
CALIBAN
by WESTERN EDGE YOUTH ARTS

Education Resources
Part A

INTRODUCTION TO CALIBAN



"An adaptation that wreaks perfect havoc on its source text, layering the urgency of climate change into its plot and characters." - ★ ★ ★ ★ Theatrepeople

WHERE DO SPIRITS GO WHEN THE WATER RISES?

Alright, so here's what I know.

Me. My island.

My space, my peace.

Knew this place like the backs of my eyelids,

Could read it like a book, cover to cover, leaf to root to paw print to coloured flower and fruit.

Until...

Caliban's island is sinking. Ariel is an artificial intelligence system with the power to save the world. But as she learns more about the people she was built to protect, she is forced to make a choice that could destroy them.

Exploring the battle ground of global climate politics through the eyes of those on the front lines, this brand new Australian work reclaims Shakespeare's iconic character of Caliban and gives him a voice in a world where only the richest survive.

Floating stories from Sudan, Nigeria, Zimbabwe and Noongar country in Western Australia, Caliban is a dynamic and energized performance that draws from the past to question how we're living in the present. Crashing between Shakespeare and rap, nature and technology, physical theatre and audio

CALIBAN

EDUCATION RESOURCE (PART A)

visual projection, this electric performance allows young people to grapple with Australia's most urgent question: how do we save the planet if we're the ones to blame?

"Western Edge Youth Arts have done and continue to do remarkable work but the real accolades go to the Edge Ensemble for a clever thought-evoking message." - ★ ★ ★ ★ ArtsHub

CAST & CREATIVE TEAM



CAST

Caliban: Ror Akot

Miranda: Amarachi Okorom

Ferdinand: Craig Gunguta

Prospera: Natalie Lucic

Ariel: Piper Huynh

Steph: Ebony McGuire

CREATIVE TEAM

Directed: Penny Harpham

Written: Georgia Symons

Set and costume: Owen Phillips

Sound composition and AV: Daniel Nixon

Movement: Amy Macpherson

Lighting and Stage management: Jessica Hutton

Production Management: Sally Farr

"Caliban is pertinent worthwhile theatre... Go Western Edge!" – Stage Whispers

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON CALIBAN

Caliban had its first season at Malthouse Theatre in 2016. In 2018 the production has undergone further development with a new director and a number of new cast members.

The inspiration for creating a show based on the character of Caliban:

Caliban is the most compelling character in Shakespeare's play, *The Tempest*. Commonly interpreted as an indigenous character, he came to the island from Africa with his mother Sycorax. He has however grown up alone on the island and he hears the songs of its spirits. As he says, *'the isle is full of noises'*. Although Shakespeare's Caliban has monstrous behaviour, he also gives him the most beautiful poetry in the play. Caliban is a contradictory, complex and challenging character who is the perfect vehicle for exploring the battle ground of global climate politics.

The character of Caliban (in the WEYA production):

Our Caliban, like Shakespeare's, is proud of his mother's culture, in touch with the natural world and in love with Miranda. He has an ambiguous relationship to Prospera who colonises his Island, treats him with fear and resentment and then leaves him alone again as she takes her daughter, Miranda, back to the city. Our Caliban is highly intelligent, unlike Shakespeare's who is often played as a buffoon. He begins the play speaking in Shakespearean language from the original text where he announces himself a servant to Prospera and Miranda saying *"I'll kiss thy foot. I'll swear myself thy subject"*. However, in our play, Caliban chokes on these words, and turns to the audience directly, asking them: *"Who put these words in my mouth?"* He then begins to speak in his natural voice – a mix of contemporary dialogue and spoken word poetry/ rap, reclaiming this problematic Shakespearean character and exploring him as a complex, playful, misunderstood and articulate young man. As the waters rise and Caliban's island sinks, he is forced to seek asylum and ends up in a Detention Centre in Australia. His plight becomes the catalyst for the other characters to urgently address the dangers of climate change and galvanise to find solutions before it's too late.

Key issues and questions that this production seeks to raise and explore:

Climate change is one of the pressing issues of our time. In Australia, its impact can be seen through increased bush fires, droughts and the startling decline in the health of the Great Barrier Reef. There is an increasing sense of the world sleep walking towards disaster, comparable to the events leading up to the First World War:

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/mar/12/climate-change-is-a-disaster-foretold-just-like-the-first-world-war>

The key vision behind this work is an image of Caliban watching the seas rise and his island in

Shakespeare's *The Tempest* slowly drown. This is currently happening to many island nations across the world, particularly in the Pacific. This theme in the production took off through the involvement of an original Edge Ensemble member with Pacific Islander background, making the process personal and immediate.

