

This book belongs to

SLINGSBY

- Journey In Wonder -



The Young King

By *Oscar Wilde* and Adapted by *Nicki Bloom*



STUDY GUIDE

Created by *Hannah McCarthy-Oliver*

Format Design by *Andy Ellis*

Materials have been created to support older student audiences.

INTRODUCTION

We are so excited to be sharing the “The Young King” with you. We hope this Study Guide helps you get the most from the production!

Oscar Wilde was an incredibly clever writer and Slingsby’s “The Young King” is a wondrous and innovative interpretation of this story. We hope it will be a positive and challenging experience for you. Whilst in the theatre you are most welcome to laugh or shed a tear if the moment leads you to.

There are many other activities, support materials and worksheets in the Activity Book. You may like to complete some of these if it helps you to form your own responses. There are also many links listed in the Study Guide. You can access and click on them all easily by going to this page at the Slingsby website: www.slingsby.net.au/tyk_education

Some other things to note:

- The production contains lighting effects as well as haze and smoke.
- Please do not write notes during the performance. (*You will be seated amongst the action and very close to the actors!*)
- Please arrive at the performance space at least 30 minutes before the start time.
- Please leave all distractions outside, including food and drink, and ensure any mobile phones are switched off.
- It’s a great idea to watch the video synopsis we have created for you and do some pre-show reading before you attend the performance. (Link is on next page!)
- The duration of the show is 70 minutes followed a 15 minutes Q&A.

I must take this opportunity to thank the creative team at Slingsby, particularly Mr Andy Packer for his huge contribution to these resources including the notes on Themes, Symbols and Characters.

I hope you enjoy every minute of your “The Young King” experience including all the pre and post show work!

Hannah



For more information – go to www.slingsby.net.au/tyk_education

Tales of shadows and sunshine for young and old...

Founded in 2007 and based in Adelaide, South Australia, Slingsby presents emotionally challenging and engaging storytelling in rich live theatrical realms. Our original productions are crafted to challenge and inspire adult and older family audiences.

Slingsby is named after a character in Edward Lear's short story *The Four Little People Who Went Round The World*. Indeed, the company's adventures have taken it far. We are now well-established as a leading international company and have toured to 68 venues in 43 cities across ten countries, and counting.

Slingsby's stories are told through images and music, as much as they are through words. The company's work acknowledges the sunshine and shadows of human experience and ultimately reminds us all, of the potential joy, infinite possibility and wonder of the universe.

Led by Andy Packer (Artistic Director) and Jodi Glass (Executive Producer) the company's productions are conceived by Andy and developed in collaboration with Artistic Associates Quincy Grant (composer) and Geoff Cobham (designer) alongside teams of artists from a range of artistic disciplines.

"If more theatre were like this, the world would be a magical place indeed."

"It is theatre like the work Slingsby produces which makes us all imagine a better and happier world."

Australian Stage Online (March 2010)

SYNOPSIS

Listen to this short version of **The Young King** story read by our Storyteller here:
<https://soundcloud.com/slingsbytheatre/the-young-king-synopsis>

Once there was a princess who dearly loved a poor woodland man. For this, she was banished by her father, the King. The couple had a baby. But he was stolen away in the night. The Princess and her woodlander died, brokenhearted. The baby boy was raised by a goatherd in a deep forest.

Years passed and the King neared the end of his life. He called for his grandson to be brought to the palace. "You are not a young goatherd," he said, "you are the Young King".

And the Young King gladly threw aside his rough goatherd's cloak and staff. He embraced the glittering riches of the palace. For his coronation, the Young King demanded the most rare and costly silks and jewels for his robe, sceptre and crown.

On the eve of his coronation, in his velvet-canopied bed, the Young King was visited by three dreams. In the first, pale, crooked children bent over looms of golden thread to weave the King's robe. In the second, a slave drew his last breath diving for pearls for the King's sceptre. And in the third, a deep mining pit of disease and famine brought forth rubies for the King's crown. The Young King awoke in deep distress.

He shunned the robe, sceptre and crown and reached instead for his humble goatherd's cloak and staff. He made a circlet of briar thorns for his head. His courtiers beseeched him: "how shall the people know you are King?" The townsfolk laughed, then grew angry: "don't you know, from your luxury comes our living?"

In turmoil, the Young King walked away from the palace to the edge of the city. He walked to where the forest began. And as the woodland welcomed him, he felt his heart and his step lighten. He turned to face the people one last time. And the sunlight beamed down and wove about him a robe brighter than gold, and his staff blossomed with lilies whiter than pearls, and his circlet of briar bloomed with roses redder than rubies. And he, and all the world around, knew he was King.

Synopsis written by Jane Goldney

OSCAR WILDE'S "THE YOUNG KING" (Audio Track – 35 mins)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fwy8vEHgem0>

OSCAR WILDE'S "THE YOUNG KING" – STORY (Written)
<http://www.eastoftheweb.com/short-stories/UBooks/YouKin.shtml>

CREATIVE CREDITS

Tim Overton *Performer*

Jacqy Phillips *Performer*

Quincy Grant *Composer & Musician*

Nicki Bloom *Playwright*

Andy Packer *Director*

Wendy Todd *Designer*

Geoff Cobham *Lighting Designer*

Bob Weatherly *Production Manager*

Catherine Turnbull *Stage Manager*

Andy Ellis *Illustrator & Graphic Designer*

Simon Hatcher, Catherine Bauer & Kate Potter Hughes *Public Relations & Communication Counsel*

Hannah McCarthy-Oliver *Educational Advisor and Resources*

Jodi Glass *Executive Producer*

WHO IS OSCAR WILDE?

