



KNACKZINE

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robertson

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GETTING CREATIVE

'what we
could do'
by sophie
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FEATURE ARTICLE

'the stages of
our stars'
by thomas
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**AIDEN McHARG ON MAGIC,
NOIR, AND PLAYING POE**

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Aiden McHarg

SUBMIT TO US!

Got something creative that you'd like to share? Maybe it's a short story, essay, comic, poem, art, etc.

Use the subject header 'Getting Creative with The Knack' and send it to theknacktheatre@gmail.com and we might put it in our next issue!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Knack acknowledges that we live and work on the stolen land of the Kulin Nation and pay our respects to the elders past, present and emerging.

NOTES FROM THE KNACK

In explaining who we are here at The Knack, I keep drawing parallels between us and 70s punk bands, and I generally just assume everyone knows what I'm on about. But incase you're not up to speed on the ins and outs of the early punk era, allow me to elaborate.

Most people think punk means spiked hair, leather jackets, jeans held together with safety pins, that sort of thing. And they're not wrong. They tend to think of punks as angry, and rebellious. Again, not wrong.

But in a list of punk ideologies, top of the list is Mutual Aid. That means taking responsibility, caring for one another, and changing political conditions if necessary to facilitate that aid.

Our main goal is to help emerging artists, to get them seen, heard, experienced, what have you. Getting your work out there is sometimes an insurmountable task for young artists and we want to change that without asking them to compromise. If that's not punk, I don't know what is.

~SB

WHAT'S HAPPENING

KNACK-WISE

Rewild (table read)

by James Robertson
19 May, The Last Jar

Constellations

by Nick Payne
6-11 June, The Butterfly Club

ELSE-WISE

Broken Record

by Emily Farrell
25 May-4 June, Club Voltaire

Point8Six

By Tim Wotherspoon
25 May-2 June, La Mama Theatre

Mor(t)ality

By Alexander Dymalovski
2-4 June, The Butterfly Club

She Wrote the Letter

Devised by Sabina Gerardi,
Kaine Hansen and Clare Taylor.
22 June-3 July, La Mama Theatre

Tableau Noir

by Aiden McHarg
4-9 July, The Butterfly Club

THE STAGES OF OUR STARS

BY THOMAS GREGORY

It is a universal experience to see the stars of the night sky as the story of humanity. While first nations people tell Dreaming stories of the seven sisters of the Pleiades or the three brothers of the Orion constellation, more superstitious cultures believed the stars also provided the story of our futures.

The Christian Bible speaks of a star that predicted the coming Messiah, while Hellenistic Astrology had existed seven hundred years prior. At the same time, Astrologists in China would teach that your life was predicted at the time of your birth, and the position of the planets on that day.

This "astronomical predestination" has been so ingrained into our combined history that it even appears in performance. Modern researchers mapping archeological sites have shown the creation of theatres used astrology as architecture. According to George Pantazis, from the National Technical University of Athens, the founders of the temples of Dionysus, Delphi and Argos "built them in this specific position, so as the audience to be able to observe the corresponding constellation to the celebrated god." The theatres of ancient Greece would

have their stages covered in golden stars and other jewels.

Shakespeare himself was conflicted about the concept. Cassius, in *Julius Caesar*, advises "The fault, dear Brutus, lies not within the stars, but in ourselves" but Kent, in *King Lear*, laments that "the stars above us govern our conditions". How much are our lives controlled by those mysterious beings in the sky, and how much is simply a natural consequence of our own decisions?

A popular answer today is found in the concept of the multiverse. Originally posited by genius physicists exploring Quantum Theory, today it is a focus of much of our entertainment and lay philosophy. The multiverse now offers the core conflict in the smothering entertainment of the Marvel Cinematic Universe, while more independent productions such as "Everything Everywhere All at Once" produce compelling stories that hinge on accepting that everything, and nothing, matters.

Nick Payne's *Constellations* is yet another brilliant tale that relies on the idea that the world we inhabit is just one in an infinite number, and that our free will exists only in that it decides what universe

we choose to live in. We all hope to understand this paradox of choices and inevitability, but we likely never will. Making a choice is so simple that we do it dozens of times a day. The very idea of having a choice is so complex that we will likely understand the stars before we understand what it means to be in control.

"On the one hand," says Dimi Volcon, director of The Knack Theatre's production of *Constellations*, "the stars are familiar to us, and on the other hand, the greatest mystery and maybe we will have never chance to touch the stars and

solve their riddle. The play is about how everything in our life is easy to understand, and on the other hand, how we don't know ourselves yet."

There's a wondrous nature to the stars - for we all look at the same ones, wherever we are. In the end, it may not matter if they tell our futures, or if we have any control over them ourselves. What matters more might be that we look up and find hope, and peace in knowing we are part of something infinitely bigger than we can even imagine.