The key question at the heart of this play is, why is the world failing to act urgently upon climate change when we clearly stand to lose everything if we don't act now? The show suggests that this inaction is because of the discrepancy between the world's rich and poor, the inaction of our governments and our reliance on technology to solve our problems, rather than developing an awareness of the natural world, understanding our complex history and reaching out to each other to collectively create change.

Caliban makes the point that climate change is a global issue, and while every country is feeling its detrimental impacts, the poorest nations are facing the worst consequences.



"...spirited, vibrant and painfully accurate." – Theatre Press



Learning Areas	Capabilities
<p>The Arts, Drama</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The different elements of drama • Principle of narrative • Perspective/ view points • Learn as an artist and an audience member • Learn through creating and responding 	<p>Critical and creative thinking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions and possibilities • Reasoning • Meta-cognition • Leadership skills <p>Ethical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning about the current affairs and world views • Develop ethical capability <p>Intercultural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on and challenge assumptions and stereotypes • Changing attitudes and believes • Learning about cohesion <p>Personal and social</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition and expression of emotions • Appreciation of diversity
<p>English</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy • Writing, speaking, listening, reading skills • The study of literature and texts 	

INTERVIEW WITH DAVE KELMAN - ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF WESTERN EDGE YOUTH ARTS

*In this interview Dave Kelman discusses the inspiration behind the original production of *Caliban* in 2016, and the devising processes for the creation of that work. He also discusses the philosophy of WEYA as a company.*

1. Could you tell us about Western Edge Youth Arts and what defines it as a company?

WEYA brings theatre to communities that don't have access to it. We make original works with young people from culturally diverse and economically disadvantaged backgrounds, that has a social justice agenda. WEYA is about theatre for change.

2. How does the Western Edge Ensemble work?

The Edge Ensemble works in democratic, exploratory devising process that involves a cycle of improvisation, analysis and discussion to develop a script. The script is the property and the voice of the ensemble and is refined through many drafts before arriving at a final version.

3. Western Edge has a history of adapting and reimagining Shakespeare's plays (recent examples include the touring production of *Iago*). Why does WEYA do this and what is the process for reimagining such well-known plays and characters?

There is a reason Shakespeare's work is still performed over 400 years after his death. It is work of genius and has transcended its anglophone origins to become world culture. But it has to be a living culture and for that to occur it must constantly be re-invented to address the times we are living in. Shakespeare gives us peerless poetry, brilliantly dramaturgy and morally ambiguous characters.

4. What was the inspiration for a new work based upon the character of *Caliban* in 2016?

Famously Caliban says in Shakespeare's play: '*This island's mine*'. There have been a number of plays written with that title. The inspiration for *Caliban* was the question: what happens when that island is sinking beneath rising sea levels?

5. What was the process you undertook when devising the first season of *Caliban* in 2016?

The process of creating *Caliban* took over a year. We explored the events of *The Tempest* from Caliban's perspective, building a physical vocabulary for the work. We then imagined a dystopian Melbourne of the near future where climate change has led to increased social division between rich and poor. We wove the characters of Shakespeare's play into this world, seeking at all times to provide a factual commentary of climate change, to make a political statement about the responsibility of the mega-rich for the lack of action to stop it and then tried to make it funny!

6. What were some of the performance styles and theatrical conventions that were explored and made use of for the production of *Caliban*?

The original *Caliban* drew on the Grotowski's 'Poor Theatre' style of and interwove it with Brecht's Epic Theatre.

7. What are some of the key themes and ideas that the production explores and in what ways do they speak to audiences today in contemporary Australia?

The original *Caliban* was a direct and complex analysis of the politics of climate change. We also wanted to talk about artificial intelligence and the ability of humankind to shape their own destiny in the Anthropocene Age if we choose to do so. It is also about love and the complexity of human nature and human culture. CALIBAN is a play for our times.