2 Minute Documentary

<http://www.biography.com/people/oscar-wilde-9531078>

Oscar Wilde Biography

<http://www.wilde-online.info/oscar-wilde-biography.htm>

Oscar Wilde was born on the 16th October 1854 in Dublin Ireland, to talented and well regarded parents, Sir William Wilde and his wife Lady Jane Wilde. Oscar's father was a renowned ear and eye surgeon, a philanthropist and gifted writer. Lady Wilde was a well known journalist and poet. She wrote patriotic Irish verse. Oscar had two siblings, an older brother, Willie, and a younger sister, Isola Francesca. Sadly, Isola died at the age of ten, deeply affecting the family.

Wilde went to the best schools in Dublin, starting at Portora Royal School (1864-71), followed by Trinity College, (1871-74). He then went on to Magdalen College, Oxford (1874-78). Whilst at Oxford he transformed himself into an unconventional, pleasure seeking "dandy". Wilde was heavily influenced by his university lecturers, in particular Professor Walter Pater, who believed art should be for art's sake. Pater encouraged his students to live with passion and to seek sensual pleasure, experiment with new ideas and to not conform to common philosophies. At this time, an avant-garde philosophy of the 1870s, "The Art Aesthetic" was in full flight and its followers, including Wilde, worked to break conventions of the day.

After graduating, Wilde relocated to Chelsea in London (1879) to establish his career as a writer. He published his first collection of poetry in 1881 – Poems. Some critics responded favorably, others gave negative reviews. That same year, Wilde worked as an Art Reviewer. In 1882 he lectured in Canada and the United States and lived in Paris in 1883. That same year, and throughout 1884 Wilde also lectured in Britain and Ireland.

Wilde married Constance Lloyd on May 29, 1884. Constance was the daughter of the very wealthy Queen's Counsel Horace Lloyd. She bore him two sons, Cyril (1885) and Vyvyan (1886). During this time, and to provide income for his family, Wilde became the editor of Woman's World magazine, where he worked from 1887-1889.

Wilde published "The Happy Prince and Other Tales", fairy-stories written for his children in 1888. His novel, "The Picture of Dorian Gray" was published in 1891 and received negative reviews. This was primarily because the novel had homoerotic overtones, a taboo subject in this era. Also in 1891 his short story collections were published, including "A House of Pomegranates" which includes the tale "The Young King". Wilde began an affair in 1891 with Lord Alfred Douglas, who was also known as 'Bosie'. Bosie was Wilde's soul mate but also was the cause of his downfall. Constance divorced Wilde in 1893.

Wilde is best known for his plays. His first script, "Lady Windermere's Fan", opened in February 1892 and was incredibly successful. He also wrote many popular and well received comedies including, "A Woman of No Importance" (1893), "An Ideal Husband" (1895) and "The Importance of Being Earnest" (1895). These plays were all highly acclaimed and firmly established Oscar as a playwright. In his short lifetime, he wrote nine plays, many poems, one novel, lots of short stories and essays. His work is imaginative, poetic, passionate, witty and clever.

Bosie's father, the Marquis of Queensberry accused Wilde of being involved in homosexuality. Wilde sued him for doing this, but he was unsuccessful and was in fact arrested and taken to court answering the charge of gross indecency. His sentence was two years of hard labour. Whilst in prison, Wilde wrote "De Profundis" for Bosie, which was a monologue and autobiography.

Wilde was released in 1897 and he wrote "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" which exposed appalling prison conditions. After this and for a number of years, Wilde made his way around Europe, staying with friends or in cheap hotels. He died on 30th November 1900 from cerebral meningitis, in a low standard Parisian hotel, penniless and with a heavy heart.



Interview

What is the difference between writing a play from scratch and adapting a story into a script?

When you're adapting a story into a script you have the structure, narrative, characters and ideas already distilled for you in the original work. Your job, as the adaptor, is to translate that into something that is playable, and that speaks directly to the world we live in now. When you're writing a play from scratch you have to invent everything. It is much, much harder to write a play from scratch.

Could you please describe your journey to transform Wilde's "The Young King" into a Slingsby show?

Andy Packer asked if I would be interested in adapting the story for Slingsby, and after reading the story I found a resonance in it that interested me, and I thought would speak to a contemporary audience. I worked on the first drafts when I was on an extended trip overseas, and have been on hand during rehearsals for adjustments and alterations to the script, and to contribute to the crafting of the whole experience of the piece for our audience.

Whilst working on this show, what do you think Wilde wanted his audience to learn?

To be true to your own self, and not to listen to the noise around you, even if that noise is the prevailing orthodoxy.

What do you think are the key themes in this show?

Honesty, bravery, responsibility, growing up.

Do you have a favourite moment in the story?

The opening out to the idea of possibility at the end.

Why do you think theatre is important?

The ability of theatre to communicate incredibly directly, in a person to person, real-time scale is what makes it special.

When and why did you decide that theatre would become a part of your career?

When I accidentally wrote a play at the age of 21.

How did you become a playwright?

I accidentally wrote a play and it went on and people liked it and wanted me to write more of them, and I seemed to want to write more of them too.

What is your professional background?

Over the past ten years I have written six or seven original plays, and worked as an adaptor or dramaturg on many others. My plays have been seen in cities around Australia and the world, and they have won several awards.

ANDY PACKER – DIRECTOR



Interview

In creating “The Young King”, what were your main intentions?