~TG

THE BUTTERFLY CLUB
presents
the Knack Theatre's production of

CONSTELLATIONS

a play by Nick Payne

June 6 to June 11
6:45pm


THE BUTTERFLY CLUB
5 Carson Place (off Lt Collins)
thebutterflyclub.com



A play about free will and friendship; it's also about quantum multiverse theory, love, and honey.

ARTIST PROFILE

JAMES ROBERTSON



James Robertson is a theatre director and writer from Naarm/Melbourne. As founder of Plain English Theatre Company, he promotes the creation of daring new theatre with an emphasis on exploring environmentalism, mental health, and the problems facing masculinity. The company just finished a very successful run of *Have a Good Night, Walter* at La Mama Courthouse. James sits down to talk with The Knack about his relationship with the arts.

WHAT GOT YOU STARTED IN THE ARTS? WHAT ARE YOU MOST PASSIONATE ABOUT?

I didn't much like the way that high school performances were put on (mainly because so many people only got tiny roles), so I wrote a script in year 7 that I thought was far better than *The Jungle Book* and proposed it to the head of drama to be put on. He politely declined, but instead put me on the course to direct the show myself, giving me my start as a writer and director of theatre. I haven't really stopped since!

WHAT DO YOU THINK IT MEANS TO REBEL AS AN ARTIST?

I've always seen the appeal in going against the status quo, in art and in life. I believe there is no life worth living unless you live it your own way, and the same goes for art. Having something important to say about the state of the world is by its definition a way of challenging the engendered norms of life. So by creating any art that has something to say against the status quo, I believe you are contributing to art's progression into humanity's future.

WHAT PERFORMANCE FROM THE PAST WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE BEEN A PART OF?

The first production of *The Threepenny Opera* by Bertolt Brecht and Elizabeth Hauptmann.

WHERE DO YOU SEE THE PERFORMANCE ARTS HEADING IN THE FUTURE?

I can't help but be pessimistic about the current state of arts funding and new works today. All I can hope for is to be a part of the group of people that fight for the future of the performing arts.

WHAT UPCOMING PROJECT ARE YOU MOST EXCITED ABOUT?

Fisher at the Meat Market in June. Writing, directing and acting in this piece has been a major challenge. It deals with heavy-handed

misogyny and toxic masculinity in our current society, displaying how men can be forced to hide the truth of themselves in the face of harmful societal norms. Details can be found on the Plain English Theatre Company's Facebook and Instagram!

WHAT WE COULD DO

BY SOPHIE HARUNA CHALMERS

"Murder hornets" is an understandable misnomer for the Japanese hornet, considering they are in fact the largest hornet in the world. Their local name literally translates to Sparrow Bee for a reason; they're massive. They're also aggressively predatory, their diets consisting of other hornets, mantises, and bees. They're known to tear through bee armies that outnumber them thousands to one, occupy the honey-filled hive, and make it their own. On top of that, their stinger venom can cause kidney failure in humans.

What horror it must be to be the bee that never knew of these Giants. Behemoths tearing through your community like so many careless claws through paper. Slaughtered sisters sloughed out of hive and home, brother drones looted and littered in pieces. They take your home, take your honey, take your Queen's head into theirs and crunch.

You starve alone in the winter, not knowing what exactly they were.

There are bees, however, that know their enemy.

The unprepared, the unlearned, attack individually in the air. Their single stingers go to waste first by glancing off the hornet's armour, and then by not being potent enough. A rain of kamikaze insects are but confetti to the Hornet's conquest.

The bees who share a history of trauma under the Hornets know to lure them in. Smell of honey, pretend to be hurt, trap the scout under their low hanging ceiling. Then they surge.

A legionary wave weighs the wings down, catching and clinging to the clawed legs. More bear down on its banded body with their own in a rippling rage as the Hornet is swallowed in the swarm.

Finally, the bees roar in unison, and roast the Hornet alive with the friction of their fury. Some bees may not survive, but the invader is defeated, curled into a cooked hook.

I wonder at times about the first cluster of bees that figured this out. I wonder when they realised that their single swords were not enough, but the weight of their comrades combined, was. I wonder, sometimes, of the savage satisfaction that must come with suffocating a predatory parasite - one that has the audacity to evict

you from your own home, steal the fruits of your labour, and kill you while they're at it - with the sheer heat of your righteous screams.

In some parts of Japan, hornet larvae are harvested for easily accessible protein. There is also a specialty sake that is infused with hornets, and apparently the bite of hornet venom is exquisite.

Eat the Hornets.

~SHC

MEET THE KNACK

ROSIE OCHTMAN



Rosie is an actor and dancer originally from rural country NSW. In 2020, she relocated to Melbourne and graduated from a Bachelor of Theatre and Performance (UNE, 2020), and was awarded the Peter Elkin Drama Prize and the UNE Players Prize.

