

VICTORIAN COLLEGE OF THE ARTS SECONDARY SCHOOL 2025 THEATRE ARTS CURRICULUM HANDBOOK



Victoria's premier school for the training and education of talented young Dancers, Musicians, Theatre and Visual Artists.



Victorian College of the Arts
SECONDARY SCHOOL



Department
of Education





THEATRE ARTS CURRICULUM 2025

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Purpose

The purpose of the School is to provide a high-quality education and training program to prepare talented young people for careers in dance, music, theatre and visual arts.

Philosophy

Theatre artists are an essential part of any society, as they reflect and comment upon that society in the most fundamental ways. The Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School recognises the importance of theatre artists and of their relationship with the world. It is committed to the nurturing and development of talented and educated students who can effectively and creatively enrich our lives.

In developing skills in Theatre Arts, students also develop:

- empathy and connection to community
- communication skills
- creativity and innovation capacities
- lateral and critical thinking skills
- intercultural awareness and understanding
- collaboration and leadership skills

The Theatre Arts course provides an intensive two-year program that guides and mentors students, providing them with access to directors, performers, designers and other theatre arts industry professionals to support their unique education.

This vocational training is taught within a broad educational framework, which provides students with the knowledge, skills and attributes to enable them to exercise autonomy and participate effectively in a rapidly changing and interconnected world.

The school seeks to recognise, develop and foster the unique talents of each student.

"Part of my job description as a director is to create an environment where actors can feel free to do what they do best. I have a tremendous amount of respect for them. They're the emotional connection to everything in a project. That's where the gold is."

Robert Luketic, Director and VCA Alumni

Rationale

The Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School is located in the heart of Melbourne's Arts Precinct and is a short walk from Melbourne's most significant performing arts and cultural organisations. The purpose of the school is to provide a high-quality academic education and preparation for further study and/or careers in dance, music, visual and theatre arts. The Theatre Arts program was established in 2016 to provide a unique opportunity for talented young people to develop theatre skills and an informed aesthetic appropriate for future study in the fields of performance and production.

The Theatre Arts program aims to provide students with a broad range of performance experiences. Students are supported to develop a professional approach to devising, rehearsing and presenting work, and to understand the creative and logistical process of theatre production. Attendance at a range of professional performances throughout each year of the course contribute to the development of each student's artistic practice.

Partnership with key cultural organisations and increased awareness of the wider arts community is integral to student learning in the Theatre Arts program. Students visit performance spaces regularly to develop a more complex understanding of contemporary performance practices and historical traditions in the theatre arts.

A full academic program in addition to the Theatre Arts curriculum, ensures that each student completes their VCE while studying at VCASS. Information on VCE subjects offered by the school can be found in the academic handbook.

Goals

- to develop a caring and supportive community
- to provide a friendly, safe and purposeful environment in which students are able to value and enjoy learning
- to provide high quality education and training in theatre, with an emphasis upon contemporary approaches to theatre making and responding to theatrical performance
- to encourage exploration and discovery and to foster creativity in the theatre arts
- to provide tuition and training by practitioners of excellence, in conjunction with a quality academic education
- to provide opportunities for developing performance skills through a combination of 'in-house' and public presentation of theatrical works
- to ensure that individual needs and differences are taken into account
- to develop a theatre arts aesthetic through observing and appreciating the work of others, comparing a range of theatre arts styles and exploring how performance reflects the views, values and spirit of contemporary society.

These goals are realised through:

- providing a wide range of experiences for each student
- providing a balanced curriculum
- making connections between studies
- providing an inclusive curriculum
- providing for the personal growth of each student.

Artistic Outcome

The Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School is uniquely placed to offer senior secondary students an educational experience based upon the principle of specialisation. The Theatre Arts course is intended to meet the performance and artistic needs of talented and creative adolescents. Students will experience exciting and rigorous pedagogy delivered by teachers and guest facilitators who support personalised student learning. In collaboration with practicing theatre artists, performers and industry professionals, students can develop performance and production skills appropriate to study at University, TAFE or other tertiary institutions.

The Theatre Arts course will provide students demonstrating interest in and aptitude towards an artistic and creative education with:

- access to facilities and resources that will support the achievement of enhanced learning outcomes
- the opportunity to work with a range of professional theatre practitioners
- the chance to work alongside and collaborate with like-minded senior secondary students in a supportive learning environment that values arts education
- the requisite skills to enter further studies in the competitive environment of tertiary education in theatre industries with a highly developed understanding of production and performance
- enhanced in skills creativity and innovation.

