

Angelique

Learning Resource

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This Learning Resource has been developed by isthisyours? with the support of Adelaide Festival Centre’s centrED Education Coordinator Renee Fort. We value your expertise as teachers who work with your students every day. Please feel free to use and adapt these resources to suit your educational context.

Adelaide Festival Centre’s centrED Schools Program is supported by The Department for Education and Child Development (DECD).



Synopsis

Angelique is beginning to see the world crack open in front of her very eyes. Her sister is missing, her parents are acting like strangers, and a talking bird haunts her day and night. Since that babbling parrot arrived, nothing has been the same. She knows at the end of it all only she can take action to make things right.

The Characters of Angelique

Angelique – a young girl of about 16	<i>Jude Henshall</i>
Carol/Mother – Angelique’s mother	<i>Anna Steen</i>
George/Father – Angelique’s father	<i>Louisa Mignone</i>
Evelyn – Angelique’s missing sister	<i>Ensemble</i>
Birdy/Trickster – an untrustworthy character	<i>Ellen Steele</i>
Teacher – Angelique’s teacher	<i>Nadia Rossi</i>
Maeve – fellow student and friend	<i>Louisa Mignone</i>
Naughty Students	<i>Ensemble</i>
Theatre Guides/Ushers	<i>Ensemble</i>

Creative Team

Director	Tessa Leong
Written by	Duncan Graham
Designer	Jonathon Oxlade
Design Realiser	Renate Henschke
Lighting	Chris Petridis
Composer	Alice Keath
Sound Design	Mick Jackson
Graphic Design	Sam Barratt
Producer	Jason Cross / insite arts
Stage Management	Georgi Paech
Production Manager	Lachlan Turner

Performed by isthisyours? Jude Henshall, Louisa Mignone, Nadia Rossi and Ellen Steele with Anna Steen and **The Usher Ensemble:** David Arcidiaco, Rachel Burke, Jessica Corrie, Mikayla Lynch, Alice Marsh, Annabel Matheson, Rebecca Mayo and Miles Teakle.

Plot Overview

The play begins with a family in crisis – Angelique’s sister Evelyn is missing, her mother is on the verge of breakdown and her father is determined to keep them all on track through sheer bloody minded positivity. All this comes undone the moment a bird flies into their living room – a living, breathing creature from the land her father works, who speaks in a persistent babble of a foreign language.

The arrival of Skye, as the bird comes to be called, sets Angelique on a path of discovery as she begins to question everything around her. Why won’t her father talk about his work? What has gone wrong in her parents’ marriage? Why did Evelyn run away?

As Angelique’s curiosity grows she is egged on by the arrival of ‘Birdy’, a bird like creature who haunts her day and night. Angelique is surrounded by a world in disarray – nothing is as it seems anymore. She seeks truth and counsel from her best friend and her teacher, which when coupled with the ever cryptic revelations from her mother and father, cast her further into a land of chaos and questioning.

The play, meanwhile, has also been derailed by Birdy’s arrival along with a series of letters delivered to members of the audience. Audience members are urged from their seats and taken deeper into Angelique’s world. They embody her fellow students, begin to question the motives and aspirations of one another and eavesdrop on the private happenings in Angelique’s life.

The pinnacle of Angelique’s discovery takes place at a birthday party her parents have thrown. Angelique and audience alike are welcomed to the celebration. Angelique is presented with a dress intended for her sister Evelyn. It is a gift, an acknowledgment that while Angelique has struggled, they foresee great things in her future should she join them in their vision of a great life together.

Angelique flees the scene and is goaded by Birdy to make a decision – will she choose her world of discovery, or the world chosen for her by her parents? The play ends with Angelique delivering her school speech about her chosen career path of anaesthesiology. She ascends into the sky. The audience leave and on their way out they are presented with a final letter.

Themes

Freedom vs. Choice

Many characters we encounter are at a state of flux in their lives – having to make choices that will affect their trajectory and immediately impact on the lives of those around them. Angelique is for the first time made aware how far the consequences of these decisions reach.

Parent/Child Relationships

Angelique’s family is in a state of upheaval – Evelyn is missing, her mother is on the verge of collapse and her father is intent on bullying them all into a state of normality. It is in this state that Angelique begins to see her parents as individuals. Everything has changed and so have they. What will their new relationship be?

Growing Up/Coming of Age

Angelique is on a precipice. The feeling that time and childhood are slipping away is exacerbated by the disappearance of her sister, Evelyn. Angelique begins to see how the decisions she makes as an adolescent will impact the woman she is to become.

Cast Interviews

Interview with Ellen Steele

What role do you play in Angelique?

I play 'Birdy', a trickster who infiltrates Angelique's world.

