TEACHERS’ NOTES

SONG the story of a girl, a bird and a teapot

Concept / Synopsis

SONG the story of a girl, a bird and a teapot is a one woman show about family and those moments in life that really test one’s self. Utilizing her life experience as a Narrunga-Kaurna woman of mixed heritage from South Australia, writer/performer Waiata Telfer follows the journey of Song, an Aboriginal girl who challenges the notion of tradition and community to form her own sense of identity and belonging. Performed with raw honesty, this is courageous, entertaining theatre, with a mix of grit, blackfella humour and a unique poetic style incorporating Kaurna language.

Background

Waiata Telfer is a Kaurna Narrungga woman of Aboriginal/Burmese British mixed heritage from the Adelaide Plains/Yorke Peninsula region of South Australia. Her involvement in the play Tjindarella (directed by Sue Rider) in the 1985 Black Women in Focus Festival Adelaide inspired her performing ambitions to Sydney where she graduated from the National Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Association (NAISDA) College in 1993.

Waiata has studied Film and Writing at UTS and University of S.A. and worked in SBS TV in eatcarpet & ICAM. In 1998 Waiata was recipient of an Indigenous Film Mentorship with SBS TV & Metro Screen TV/Sydney scholarship program where she wrote, directed and featured in her short film ‘speak of spirit’.

In 2002 Waiata worked as Associate Director, Adelaide Festival of the Arts, playing an integral role in the creative-cultural direction and management of the Opening Ceremony Kaurna Palti Meyunna, along with the Cross Connections hip hop symposium and concert program, bringing together Indigenous people worldwide to connect upon ritual, art and
cultural practice. In 2004 Waiata travelled to London International Festival of Theatre as guest presenter. She was awarded South Australian NAIDOC 2003 artist of the year.

*SONG the story of a girl, a bird and a teapot* has been developed by an outstanding creative team, including acclaimed Brisbane director Sue Rider, and featuring Waiata and musician Jay Kleinschmidt, the story is performed with raw honesty and is a mix of grit, blackfella humour, strong visuals and a unique poetic style incorporating Kaurna language.

**Creative team**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writer/Performer</td>
<td>Waiata Telfer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Director/Dramaturg</td>
<td>Sue Rider</td>
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<td>Designer</td>
<td>Penny Challen</td>
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<td>Lighting Designer</td>
<td>David Walters</td>
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<td>Visual media design</td>
<td>Markwell Presents Cinematic Theatre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Director</td>
<td>Dominic Woodhead</td>
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<tr>
<td>Composer/Musician</td>
<td>Jay Kleinschmidt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Movement coach</td>
<td>Carmen Attel</td>
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<td>Production/Stage Management</td>
<td>Rachael Edwards</td>
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**Form**

Primarily a dramatic production, the show features a single performer playing several different characters, and a musician who performs live on stage. The show includes cultural and contemporary dance choreography interwoven within the live musical score. The script incorporates Kaurna language.

**Curriculum Connections - Dramatic Languages and Perspectives**

**Dramatic Forms and Styles:**
- Contemporary Aboriginal theatre forms
- Storytelling

**Elements of Drama:**
- Role
- Relationship
- Tension
- Language
- Symbol
- Mood
- Movement

**Conventions:**
- Appropriation
- Audience participation
• Chorus
• Ritualised movement
• Song and music

Skills of Performance:
• Acting
• Designing
• Directing
• Offstage character and action
• Performance technologies (sound, image and lighting)
• Direct address to audience
• Movement
• Spoken Word Poetry
• Rhyming
• Song

Themes and Ideas
The dominant theme and idea in *SONG the story of a girl, a bird and a teapot* is the exploration of identity and connection to culture and family.

Other themes investigated include:
• Social justice
• Identity and belonging
• Independence and self-worth
• Relationships
• Reconnecting families
• Cultural separation and reconnection

Recommendation and Rating
The company generally suggests that *SONG the story of a girl, a bird and a teapot* is appropriate for Drama, Dance, English and Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE) Students in Years 10 to 12.

Useful Resources and Further Reading
Comprehensive readings, pre and post activities are available upon booking your school group to see this performance.