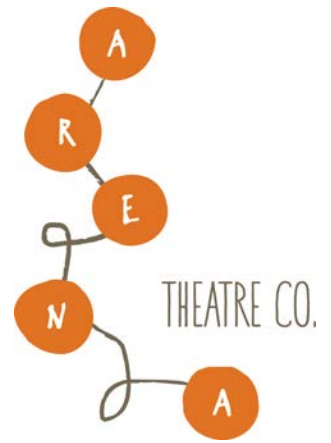


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TRAPPER



EDUCATION NOTES

By Arena Theatre Company

World Premiere

Presented at Arts Centre Melbourne, Fairfax Studio

2 – 5 August 2017

ABOUT THESE NOTES

These Education Notes have been prepared by Arena Theatre Company to support the presentation of **Trapper** at Arts Centre Melbourne from 2 – 5 August 2017.

Education Notes are designed to support educators and students in engaging with **Trapper** both prior to and after the performance. Please note the activities are not compulsory, rather a resource for educators to draw upon and select the activities that they believe will benefit their students.

Trapper has been designed for young adults aged 14 and above. These notes have likewise been designed for students in Years 9 – 12.

All copyright remains with Arena Theatre Company. Please do not reproduce or distribute these notes without their permission.

Please note: all script excerpts used in these notes were taken during rehearsal from draft script and as such might not be identical to the script performed.

CURRICULUM LINKS

These curriculum links have been prepared with reference to the Victorian Curriculum.

LEARNING AREAS	Levels 7 - 10
The Arts – Drama	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Explore and Express Ideas ○ Drama Practices ○ Present and Perform ○ Respond and Interpret
The Arts - Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Explore and represent ideas ○ Respond and Interpret
English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reading and Viewing ○ Writing ○ Speaking and Listening
Design and Technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Technologies and Society ○ Technologies Context – Engineering principles and systems, Materials and technologies specialisations ○ Creating designed solutions
Civics and Citizenship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Citizenship, Diversity and Identity
CAPABILITIES	Levels 7 - 10
Personal and social capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Self-Awareness and Management ○ Social Awareness and Management
Critical and creative thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Questions and Possibilities ○ Reasoning ○ Meta-Cognition
Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Understanding Concepts ○ Decision Making and Actions

LINKS TO VCE

- Drama
- Theatre Studies
- English
- Philosophy

Educators Please Note the following pages have been written as direct instructions to students for ease of use. Please feel free to adjust activities, expand upon ideas etc. to suit your students and class needs.

ABOUT ARENA

Arena Theatre Company is powered by the twin drivers of art and audience: creating inspiring live performance known for genuine engagement with young people aged 5 – 25.

High quality, original, artistically ambitious theatre defines Arena's success. We believe in theatre's unique ability to provide a space of reflection, celebration and transformation for young people. We provide a theatrical space to which everyone is invited, on equal terms. Our aim is to speak to young people in languages they understand, in the spaces they occupy, but in ways they never thought possible. Arena is a national leader, working in a diversity of forms, with Australia's best artists.

Established in 1966, Arena is one of Australia's longest-running producers of theatre for young people. Arena presents performances at major arts centres, international festivals, regional arts centres, local festivals and schools. We contribute to international conferences, and arts markets.

Our work is comprised of:

- **HIGH QUALITY ART:** World premieres of innovative, original performance works presented by Australia's major theatre producers and arts centres.
- **ENGAGEMENT PROCESSES:** Working directly with young people to inspire engagement with the performing arts through residencies and workshops.
- **ARTIST DEVELOPMENT:** Supporting artists to extend their practice at all points in their careers.

Staff

Artistic Director **Christian Leavesley**

Artistic Associate **Jolyon James**

Executive Producer **Sheah Sutton**

Education and Programs Manager **Alexandra Macalister-Bills**

Arena Theatre Company is governed by a Board of Directors.

WORK EXPERIENCE AND INTERNSHIPS

Arena Theatre Company regularly offers a work experience program for secondary students and internships to tertiary students studying areas relevant to the performing arts. For more information please see:

<http://www.arenatheatre.com.au/get-involved/work-experience>

SYNOPSIS

Are we living in a prison or a playground?

Four performers battle each other inside a series of giant sculptural machines, hoping to discover the proof of free will.

Using slam poetry and demanding physical agility, the performers make their arguments from within the body of the machines – simultaneously asking, "Are we in control or being controlled?"

Four archetypal characters – The Gamer, The Fighter, The Architect and The Poet – build and throw their arguments at the set and each other as they explore the hidden influences on their decision making. **Trapper** draws on evolutionary DNA, big data, retail anthropology, surveillance culture, social media use, spatial design and behavioural sciences, challenging whether free will and the individual exist or not.