Tara Daniel

Specialist Theatre Arts Program Coordinator



Year 11 Theatre Arts Studies

VCE Drama

In VCE Theatre Studies students interpret scripts from the pre-modern era to the present day and produce theatre for audiences. Through practical and theoretical engagement with scripts they gain an insight into the origins and development of theatre and the influences of theatre on cultures and societies. Students apply dramaturgy and work in the production roles of actor, director and designer, developing an understanding and appreciation of the role and place of theatre practitioners. Throughout the study, students work individually and collaboratively in various production roles to creatively and imaginatively interpret scripts and to plan, develop and present productions. Students study the contexts – the times, places and cultures – of these scripts, as well as their language. They experiment with different possibilities for interpreting scripts and apply ideas and concepts in performance to an audience. They examine ways that meaning can be constructed and conveyed through theatre performance. Students consider their audiences and in their interpretations incorporate knowledge and understanding of audience culture, demographic and sensibilities. Students learn about innovations in theatre production across different times and places and apply this knowledge to their work. Through the study of plays and theatre styles, and by working in production roles to interpret scripts, students develop knowledge and understanding of theatre, its conventions and the elements of theatre composition. Students analyse and evaluate the production of professional theatre performances and consider the relationship to their own theatre production work. Students learn about and demonstrate an understanding of safe, ethical, and responsible personal and interpersonal practices in theatre production.

Unit 1: Introducing Performance Styles

In this unit students' study three or more performance styles from a range of social, historical and cultural contexts. They examine drama traditions of ritual and storytelling to devise performances that go beyond re-creation and/or representation of real life as it is lived. This unit focuses on creating, presenting and analysing a devised solo and/or ensemble performance that includes real or imagined characters and is based on stimulus material that reflects personal, cultural and/or community experiences and stories. This unit also involves analysis of a student's own performance work and a work by professional drama performers. Students apply play-making techniques to shape and give meaning to their performance. They manipulate expressive and performance skills in the creation and presentation of characters and develop awareness and understanding of how characters are portrayed in a range of performance styles. They document the processes they use as they explore a range of stimulus material, and experiment with production areas, dramatic elements, conventions and performance styles.

Aims

On completion of this unit the student should be able to:

- devise and document solo and/or ensemble drama work/s based on experiences and/or stories
- perform a devised drama work to an audience
- analyse the development and performance to an audience of their devised work
- analyse the portrayal of ideas/stories and characters in a drama performance by professional or other drama practitioners.

Assessment

Assessment tasks for this unit include the following:

- demonstrate the use of play-making techniques to devise and rehearse a solo and/or ensemble drama work/s based on stories and/or characters
- document use of processes to create and develop stories and characters in drama
- perform a solo and/or ensemble devised drama work/s that features stories and characters

- analyse the drama work created and performed in class in an aural presentation or a multimedia presentation, or in responses to structured questions
- a written analysis in response to structured questions.

Unit 2: Australian Identity

In this unit students study aspects of Australian identity evident in contemporary drama practice. This may also involve exploring the work of selected drama practitioners and associated performance styles. This unit focuses on the use and documentation of the processes involved in constructing a devised solo or ensemble performance. Students create, present and analyse a performance based on a person, an event, an issue, a place, an artwork, a text and/or an icon from a contemporary or historical Australian context. In creating the performance, students use stimulus material that allows them to explore an aspect or aspects of Australian identity. They examine selected performance styles and explore the associated conventions. Students further develop their knowledge of the conventions of transformation of character, time and place, the application of symbol, and how these conventions may be manipulated to create meaning in performance and the use of dramatic elements and production areas. Students analyse their own performance work as well as undertaking an analysis of a performance of an Australian work, where possible, by professional actors.

An Australian work might:

- be written, adapted or devised by Australian writers or theatre-makers
- reflect aspects of Australian identity, for example the voice of Australia's first peoples, the Celtic perspective, the twentieth or twenty-first century migrant experience, the refugee experience, urban and rural perspectives.

Across this unit, students study performance styles from a range of historical and/or social and/or cultural contexts.

Aims

On completion of this unit the student should be able to:

- devise and document the processes used to create a solo or ensemble performance that reflects an aspect or aspects of Australian identity and contemporary drama practice
- present a devised performance that reflects aspects of Australian identity and contemporary drama practice
- analyse the development, and performance to an audience, of their devised work.
- analyse and evaluate a performance of a drama work by Australian practitioners.