Rosie has appeared in 4:48 Psychosis (2022), Shopping and Fucking (2021), A Stone's Throw (2020), Blackrock (2019),

Some Explicit Polaroids (2019), Love and Information (2018), Speaking in Tongues (2018), Spring Awakening (2017), and Have A Good Night Walter, premiering next week at La Mama. She has been involved as a voice actor in various projects and has 12 years of dance training and experience in the styles of Ballet, Jazz, Contemporary, and Lyrical.

When she's not doing all of that, Rosemary spends her time painting flowers, reading mystery novels, and drinking copious amounts of tea.

AIDEN MCHARG

ON MAGIC, NOIR, AND PLAYING POE



I'm Aiden McHarg, I studied acting at Fed Uni and graduated in 2020. I have been a magician and mime for the last 12 years and now an apprentice bubble maker.

When I was 12, my brother's friend got a book on how to do magic. One day, he and my brother were at our place, doing magic tricks. I trolled them for an hour asking them how it worked until they finally cracked. My brother eventually lost interest in magic, but I kept messing around with it. I ended up creating my own tricks and it went from there. That being said, I never wanted magic to be my career because when you're a magician, that's all you're ever known for. Magic is limited, and I felt that I could get stuck in that and wouldn't be able to do any more interesting things. Acting, in contrast, allows me to pursue that.

In high school I was doing such a wealth of things that I had no idea what I wanted to do as a career. But I had a look at the things that

I was interested in and realised that except for dance and drama, all of my other interests led to a desk job. So I decided to study performing arts.

Earlier this year, I played the role of Edgar A. Poe for The Knack. The biggest challenge in preparing to play this character was definitely perfecting the accent. Voice is something that I've worked on quite a bit because in the past it's been where I've gotten stuck. Working on where the voice sat naturally and where it went and why.

That's not usually how I prepare for a character but, in this case, it informed my interaction with it. I found an interesting balance in Poe's level of congeniality - how casual he could be while also formal. When I researched Poe, I found that he was passionate about what he did while also academic about it, so I practiced the accent with his poems. I would read Annabelle Lee to myself while walking around the house. I would read The Raven, which helped me to do accent work, character work, AND script analysis. It was a triple-edged sword!

In the end, to be able to relax into the character and play with

the other people on the stage with an accent that I perfected over the course of many months was really good.

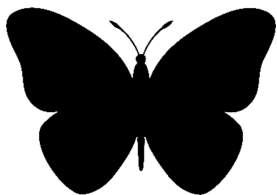
After playing Poe, I started working in a show of my own, called Tableau Noir. Tableau Noir is a short 15-20 min play that I've workshopped into a fully-fleshed show. It's a show that combines my skills as a magician and as a mime and brings them to theatre work. Tableau Noir explores the

idea of drawers coming to life – it is an homage for Noir, which makes it all the more interesting.

In a nutshell, I would say that Tableau Noir isn't a magic show. It is a theatre show. A movement based on Noir that uses illusion to add a sense of wonder. The story isn't meant to be complex, the illusions aren't meant to be , they're meant to be beautiful.

~AM

FRIENDS OF THE KNACK



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SUBMIT YOUR WORK

AT THE KNACK, WE PRIDE OURSELVES IN STAGING ORIGINAL WORK FROM EMERGING WRITERS.

WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR NEW WORK THAT PUSHES BOUNDARIES, THINGS THAT HAVEN'T SEEN THE LIGHT OF DAY AND HAVE SOMETHING NEW TO SAY.

WE ACCEPT SUBMISSIONS FROM EVERYONE AND ANYONE, LETTING YOUR WORK SPEAK FOR YOU.

SCRIPT SUBMISSIONS ARE AU\$15. THIS ALLOWS US TO COVER ONGOING OPERATION COSTS.

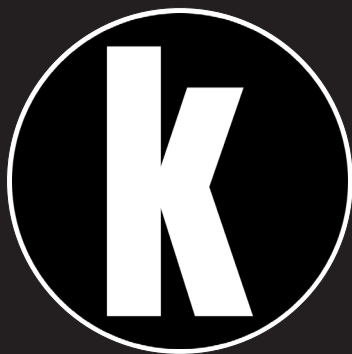
IF YOU'D ALSO LIKE TO RECEIVE NOTES ON YOUR SCRIPT, WE ARE HAPPY TO DO THAT AS WELL. PLEASE VIEW OUR SCRIPT SERVICES PAGE ON OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION.

YOU WILL RETAIN ALL RIGHTS TO YOUR WORK AND RECEIVE PAYMENT IF YOUR WORK IS PRODUCED BY THE KNACK THEATRE.

IF YOU'D LIKE US TO CONSIDER YOUR SCRIPT FOR PRODUCTION, PLEASE CONTACT US AT THEKNACKTHEATRE@GMAIL.COM.

*"I THINK ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS PUNK
BROUGHT BACK WAS THE WHOLE CONCEPT OF STAYING
INDEPENDENT AND DOING THINGS YOURSELF."*

JELLO BIAFRA



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