Slingsby creates theatre that invites our audience into the world of the story and characters. With *The Young King*, we are taking this a few steps further than our previous shows. We use language, image and sound equally to create a comprehensive theatrical space where the audience is discovering the story with us, rather than us simply telling them the story. We also seek out (or create) stories that confront some darker themes. Oscar Wilde’s story “The Young King” is full of beautiful and powerful images. It asks big philosophical questions about compassion and leadership. It is a celebration of life whilst also acknowledging death and danger. These are precisely the elements we look for in a great story to bring to the stage.

What was included in your “brief” for your creative and technical team/designers?

Slingsby’s core creative team of Director, Designer, Composer and Lighting Designer worked closely together to develop a cohesive and unique world for the production. The story of “The Young King” takes place in several locations, but we wished to select one of these locations to be our main set. We discovered an evocative photograph from the set of the film “The Kings Speech”, where actors Colin Firth and Geoffrey Rush are relaxing on set in front of an enormous fireplace. This inspired us to set the story in the Young King’s chamber (bedroom) in the palace, with a large fireplace. This is a potent space for the King’s dreams to take place and is also ideal to show the opulence and scale of the castle, without building a whole castle! The set is built of wood veneer, a reflection of the forest that the Young King grew up in. In the original story of “The Young King” there is the line “...he lay back on his luxurious couch, watching the great pinewood log that was burning itself out on the open hearth.” This suggests to me that the young man is watching his innocent past go up in flames. From this one powerful image we expanded out to create the rest of the production.

What process did you go through to bring “The Young King” to life?

In September 2015 our creative team of Quincy Grant (Composer), Geoff Cobham (Lighting Designer), Wendy Todd (Designer), Matt Crook (Actor) and I spent two weeks together exploring theatrical form, finding new ways to create intimacy in the theatre that we create together. With no pressure on the outcome at this point, we all worked across many disciplines (rather than just our individual specialities). As a full team and in smaller groups we created multiple storytelling ideas, with a ‘no such thing as a bad idea’ philosophy at that stage and weeding out left to later!

ANDY PACKER – DIRECTOR

We developed a manifesto for ourselves as a team. For us, great theatre must deliver on the below challenges:

Manifesto:

- Our audience is a group of strangers who become a brotherhood/sisterhood
- Our audience members leave a memory of themselves in the space
- Every piece of theatre should be an island (where its unique culture and logic has evolved)
- We value the experience as much as the story
- Making adults and children equal – finding the humanness in us all
- We should discover the story together (with the audience)
- Embrace unpredictability
- Create a ceremonial journey of the experience
- Remember that contrived accidents keep it real
- Every night is unique
- Our audience should start and end the show at home

From here, making the production is a circular process of hunches, experiments, testing and repeating until we find a satisfying result. Often it is accidents or unplanned discoveries that make the best moments in theatre. To get to these moments you must have time to explore, experiment and take risks. This is why we call the end result a “play”.

Why did you choose Wilde’s story as Slingsby’s next show?

For most Slingsby shows we commission writers to create completely original stories for us. Every now and again it is a useful experience to take an unknown or lesser-known story from a literary giant and adapt it to the stage. This provides the opportunity for Slingsby to discover and investigate moments of theatre that are inspired by a story that comes from a different time and place. As we looked around for inspiration for future shows our Associate Artist Quincy Grant remembered reading “The Young King” years ago and suggested we have a look at it. The story is a wonderful combination of hope, loss, death and new beginnings. It raises challenging questions about ethical behavior, finding your own path and being willing to stand your ground. We also love Oscar Wilde’s language and decided that this was the perfect story for our next production.

Are there any differences in Slingsby’s “The Young King” to Mr Wilde’s tale?

We invited award-winning playwright Nicki Bloom to write a new play script of The Young King, based on Oscar Wilde’s story. Nicki’s script maintains much of Wilde’s language but structures it in a way that works for a theatrical telling of the story. The major change that we asked Nicki to incorporate in her adaptation was to shift the end of the story from being set in a Cathedral to taking place in the forest. The final image of the original story has very strong Christian imagery which we felt may delight some people but may also alienate some of our largely secular audience. By moving the final “blossoming” image to a forest setting it creates a broader meaning and an opportunity for us all to understand the opportunity for a new beginning.

What do you think are the KEY moments in Slingsby’s “The Young King”?

Oscar Wilde’s story “The Young King” is rich with ‘meaningful moments’. The boy’s life begins with violent and mysterious events including the death of his parents and a humble and secluded forest childhood. It’s a classic literary character setup: an underdog story. It speaks to something within the human psyche that wants to believe that anything is possible for anyone. The three dreams that help to shape the Young King’s new view of the world are the pivotal point of the story. Through these visions he develops a new perspective on privilege, power and the suffering of the poor. After the turmoil created by these dreams, and the conflicting opinions and emotions, the final key moment is the Young King’s ‘coronation’ by nature as he heads back to the forest. The people of the kingdom realize that precisely because he has declined to rule, he is the right person for them to follow. A new beginning is heralded for everyone.

What do you want the audience to experience (Think, Feel and See) when they come to see Slingsby’s “The Young King”?

We would like audience members to feel like they’ve stepped out of their usual lives and into a different world for a while. Inside this story and this world you can think and feel a whole lot of things, and whatever you feel is okay, because it’s just a story. After it’s finished, you don’t have to continue feeling sad, or angry, or whatever. But maybe later on, after the show, you might remember how you felt about something, and that might make you think about part of your life, or something that’s going on in the world today. And maybe you might see that a bit differently now. Or you might be inspired to change something. Or maybe you might be inspired to see more theatre!

What lessons can audience members learn from the Young King’s story?

