

REGIONAL ARTS VICTORIA

EDUCATION & FAMILIES



PICNIC KAGE

On The Road
29 Feb – 11 March
2016

Ideal for Years 8 – 12 VCE

KAGE

The 2016 Education and Families Program is
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CONTENTS

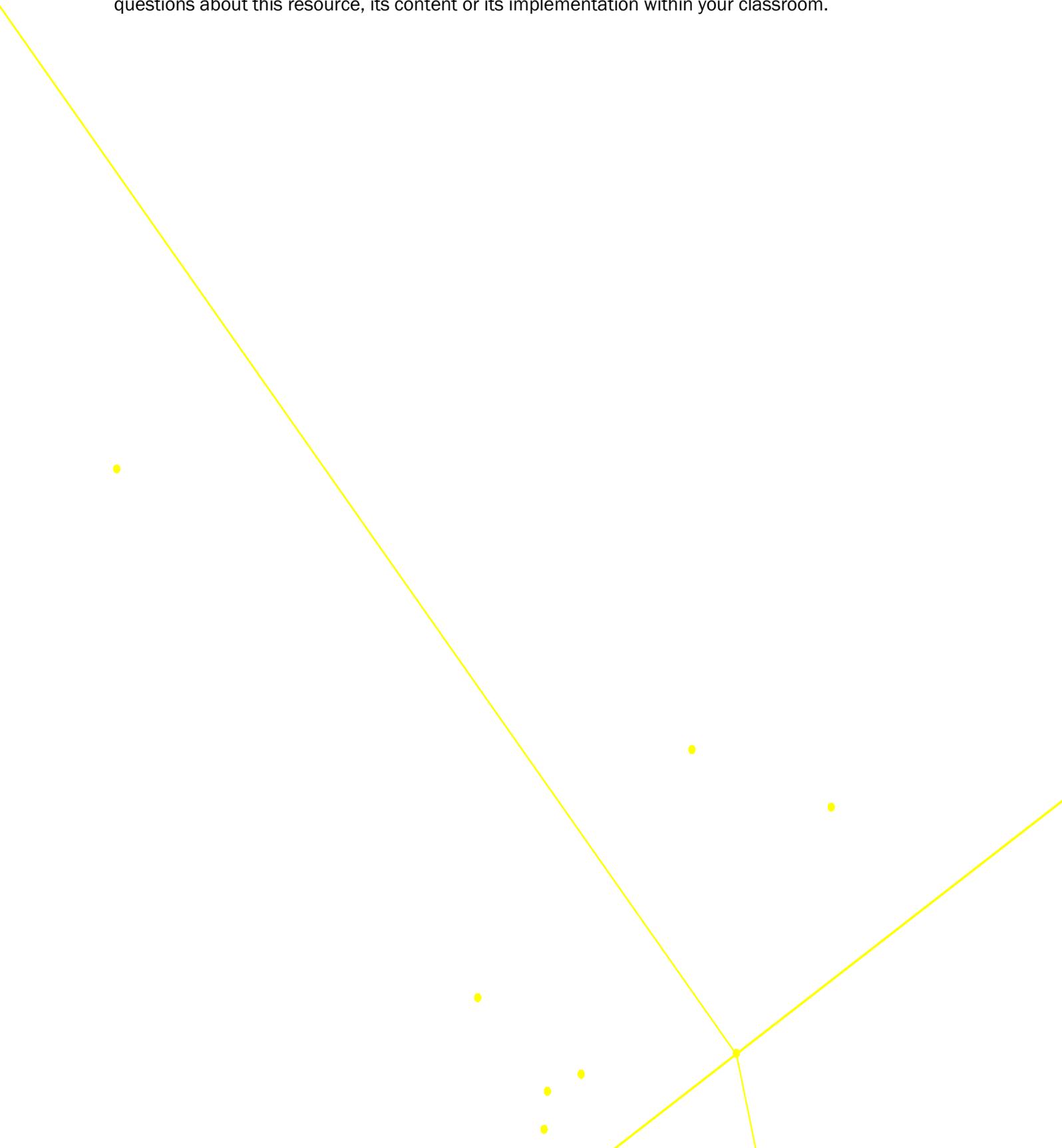
CONTENTS.....	1
ABOUT THIS RESOURCE	2
ABOUT REGIONAL ARTS VICTORIA	3
EDUCATION & FAMILIES TEAM.....	4
CURRICULUM LINKS - Victorian Curriculum.....	5
INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAM.....	7
SUGGESTED PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES	8
SUGGESTED POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES	11
FURTHER RESOURCES	17



ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

This resource has been created to provide teachers and students with some preliminary ideas as to how to extend their experience of *PICNIC* beyond the stage and into the classroom. The activities are designed to be open-ended and multi-ability. They may need differentiation for your specific cohort.