Assessment

Assessment tasks for this unit include the following:

- demonstrate the use of play-making techniques to devise and develop a solo and/or ensemble drama work/s based on stories and/or characters
- document the processes to create and develop stories and characters in drama
- perform a devised solo or ensemble devised drama work that features stories and characters
- analyse the drama work created and performed in class in an aural presentation or a multimedia presentation, or in responses to structured questions
- a written analysis in response to structured questions.

VCE Theatre Studies

Unit 1: Pre-modern Theatre Styles and Conventions

This unit focuses on the application of acting, direction and design in relation to theatre styles from the pre-modern era, that is, works prior to the 1920s. Students creatively and imaginatively work in production roles with scripts from the pre-modern era of theatre, focusing on at least three distinct theatre styles and their conventions. They study innovations in theatre production in the pre-modern era and apply this knowledge to their own works. Students develop knowledge and skills about theatre production processes including dramaturgy, planning, development and performance to an audience and apply this to their work. Theatre styles from the pre-modern era of theatre include Ancient Greek, Ancient Roman, Liturgical drama such as morality/miracle/mystery plays, Commedia dell'Arte, Elizabethan, Restoration comedies and dramas, Neo-classical, Naturalism/Realism, Beijing Opera, Noh, Bunraku and Kabuki and other traditional indigenous theatre forms.

Aims

On completion of this unit the student should be able to:

- identify and describe distinguishing features of theatre styles and scripts from the pre-modern era
- work creatively and imaginatively in production roles to interpret scripts from the pre-modern era
- analyse the performance of a script.

Assessment

Assessment tasks for this unit are selected from the following:

- interpretation of scripts from the pre-modern era through the application of acting, direction and/or design: costume, make-up, props, set, lighting, sound
- oral/visual/multimedia reports and/or presentations
- structured questions
- a research report.

Unit 2: Modern Theatre Styles and Conventions

This unit focuses on the application of acting, direction and design in relation to theatre styles from the modern era, that is, the 1920s to the present. Students creatively and imaginatively work in production roles with scripts from the modern era of theatre, focusing on at least three distinct theatre styles. They study innovations in theatre production in the modern era and apply this knowledge to their own works. Students develop knowledge and skills about theatre production processes including dramaturgy, planning, development and performance to an audience and apply this to their work. They study safe and ethical working practices in theatre production and develop skills of performance analysis, which they apply to the analysis of a play in performance. Theatre styles from the modern era of theatre include Epic theatre, Constructivist theatre, Theatre of the Absurd, Political theatre, Feminist theatre, Expressionism, Eclectic theatre, Experimental theatre, Musical theatre, Physical theatre, Verbatim theatre, Theatre-in-education, and Immersive/Interactive theatre.

Aims

On completion of this unit the student should be able to:

- identify and describe the distinguishing features of theatre styles and scripts from the modern era
- work creatively and imaginatively in production roles to interpret scripts from the modern era
- analyse and evaluate a theatre production.

Assessment

Assessment tasks for this unit are selected from the following:

- interpretation of scripts from the pre-modern era through the application of acting, direction and/or design: costume, make-up, props, set, lighting, sound
- oral/visual/multimedia reports and/or presentations
- structured questions
- a research report.

[VCAA VCE Theatre Studies Units 1 & 2 Study Design](#)

Associated Programs

Performance Skills 1

Performance Skills classes are conducted for the entirety of year 11. Classes include workshops facilitated by expert teachers and encourage the development of the students' sense of themselves as individuals and how this understanding can be translated into the creation of character for performance purposes. Skills and techniques taught in these classes include both physical theatre and text analysis. The subject has no performance outcome and student progress is assessed through facilitator observation, feedback and reflective journal entries.

Musical Theatre Workshop

Musical Theatre Workshop is a year-long course throughout year 11. Course content focuses on the development of dance, movement and voice (singing) skills, compositional practices, devising and acting skills pertinent to the Musical Theatre performance style. The course culminates in a public performance season of a co-devised Musical Theatre production.

VCASS does not offer private singing tuition. Students are encouraged to make their own arrangements for private tuition with a singing tutor if they wish, however private singing tuition can only be scheduled adjacent to the school day and at times that do not clash with VCASS rehearsal times.

