

THE STONES



SHOCK THERAPY
PRODUCTIONS

THE STONES TEACHER'S NOTES

PRODUCED/PERFORMED BY: SAM FOSTER & HAYDEN JONES
WRITTEN/DEvised BY: TOM LYCOS & STEFO NANTSOU



SHOCK THERAPY PRODUCTIONS

ABOUT THE COMPANY

Shock Therapy Productions was founded in 2015 by Sam Foster and Hayden Jones and has quickly established itself as one of the leading performing arts companies based on the Gold Coast. In this year, the company was awarded Accelerated Triennial Funding by City of Gold Coast for operational costs and to assist in the growth of the company. In 2018 this funding was renewed for a further 3 years.

Shock Therapy Productions aims to deliver Transformative Arts Experiences, and tell stories that are meaningful, thought-provoking, dynamic and entertaining, celebrating both the confronting and cathartic nature of performance.

Working across theatre, film and live events, Shock Therapy Productions aims to establish itself as a leading company in the delivery of high quality, relevant, multidisciplinary performance and a leader in the Arts and Culture Sector on the Gold Coast as well as Nationally and Internationally.

The company has produced a rapidly expanding catalogue of works, including a number of original productions, won 5 Matilda Awards, performed at venues and Arts Festivals in both Australia and Internationally and is proudly sponsored by the City of Gold Coast Council.

FOR ALL ENQUIRIES AND BOOKINGS

E: education@shocktherapyproductions.com.au
www.shocktherapyproductions.com.au

AWARD WINS

2017 MATILDA AWARDS
Best Independent Production
– *The Forwards*

2016 MATILDA AWARDS
Best Independent Production
– *Viral*

2015 MATILDA AWARDS
Best Independent Production
– *The Pillowman*

Best Director, Sam Foster
– *The Pillowman*

Best Supporting Actor, Tama Matheson
– *The Pillowman*

AWARD NOMINATIONS

2021 MATILDA AWARDS
Best New Australian Work
– *Undertow*

Best Independent Production
– *Undertow*

Best Sound Design
– *Undertow*

2017 MATILDA AWARDS
Best Actor, Sam Foster
– *The Forwards*

Best Actress, Ellen Bailey
– *The Forwards*

2016 MATILDA AWARDS
Best New Australian Work
– *Viral*

Best Actor, Sam Foster
– *Viral*

Best Audio Visual Design, Nathan Sibthorpe
– *Viral*



MEET THE CREATORS

HAYDEN JONES – ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Hayden is a performer and contemporary performance maker, working across a range of forms including theatre, installation, immersive experiences and cross art-form collaborations. He has worked as an Actor, Director, Writer, Producer and workshop facilitator, for some of Australia's most recognised and innovative arts organisations. He is a co-founder of Shock Therapy Productions.

Hayden also has an extensive background working in Youth Theatre, Children's Theatre and Theatre-in-Education, writing and directing shows for young people, and touring nation-wide performing and teaching workshops.

SAM FOSTER – ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Sam is a storyteller, performer and theatre maker. He is an award-winning Actor, Director, Writer, Producer, Stunt Performer and Stunt Rigger as well as being a Physical Theatre Performer, Movement Director and workshop facilitator. He is the co-owner and co-founder of Shock Therapy Productions.

Sam works in theatre, film and large-scale events and has worked for a number of companies and festivals throughout his career. His career has taken him to New York, London, Namibia, South Africa, Denmark, Norway and India as well as all over Australia.



CONTENTS

- 5 Synopsis
- 6 Class exercises – Storytelling
- 7 Class exercises – Acrobatics
- 8 Class exercises – Dual
Characterization
- 10 English exercises
- 11 Group Devising
- 12 LEGAL STUDIES exercises
- 13 Media
- 15 Script Excerpts



SYNOPSIS

The Stones is a dramatization of a true story where two boys faced manslaughter charges after kicking rocks off a freeway overpass and killing a motorist.

Zeal Theatre writer/director/performers Tom Lycos & Stefo Nantsou developed the script with the assistance of Victorian Police officers and detectives who were in charge of the case.

The play fictionalizes the characters and weaves in other true stories from similar incidents from around the world.

The Stones premiered May 1996 in Melbourne, and has since been performed over 1,100 times around

Australia, North America, Europe and Asia including seasons at the Royal National Theatre in London, the New Victory Theatre in New York and Theatre Kazemoko in Tokyo.