The Young King’s story makes me think about what kind of leader I would like to be. Is it better to keep everyone happy and have agreement in a group, so everyone feels comfortable and nothing ever really changes? Or is it better to challenge a group with new ideas and lead them through conflict to a new, positive outcome? The latter is certainly the harder option. This is the path that The Young King takes. He disrupts the current order of things. I also think the story has a lot to say about being aware of those less fortunate around us and making changes to improve their lives, even if that means that we have less ourselves.

Do you have a favorite quote from “The Young King”? Why did you choose this?

My favorite line from “The Young King” is when the Courtier asks the Young King:

“For how shall the people know thou art a King If thou hast not a King’s raiment?”

The obvious answer to this is by his actions, not by the clothes that he wears. Often we look for the wrong signals and indications of a person of power. Rather than looking at their deeds and personal qualities, we may be swayed by where they were educated or how wealthy they are, assuming that this is some indication of great leadership qualities. “The Young King” challenges these perceptions.

ANDY PACKER – DIRECTOR

Why do you believe theatre is important/valuable?

I wholeheartedly believe that great theatre is a communal, immersive, collaborative and transformative human experience. Since the emergence of human culture, people have gathered to share stories. This custom, of a community present in a single shared time and space experiencing a story, evolved into theatre. Our contemporary digital world offers a proliferation of ways to engage with stories, yet theatre continues to be the storytelling form that physically brings people together. I love that through theatre we can time travel, shape shift, live multiple lives, die, be born, be the size of a planet or as small as an atom. I love being in a room with a group of people, sharing in a story that is challenging, moving and memorable. I can't think of anything I'd rather do.

When and why did you decide that the world of theatre was where you wanted to have a career?

I went to Campbelltown High School, which was a performing art focused school, and I studied Dance and Drama through to year twelve. This was the local school so I was just very fortunate to live in the area. The school had its own dance company, and we created our own shows and toured to regional South Australian schools. I loved the collective endeavor of making a show, taking it on the road and sharing it with another group of people: the audience. I have been doing the same ever since.

How did you get here?

After High School I studied for a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Studies at Adelaide University. I was trained in many areas including technical theatre, lighting design, acting, directing and running workshops, pretty much all of which, have come in handy at times in my career! I spent eight years as a member of a small company called Ricochet Theatre which created original shows for primary school audiences and toured through South Australia, Victoria and Queensland. I ventured briefly into children's TV as a singing, dancing goanna and the silent Humphrey B Bear. As Production Manager for Co-Opera, I helped bring small-scale, cabaret-style opera to venues all over SA, VIC and NSW, and learnt to love the art of opera. From 2002 – 2007 I had a number of office-based arts jobs, creating and running programs for Adelaide Fringe, Come Out Festival and Carclew Youth Arts. In 2007 I took the leap to create my dream theatre company, making touring work for adults and young audiences, when I opened Slingsby together with our Executive Producer Jodi Glass. Alongside Slingsby over the past eight years I've also been Creative Director of Come Out Festival 2011 and directed productions and events for other companies including Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, Adelaide Cabaret Festival, Adelaide Chamber Singers and Adelaide Festival.

TIM OVERTON - PERFORMER



Interview

What role(s) do you play in Slingsby's "The Young King"?

I play the role of the Young King himself and share the role of Narrator with Jacqy, as well as some smaller roles, such as the character of Death in a dream.

Who are they?

The Young King is a teenage boy who was taken from his mother as a baby and raised as a goatherd by a poor family. He grew up in the woods and the fields outside of the town. At the beginning of the play he has been taken back to the castle and told that he is the rightful heir to the entire kingdom. The Narrators are Jacqy and I as ourselves telling the story.

What is/are their relationship(s) with other characters in the story?

Some of the other characters in the story are:

The Young King's Mother, who he doesn't know because he was taken away when he was only a baby. The Old King who is The Young King's grandfather who seeks him out to inherit the kingdom. Death and Avarice who are in The Young King's dream. They are both his imaginings. There are the courtiers, soldiers and peasants of the city. They are all The Young King's servants and subjects. And many more characters played by myself and Jacqy.

What is/are your character(s) Super Objective(s)? – Motivation?

The Young King goes on a big journey and his objectives change quite a lot as the play progresses. I think his Super Objective is always, to find happiness. In his early life I think his objectives are about maintaining peace and helping his foster family. When he arrives at the castle and discovers his love for expensive possessions his objective becomes the accumulation of greater wealth and finer things. And as he goes through a big emotional change at the end of the story I believe his objective is to make the world a better place.

What do you like most about your character(s)

I really like The Young King's emotional journey. It is always a privilege to play a character that starts and ends the play in a very different emotional state. I also really love his strength and conviction at the end. I think we could all learn a lot from the example set by his actions. I find The Young King VERY inspiring.

TIM OVERTON - PERFORMER

Why do you think theatre is important?

Theatre teaches us about ourselves and the world around us. It helps us decide what kind of people we would like to be. Theatre can inspire people to be better than they are, touch and move us in so many different ways and educate us about worlds far from our own.

When and why did you decide that theatre would become a part of your career?

Most of my childhood I wanted to be an architect and only performed on stage in school plays for fun, but when I was in year 11 my drama teacher inspired me to think about pursuing a career in acting. At around the same time I was also realising that I didn't really enjoy advanced mathematics as much as I thought I would and so I started to put more of my energy into drama and performances outside of school.

How did you become an actor?

After graduating from high school I auditioned for the acting course at Adelaide College of the Arts and got in. It's a three year course that provides you all the essential learning in becoming a professional actor. I think this is a very important step for people who would like to be an actor today, I highly recommend it. Acting is something that you never stop learning. You pick up a lot from working with lots of different people in the world and you're always developing as a performer. It is very exciting.

What is your professional background?