Trapper is a high-energy slam poetry competition where characters compete to win the argument, solve the mystery of the trap they are in, and try to escape from it.

CREDITS

Created By **Christian Leavesley and Jolyon James**

Director **Christian Leavesley**

Text **Angus Cerini, Emilie Zoey Baker, Christian Leavesley and Jolyon James**

Design **Jolyon James**

Sound Design and Composition **Ania Reynolds**

Lighting Design **Paul Lim (Additive)**

Video Design **Sean Healy**

Movement Director **Ashlea Pyke**

Set Construction **Additive**

Performer **Rachel Perks**

Performer **Hamish Irvine**

Performer **Daniel Schlusser**

Performer **Naomi Rukavina**

Production Management **Emily O'Brien**

Stage Management **Pippa Wright**

Executive Producer **Sheah Sutton**

Education and Program Management **Alexandra Macalister-Bills**

Intern **Grace Ulrich**, on secondment from Monash University

Intern **Julia Orlando**, on secondment from the Faculty of VCA and Music

PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES

Trapper – Teaser

- Watch the teaser for **Trapper** below.



LINK: <https://vimeo.com/215779297>

- What do you think the show is about? Consider the influence of music, symbols, text and images in the trailer.
- Draw up table with four sections (as below).

Images	Symbols
Music	Text

- Make predictions about how these elements (music, symbols, text and images/set) will be significant in the production. List reasons for your ideas and brainstorm as many as you can. You can test your predictions post-show.

SYNOPSIS

- Read the synopsis above. How has your idea of the play changed now?
- “Trapper draws on evolutionary DNA, big data, retail anthropology, surveillance culture, social media use, spatial design and behavioural sciences, challenging whether free will and the individual exist or not.”
- What do you think is meant by ‘free will’? Do you believe you have free will in your own life? Make a list of the choices you make everyday and then another list of the choices made for you. Compare your list with another student.
- What sort of ‘hidden influences’ do you think might exist in your life? Make a list or mind map of the influences and how they relate to your own life.
- Working in small groups select and research one of the concepts in the following list.
 - evolutionary DNA
 - big data
 - retail anthropology
 - surveillance culture
 - social media use
 - spatial design
 - behavioural sciences
- Brainstorm whether you have experienced any of these concepts in your own life. Present your findings back to the class.
- Discuss as a class how these concepts and the idea of ‘free will’ might be depicted in **Trapper**.

Trapper – Prison or Playground

- Watch the second teaser for Trapper.



LINK: <https://vimeo.com/215939188>

- Working in pairs consider the significance of the title- what do you think it might mean?
- What images do you recognise in the teaser? How might these be associated with the show?
- Working in pairs design your own logo for **Trapper**. Consider the concepts you have investigated so far and the hidden influences on your life.

SPOKEN WORD

Trapper's script is inspired by spoken word or slam poetry.

Together watch some of the examples below and discuss as a class and with your teacher the style of performance, the purpose and structure of the work.

(Keep in the back of your mind you are getting ready to write your own spoken word piece.)

Examples

Live performance by Trapper writer Emilie Zoey Baker |
Bratz Camp | Porn an orange and Beverly Hills 90210
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nof3l_4u3dk

OutLoud 2016 Spoken Word Winners | Sir John Monash Science School
<https://vimeo.com/193963494>

Eleanor Jackson | The Very Best Story That I Know
<https://soundcloud.com/goingdownswinging/eleanor-jackson-the-very-best>

Omar Musa | Fireflies
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jOJUmtIXPb8>

WRITE YOUR OWN

- **Thesaurus Poem.** Select a word at random and put it into a Thesaurus. Make a list of all the synonyms for that word. Feel free to leave out any that don't feel or sound right. Those words are your poem. Think of a different attitude or approach to each word in the poem. Perform it to your colleagues.

- **The Eleventh Sign.** In pairs, do a word association game. (Take turns in saying one word each. Each word must relate in some way to the previous word said by the other person.) Each person takes the 11th word and puts it into Google. In the Images section of Google, select the 11th image. Imagine this image is your phone wallpaper. You have put it there for a very important reason. Write a monologue that tells the story of why that image is your phone wallpaper.

PERSUASION

- **Plus or minus.** Select a news article at random. Identify the central issue at stake in the article. Generate arguments in passionate support of one side of this issue. Take another position in relation to the issue. Generate arguments in passionate support of the other side of the issue.