The play has also been translated and performed in over 25 countries with Lycos and Nantsou having directed the play in Germany, Canada, Wales, Holland, Hungary, Norway & Denmark.

The Stones has received numerous national and international awards with Zeal Theatre being awarded the prestigious ASSITEJ International Directors Choice Award for 'excellence in the profession of theatre' in Montreal, Canada 205.

CLASS EXERCISES – STORYTELLING

***The Stones* utilises quite a variety of theatrical techniques and skills.**

Simply telling a story to a group of people, nothing flashy or fantastic – just being able to communicate a story clearly to an audience is a skill in itself. A story can be told in a serious way, or a comic way, or both... no rules, as long as it is clear and concise, that is the important thing.

On numerous occasions during *The Stones*, the actors tell the audience what happened. Sometimes they 'act it out' as they are telling the story, and sometimes they just tell the story as it is.

EXERCISE 1:

(Ideal for all Drama students)

Get each individual member of the class to tell a simple story:

- Then get them to tell the same story, but as another character
- Then get them to tell the same story, either in character or as themselves, once in a comic way, then in a serious way

EXERCISE 2:

Each student should try different ways of telling a story:

- Using direct audience eye contact
- Not looking at the audience
- As a soliloquy (ala Shakespeare)
- In different languages
- Without words, only mime
- In poetry

EXERCISE 3:

4 students tell the same story from their own points of view:

- Each one telling the audience separately
- Telling each other (not referring to the audience)
- Arguing their stories with the audience becoming involved
- One story being funny, another being very serious

CLASS EXERCISES – ACROBATICS

Throughout *The Stones*, the actors are employing physical and acrobatic skills. Acrobatics and a physical acting style combine to give the production more dynamic.

EXERCISE 1:

(Good for large classes, either in smaller groups or large packs)

Through a range of body shapes, balances, and formations, the class should create a series of places...

- A jungle
- A large city
- Mars
- An emergency ward

Same idea, only they create physical shapes, balances and formations of a series of titles...

- “Climbing Everest”
- “Circus Gone Wrong”
- “The Rescue”

EXERCISE 2:

In groups of 3, 4 or 5, each group tells a well-known nursery rhyme story with as much acrobatics as possible.

EXERCISE 3:

In groups of 3-6, create a non-verbal storytelling style, with a particular focus on body shapes and balances and tell an original story.

CLASS EXERCISES – DUAL CHARACTERIZATION

Playing one part in a play is standard. Playing two or more roles in a play can be more challenging. Switching quickly from one role to the other can be hard to master. Switching from one role to another, without any costume change, without any pauses, takes a lot of practice. In *The Stones*, the actors switch very quickly from one role to the other, without hesitation, without leaving the performing area.

EXERCISE 1:

Each student should attempt to create a character highlighting:

- Body shape (posture, stance)
- Attitude
- The situation they are in (where are they?)
- Then a typical thing that character would say.

Each student should then create a second character.

Each student should try to make both characters have some kind of interaction.

EXERCISE 2

“Jesus & the Devil”

Each student takes it in turns sitting in a chair as themselves. They then slowly “turn into” their impression of Jesus Christ. Once they “are” Jesus, they slowly turn into their impression of the Devil.

EXERCISE 3

“The Double Date”

In groups of two, students should attempt playing all the characters in a double date, switching between the two boys, then the two girls, then one boy and one girl, then the other pair, etc...

CLASS EXERCISES – MUSIC

All Zeal Theatre shows have their musical 'angle'. *The Stones* features electric guitars, sometimes the two actors playing an instrumental together, other times the music being used to heighten a monologue, or as sound effects behind a scene. Music is a potent force in film and television and theatre.

EXERCISE 1:

Give the class a few minutes of 'reference music' of your choice, preferably a piece that is not 'popular'. Each student should write (or find) a monologue for that piece of music.

EXERCISE 2:

Each student should then write (or find) a monologue for a piece of music of their choice.

EXERCISE 3:

In groups of 2, one musician, one actor, each pair present a story.

(NOTE: Music, sound effects, noises, no rules, let the imagination run wild.)

EXERCISE 4:

In groups of 4 or 5, present a short 6 minute scene with an appropriate soundtrack. Try performing the same scene with dialogue, the music as merely backing mood music. Then try the scene without dialogue, emphasizing the mood created by the music.

EXERCISE 5 (for students with musical abilities):

Have one or more students play a soundtrack live for a scene involving 2 or more actors. This exercise can be extended for the group or class to create their own musical.