When I first graduated from acting school I started my own theatre company with some friends and we put on four plays together. I have performed for The State Theatre Company of South Australia 5 times including a show that toured around Australia for 10 weeks. This year I'll be performing in The 39 Steps with them in August. Most of the work I have done since graduating has been children's theatre with a company called Patch. I have done a lot of tours with them, around Australia and overseas to the USA a few times. I'm now starting to look at developing/writing my own shows with themes that I would like to explore on stage.

JACQY PHILLIPS - PERFORMER



On her role in Slingsby's "The Young King"...

My stage name is Jacqy Phillips. In Slingsby's story of "The Young King", I will be playing several characters unlike myself, which is wonderful for an actor. My main role will be the old king, estranged grandfather to the young man who will inherit the crown of the kingdom.

I am old-ish but I am a woman.

I will also play groups of people, soldiers and courtiers and townsfolk and a marvelous character called Avarice who is evil and therefore lots of fun to play. Playing the groups will be a challenge and you will have to wait to see the play to see how Andy, the director and I make this work!

I have played several old men in my career and have a strange affinity with them, which helps me make them believable on stage. In a production of Gogol's "the Government Inspector" produced by State Theatre in 2005, I played an elderly Russian military gentleman and was never recognized, one of my proudest achievements!

On that occasion the costuming and make-upping took a rushed 15 minutes backstage in my dressing room with Jana, the wig-maker and make-up artist and dresser helping me while the rest of the play went on, onstage. In this production, there only being two of us to tell the story, Tim and I will have to create new characters without costume changes, by playing with vocal ranges and physical possibilities.....lots of fun! Transforming before your very eyes.

I don't remember a time when I haven't performed and with a long history of theatre on my Mother's side, I was born to it, I suppose.

My debut was at 6 years old in a pantomime written by my grandfather and directed by my mother called "Robin of The Greenwood" in which I played a rabbit and a flame. I remember going to a shop in Melbourne called Will Andrades which was in a basement and full of the exotic smells of makeup which in those day was very heavy, a hangover from the days when stages were lit by gaslight and so expressions were "painted" on the actors' faces, and of the glue and fabrics of the glorious masks and costumes which crammed this small room and made it a treasure house for me.

I acted and sang all through my school years in a small school where the headmistress, Miss Sparrow gave every girl the opportunity to act and sing and make speeches and generally gave us all a huge sense of self worth.

JACQY PHILLIPS - PERFORMER

Acting is a precarious profession but if it is what is in your soul there is no denying it. I wish that the theatre was given the respect and financial support afforded to sport, for instance, in Australia.

I trained at Flinders University back in the 70s of last century and my first professional work was with the new Magpie Theatre-In-Education Company, and once a year with the State Theatre Company. I was very lucky to have graduated at a time when both the State Government led by my hero, Don Dunstan as Premier, and The Federal Government and Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, were hugely supportive of the Arts in this country. I worked for ten years straight, including two years with a prestigious company called Lighthouse which was an ensemble which meant that the same group of actors worked literally day and night together, rehearsing during the day and performing another play at night for those two years. It was the brainchild of the director Jim Sharman whose history is worth exploring, him coming from a famous Australian circus troupe. And among the ensemble of actors was someone you'll know well, Geoffrey Rush and many whose faces you will have seen on TV or in films... all working hard in a profession where a few become famous and most work hard to make a living from their careers. I am one of the latter, although occasionally there is a bit of TV or film work which suddenly makes you well-known for a while. For me that has been the original Irene in "Home And Away" back in 1992 and lately as horrible Mrs Cribbage in "Red Dog".

Theatre is the cream of acting work however because it is constantly creative and rewarding for the actor. During rehearsals and especially in the performance season, every audience is new and deserves to see the best performance at every performance. And it is the actor's responsibility to keep it fresh and as exciting as opening night, when nerves never cease to be at their most febrile and exciting for actor and audience alike.

I think that the unique joy of going to the theatre is sitting in an auditorium with everyone, a stranger, but perhaps your friend and sharing, in the dark the magical experience of seeing that curtain going up or those lights going down. And then, with the help of lights and music and scenery, a wonderful story begins with real people creating it before your eyes. And you can laugh or cry or love or hate all together.

I know that "The Young King" will be a magical experience for Tim and I to bring to life and trust it will be just as magical for you to watch.



Describe your role in the team of creatives for “The Young King”.

My role was to conceive and design the entire “Dazzeland” performance venue interior, not just the sets and props on stage. From the moment you walk in the door every object or item, you see has been conceived by myself and the Slingsby team. For example, sets, props, costumes, theatre seating, curtains, foyers and pre-show experience, etc.

What main concepts have guided you in the design process?

Scale is a very important part of the design for this show. By using scale (enhancing or downgrading the size of props, puppets, sets etc) means you can find solutions to staging requirements of the story/script itself. Using devices built on a smaller scale, mean you can encompass a whole world using minimal amounts of space. For example, when the story requires the Young King to move through water, we have created a small interactive magnetic device which enables the Young King to travel down the river/sea. We use real water and we see the Young King immersed in this world. On the other hand when the story calls for the audience to feel excitement and awe inspired at the large size of something, we use larger scale sets, e.g. the forest and the fireplace. It was important in this show for audience members to be cast as “Gods” – “Giants” – looking down on the story... a form of distancing and feeling empowered. Creating storytelling devices on a small scale enables this to occur. But at the same time audience members are immersed in and feel as if they are a part of the story unfolding around them. They are participants not just inactive voyeurs. The design of the performance space allows for this and enhances a feeling of intimacy.

Where did you start?