PROFILES OF CAST IN CALIBAN ON TOUR 2018

CAST



AMARACHI OKOROM

Amarachi is an aspiring actress who was born in Nigeria. She grew up in Auckland, New Zealand, where she spent 14 years of her life. In July 2013, she moved to Melbourne, where she studied and graduated with a Bachelor's Degree of Technology in 2017. When she's not performing, she enjoys attending meetings with the Youth crew at the Wyndham City Libraries and being involved in Western Edge Youth Arts' Wyndham Edge workshops as a facilitator and participant. Outside of her commitments, she perfects her communication skills by writing stories. Amarachi has performed her poetry at multiple events such as The Sistahood Picnic 2017 and Africa Day event at Latrobe University 2017. Amarachi joined the Wyndham Edge Ensemble in 2017, where

she performed in *At First Glance*. She joined the Edge Ensemble in 2018 and plays Miranda in *Caliban*.



CRAIG GUNGUTA

At age 21 Craig is already carving a unique path for himself, being a dancer, actor, musician and education facilitator. He is a creative powerhouse who believes he is here for a reason. As a teenager who grew up in Zimbabwe, Craig was involved in making Zimdancehall music. Since moving to Australia in 2014, he has continued to develop his creative practice through dance and theatre, while maintaining his love for music. Craig who has been a member of Western Edge Youth Arts' Geelong Ensemble since its inception, has co-created two major productions and toured schools in the Geelong region with an interactive educational theatre work. Craig joined the Edge Ensemble in 2018 and plays Ferdinand in *Caliban*.



EBONY MCGUIRE

Ebony McGuire is a proud Noongar woman who graduated from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts. In 2014, she performed at The Blue Room in *What Do They Call Me?* Ebony also worked as a workshop facilitator in the *Culture 2.0 | Respecting Yourself | Respect Your Culture* program with Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company, and worked with a team of artists in developing the *Shakespeare Sonnets* in Noongar workshop program in 2015. She performed in the 2015 Yirra Yaakin production of *The Fever and The Fret*, directed by Kyle Morrison. In 2017, Ebony played various roles for the *Coranderrk National Tour* with Ilbijerri Theatre Company, she then went on to work with wit incorporated, playing the roles of Irene Adler/Sally Barak in *A Scandal in*

The Weimar and Lou in *Outside In*. Ebony was inspired to work with WEYA after seeing *Six Hours in Geelong*, and joined the Edge Ensemble in 2018. She plays Steph in *Caliban*.



NATALIE LUCIC

Natalie is an actress and an education facilitator who hails from Werribee, Victoria. Her parents opened a pizza shop the day she was born, founding her love for pizza. Natalie has always enjoyed entertaining and being in the spotlight. She started acting professionally at age 15 with Moving Theatre, where she performed in various shows including a season at La Mama Courthouse Theatre. In 2013, she attended film acting school at ITM studios. In 2014, Natalie joined the Western Edge Youth Arts' Edge Ensemble, where she co-created and performed in *Iago* (2015) and *Caliban* (2016). Currently, she is teaching with Western Edge Youth Arts where she works with schools and communities, and loves every second of it. Natalie plays Prospera in *Caliban*.



PIPER HUYNH

Piper is a theatre-maker driven by untold stories. She has worked extensively in community engagement, access arts and independent theatre focusing on stage/production management, performance and facilitation. She has worked extensively with Western Edge Youth Arts as an artist and performer, devising projects such as *Chronicles: Searching for Songlines*, *Beagle Bay Chronicles*, *Iago* and *Caliban*. She recently graduated from Footscray Community Arts Centre's Emerging Cultural Leaders Program and is an avid Playback Theatre practitioner facilitating workshops in Asia. Her recent stage/production management credits include 4th *National Gathering of Theatre of Friendship* (Sri Lanka), *Agni* (Apollon Studios), *Ode to Man* (Melbourne Fringe Festival), *My Ancestral Roots* (Gertrude Street Projection Festival), *Surprise Party with Jem and Dead Max* (La Mama Theatre) and *Salt* (She Said Theatre). Piper plays Ariel in *Caliban*.



ROR AKOT

Ror is a 20-year-old hip hop artist and poet born in South Sudan. In 2005, he immigrated to Australia with his mother, brothers and sisters. Ror's music speaks of the hardships and triumphs he has experienced in his young life, and his music is continually evolving through his powerful lyrics and live performances. As well as performing extensively for his local community, Ror has also performed at Peace Pallet, a benefit for South Sudan, 'Bring It' Festival at the Melbourne Arts Centre, and the Boston Leadership Course U.S.A. Ror's professional acting talent was also recently showcased in SBS crime drama series, *Sunshine*. Ror joined the Edge Ensemble in 2018 and plays Caliban in *Caliban*.