Who are they? What is their relationship with other characters in the story?

Birdy lives in the liminal spaces of Angelique's world – she's a character who encourages Angelique to question the seeming certainties in her life and her relationships with those she knows best.

What process(es) did you go through to bring your character to life?

Birdy is a lot of fun to play because she is a shape shifter of sorts. Birdy seeks out trouble and encourages Angelique to push the boundaries. She is intoxicating and provocative so it's been great playing with lots of extremes. I wanted to make Birdy's objective to incite chaos incredibly enticing to all she encounters.

How do you go about devising your work?

We have been devising work as a company for ten years so we have developed a very particular way of working together. We do lots of research, and lots of task based discovery on the floor. Angelique has been a wonderful project for us because we have joined forces some additional creatives who bring so much to the process. It has been an exciting shift for us to work with playwright Duncan Graham in particular as we have all worked together to generate material that Duncan has then woven into a wonderful script. It's been a great collaborative process across the board and one we are very excited to share with our audience.

What were some of the challenges you faced in bringing your role(s) to life?

Birdy is seemingly omnipotent at times, so it has been a great challenge discovering ways to make her influence apparent in every facet of Angelique's life. The shape-shifting nature of the character has also been a great challenge because it has meant I have had to explore huge shifts in characterisation – vocal extremes, physicalisation jumps, genre bending – all of which is a great gift to play with as a performer, as well as a whole lot of fun to explore on the floor.

What do you like most about your character(s)? What did you learn about/from them?

I like the trouble-maker in Birdy. She's not afraid to make some noise and rattle some cages if she sees' fit. I think while these characters can be dangerous, it's also great to have people around who are not afraid of confrontation, to ask difficult questions and make some noise if only to reveal some of the everyday fallacies that surround us and shake up the seeming certainties in life.

Why do you think it's important to tell these stories?

I think Angelique's story will be a fairly familiar one to most of our audience. Often I think we get stuck in patterns that seem so far out of our control. A series of decisions can set us up for a lifetime before we ever know it. I think we are generally very good at adhering to rules, or what is dictated to us, without questioning why the constructs surrounding us even really exist. I think theatre is a very powerful medium for making us question how we live our lives and hold a mirror up for us to see the effect of the decisions we make. A great theatrical experience for me is when you leave the space questioning some facet of your own life, and I very much hope we can do this with Angelique.

Interview with Bec Mayo

What role do you play in Angelique?

I play one of the 'ushers'.

Who are they? What is their relationship with other characters in the story?

The ushers are an ever-present but strange presence in the show. They are part of the story but they are also outside it. They help shape the world but are also shaped by it. Sometimes the characters know the ushers are there and sometimes they don't.

What process(es) did you go through to bring your character to life?

It was a long process to figure out what we needed the ushers to do but once we had that sorted we were all able to put our own personality into each character. The ushers might all seem the same but are definitely all individuals and so we spent time playing with what these differences could be.

How do you go about devising your work?

Every process is different and so I don't have any one particular way of devising work. In general though, I'm an 'outside-in' person. I like to start with the big external picture of a character or piece and then work my way in to all the nitty gritty details.

What are your character's objectives and super objective? (What is their motivation?)

My character is always doing their job. Everything they do is based on the objective to tell this story and take the audience through this experience.

What do you like most about your character(s)? What did you learn about/from them?

I like the strangeness and shape-shifter quality of my usher character. They start as one thing but become many others throughout the show. I think we might all have some of that capacity within us...

Why do you think it's important to tell these stories?

These stories are a crucial way for us to open our minds to new ideas or old ideas we've hidden away. They take us to places we aren't expecting and challenge us to dive head first into the unknown.

Post Show

Questions to Consider

How does Angelique's perception of her parents as individuals change throughout the play?

At many points in the play, Angelique is encouraged by others to choose her direction in life – name two instances where this happened and discuss how you think the conversations affected Angelique's trajectory.

Name the character/characters you think influenced Angelique and her decisions the most in the play. Describe how they influenced her and explain the impact of that relationship on the play's narrative.

We begin the play with Angelique and her parents having difficulty connecting as a family. Describe two occasions where they tried to breach the divide between parent and child.

In Angelique some of the actors play dual roles. What is the significance of this casting choice?

At the end of the play we are left with a final note from our letter writer. Who do you think the author was, and what impression do you think they are trying to leave with you?

What is the significance of the usher characters in the theatre?

Activity

Write a 'Tuesday' presentation about something you wish to achieve in your lifetime, outlining the circumstances or influences that set you on this path.