INFLUENCE

- Go to a public space with lots of people. eg. A shopping centre or walkway or cafeteria at your school. Preferably find a place that you can view from above. Watch how people move through that space.
 - Where do they move quickly?
 - Where do they move slowly?
 - Where do they sit, or are stationary?
 - What are the obstacles that snag the flow of moving people?
 - Were the obstacles put there on purpose, or are they an accident?
 - Why could have been the reasons for the accidents or the purposeful snags?
- Back in class experiment with using found objects to dictate how other students move through the classroom. Place obstacles in the way or fun objects for people to interact with. Consider using instructions or visual clues for actions too.
- Watch the “Cartographers for Social Justice” clip from the West Wing television series
LINK: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eLqC3FNNOaI>
 - Try to come up with another example where something we take for granted might have other ‘hidden’ influences. Can you think of other examples in pop culture (eg. Movies, TV Shows, YouTube Videos, Books) that explore these ideas?

DEVELOPMENT

It can take years to develop a theatre work. Arena began developing **Trapper** in 2014. Through development initial ideas can be tested and teased out. You'll notice through the development videos below that **Trapper** has been through some major changes in its development. The very first developments were undertaken with students from the SEDA Arts program and in workshops with five East Gippsland schools.

- o Watch the East Gippsland Schools Workshop Development video

East Gippsland Schools Workshops



LINK: <https://vimeo.com/112754452>

Arena deliberately engages young people in the development of all of its works. In small groups discuss

- o Why might Arena seek out young people to test our ideas?
- o What do you notice about the machines in the video? Look particularly at how movement is triggered.

Creative Development

Following the development with students Arena undertook a series of creative developments with professional artists through 2014 – 2016.

- Watch this video from the 2014 development.



LINK: <https://vimeo.com/114091361>

- Continue your group discussion
 - What elements of machines and performance are similar to the schools' development?
 - What elements are different?
 - What do you notice about how performers interact with the machines?
- Working in small groups try making your own kinetic sculpture or machine out of found objects.
 - Think of the machines used in both **Trapper** creative development videos. You might also consider this video clip from 'OK GO'

LINK: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qybUFnY7Y8w>

- Try and include human movement in your machine eg. Human's mimicking the action of a machine, dance moves, triggering sections of your machine.
- Demonstrate your machine to the rest of the class.
- Now consider how to embed the 'Thesaurus' and 'Eleventh Word' pieces you wrote in the machines you have created. Try and use the machine to trigger the start or end of the performance.
- Film your performance as though it were a YouTube clip.

GOING TO THE THEATRE

As a class discuss:

- Has anyone in your class been to the theatre before?
- What is the experience like?
- What might you expect to see?
- How might it differ from going to the movies or a concert?

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- What do you make of this statement?

You will have a chance to ask the cast and creators Christian Leavesley and Jolyon James questions after the show. Have a think in advance what you might like to know about the show. Think about the development, the design, the actors process. Other questions might occur to you whilst you’re watching the show too.

POST SHOW ACTIVITIES

EXPECTATIONS/ REALITY

- Consider the table of predictions you made when you watched the **Trapper** trailer.
- Discuss in groups
 - which of your predictions were true?
 - Was **Trapper** what you expected? If so how? If not, what was different?

CHARACTERS

The four characters in **Trapper** are archetypes - The Gamer, The Fighter, The Architect and The Poet.

- Now that you have seen the play identify which character was which.
 - What were their different perspectives on the 'trap' they were in?
 - Which character do you identify with the most?
 - Create a table that outlines characteristics of each character.
-
- Find someone in your class that identifies with a different character.
 - Role play one of the script excerpts below.
 - Have a passionate debate in defence of your point of view on the 'trap' the performers were in.

WRITE

Director Christian Leavesley said "Trapper investigates how humans operate within systems, both man-made and of the natural world. It looks at the love/hate relationship humans have with these systems that can influence our thought patterns, serve our needs and desires, and entrap us in particular behaviours - often all at the same time."

- Think of examples of systems
 - that you love
 - that you hate
 - that entrap you
 - that set you free
- Use these lists to have another go at writing your own spoken word piece. Think of your personal interactions with these systems.
- You could try using a personal anecdote or a passionate argument for or against the system to generate your own spoken word poem.

THEMES

FREE WILL

- Look at the script excerpt below. Consider what is meant by each line.
- Try performing the work solo and in groups, dividing the lines between you.
- Together try writing a third verse for the poem

Life Hack

(Trapper Draft Script Version 15)

*You think you are an individual with will
but you are a tiny packaged powder pill
dissolving like an aspirin in this matrix
it's all smoke and tricks*

*But you think you have free will,
you are just a cog in the clock
another screw clicking though time
with your mouse bitten fingers
doing exactly what they want.*

SYSTEMS

- Working in pairs read the script excerpt below.

Read the Signs

(Trapper Draft Script Version 15)

A: *The date*
 B: *didn't start great*
 A: *I was early*
he made me wait
 B: *and wait*
 A: *and wait*
 A: *My friend said*
 B: *make sure you meet in a public place*
you know just in case..
because sometimes
you're not great at reading the signs
remember that creepy 'keep left' guy
 A: *so obsessive*
 B: *or that 'Give Way' sign*
 A: *who always said "fine" when he meant no*
 A/B: *soooo*
passive aggressive
these guys have only one thing on their minds
Just remember he's a stop sign

- Discuss
 - How are people and systems intertwined in **Read the signs**? What about in your own life?
 - If you could change the systems in your everyday life, what would you change?