The performances and workshops included in the Education & Families program are designed to offer students engaging performing arts experiences with strong links to the Victorian Curriculum and to VEYLDF, and VCE subjects where appropriate. Each Education & Families performance varies in its content and as a result the scope for integration across the curriculum varies. Please feel free to contact the Education and Families team on [\(03\) 9644 1808](tel:0396441808) or at education@rav.net.au if you have any questions about this resource, its content or its implementation within your classroom.



ABOUT REGIONAL ARTS VICTORIA

Regional Arts Victoria inspires art across the state. Through creative facilitation, touring, education, specialised resources, artistic projects and advocacy, we develop and sustain creative communities and artistic practice all over Victoria.

Regional Arts Victoria is an independent, not-for-profit, membership-based organisation working in long-term partnerships with every level of government, fostering contemporary and innovative regional cultural practice across five decades. We advise and impact on decision-making across multiple portfolios and levels of government.

Regional Arts Victoria is the peak body for regional artists and arts organisations, and the leading organisation for regional creative practice in Victoria.

Our artistic program

Regional Arts Victoria inspires creative communities, creative places and creative catalysts.

CREATIVE COMMUNITIES	CREATIVE PLACES	CREATIVE CATALYSTS
Regional Arts Victoria stimulates and connects our state's communities of practice.	Regional Arts Victoria champions the places where art is made, experienced and discussed.	Regional Arts Victoria fosters current and next generation creative capacity and practice.
<p>Members and membership services: fostering active and engaged artists and arts organisations across the state; supporting arts professionalism through specialised resources and professional insurance</p> <p>Resources, workshops and events program of forums and activities through our Regional Cultural Partnerships Program</p> <p>Networks: hosting specialised state-wide and national networks (including Regional Cultural Network, Festivals Network, Arts Teachers); participating actively in regional development networks; accessing and developing New Networks at membership and organisational level</p> <p>Strategic partnerships with governments, universities, tourism, planning and development bodies as well as arts and cultural organisations</p>	<p>Performing Arts Touring: opportunities, tools and support for regional and remote touring across Victoria and Australia</p> <p>Education & Families: performances, workshops and projects in schools, accompanied by AusVELS aligned teacher resources</p> <p>State-wide place-making projects including –</p> <p><i>Home is where the hall is:</i> November's month-long celebration of arts events in regional community halls</p> <p><i>Eco-Cubby:</i> promoting the principles of sustainable design and architecture in schools, hands-on</p> <p><i>Small Town Transformations:</i> innovative projects of significant local and regional impact, combined with state-wide thought leadership on "How can art transform your town?"</p>	<p>Advocacy and leadership: leading state-wide arts conversations; creating exposure for regional artists; providing strategic advice</p> <p>Creative Leadership Program: annual program for emerging arts and thought leaders</p> <p>Creative Arts Facilitators: our regional staff team work directly with artists and communities, in close partnership with local and federal government</p> <p>Access and diversity including Indigenous engagement and cultural exchange</p> <p>Grants programs: facilitating and supporting high quality applications to quick response, presentation and project grants, administered on behalf of state and federal government</p>

EDUCATION & FAMILIES TEAM

Regional Arts Victoria's Education & Families team pride ourselves on providing relevant and exciting activities for children and young people that are complementary to both Victorian and Australian curriculums. All of our tours come with a free set of education resources to further enrich your arts experience.

Our team is available to provide local contacts and links to research, and offer advice on how to make the most of the arts at your school or centre. Our office is a resource for Victorian teachers, so we encourage you to make use of us!

We also provide significant subsidy assistance (up to 50% of program costs) to eligible remote and disadvantaged schools. Your school may be eligible so please contact us to find out more!