Melbourne Theatre Company Program

The MTC 'On Stage' program is delivered by MTC educators, creatives and staff members at the Southbank Theatre, as a part of their collaboration with the Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School. Students follow a condensed MTC production lifecycle with guest sessions from MTC staff and artists. Working under the guidance of an external director, students develop and present performance outcomes at the end of the semester.

Formative assessment takes the form of regular reflective journal entries completed adjacent to working sessions. Summative assessments include set and costume design presentations, construction of set models, designs and performance outcomes.

Masterclass Program

Students will undertake a range of Masterclasses, facilitated by theatre industry professionals and VCASS Alumni.

Masterclasses will focus on:

- practical theatre performance skills, such as voice and movement
- theatre literacy skills, such as script writing and grant writing
- theatre production skills such as sound design and stage management

Masterclasses are a further valuable opportunity for students to meet and work with contemporary theatre industry professionals.

VCASS Year 12 Theatre Arts Company Presents

Burial Rites

by Hannah Kent
Adaptation by Goran Banyai



Wednesday 20th June & Thursday 21st June 2018 @ 6:00pm
VCASS Recital Room
57 Miles Street, Southbank, Victoria

Image - Christy Tran; Photograph by Goran Banyai

VCA Victorian College of the Arts
SECONDARY SCHOOL



VCASS | THEATRE ARTS | 2021

presents

Almost MAINE

by John Cariani



1 - 2 JUNE @ 6PM

Southbank Theatre, Lawler Theatre
140 Southbank Boulevard, Southbank Victoria



**SOUTHBANK
THEATRE**



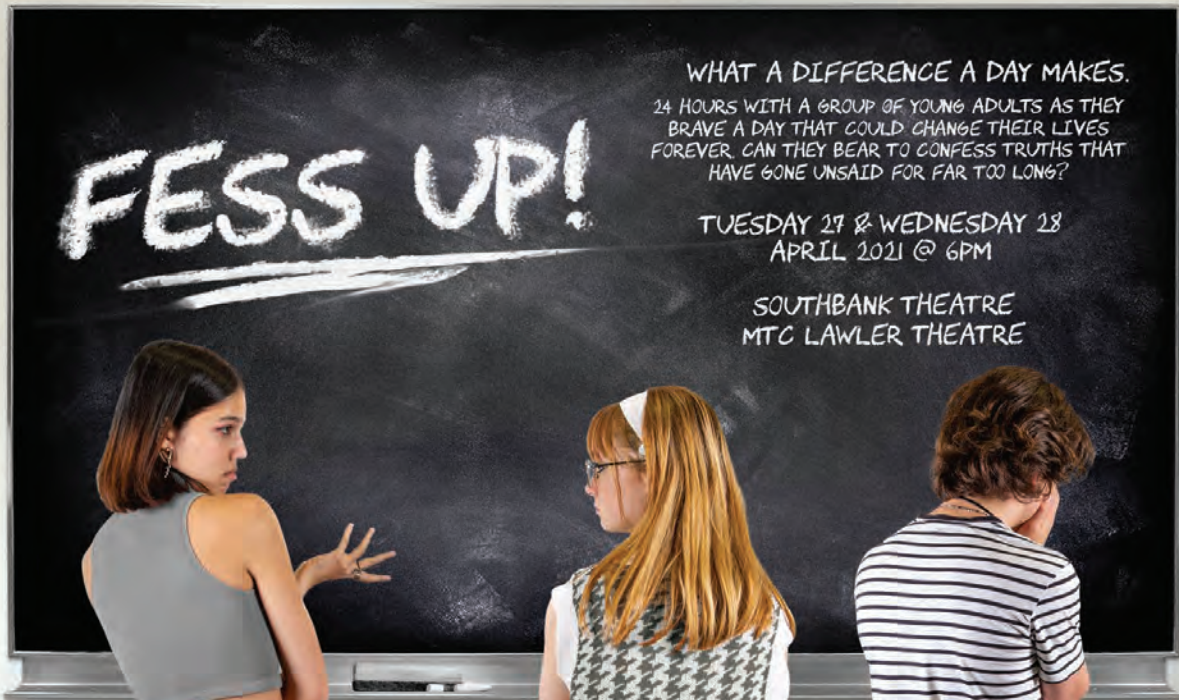
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Year 12 Theatre Arts