About isthisyours?

isthisyours? creates original and unconventional theatre for a smart, risk taking audience that revel in the possibilities of live theatre. The company ethos is to search for humour in the serious, and find significance in the ridiculous, all to challenge our world's seeming certainties. isthisyours? was formed in 2007 by Tessa Leong, Ellen Steele, Nadia Rossi, Louisa Mignone, and Jude Henshall. The company has created five original, self-devised and critically acclaimed theatre works. *Nathalie Ribout* adapted from Philippe Blasband in 2007, *Make Me Honest*, *Make Me Wedding Cake* in 2009, Winner of Adelaide Festival Centre's inSPACE Development Award, *Best We Forget* in 2010, presented by Tamarama Rock Surfers in Sydney and at the Brisbane Festival in 2012, *You Wanna Talk About It* at the Adelaide Fringe 2014, Winner of 'Weekly' Award for Best Theatre and Melbourne Fringe supported 'Tour Ready' award, and *The Awkward Years* at the Adelaide Fringe 2015, Winner of the Adelaide Festival Centre's inSPACE Development Award.

The new theatre installation by isthisyours?, *Angelique* represents an important culmination in the work of isthisyours?. It deepens new creative relationships with playwright Duncan Graham, designer Jonathon Oxlade, lighting designer Chris Petridis and composer Alice Keath. The Adelaide Festival Centre, who have repeatedly recognised the company with awards, residencies and in-kind support, have also offered the historic Her Majesty's Theatre for the performances as part of the 2017 Adelaide Festival Centre program.



Isthisyours? company Nadia Rossi, Jude Henshall, Louisa Mignone, Ellen Steele, Tessa Leong

Image: Andrew Howard

Isthisyours? Company Biographies

Nadia Rossi

Nadia Rossi completed a Bachelor of Creative Arts (Hons) from Flinders University Drama Centre and is a founding member of award winning theatre company isthisyours?. For the past three years Nadia has also held the position of Artist and Venues Coordinator for Adelaide Fringe.

Nadia's theatre credits include, for the State Theatre Company of South Australia; *Sista Girl, Three Sisters, The Memory of Water*. For Windmill Theatre Co. she has toured extensively both nationally and internationally with *Plop!, Cat and The Green Sheep*. For The Border Project; *I Am Not An Animal*. For isthisyours?; *Make Me Honest Make Me Wedding Cake* (Adelaide Festival Centre inSPACE Development Award), *Best We Forget, You Wanna Talk About It* (Melbourne Fringe Tour Ready Award 2014) and *Anglique*. Film Credits include *The Swimming Lesson* and *Drive By*.

Jude Henshall

Jude has worked extensively in theatre in Australia and internationally for companies including Bell Shakespeare, State Theatre Company of SA, Windmill Theatre Co., Patch Theatre Company, Flying Penguin Productions, Ontroerend Goed, The Border Project and isthisyours? theatre. She has been nominated for a Helpmann Best Supporting Actress in a Musical (*The Wizard of Oz*) and received numerous awards including Adelaide Critics Circle Award, SA Short Screen Best Performance and the Adelaide Advertiser's Best Performance.

Jude has a great deal of experience in working collaboratively to create big and small scale, new Australian work. As a founding member of isthisyours?, Jude has co-created, performed in or written music for *Nathalie Ribout, Make Me Honest Make Me Wedding Cake, Best We Forget, You Wanna Talk About It* and *The Awkward Years*. As an associate artist to The Border Project she has devised and performed in *Highway Rock'n'Roll Disaster, Disappearance, Trouble On Planet Earth, I Am Not An Animal, I, Animal* and *Escape From Peligro Island*. For Windmill, Jude has worked on almost every show created by Windmill since Rose Myers took the reigns as Artistic Director including *Girl Asleep, School Dance, Pinocchio, Grug, Grug and The Rainbow, The Wizard of Oz, Big Bad Wolf, Fugitive, and The Story Thieves*.

Jude is also an accomplished singer, and has just performed her Broadway debut with a season of Windmill's critically acclaimed *Pinocchio*. Film and television credits include *Sunshine and Oranges, The Swimming Lesson, Yuri Shima, Wire Through the Heart, and Rainshadow*. Jude has a passion for large scale events and has recently taken over the helm of directing the largest arts parade in the world – The Adelaide Fringe Parade. Jude graduated from Flinders Drama Centre in 2006 and is a proud member of Actors Equity.

Louisa Mignone

Louisa has worked extensively in theatre, film and television in Australia and abroad. She is also a founding member of the award-winning South Australian theatre company *isthisyours?*.