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CURRICULUM LINKS – Victorian Curriculum

Learning Areas	Capabilities
<p>The Arts</p> <p>Drama</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making & Responding • Students learn as artist and as audience • Students learn through making and responding <p>Dance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body awareness and technical and expressive skills • Choreographic and performance skills • Aesthetic, artistic and cultural understandings of dance • Respect for an knowledge of the diverse purpose of dance <p>Media Arts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conceptual and perceptual ideas and representations in media • Understanding of the use of the techniques, materials, processes and technologies 	<p>Personal & Social Capability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise, understand and evaluate the expression of emotions • Demonstrate an awareness of personal qualities and factors that contribute to resilience • Develop empathy for an understanding of others • Recognise the importance of supporting diversity for a cohesive community • Understand how relationships are developed • Use interpersonal skills to establish and maintain respectful relationships • Work effectively in teams and develop strategies to manage challenging situations constructively
<p>English</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn to listen to, read, view, speak, write, create and reflect on increasingly complex and sophisticated spoken, written and multimodal texts • Appreciate, enjoy and use the English language in all its variations • Develop interest and skills in inquiring into the aesthetic aspects of texts 	<p>Critical and Creative Thinking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of thinking processes and an ability to manage and apply these intentionally • Skills and learning dispositions that support logical, strategic, flexible and adventurous thinking • Confidence in evaluating thinking and thinking processes across a range of familiar and unfamiliar context.

VCE DRAMA	Key Knowledge and Key Skills
Unit 1: Dramatic Story Telling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating, sustaining and developing a role/character • How experiences and stories can be given form and meaning • Ways stimulus material can be researched, given meaning and shaped into a performance • Naturalistic and non-naturalistic performance styles • Dramatic elements, theatrical conventions • Playmaking techniques • Analysing devised performance
Unit 2: Non-naturalistic Australian Drama	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using Australia as inspiration • Playmaking techniques • Non-naturalistic performance styles • Processes for documenting playmaking • How story is given form and meaning • Manipulate dramatic elements • Incorporate stagecraft • Analysing a devised performance
Unit 3: Devised Non-naturalistic Ensemble Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysing non-naturalistic performance

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exploring the ways in which non-naturalistic performance styles and conventions are used in performance• The ways in which characters are represented• The ways in which expressive skills are used• The ways in which dramatic elements, conventions and stagecraft are manipulated
Unit 4: Non-Naturalistic Solo Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Playmaking techniques to extract dramatic potential from stimulus material• Devise a solo performance to a given stimulus• Use dramatic elements, conventions and expressive skills to convey and enhance the performance• Describe non-naturalistic qualities of a performance

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAM

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Part nightmare, part time capsule, part gift. A surreal physical poem.

PICNIC explores notions of innocence, naivety, creativity and chaos as Gerard's character cleverly leaps between childlike regression and adult responsibility.

PICNIC combines nuanced and athletic choreography, machine gun monologues, illusion and intelligent humour to present an absurd meditation on the importance of creativity.

Conceived, choreographed and performed by **Gerard Van Dyck**. Writer: **Marieke Hardy**. Composer: **Alisdair Macindoe**.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Gerard is a Melbourne based dance artist. His training and performance experience includes dance, acting, slapstick, puppetry, motion capture and aerial flying. Gerard co-founded KAGE with Kate Denborough 18 years ago and has contributed choreography and performed in nearly all of KAGE's award winning works. In 2001 Gerard created his first solo work and through touring regionally and nationally he clocked up 50+ performances. He has toured extensively with BalletLab and Polyglot Puppet Theatre, and worked with artists such as Nat Cursio, Danielle Micich, Eleventh Hour Theatre, Legs on the Wall, and desoxy Theatre. Gerard has performed in music videos, directed circus and comedy, and provided dramaturgy for ballet. Gerard is a highly sought after teacher of dance, partnering techniques and movement awareness across Melbourne. He co-hosts a regular dance segment on Triple R's Smart Arts program, he is a Marriage Celebrant, and he is a dance panel member of the Green Room Awards Association.