The first thing we needed to establish was “Where are we? “Where shall we start telling the story from?”. We decided to start in the Young King’s chambers. We want the audience to feel like they are actually in his room, so we have build the space around the seating somewhat. Sight lines were also important to consider when creating the layout. The story begins on the night before the Young King’s coronation. In the script there are strong references to the fireplace and we have accentuated that. Wilde wrote the story in 1895, but the setting can be timeless. As with many Slingsby shows, we have been influenced by the era of the 1930’s-1940’s , but have borrowed from all eras to tell this story. We’ve also tried to remember that audiences have a number of senses... visual, aural, smell and touch. We’ve experimented with sounds to increase the audiences’ experience, e.g. pouring water to suggest the river, using real leaves and foliage from a forest so even smells help audiences feel they are in that world.

Describe the sets.

The story suggests that the Young King is set in a castle which calls for the set to suggest opulence and grandeur; something that's more than domestic. It was important for the set to look as authentic as possible. We want the audience to come in and feel that "it's beautiful". The sets include panelled walling, bookshelves full of objects that reference the boy's life, and lots of blue velvet, which creates a sense of opulence and helps warm and soften the space. This also represents tapestries of the time. The fireplace is larger than one you will find in a domestic setting which again suggests opulence and grandeur. In the film "The Kings Speech" audiences can see an ornate and very large fireplace, this has influenced my design. The audience will sit on a variety of timber chairs. When thinking about how the audience experiences the show, one of the most important things is that everyone can see the actors and what they are doing. Choosing a collection of chairs and arranging them so that higher ones are at the back and shorter ones at the front is a way of making this happen. We will also make some quite low benches for the front row. The audience is very close to the actors and so everyone will see. With all productions, sets must support and help to tell the story, not dominate the audience's experience. A sense of simplicity allows the director and actors to play in the space, rather than the set determining it. We have used modern drum pendant lighting as part of the set – they are suspended – domestic light. We wanted fewer obvious theatre lights. And where we do, we will mask them as much as possible. We have hidden a number of lights behind grills behind the seating. The props and "puppet like" technical devices support the story. They do not dominate. Using these devices allows the audience to use their imaginations. Rather than literally showing them something, it is suggested through a puppet or device. The audience believes it is happening anyway.

What challenges have you faced?

How to "reveal" the forest to the audience? This is a key part of the story and moment in the design. The manner in which this is done in our show makes the audience break away from their preconceived ideas of where they already are. It is a transformation of the world that they are in, as well as signifying a transformation in the boy himself. The audience will be given the experience of actually being in the forest. The forest reveal is the climax of the audience's experience. It is the scene of the coronation. (In Wilde's original work the setting for the coronation is in a cathedral.) We are aiming to use time-lapse imagery to enhance this moment. Once a prop or device is added to the set, it is challenging to work out how they get on and off the stage without affecting the transition of scenes or action taking place. Another challenge faced was there was a "big fat column" in the venue which put physical limitations on the layout of the space. We worked around that and the "big fat column" is hidden in the set design. (Can you work out where it is?!)

What is the aim of the pre-show experience for the audience?

The pre-show experience is somewhat like a prologue, helping the audience to relax into the space and actively become involved in their experience. Art will come to life in 3D. It will unite the audience. When the audience walks through the door of the Dazzeland space, they will undertake a transformation, leaving their everyday lives behind and entering the world Slingsby has created for them. We aim to give the audience a sense of the Young King's backstory. This will help "flesh out" the ideas that are in the story... the script moves across them quickly. It will be a sensory experience and we have a number of installations set up around the space.

WENDYTODD - DESIGNER

Why do you think theatre is important?

Theatre can talk directly to the moment. It is for the higher good. It is a reality that we relate to – ITS REAL! The thing I love about theatre is that every performance is a one off. There is engagement between the audience and performer. You can leave at the end of a show and feel like you understand humanity just a little more. It often gives one an ‘aha’ moment.

Why did you become involved in theatre and this career?

I studied Visual Arts prior to studying Design. Visual Art can be a solitary kind of work. I enjoy the collaborative nature of theatre. It is a collection of creative people that makes a show come together, not just one or two. Being able to talk ideas and ways of exploring ideas is stimulating and challenging. I think that theatre is a dynamic place, where one show is never the same as another, where the audience can be moved to think and feel about things they may not have otherwise. Space and light are crucial. Space and light are a vital part of design and creating a world to hold a character. Theatre is an ephemeral art form. This is my truth. This is why I do what I do.

Brief Professional Biography

Wendy studied Design for Theatre at AC Arts, Adelaide. She previously completed studies in Visual & Applied Arts.

Recent Work:

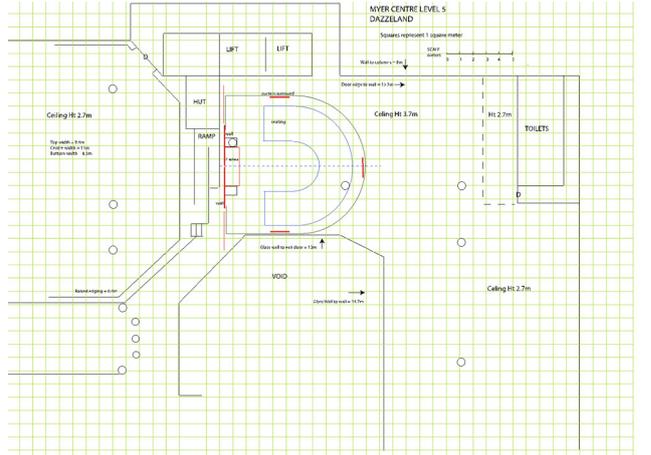
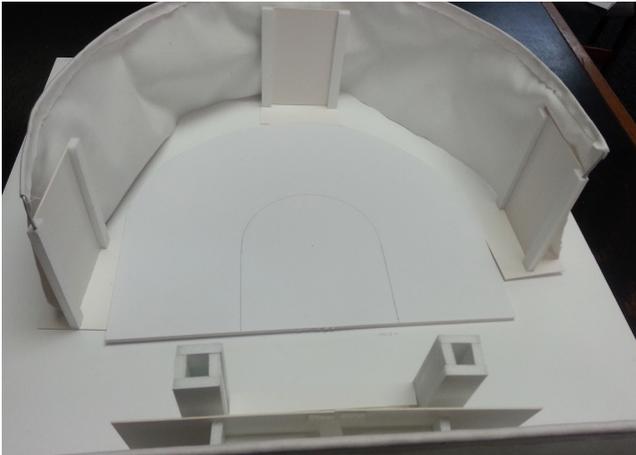
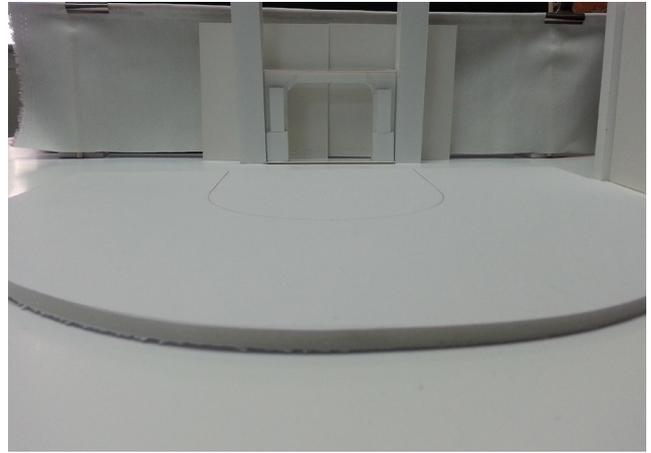
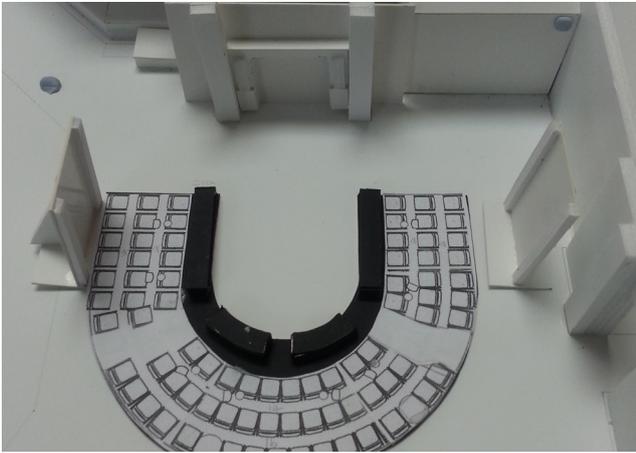
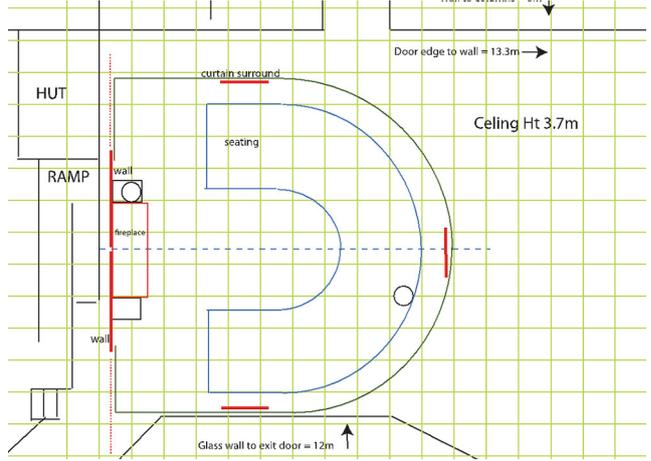
Set & Costume Design

Nursery 2014, (Sally Chance Dance), Babyteeth 2013, Blasted 2012, Pornography 2012 (State Theatre Company of SA), Land & Sea 2012, Skip Miller’s Hit Songs 2011, Harbinger 2010 (Brink Productions), Man Covets Bird 2010, The Tragical Life of Cheeseboy 2007 (Slingsby), Worldhood 2011 (Australian Dance Theatre), A Lion In The Night 2012, The Little Green Tractor 2011 (Patch Theatre Company), Cutaway III, 2013 & II, 2012 (Vitalstatistix), Ruby Bruise 2010 (The Misery Children & Vitalstatistix).

Event Design

Designer Blink Bar 2015 Adelaide Festival of Arts Precinct, Design Assistant/Coordinator Lola’s Pergola, 2014, Design Coordinator of Barrio, 2013 & 2012, Assistant Designer Persian Garden 2008, 2006, (Late Night Clubs of the Adelaide Festival of Arts), Event and Gala Designer, Adelaide Cabaret Festival 2015, Design Coordinator, Adelaide Cabaret Festival 2014, (Adelaide Festival Centre), Bowerbird Design Markets 2014, 2013, 2012.

WENDY'S DESIGN IDEAS



QUINCY GRANT - COMPOSER



Please describe the musical score for “The Young King”.

The music for The Young King will be very evocative, colourful, and support the emotion of the story. Much of it will be played live, mostly on piano and clarinet, with some pre-recorded material featuring recorders, strings, percussion, and perhaps guitar and trumpet.

What is its purpose?

The music will help bring out the drama and emotion of the story, and also to help set the atmosphere of the many contrasting scenes.