INFLUENCE

- Working in groups of four role play the script excerpt below.

Sally Woke Up This Morning

(Trapper Draft Script Version 15)

B: *This is Sally, she just woke up and opened the curtains*

A: *What a beautiful day!*

B: *She said reaching for her phone*

C: *The sun was sparkling on the bay,*

D: *people were out with their dogs*

A: *Children were bouncing along the path.*

B: *It was Saturday, there was no school and Sally was finally going to get some*

All: *shit done.*

A: *First I have to instagram this.*

B: *Sally takes her phone and snaps*

C: *She takes about 25 pictures, snap*

B: *she changes her hair, snap*

B: *she puts on some lip gloss, snap*

Snap, snap, snap.

B: *She opens camera,*

C: *scroll, scroll, scroll. Ok*

D: *that one,*

B: *not that one, nope, nope,*

A: *OMG*

B: *delete,*

C: *scroll, scroll,*

B: *yep.*

A: *Open instagram*

D: *Choose filter,*

B: *swipe, swipe, Nashville as if.*

B: *Lo-fi HA!*

B: *How bout NO-FI.*

B: *She types:*

C: *"Beautiful morning! Can't wait to get out there!"*

B: *hashtag*

B: *getting things done,*

B: *hashtag*

C: *morning,*

B: *hashtag*

D: *beautiful-day,*

B: *hashtag*

C: *Melbourne,*

B: *hashtag*

A: *selfie*

B: *hashtag*

D: *no filter.*

- In your group discuss
 - How is Sally's behaviour influenced in this piece?
 - Have you ever felt addicted or trapped by social media?
 - Can you think of an example where social media or technology has influenced your life significantly?
- Make a story board of Sally's morning or your own using #hashtags and an image app such as Instagram, Tumbler or Pinterest.

DESIGN

Trapper asks you to question whether we live in a “prison or playground”. Now that you have seen the show discuss in small groups

- How this idea may have influenced the development of the set?
- How are the machines used as metaphors in the show?

- Select a text eg. One of your own spoken word pieces, one of the **Trapper** script excerpts or a piece from another play.
- Design a set design for the piece that would influence where and how the performer can perform the work. Consider other kinetic machines you could use in your design. Think about playgrounds, engineering and artworks you have seen.
- Draw your design by hand or using software you’re familiar with eg. CAD or photoshop.

LIGHTING/SOUND/VIDEO DESIGN

Think about how lighting, sound and video design are used in **Trapper**.

- What do they add to the design?
- Do they influence your mood or interpretation of any sections?

- Search for some animations and video design that inspire you.
- If your school has a projector experiment projecting on some different surfaces.
- Try performing some of your own original spoken word pieces in the environment you create.

PUT IT ALL TOGETHER

Now’s your chance to create your own mini-performance or play.

- Working in groups build one of your set designs.
- Try overlaying it with projection if possible.
- Embed your spoken word pieces in the set and machines created.
- Rehearse your performance
- Perform it to the rest of the class
- Film your final production.

Arena would love to see the work you create!

You can email spoken word pieces and/or films to info@arenatheatre.com.au

OR share them on social media with the hashtags

#prisonorplayground

#trapper

#arenatheatreco

FURTHER ACTIVITIES

- Research whether there is a spoken word scene in your local area. Find out whether there are open mic nights. Neighbourhood house, local libraries, community Facebook pages might be a good place to start. Think about whether you would like to perform your **Trapper** poem to a broader audience.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Arena Theatre Company Website – Trapper Page
<http://www.arenatheatre.com.au/show/trapper>

Arena Theatre Company Website – About Arena
<http://www.arenatheatre.com.au/>

If you would like to know hear more great Victorian Spoken word artists and learn more about the Australian Spoken Word scene look up:

- Going Down Swinging. <http://www.goingdownswinging.org.au/>
- Melbourne Spoken Word <http://melbournespokenword.com/>

FEEDBACK

Arena would love to know what you thought of **Trapper**.

You can use the hashtags below to post images and comments to social media. You can also tag Arena.

#prisonorplayground

#trapper

#arenatheatreco

Facebook: @arenatheatrecompany

Instagram: @arenatheatreco

Twitter: @arenatheatreco

If you would like to share any of your responses to the activities eg. original poems, videos of your performances you can email them through to Arena Theatre Company via info@arenatheatre.com.au

You can also sign up to Arena's Mailing List.
<http://www.arenatheatre.com.au/maillinglist>