Production History

Premiere

18-30 August 2015

fortyfivedownstairs

Melbourne

Development

19 Jan - 1 Feb 2015

Hot House Theatre Wodonga

A Month in the Country

29 June - 14 August

Abbotsford Convent, Melbourne



SUGGESTED PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES

The following activities are designed for teachers and students to explore before seeing PICNIC. They aim to get you in the zone with regard to the structure, style, themes and ideas that are part of the performance.

1. PICNICS – What, when and why (Critical Thinking)



DISCUSS: In PICNIC, creator Gerard Van Dyck uses the idea of a *picnic* and all it conjures to make a solo performance. Consider the following:

- What is a picnic? Do you like picnics?
- What occasions might demand or call for a picnic?
- What is standard picnic equipment?
- Why do you think people “picnic”?
- What do you take when you go on a picnic?
- What do you think is important about picnics? Why do people picnic?
- If you could invite a group of six famous people on a picnic with you who would they be?
- Would you picnic alone?
- What would be ten of the most unusual places to have a picnic?

What do you think of this description?

*A **picnic** is an excursion at which a meal is eaten outdoors (al fresco or en plein air), ideally taking place in a beautiful landscape such as a park, beside a lake or with an interesting view.*

2. DRAMATIC PICNICS – STORY TELLING (Drama and English)

SHARE: Pair and share a funny/tragic/disastrous/awkward/embarrassing/memorable or ordinary picnic story with someone in your class. Describe when, where it was, how old you were, the occasion, whether you wanted to go, who came, what type of food was eaten, what happened to make it what it was e.g. A storm came, the ants ate the food, cricket match, forgot the food, got bogged or lost etc.

WRITE: Write down the key elements from your shared picnic story:

- Who – who are the “characters” – names, age, gender, relationship
- Where – where was the picnic, describe the setting
- Why – why did the picnic occur – birthday, wedding, holiday, sporting event, bbq?
- When – how old were you and why were you there?
- What – describe in dot points what happened to make it memorable

*In our family, Aunty Jan brings the pasta salad. Don't question that. It's just how it's always been.
One Christmas someone else brought one and she stabbed them in the arm with a fork
(from PICNIC)*

3. STRUCTURE AND FORM (Drama, Dance & Media Arts)

The creator of *PICNIC*, Gerard Van Dyck, chose a non-naturalistic way to tell a story. He chose the medium of theatre and dance. He could have written a story or told it simply, sitting in a chair, or made a short film.

PICNIC draws on the following styles and structural devices to create a performance piece that uses the great Australian tradition of 'picnicking' as an analogy for happiness.

Movement pieces – five movement pieces reflecting ideas about picnics, about loneliness about dreams about being a child.

Straight story telling – small episodes that reflect, that tell incidents, talk about love, about friendship, about work, including directly addressing the audience.

Digital blogging – 694 days of digital diary. Excerpts of these accompany some of the story telling or are some of the episodes.

Physical theatre – the use of physical theatre to work with and around objects in the space.

What is contemporary dance? The following description and links may be helpful!

Contemporary dance describes a range of techniques and styles used in classes, workshops and dance choreography. Contemporary dance was developed in the early 20th century as a reaction against the rigid techniques of ballet. Pioneers such as Isadora Duncan and Martha Graham searched for ease of movement using the body's natural lines and energy, allowing a greater range and fluidity of movement than conventional dance techniques. Contemporary dance is characterised by its versatility: contemporary can be dance to almost any style of music or united with other dance forms to create new styles of movement. Contemporary seeks to work with the natural alignment of the body, and is therefore safe and accessible for beginners. At the same time, the ease of movement promoted by contemporary dance technique allows experienced dancers to push new boundaries of body movement.

Contemporary dance is characterised by its versatility. It can be danced to almost any style of music, or united with other dance forms to create new styles of movement. It can include site-specific works and the movements are often visually arresting. The dance addresses current contemporary cultural themes, often in a global context, and is deliberately open to audience interpretation and interaction. It often references other cultural forms, especially with visual and contemporary arts, theatre, film, music and lighting.

'Contemporary dance' has different meanings in different places. Different terms are used: modern dance, post-modern dance, 'new' dance, experimental dance, dance improvisation and contact improvisation as well as other terms in different languages. It is not contemporary artists and companies working in the fields of classical ballet, modern ballet, jazz dance, show dance or other forms of popular dance.