ENGLISH EXERCISES

The Stones is a theatrical presentation of real events and real people. It uses the facts of a story, then retells the story as fiction, making up new characters, and new events. The play as a text employs many variations of writing, from monologue to direct audience address, traditional “4th Wall” dialogue scenes, and non-verbal scenes with only the stage directions being written down.

EXERCISE 1:

Using the daily newspaper, allow each student to select a story from the paper and write a short play about that story.

Specific focus should be placed on:

- Who are the characters (or, what characters do you “need”)?
- Where are the scenes going to take place?
- How are the characters going to look, speak, behave, etc?
- How will the play start, and how will it end?

EXERCISE 2:

Select a specific story from the newspaper and allow each member of the class to write a short play about that story.

- You select the characters/situations, the students have to write the dialogue and ‘what happens’.
- Alternatively, the students ‘fictionalize’ the characters/events in their own way.
- Allow the students to experiment with particular writing styles such as:
 - a) rhyming poetry
 - b) monologues
 - c) non-naturalistic dialogue
 - d) make up their own words (eg. “Jabberwocky”)

EXERCISE 3:

Tell the class a story. Have each student select one moment/scene/piece of your story and have them write out that scene in script form.

GROUP DEVISING

The Stones was group-devised by the two actor/writers. Different scenes were written by different writers, some scenes are a product of two versions being amalgamated, some monologues were written by one person, and the other person would then edit it.

Some scenes were created without any words being written down, all action, the actual dialogue being improvised daily. There are many ways and means of group-devising. Each group usually works out its own method.

The best formula for hassle-free group-devising is that a group should agree on what they are writing about. This is the greatest hurdle.

EXERCISE 1:

Repeat the story from the newspaper exercise, only this time have groups of 4 undertake the processes of group-devising a script based on the news event.

EXERCISE 2:

In groups of 3-6:

Give each group a story, or they select one themselves or one is selected that 'suits' the group. The story should involve the same number of characters according to group size.

Each student should then write only the dialogue for 1 of the characters in the story. The script is then built by the cast.

EXERCISE 3:

In groups of 3-6:

Each group makes three separate scenes, one from a news item, one from a personal story and one like a fantasy or nightmare without any dialogue.

Once they have made each separate scene, they must 'stitch' them together somehow to form a coherent, or indeed, an incoherent piece of theatre.

LEGAL STUDIES EXERCISES

Zeal Theatre has tackled numerous youth-and-the-law style issues and themes in their productions. *Joyride* looked at the complex relationship between youth crime, homelessness, family breakdown and the links to joyriding, drug and alcohol abuse. The “target audience” was 13 to 18 year olds.

The Stones is about 2 boys, one aged 13, one aged 15, on trial for manslaughter for killing the driver of a car by throwing rocks off, a freeway overpass. It is not a strict recreation of events, but rather an “example of a story” that poses quite a few questions of moral, ethical and legal complexity.

QUESTION 1

Can a 13 year old boy be held responsible for his actions?

Is he too young for a conviction? What should his sentence be if found guilty?

What if the boy was 15? 17?

What should the penalty for manslaughter be for someone who is 18 years old?

What should the penalty for manslaughter be for someone who is 13 years old?

How old should a person be before they can be held responsible for their actions?

QUESTION 2

Are boys more reckless than girls? Why or why not?

Are young people getting more and more reckless? Has there always been a recklessness in young people?

QUESTION 3

What is bail?

Why are some people granted bail and some are not? Why are the two boys in *The Stones* granted bail?

QUESTION 4

What do you think of our juvenile justice system? Is it working?

Should it be a State Government responsibility? Or should it be a local

Council responsibility? Or should it be a Federal Government responsibility?

QUESTION 5

Do we have a strong Police Force?

How can the Police Force better their services? What kind of Police Force would you set up?

Why do you think the two police officers in *The Stones* disagree so much about that particular case?

QUESTION 6

Do we live in a free and equal society?

Should young people between the ages 13 and 15 have more input in the juvenile justice system?

QUESTION 7

Are people attracted to illegal activities and drugs because they are “illegal”? Is “crime” addictive? Is “danger” addictive?

Does jail, or the threat of jail, stop young people from committing crimes? Does “punishment” work?

QUESTION 8

How often do young people endanger other people’s lives?

How often do young people endanger their own lives?



BOYS ON DEATH CHARGE

*By Allison Harding, Magistrates Court Reporter
HERALD SUN, JUNE 1994*

Two boys charged over a rock throwing incident that killed a freeway motorist have been granted bail.