Louisa's credits include: **Theatre:** For Sport for Jove: *Antigone*. For STCSA/Belvoir: *Mortido*. For Griffin Theatre Company: *The Boys*. For The Tamarama Rock Surfers: *Pork Stiletto*. For Windmill Theatre Co.: *Fugitive*, and *Boom Bah!*. For *isthisyours?*: *Best We Forget*, *Make Me Honest*, *Make Me Wedding Cake*, *The Awkward Years*, and *Angelique*. For Bell Shakespeare Company: *Actors At Work*. **Television:** *Miss Fishers Murder Mystery*, *Rake* (2,3,4), *Fat Tony & Co*, *Wonderland*, *East West 101*, *My Place*, *Danger 5*, *Pandemic*. **Film:** *The Osiris Child: Science Fiction Volume One*, *Observance*, *Infini*, *Trust Fund*, *Two Fists One Heart*. Her short film *Latte e Miele* (Milk and Honey) she wrote, directed and starred in with Andrea Demetriades with support from Screen NSW and Metro Screen, premiered at Sydney's prestigious Flickerfest Film Festival and was chosen to screen as part of ABC iview's *Best of Flickerfest* series in 2016.

Ellen Steele

Ellen graduated from Flinders Drama Centre in 2006. Since graduating she has worked extensively in theatre throughout Australia, Asia and North America, with companies including the State Theatre Company of South Australia (*Between Two Waves*, *Holding the Man*, *Maestro*), Vitalstatistix (*Love*, *Ruby Bruise*), Slingsby Theatre Company (*Wolf*), The Border Project (*I Am Not An Animal*, *I, Animal*), Windmill Theatre Co. (*Grug*, *Girl Asleep*, *Big Bad Wolf*, *Grug and the Rainbow*) and Patch Theatre Company (*Mr McGee and the Biting Flea*).

Ellen is also a founding member of independent theatre company *isthisyours?* whose productions include *Nathalie Ribout*, *Make Me Honest*, *Make Me Wedding Cake*, *Best We Forget*, *You Wanna Talk About It* and *The Awkward Years*.

Ellen has also developed work with independent artists and companies throughout Adelaide and Melbourne as part of Next Wave Festival (Zoe Meagher – *Goodbye*, CSIRAC, *Spilt Second* – *Kids Can Get Lost*), Adhocracy (*Little Black Box - Au Revoir Abattoir*), *isthisyours?* – (Audio Commentary), *Aphids* – (*Crawl Me Blood*), FOLA (*I Left You This Way*) and Sanctum Theatre (*The Plains*).

Tessa Leong

Tessa Leong wrote, directed and starred in her first show at Year One Assembly: it was about Martians. Now working across theatre, performance and live art as a director, deviser and dramaturg, Tessa is a founding member of *isthisyours?*, an Adelaide collective making new performance.

In 2009, *isthisyours?* won the Adelaide Fringe inSPACE Development Award with their work *Make Me Honest, Make Me Wedding Cake*. In 2010, *isthisyours?* premiered *Best We Forget* at the Adelaide Fringe Festival, which then in 2012 featured in the Tamarama Rock Surfers Season in Sydney and then was curated as part of the Under The Radar Brisbane Festival. In 2014, *You Wanna Talk About It* premiered at the Adelaide Fringe and won the Melbourne Fringe Tour Ready Award. *isthisyours?* have been selected as part of the HotHouse Month in the Country Residency, Adhocracy and Incubator at Vitalstatistix, Country Arts SA Forged Residency and the MAPS SA program for independent artists.

Tessa also worked with artists Emma Beech and James Dodd as part of The Australian Bureau of Worthiness. The bureau is a micro-residency model which asks people 'What makes your day worth it?' The work has been made in Horsham, Hindley St Adelaide, Port Adelaide, Geelong, The Falls Festival, Viborg (Denmark) and Goolwa (Kumuwuki). She co-directed work *Life is Short and Long* with Emma at Vitalstatistix in October 2016.

Her work with Contemporary Asian Australian Performance, (formerly Performance 4a), Sydney Theatre Company, Ontroerend Goed, Griffin Theatre Company, Vitalstatistix, State Theatre Company of SA, Restless Dance and Force Majeure continues to feed her love of new and challenging work. Tessa has tutored, directed and mentored at University of NSW, University of Wollongong and Flinders University on creative and academic projects.

Tessa was a 2013 Griffin Theatre Studio Artist and in 2014 was chosen by the Australia Council for the Arts to attend the Avignon Festival to participate in an international conference for practicing artists. Tessa was selected for Time Place Space Nomad in 2015 where she was one of 25 interdisciplinary artists from across Australia to live and work for two weeks in regional Victoria.

Tessa is currently in development with *Blue is the Distance* with Muriel Imbach and Cedric Leproust in Switzerland with support of the Australia Council. She is also in residence at Powerhouse Youth Theatre to develop her new work *Swimming Pool*.