Source: <http://australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/contemporary-dance>

Links: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mvkUBflq50I> (Bangarra)

Links: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZ7aYQtIldg> (Stomp)



Kaleidoscopic



Mosaic



Pastiche

What might you call a performance piece that uses a whole range of different styles and structural devices?

DISCUSS: What do each of the above terms mean? Recollect these terms and their meaning after you have seen the production.

4. MEMES! (English, Media Arts and Critical Thinking)

In PICNIC, the character of Nick talks about how people communicate, including the limitations of certain communication forms such as memes: *Grandma sent me a meme the other day. It said: 'The problem is not the problem. The problem is your attitude about the problem.'* (From PICNIC)

What is a MEME? A meme is "an idea, behavior, or style that spreads from person to person within a culture". An Internet meme may take the form of an image, hyperlink, video, picture, website, or hashtag. It may be just a word or phrase, including an intentional misspelling. Memes tend to spread from person to person via social networks, blogs, direct email, or news sources. They may relate to various existing Internet cultures or subcultures, often created or spread on various websites. Memes rely on the relationship between the image, the text and the concept/text/popular culture or thematic reference.

Here are some examples of picnic memes:



DISCUSS: What is the relationship between the image, the text and the idea in these three memes? What do you need to know in order to "get it"? How are these memes making a comment about picnics? How many meanings and interpretations can you arrive at in your class?

CREATE: In this activity you are going to create your own meme about picnics. Select an image of a picnic from the internet OR use your smart phone to create and take one. Then upload or download and create some text that makes a funny, satirical, dramatic, quirky, political or other comment about picnics.

SHOW: Have a class slideshow of the memes. Discuss which are the most effective or have the strongest responses and why. **Is a meme an effective way to communicate an idea? What other memes could you make that reflect on and respond to the performance of PICNIC?**



DISCUSS: What physical skills is the performer displaying here?

SUGGESTED POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES

The following activities are designed for exploring after seeing the performance. Hope you enjoy them.

1. PICNIC STRUCTURE (Dance)

MAKE: Working in pairs, threes or fours, create each of the following in only ten seconds. Have someone call out each one and then count down from 10 to zero at which point the pair or group freezes.

Esky, packet of sausages, thermos flask, picnic blanket, roast chicken, knives and forks, packet of napkins, picnic umbrella, basket, sandwich, cup of tea, fly spray, giant ant, bread roll, sauce bottle.

CHOREOGRAPHY:

In this activity you use your dance skills to create the series of still and moving tableaux

- Stay in your pair or group and select four of the structures from the previous activity.
- As a group create movement montage using movement
- Pay attention to elevation, falling, gesture, locomotion, turning or rotation and stillness as ways to move
- Pay attention to the elements of movement – time, space and energy.
- Move into the next, object perhaps using a different movement dynamic and different time.
- Remember – everyone must be part of the object (no humans).
- Spotlight/perform each group movement sequence for the rest of the class to see.
- Discuss how effectively each group used time, space and energy, dynamic, time, levels, locomotion and stillness to create the choreography.
- How does the work reflect what was performed in Picnic?

2. POST SHOW QUESTIONS (Drama, Critical Thinking)

- Recall as much of the performance as you can – words, actions, lighting, sound, music, props, digital components
- Write these on a whiteboard or play with a google doc you can all add to
- Describe the performance space – where did you sit?
- How would you describe the theatrical ‘styles’ in the show?
- How was movement used?
- How was stagecraft – set pieces, props, sound, and lighting – used in the performance?
- Were objects ‘transformed’ by the performer?
- What was your favourite part?
- What was most challenging for you?
- Whose story do you believe it was?
- Was there actually a story?
- What role did the audience play?
- How was technology used in PICNIC?
- Discuss the use of love letters – how did it make you feel?
- Do you think picnics and technology go together?
- If you could ask a question to the creator, what would it be?
- Return to the terms KALEIDESCOPIC, MOSAIC and PASTICHE - do you think PICNIC was a bit like one of these?

My advanced driving instructor once explained that if you're losing control of your steering, then do NOT look at solid objects like trees or buildings- because you'll naturally steer towards them. Instead he said to aim for gaps.

(from PICNIC)



DISCUSS: How does this image capture some of the different performance elements used in PICNIC?

