



SYNOPSIS OF *MELBURNALIA*

Melburnalia is a single piece of theatre that exhibits five new works about Melbourne by outstanding local writers. Each writer was commissioned by White Whale Theatre early in 2007 to produce a 20-minute piece about a specific slice of life in a Melbourne suburb. As hoped, the writers all chose an area which relates to them personally, and each brought a very different style and voice to their piece. The works all feature a single linking element - Melbourne's laneways - which binds their diverse works together and represents the hidden, peripheral and ordinary stories that *Melburnalia* seeks to uncover.

White Whale Theatre is an emerging company that is run entirely by under-26 year old theatre makers. It has boldly created this pioneering work in order to both celebrate and challenge our preconceptions of the city we live in.

SUMMARY OF THE FIVE SHORT PLAYS

Lally Katz has written about Kew, a suburb she has recently moved to from the trendier inner-north. Her piece, *The Fag from Zagreb*, has an off-kilter, mysterious and somewhat absurdist vibe that brings out a unique vision of Kew. Set in a wealthy middle-class home in a tree-lined boulevard, her play focuses on the interplay between a gay private school boy and his unusual household friend, the Apocalypse Bear.

Tee O'Neill grew up in Ringwood and has drawn on her memories of that suburb in creating *The Queen of Ringwood*. Featuring a moment of decision and crisis in the relationship between two young petty crims, Tee's piece offers a fascinating look at class and opportunity in the far eastern suburbs. As Gary and Terri hurtle towards their separate fates, this fast-paced piece adds unique energy and enthralling characterisation to the collection of plays.

Alice Pung has written her piece, *Educating Riah*, about growing up in Footscray as a Chinese Cambodian refugee. Alice problematizes stereotypes of suburban identity and dramatizes the clash of culture and class in her open and earnest piece of theatre. As young Asian Australians (or EEDs - Ethnically Enhanced Dweebs) from diverse backgrounds study and flirt in the Footscray library, the differences between their outlooks and responsibilities bring them to a heartbreaking situation of conflict and choice.

Kate Holden - a long-term resident of St Kilda - has contributed a thoughtful and textured piece about four women in an iconic St Kilda cafe, the Galleon. As the four characters in *Waiting It Out* chat over coffee on a cold and rain-drenched night, their reminiscing canvasses issues such as prostitution, misplaced nostalgia, sex work, relationship breakdown, friendship and the changing face of St Kilda.



Ross Mueller's *Being Greg Stone* is a unique and high energy comedy set in the CBD that satirises and celebrates the Melbourne theatre industry. Aspiring actor Natasha and fading agent Robyn meet in a trendy laneway café in Degraes St where they meet real-life Melbourne actor, Greg Stone. Realising that Greg is the only actor in Melbourne who always lands paid acting work, the pair embark on a hilarious post-modern mission to turn Natasha into the new Greg. Snappy and stylish, Ross' piece can be seen to speak directly to the young generation about wider issues such as the arts, employment and the current Australian condition.