However, one boy was still in custody last night as his family sought to provide a \$5000 surety.

Both youths face up to 15 years in jail if convicted for manslaughter.

The teenagers, who cannot be identified, appeared in a Children's Court yesterday each charged with one count of manslaughter of Dr. Malcolm Goodall.

The boys, a 15 year old from Northcote and a 14 year old from Yarraville also face 7 charges of engaging in conduct endangering life relating to other alleged rock throwing incidents.

The older boy was accompanied in court by his grandmother, the other was with his mother and uncle.

Neither boy was required to enter a plea yesterday. Homicide squad detectives charged the pair early yesterday after investigating the death of a motorist on the Eastern Freeway.

The two boys shuffled into court escorted by uniformed police officers. The 14 year old took a seat next to his uncle and his teary eyed mother. The 15 year old mate whose grandmother was in court sat at the end of the opposite front row.

The clean-cut baby-faced youngsters looked stunned when brought into the packed courtroom through a heavy door which leads to the holding cells. Dressed casually in windcheaters, trackpants, jeans and runners, the boys did not look at each other during their brief appearance.

Their lawyers said their clients wanted to be released on bail, and the police did not oppose it.

BOY, 11, FOUND GUILTY OF KILLING PENSIONER

By Sandra Barwick

LONDON TIMES, 24 MAY 1996

A boy of 11 was found guilty yesterday of killing a pensioner by pushing a concrete block off an 11 storey block of flats. The boy, who can not be identified, chewed on a sweet and gazed around the courtroom as the verdict of manslaughter was announced, apparently unaware of what it meant. But his mother sobbed on a bench beside him in Leeds Crown Court after the unanimous decision of the jury of eight women and four men. Sentence was deferred to await reports.

The block, which weighed 19lb fell directly on Edna Condie, 74, who was waiting by the side entrance to her flats and smashed her skull killing her instantly. Another boy who had been on the roof last August 29, had told the court when the boy, then 10, had been told he had hit someone he had laughed as he ran away.

Det. Ch. Insp. Bob Browell of West Yorkshire Police who had lead the investigation into the killing said the crime had many victims, including the boy himself. The first victim, of course, had been Mrs Condie, he said, her husband George, 76, and daughter Janice Smith, 43, who had been standing near her when she was hit, together with another female friend. "But the defendant himself and the two children who were with him were victims themselves" he said. He hoped they would be able to put the case behind them and look forward to a future.

Grahame Stowe, the solicitor for the boy, said he was unsure how much of the case was taken in by a child so young. Last summer, the court was told, children and teenagers in the area of the Grayson heights flats in Kirkstall, Leeds, had formed the habit of playing and sometimes throwing stones from the top of the block. The boy was one who had been up there before, gaining entrance by a door which had probably been kicked in. He was, though, according to a teacher who gave evidence, of average intelligence, very immature and anxious. Like many children who turn to dangerous acts, he did badly at school, he could barely read, he had emotional problems and could not concentrate on schoolwork.

Police officers who first interviewed him said he barely knew his date of birth. His achievements were so poor for a ten year old that, according to one teacher: "he could not attempt schoolwork

for fear of failure". His frustration and anger took familiar forms, he had tried to make himself seem bigger and feel better by taunting other children. He was, according to others on the estate, mocked himself for his family background and for his backwardness. If he excelled in anything it was in being troublesome. On the whole his bullying was verbal, though he once smashed a bus window. So, when his friends, then aged 9 and 11, suggested they all go up on the roof for 'a lark' he readily agreed.

Once on the roof there was little restraint. One boy had thrown an orange at a car and hit its roof. The 10 year-old had thrown a stick, and then showing off to his friends, carried a lump of concrete over to the parapet. His friends leaned over the top. The 10 year old could not see who was below, and it was not clear from the friends accounts whether they told him before he pushed or just after. One boy saw the old lady fall and heard screams. Then they all ran away.

Yesterday near the flats, a woman who found Mrs Condie dead said "There are still people doing it. A car battery was thrown out of the window one day. A few weeks ago someone threw a three-litre bottle at a friend of mine who was cleaning windows". "They do it for a laugh".

SCRIPT EXCERPTS

THE TWO DETECTIVES STAND AT THE DOOR LOOKING AND WHISPERING ABOUT SHY BOY. THEY THEN ENTER FOR AN INTERVIEW.