3. "MAKING A SCENE" AT A PICNIC (English, Drama)

In order to explore the idea of making stories through drama and performance, you are going to return to the first picnic stories you told before you saw the show.

RETELL: Re-join your partner from activity one in the pre-show activities – the one you shared the picnic story with. Bring your notes – who, where, when, what, why. Now join with another pair to make a four. Share your stories about picnics.

CHOOSE: Choose one of the four stories that interest the group the most. Why this choice? Why is it interesting? Consider carefully how it may be turned into a piece of theatre for performance.

Brainstorm 4 – 6 key points/moments in the chosen story – write/e-write them down

Put them in an order e.g. arrival, set up, surprise, discovery, disaster, ending – but it doesn't need to be in order – you can mix it up

What characters are there, what objects, what sounds, and what actions?

MAKE: Using ONE frozen tableaux/freeze frames create an image for each moment of the story. You can be human or you can be objects (remember the 10 second structures?)

Make the tableaux/freeze frames very strong and like something is about to or has just happened – consider exaggerated movement here

Transitions or transformations between the moments are important – how will you achieve this through movement and/or sound?

Rehearse and practice your tableaux sequence until you feel it is clear and smooth and you are working closely as an ensemble

PERFORM: Perform your PICNIC tableaux to the class and have the audience tell back to you what the story is. How clearly were the images and transitions used to convey the story? What differences/similarities were there between picnic stories?

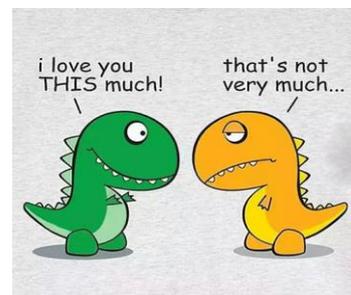
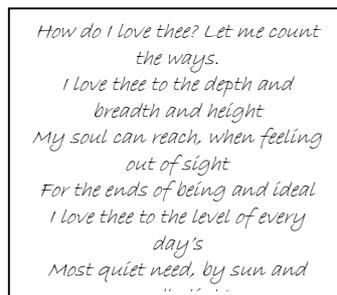
4. IS THE LIVE REALLY LIVE? (Media Arts)

In the production the character of Gerard keeps a visual diary. Visual diaries and blogs as well as other online applications are used by many people to record experiences – Instagram, Snapchat are other examples. Selfies can record any moment of anyone’s life. There are even selfie sticks to ensure you don’t miss out on the detail.

DISCUSS: How is the visual diary created as part of the performance? How did you respond to seeing the performer LIVE and seeing the performer on a SCREEN? What STATEMENT do you think the performer was making about the idea of what is REAL and what is FAKE?

DEBATE: Is there a new definition of “live”? Debate this by considering what the difference is (if any) between having an actual experience while simultaneously recording and documenting that experience through digital media – Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, selfies, Facebook?

5. LOVE LETTERS



DISCUSS: What are love letters? Do you write them? Have you ever received one? Consider the examples above.

How do they define love?

What language is used for love?

- Is it embarrassing to talk about love?

How does digital technology allow you to demonstrate your love?

How does social media allow people to declare their love?

Is Valentine’s Day important to you?

How was love explored in the performance of PICNIC?

6. THEMES AND IDEAS

READ the text in the boxes presented throughout this resource. They each are drawn directly from the spoken text in the show.

How might each text box reveal a theme or idea from the performance?

What are these themes?

How does the performance comment on contemporary life?

Is PICNIC really only about a picnic?

We make a conscious choice to engage, or disengage. We make a conscious choice about the face we present to the world. The carefully curated self. We surround ourselves with people and we so badly want to see that version of ourselves reflected in their eyes.

(from PICNIC)

DISCUSS: How would you describe this image from PICNIC? What mood is being conveyed? What story is being told?



*There was an old woman who swallowed a fly,
I don't know why she swallowed a fly,
Perhaps she'll die.
There was an old woman who swallowed a spider,
That wriggled and jiggled and tickled inside her,
She swallowed the spider to catch the fly,
I don't know why she swallowed the fly,
Perhaps she'll die.
(from PICNIC)*

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/There_Was_an_Old_Lady_Who_Swallowed_a_Fly



DISCUSS: How is the performer using his expressive skills in this image?