VCE Drama

Unit 3: Devised Ensemble Performance

In this unit students explore the work of drama practitioners and draw on contemporary practice as they devise ensemble performance work. Students explore performance styles and associated conventions from a diverse range of contemporary and/or traditional contexts. They work collaboratively to devise, develop and present an ensemble performance. Students create work that reflects a specific performance style or one that draws on multiple performance styles and is therefore eclectic in nature. They use play-making techniques to extract dramatic potential from stimulus material, then apply and manipulate conventions, dramatic elements, expressive skills, performance skills and production areas. Throughout development of the work they experiment with transformation of character, time and place, and application of symbol. Students devise and shape their work to communicate meaning or to have a specific impact on their audience. In addition, students document and evaluate stages involved in the creation, development and presentation of the ensemble performance. Students analyse and evaluate a professional drama performance selected from the prescribed VCE Drama Unit 3 Playlist published annually on the VCAA website.

Aims

On completion of this unit the student should be able to:

- develop and present characters within a devised ensemble performance that goes beyond a representation of real life as it is lived
- analyse the use of processes, techniques and skills to create and present a devised ensemble performance
- analyse and evaluate a professional drama performance.

Assessment

Assessment for this unit of study includes:

- development and presentation of characters within a devised ensemble performance that goes beyond a representation of real life as it is lived
- analysis of the use of processes, techniques and skills to create and present a devised ensemble performance
- analysis and evaluation of a professional drama performance.

Unit 4: Devised Solo Performance

This unit focuses on the development and the presentation of devised solo performances. Students explore contemporary practice and works that are eclectic in nature; that is, they draw on a range of performance styles and associated conventions from a diverse range of contemporary and traditional contexts. Students develop skills in extracting dramatic potential from stimulus material and use play-making techniques to develop and present a short solo performance. They experiment with application of symbol and transformation of character, time and place. They apply conventions, dramatic elements, expressive skills, performance skills and performance styles to shape and give meaning to their work. Students further develop and refine these skills as they create a performance in response to a prescribed structure. They consider the use of production areas to enhance their performance and the application of symbol and transformations. Students document and evaluate the stages involved in the creation, development and presentation of their solo performance. Students are encouraged to attend performances that incorporate a range of performance styles to support their work in this unit.

Aims

On completion of this unit the student should be able to:

- demonstrate, in response to given stimulus material, application of symbol and transformation of character, time and place, and describe the techniques used
- create, develop and perform a solo performance in response to a prescribed structure
- analyse and evaluate the creation, development and presentation of a solo performance devised in response to a prescribed structure.

Assessment

Assessment for this unit of study includes:

- a one to two-minute presentation of a solo demonstration
- a short oral or written statement, which describes techniques used in the demonstration
- analysis and evaluation of the devised solo performance.

In addition, all students will undertake:

- the preparation and presentation of a solo performance based on a prescribed structure selected from the VCE Drama Solo Performance Examination published annually by the VCA, to be performed in examination conditions to a VCAA appointed panel of assessors.
- a written examination, conducted by the VCAA in November

Assessed work in VCE Drama units 3 and 4 contributes to student's study score and is a component of their ATAR score.

[VCAA VCE Units 3 & 4 Drama Study Design](#)

VCE Theatre Studies

Unit 3: Producing Theatre

In this unit students develop an interpretation of a script through the three stages of the theatre production process: planning, development and presentation. Students specialise in two production roles, working collaboratively, creatively and imaginatively to realise the production of a script. They use knowledge developed during this process to analyse and evaluate the ways work in production roles can be used to interpret script excerpts previously unstudied. Students develop knowledge and apply elements of theatre composition, and safe and ethical working practices in the theatre. Students attend a performance selected from the prescribed VCE Theatre Studies Unit 3 Playlist and analyse and evaluate the interpretation of the script in the performance.

Aims

On completion of this unit students should be able to:

- interpret a script across the stages of the production process through creative, imaginative and collaborative work undertaken in two production roles.
- outline concepts and ideas for a creative interpretation of excerpts from a script and explain how these could be realised in a theatre production.
- analyse and evaluate the creative and imaginative interpretation of a written script in production to an audience.

Assessment

Assessment tasks for this unit include the following:

- Ongoing developmental contributions to creative interpretation of a script across all three stages of the production process through collaborative work in two production roles
- Analysis and evaluation, supported by relevant documentation, of ongoing developmental contributions across all three stages of the production process
- Documentation that outlines the concepts and ideas for a creative interpretation of excerpts from a script and provides an explanation of how these could be realised in a theatre production
- An analysis and evaluation of a creative and imaginative interpretation of a prescribed script.