DIRECTOR



PENNY HARPHAM

Penny Harpham is the Associate Director at Western Edge Youth Arts and is also co-founder and co-Artistic Director of She Said Theatre. She has worked across Australia, South Korea and Germany as a director and performer and is a graduate of the University of Queensland (Bachelor of Drama/ Journalism), University of Melbourne (Post Graduate Diploma in Arts and Cultural Management) and the Victorian College of the Arts (Directing). Her other theatre directing credits include the multiple award-winning *HART* for She Said Theatre (Australia and New Zealand tours); *The Way Out* for Red Stitch Actors Theatre; *Fallen* for Sport for Jove/She Said Theatre/Seymour Centre; *Salt* for She Said Theatre/La Mama Courthouse; *Bock Kills Her Father* for She Said Theatre/La Mama Courthouse; *Slut* for VCA One Act Play Season; *Laika and Wills* and *Breaking* for

She Said Theatre/Melbourne Fringe. Her assistant directing credits are *Antony and Cleopatra* (Bell Shakespeare) and *Rust and Bone* (Dan Clarke). Her most recent theatre performance credits include *Virgins and Cowboys* (Griffin Theatre), *You Got Older* (Red Stitch Actors Theatre), *Now More Than Ever* (Elbow Room) and *Six Women Standing in Front of a White Wall* (Little Dove Theatre Art). Upon graduating from the VCA Penny was awarded the Barbara Manning Scholarship for Excellence and the Global Atelier Scholarship for Overseas Travel. Penny has both received and been nominated for a Green Room Award, received three Melbourne Fringe Awards, an Adelaide Fringe Award, and was the 2015 recipient of the Ian Potter Cultural Trust Award. Penny has also worked extensively with children and young people as a Workshop Facilitator at La Boite Theatre Company, Footscray Community Arts Centre and as a Teaching Artist and director at Western Edge Youth Arts.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Books:

- **2014** *'Come You Spirits' Shakespeare, Mythology and Process Drama*. Kelman and Rafe. English In Australia Journal of the Australian Association for the Teaching of English: Vol 49 Issue 3, 2014.
- **2013** *Playing on the great stage of fools: Shakespeare and dramaturgic pedagogy*. Kelman and Rafe. Research In Drama Education. Routledge: (Vol 18: 3)
- **2013** *Drama, Cultural Leadership and Reflective Practice: Taking the Road to Zamunda*. Sinclair and Kelman, in Anderson and Dunn Eds. 'How Drama Activates Learning, Contemporary Research and Practice'. London: Bloomsbury.
- **2011** *Mythological Translations: Drama, Poetry and the Language of Myth*. Kelman and Rafe. Applied Theatre Researcher, Griffith University: Issue 12 2011.
- **2010** [*Who Told You There Was Meaning? Narrative, Mimesis and Narrative Complexity*](#). Kelman. NJ Drama Australia Journal. Drama Australia: Issue 34 2010
- **2009** [*Reaching Out To A Larger World, an investigation into narrative meaning and performance dynamics*](#) 2009. Kelman D. in Shu, Jack & Chan, Phoebe et. al. (Eds.) 'Planting Trees of Drama with Global Vision in Local Knowledge: IDEA 2007 Dialogues'. Hong Kong: TEFO & IATC (HK).
- **2008** *Narrative, Dialogue and Resistance: Making Meaning through Drama with Young People at Risk*. Kelman D. in 'The Arts and Youth 'At Risk': Global and Local Challenges' (the publication of the 2005 Risky Business Symposium) Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- **2006** *My Story / Our Stories: Growing and Connecting Through Enacted Stories*. Donelan, O'Brien and Kelman. NJ Drama Australia Journal (Vol 30: 1)
- **2006** *Complex Messages*. Kelman in 'Drama As Social Intervention', Captus Press.
- **2004** *Evaluation of School-based Arts education programmes in Australian Schools*. Bryce et al. Australian Council for Education Research.

Interviews and articles:

<https://www.dramavictoria.vic.edu.au/homepagearticles/columns/mask20aninterviewwithdavekelman>

Reviews:

<http://www.stagewhispers.com.au/reviews/caliban>

<https://theatrepress.com.au/2016/11/26/western-edge-presents-the-tempest/>

<http://performing.artshub.com.au/news-article/reviews/performing-arts/andrea-simpson/caliban-252724>

Trailer:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=4&v=MXghRlfbT80

Images:

http://westernedge.org.au/archives/program_type/shows