VCE DRAMA – UNITS 1 AND 2

Devising non-naturalistic performance, using Australia as stimulus. In this activity you will use the stimulus of a picnic to create a non-naturalistic performance – solo or ensemble – that addresses the Key Knowledge and Key Skills of Areas of Study 1 in both units.

DISCUSS:

- Are your picnics the same as picnics your mum and dad or grandma and grandpa would have had when they were young?
- Research the various components of a picnic – food, transport, picnic sets, locations, clothing, group sizes, games, and links to celebrations that would have accompanied the lives of your grandparents and their parents – for instance the ‘Sunday School Picnic’.
- Look for aspects of picnics that appear to have changed over time and aspects that appear to be unique to each generation.
- Why would there be changes? For instance community involvement, religious involvement, changes in types of food, storage, transport, family structure and so on.

GATHERING DATA

- Research this topic by interviewing your parents/grandparents on the topic of picnics in their youth.
- Ask questions that prompt – people, locations, food, games, occasions, ritual, travel.
- Save the interviews via MP4 or video them and upload
- Consider how the interviews generate dialogue, action and narrative.

USING THE STIMULUS MATERIAL

Brainstorm ideas for an ensemble or a solo performance using the gathered data as the basis.

- The features of picnics that have emerged
- The specific stories (verbatim and paraphrased)
- The characters and types

- The locations and occasions
- The rituals that existed across generations
- The picnic equipment
- The things that went wrong or created tension

CREATING A PERFORMANCE

Using the gathered data consider how you could construct a solo or ensemble performance.

- How might you use Verbatim Theatre conventions?
- How might you use Epic Theatre conventions?
- How might you draw on some of the theatre conventions you observed in PICNIC?
- How you might use technology to complement the performance

NON-NATURALISM/REALISM

Create your mini solo or ensemble by considering:

- The central theme of picnics
- The characters who have emerged
- The locations and actions that have been told to you
- The transformation of time, place, character and object to enable you to attend to the differing generations
- How you or your group may use – movement, space, mood, rhythm, contrast, sound, symbol, climax, time, tension, to create the performance

PERFORM

- Perform your mini-solo or group ensemble to the rest of the class
- Discuss how the central concern of a PICNIC influenced the work
- Reflect on the process of creating the work and how it transferred into performance

VCE DANCE - Unit 2

Using the themes and concepts offered above, choreograph and perform a solo or group dance that responds to the intergenerational nature of **picnics** considering:

- Developing an expressive intention for the work
- Choreographic manipulation of the elements of movement
- Using the elements to communicate the concept of **picnics**
- Formation, ordering and linking of movement sections to creative the response

FURTHER RESOURCES

Contemporary Dance

Bangarra Dance <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mvkUBflq50I>

STOMP: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZ7aYQtlldg>

Social media Is social media good or bad? <http://www.socialmediatoday.com/technology-data/sarah-snow/2015-07-01/social-media-bad-us>

WEBSITES:

Regional Arts Victoria: www.rav.net.au
Production Company: www.kage.com.au

ABOUT KAGE DANCE THEATRE:

KAGE is the creative partnership of Kate Denborough and Gerard Van Dyck. Meeting whilst completing a Bachelor of Dance at the Victorian College of the Arts in 1992, the two formed an immediate and unique affiliation. Kate and Gerard's visionary partnership has sparked for seventeen years and since their performance debut in 1997, KAGE has propelled dance-theatre into fresh territory, claiming international awards, recognition and new audiences along the way.

KAGE strives to create work that's felt as often as it's explained. Technically rigorous and visually striking dance theatre becomes a platform for work about the subtlety of experience; about the millions of gigantic-yet-tiny, deeply felt, funny and ultimately connected moments that make up our lives – success, failure, awkwardness, panic, tears and reckless joy. The work of KAGE is to render these, and other human things, physical.

More than dance. Not quite theatre. Not circus, or poems, or dreams; but like these... KAGE strikes out for new ground; innovating and reconceiving dance theatre to draw humour, humanity and pathos from the physicality of human bodies.

KAGE is committed to creating new works with a particular focus on social justice. In 2015 KAGE is delighted to be touring regionally, nationally and internationally.



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EDUCATION & FAMILIES

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