RUSSO

OK mate, my name is Detective Russo, this is Detective Quinn.

SHY BOY

REFERRING TO QUINN

Does he have to come in...

RUSSO

Don't worry about Detective Quinn, that's just the look on his face. Now we're going to ask you a few questions, you don't have to say or do anything if you don't want to, but I have to tell you that this interview is going to be recorded. Is that alright with you?

SHY BOY

Alright.

RUSSO

Now... Tell me in your own words, exactly what happened on the day.

THE ACTOR PLAYING SHY BOY 'BECOMES' QUINN. YAHOO IS NOW BEING INTERVIEWED BY QUINN. (THE TWO INTERVIEWS HAPPEN SIMULTANEOUSLY, WITH THE ACTORS SWITCHING QUICKLY FROM DETECTIVE TO KID.)

QUINN

What were you doing yesterday around 5:30pm?

RUSSO

Were you on your own?

QUINN

Who else was with you at the time?

RUSSO

And what's his name?

QUINN

Where does he live?

RUSSO

Was he with you when it happened?

QUINN

Whose idea was it to throw the stones?

RUSSO

What were you trying to do?

QUINN

How many stones did you throw?

RUSSO

Were you aiming at the cars?

QUINN

How many cars did you hit?

RUSSO

How many cars did your mate hit?

QUINN

Who threw the last stone?

RUSSO

How old are you?

RUSSO CHANGES TO YAHOO

YAHOO

I'm fifteen.

QUINN

And how old is your mate?

YAHOO

He's thirteen.

QUINN

And where do you know him from?

YAHOO

From school.

QUINN

Was anyone else with you at the time?

YAHOO

No.

QUINN

It was just the two of you?

YAHOO

Yeah... we didn't mean to kill anyone, honest.

QUINN

You were just having fun?

YAHOO

Yeah... that's all we were doin.

PAUSE

QUINN

How many rocks did you kick off the bridge?

YAHOO

A few.

QUINN

Did you kick any of the rocks?

YAHOO

Yeah.

QUINN

Did you kick the last rock?

YAHOO

No

QUINN

Are you sure.

YAHOO

Yes.

QUINN

Are you sure?

YAHOO

Yes...look, I've already answered this question a hundred times, why do you keep askin' me the same stupid questions for?

QUINN

I told you that we just need to know all the facts.

QUINN CHANGES TO SHY BOY. YAHOO CHANGES RUSSO

RUSSO

Tell me again what happened.

SHY BOY

I've told you already.

RUSSO

Tell me again.

SHY BOY

Where from?

RUSSO

From when you got to the rock pool.

SHY BOY

That's where we got the rocks.

RUSSO

How many did you get?

SHY BOY

I dunno...

RUSSO

Big ones, little ones?

SHY BOY

A whole stack of 'em....

RUSSO

Just the big ones?

SHY BOY

I dunno, some were bigger than others.

RUSSO

How many did you take up on the bridge?

SHY BOY

I dunno.

RUSSO

How many? Five?

SHY BOY

Yeah.

RUSSO

Ten?

SHY BOY

Maybe.

RUSSO

Twenty?

SHY BOY

I dunno.

RUSSO

Twenty Five?

SHY BOY

Maybe.

RUSSO

Come on mate, how many rocks?

SHY BOY

I dunno!

THE TWO OFFICERS THEN 'READ THE BOYS THEIR RIGHTS' TOGETHER, THEIR VOCALS OVERLAPPING UNTIL THEY SAY 'DO YOU UNDERSTAND' TOGETHER.

QUINN

You have the right to contact a friend or relative. You have the right to contact a legal practitioner. If you are not an Australian citizen you can contact the Consular Office of your own country.

RUSSO STARTS DIALOGUE

You are not obliged to say or do anything. You have the right to remain silent. I must tell you that anything you say will be recorded and may be used as evidence in a court of law. Do you understand?

RUSSO

I am charging you with manslaughter. I am also charging you with seven separate counts of conduct recklessly endangering life. You will be remanded in custody to appear in the Melbourne Children's Court tomorrow. Do you understand?

YAHOO/SHY BOY

Yeah.

PAUSE. THE BOYS, NOW ALONE, LOOK AT EACH OTHER, AND GIGGLE.

YAHOO

We made the front page. We're famous! "Two teens face trial over freeway rock death." "Boy 13, surrenders to police!" "Boy 13, admits rock hit car!"

SHY BOY

"Boy 13, haunted by rock death!"