Unit 4: Presenting an Interpretation

In this unit students study a scene and an associated monologue. They initially develop an interpretation of the prescribed scene. This work includes exploring theatrical possibilities and using dramaturgy across the three stages of the production process. Students then develop a creative and imaginative interpretation of the monologue that is embedded in the specified scene. To realise their interpretation, they work in production roles as an actor and director, or as a designer. Students' work for Areas of Study 1 and 2 is supported through analysis of a performance they attend. The performance must be selected from the VCE Theatre Studies Unit 4 Playlist. Students analyse acting, direction and design and the use of theatre technologies, as appropriate to the production. In conducting their work in Areas of Study 1 and 2, students develop knowledge in and apply safe and ethical theatre practices.

Aims

Monologue selection

For Areas of Study 1 and 2 students must select a script, scene and monologue from the VCE Theatre Studies Monologue Examination published annually by the VCAA. The list will consist of a set of prescribed scripts, a specified scene from each script and a selected monologue from that scene.

On completion of this unit the student should be able to:

- describe and justify a creative and imaginative interpretation of a monologue and its prescribed scene
- interpret and present a monologue and orally justify and explain their interpretive decisions
- analyse and evaluate acting, direction and design in a production.

Assessment

Assessment for this unit of study includes the preparation and presentation of a solo performance of a monologue from a scene in a play and explain their interpretive decisions. The monologue will be selected from the VCE Theatre Studies Monologue Examination set annually by the VCAA.

Additional assessments include:

- A written report that describes and justifies dramaturgical decisions for a creative and imaginative interpretation of a monologue and its prescribed scene
- An oral presentation about the possibilities, intentions and vision for an interpretation of a monologue and its prescribed scene, including responding to question/s
- An analysis and evaluation of acting, direction and design and their interrelationship in a production from the prescribed playlist.
- A written examination conducted by the VCAA in November.

Assessed work in VCE Theatre Studies units 3 and 4 contributes to a student's study score and is a component of their ATAR score.

[VCAA VCE Theatre Studies Study Design](#)

Associated Programs

Performance Skills 2

Students undertake acting classes during terms one to three of their year 12 studies. Student progress is assessed through facilitator observation, feedback, performance “showings” and reflective diary entries. Workshops facilitated by expert teachers continue and include classes in Alexander Technique and Laban Movement Analysis. Students are also instructed in the preparation of monologues and other audition processes for tertiary entrance auditions.

MTC Program

In year 12, students are invited to attend a series of MTC productions in rehearsal, followed by tailored content specific to that production. For example, students might observe a table read of a script with the director and cast, and then participate in a workshop that explores any aspect of script work, such as identifying beats and character objectives. Alternatively, they might observe a technical and dress rehearsal and be shown how a stage lift or revolver is operated, and then participate in a technical workshop. This program offers valuable opportunities for students to work with a wide range of professional practitioners working on MTC productions across terms 1-3.

Masterclass Program

Students will undertake a range of Masterclasses, facilitated by theatre industry professionals and VCASS Alumni.

Masterclasses will focus on:

- practical theatre performance skills, such as voice and movement
- theatre literacy skills, such as script writing and grant writing
- theatre production skills such as sound design and stage management

Masterclasses are a further valuable opportunity for students to meet and work with contemporary theatre industry professionals.





VCASS Theatre Arts Specialist Program performing *Metamorphosis*

VCASS Theatre Arts Specialist Program performing *The Beaux Strategem*





VCASS | THEATRE ARTS | 2023
presents



OUR TOWN
BY THORNTON WILDER

*"Oh, earth, you're too wonderful
for anybody to realize you."*

EMILY WEBB

WEDNESDAY 31 MAY @ 6:00PM
THURSDAY 1 JUNE @ 6:00PM

SOUTHBANK THEATRE | LAWLER
140 Southbank Blvd, Southbank VIC 3006

ENQUIRIES | events@vcass.vic.edu.au

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presents

THE TRIAL



BY JASON KLARWEIN
AFTER KAFKA

Wednesday 29 May @ 7pm | Thursday 30 May @ 7pm

Chapel Off Chapel

12 LITTLE CHAPEL ST, PRAHRAN VIC 3181



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CHAPEL OFF CHAPEL