gadsby's set design and discuss how the very detailed, realistic set is arranged to function theatrically. How do you think the plumbing effect was achieved?

Playwright Lucy Kirkwood identifies the line "I don't know how to want less" as 'perhaps the most crucial line in the play'. Capitalism depends on growth, says Lucy. 'Our entire economic system depends on us wanting more and more, on boundless desire – and if we continue to pursue those desires they will destroy us.' Discuss this line from the play and its implications.

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 past and present, and to our shared future.



@melbtheatreco #mtcTheChildren



MTC Education

MTC is a department of the University of Melbourne

