

(un)Australian: *A Double Bill*

new works by Esther Cowen and Maki Morita

2 - 4 May Guild Theatre



A NOTE FROM FLW THEATRE

The original stimulus for (Un)Australian was the product of a series of conversations about this supposed thing called national identity, about 'Australian' identity. Whilst this could have led to a very sombre conversation on-stage, I was eager to take a different route.

I have always felt that comedy is, in many ways, better equipped to act as a vehicle for challenging conversations than other forms of theatrical discourse. If an audience is willing to laugh, then I find they are also willing to be vulnerable enough to have a meaningful conversation with the work in front of them. Pairing Maki Morita and Esther Cowen's works made perfect sense because they both harnessed the value of comedy, but they did so in two very distinct ways. As far as outcomes go, the company's aims for this work stayed consistent: make it do something to an audience, make it accessible for a diverse audience, make sure someone learns something at some point, and most importantly, make sure everyone involved enjoys the process. I am confident our unequivocally talented cast and crew will achieve all four of these aims with this very exciting double bill.

- Ellie Woods, Artistic Director

Four Letter Word and the (un)Australian team would like to thank extend a very special thank you to:

Union House Theatre
The University of Melbourne Theatre Board
UMSU Creative Arts Department
James Macaronas
Kim Ho
Alain Nguyen
Colin Sneesby
Officeworks Exhibition Street

And everyone else who has supported us in the development and staging of this show!

This show is taking place in The University of Melbourne, which rests on the lands of the Boon Wurrung and Woi Wurrung peoples of the Kulin Nations. Sovereignty was never ceded. Four Letter Word would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land and pay our respects to their elders, past, present and emerging.

Director's Notes:

Yellow Swan
by Maki Morita

I first said yes to directing *Yellow Swan* because of two things - "(un)Australian" and Maki Morita. Throughout the process, I've worked quite closely alongside Maki, firstly, to honour her vision as a Writer, but also, as someone who doesn't identify as an Australian, I found myself in tricky territory to begin with. What do I know about being Australian? But I guess this play speaks on that and in working on this piece I was tackling my own questions head on. I bring my experience as an Actor and Theatre Maker into the rehearsal room and try to work quite playfully in the space. Through Animal work or funky exercises, I try to get the actors to work off their impulses and then shape as we go. Do I know what I'm doing? Who knows, but I'm very fortunate to work with very generous and collaborative cast and creatives who make really great choices.

- Cheryl Ho, director

Elbow Lotion
by Esther Cowen

There's a lot to say about what makes Australia so... Australian. There's the dispossession of Indigenous peoples, the virulent xenophobia, the ferocious drinking culture. But there's lots of plays about that stuff. Let's talk about something else, just for a minute.

Let's talk about mateship. There's a certain level of chumminess we Australians demand of each other, a necessary warmth that runs through every social exchange. Whether it's your spouse, your colleague or a total stranger – you are always already mates. Much like the Force in Star Wars, mateship surrounds and penetrates us – it binds all Australians together, whether we like it or not.

Elbow Lotion is about mateship. It's about intersubjectivity and solidarity and love. It's about how we can create and maintain meaningful relationships in a society that proscribes all but the most narrow range of emotional expression.

But most of all, it's about being silly and talking shit. I hope it makes you laugh.

- Simon Farley, director

Playwrights' Notes:

Maki Morita, *Yellow Swan*



Yellow Swan is about misunderstandings, mispronunciations, and mistaken identities. It takes instances from my day-to-day life as a Japanese migrant in Australia that have made me feel unwelcome or '(un)Australian', and blows them up to comedic proportions. The play brings together TV personalities, politicians, and national icons to create a mish-mash of pop culture references. In doing so, I want to start a conversation about how we perceive Australian-ness, and in contrast, how to treat the 'Other'. Writing it was quite enjoyable because I got to make fun of insensitive white boys and politicians that don't make sense. I hope audiences will gain an insight into what it's like to feel 'different' in this country. But I also want audiences to laugh, because we don't always have to be so serious, right? Seeing *Yellow Swan* come to life thanks to FLW theatre and all the creatives involved has been such a fantastic experience. I hope you enjoy the show!

Esther Cowen, *Elbow Lotion*



Esther Cowen is a recent graduate of the University of Melbourne. She has varied experience as a dramatic and comedic performer, and has long been interested in creating her own work. Cowen was inspired by the tradition of Australian comedians like Barry Humphries and 'Kath and Kim' who find comedy within the mundane and familiar aspects of Australian life. Cowen is very grateful for the support of FLW Theatre in nurturing this play. 'Elbow Lotion' is Cowen's first play.

CAST (*Elbow Lotion*)



LYDIA BELL
NURSE

IMOGEN GIBB
PATIENT

SINEAD MULCAHY
HARRY



ELLA KAMER
WILL

KATIE TREASURE
LORNA

CINDY JIANG
JORDAN

CAST (Yellow Swan)



NINA D'SOUZA
MICHIKO

FINN LLOYD
WILLY

JAMES ROBERTSON
TOM



LOTTE BECKETT
KYLIE/PAULINE

AMY LI
MARIE KONDO

EMMANUELLE MATTANA
LAUREN



LUCINDA KELLY
LAUREN'S ASSISTANT

PRODUCTION TEAM



OLIVER ROSS
PRODUCTION MANAGER



ADA COXALL
PRODUCER



MINNA PIUS
STAGE MANAGER



SIMON FARLEY
DIRECTOR (ELBOW LOTION)



CHERYL HO
DIRECTOR (YELLOW SWAN)



VAISHNAVI KRISHNA
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR



JESSICA CASSAR
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER



ALISON FORD
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER



DESIREE TAN
ACCESS OFFICER

PRODUCTION TEAM

continued.



EMMANUELLE MATTANA
SET DESIGNER



ANYA WONG
SOUND DESIGNER



ANNA SMITH
LIGHTING DESIGNER



SASKIA PEACHEY
LIGHTING OPERATOR



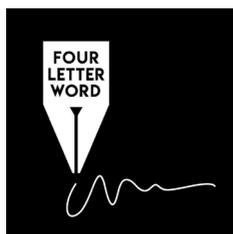
LUCY GOLUB
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT



YUQI (MAXINE) CHEN
COSTUME DESIGNER



NAOMI CARDWELL
FRONT OF HOUSE MANAGER



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