Please describe the emotional responses and imagery you hope to evoke from the audience?

We want to evoke the goat-herders’ life in the forest, the sense of life flowing quickly past, and the otherworldliness of the dreams. We want to transport the viewer to a weaving mill in the north of England, to a pearling boat off the North African sea, and to a gigantic mine in the deep tropical jungle.

Did you take inspiration from anywhere else for your compositions? *Please specify a few examples?*

I’ve been inspired by quintessentially English music: from modal folk songs (eg. The Trees They do Grow High, Let No Man Steal Your Thyme), to the music of Ralph Vaughan Williams (especially Five Variants of Dives and Lazarus, The Lark Ascending); to Howard Blake’s score for the famous animated film “The Snowman”, and Rachael Portman’s score for the film “Never Let me Go”.

Could you please describe the score used during the scene where the young boy becomes king?

What do you hope the music achieves in this scene?

This is a vital moment: a redemptive moment in the story, and we hope that the music can re-live the whole story of his journey from his life in the forest up until this moment, and bring the story to a beautiful and emotional ending.

Did you work with other creatives whilst creating the music for “The Young King”? In what way did they influence your choices?

We are using the text, the imagery, the lighting, the music and the sound design to tell the story, so we are always in constant dialogue about what we are trying to achieve at each moment, and what means we will use to achieve it. Sometimes it may be almost purely visual; at other moments the music will be the focus – the director guides the creative team in making these choices.

QUINCY GRANT - COMPOSER

Why do you think theatre is important?

To come together and share deep thoughts about our lives, and our pasts and our futures, seems like an intrinsic human need to me. Theatre is one of the ways we can do this.

What journey did you go through to become a composer?

I grew up in the country (as did the Young King) and was largely self taught as a child and teenager. I always loved making things and as soon as I could play music I started making my own. The vocation of composer settled deeply in me by my late teens, and I have done it ever since: for over thirty years (a blissful and fortunate life).

What is your professional background?

I work as a freelance composer on commissions from musicians around Australia and internationally. I've written the music for all of Slingsby's productions, and this is the second one I've performed in live. Other theatre groups I work with include Circa and State Theatre SA. I also write for film, and play in many groups: from rock to new music and, most recently wild gypsy music with Golonka. I am a co-director of The Firm, a company that presents concerts each year featuring Australian classical musicians in programmes of new Australian music along side interesting repertoire. I live in Adelaide with my four dear ones – Anna, Arland, Clara and Miranda.

GEOFF COBHAM – LIGHTING DESIGNER



Describe the lighting design?

For “The Young King” lighting design we have taken a very low tech analogue approach. If we do use newer post 2000 technology we will attempt to make it look like old style tungsten lighting. The design aims to keep the lighting at a domestic level... using sources that are within the world of our audiences. Often the lighting will be actor controlled. During the dreams and in the finale we will work against this as a deliberate contrast and employ the latest LED lighting to assist us.

What is the purpose of your design?

The design aims to supply romance and magic on a human scale. Of course it must also allow the audience to see the actors!!

What process did you go through to create the lighting?

I work very closely with the director and designer; most of the lighting ideas are led by the design or actor needs... they come from the over arching design process. We often workshop the ideas together.

Did you collaborate with other designers to come up with your final product? Can you describe how you did this?

Just our team.

The placement of lamps and choice of colour is only one part of the design. The design is not finalized till Opening Night. Most of the final lighting choices are made in the plotting and tech session... and during the dress runs.

Please describe the lighting used in the scene where the Young King is crowned in the forest.

The forest moment will be a radical and surprising change. At this point we will use projection and gobo and saturated color to assist with the cracking open of the wall. This will be a departure from the small domestic nature of the majority of the design.

CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

The Young King by Oscar Wilde

Adapted for the stage by Nicki Bloom

Character List

Young King	A boy raised in the forest by a humble goatherd, who discovers he is heir to the throne of the Kingdom.
Old King	Grandfather of the Young King, who banished his own daughter for falling in love, and having a child, with the wrong man.
Princess	The daughter of the Old King who falls in love with a woodsman and gives birth to the Young King, but dies after he is stolen from her. The Princess was an artist and she wore the scent of lilies.
Woodsman	A free man who lived in the forest and fell in love with the Princess. The Young King's father.
Goatherd	A man living a simple life deep in the forest, tending goats. He discovers the Young King as a baby left on his doorstep and raises him as his own son.
The Hunters	A band of ruffians working for the Old King who find the Young King living in the forest and bring him to the palace.
The Pages	Attendants who dress, bathe and take care of the Young King at the palace.
Weaver	A craftsman suffering under terrible workhouse conditions, weaving the gold silk for the Young King's robe.
Master of the Galley	The captain of a slave ship searching for pearls to decorate the Young King's sceptre.
Diver	A young slave forced to repeatedly dive underwater to search for the most beautiful pearl for the Young King's sceptre.
Death	A personified force that brings death to men toiling in a mine pit.
Avarice	A personified force that greedily refuses to share three simple grains of corn, angering Death, which results in the murder of all the men in a mine pit.
Courtier	An attendant at the palace (higher status than the Pages) who attempts to convince the Young King to ignore his dreams and put on the robe, sceptre and crown that were created for his coronation.
Soldier	One of the Old King's guard who mocks the Young King for bringing shame on the kingdom.
The People	The citizens of the kingdom who follow the Young King as he leaves the palace and call on him to change his mind and wear the robe, sceptre and crown befitting a king.

QUOTES FROM THE YOUNG KING

Weaver

“In war
The strong make slaves of the weak and in peace
The rich make slaves of the poor.
We toil for them all day long and they heap up gold in their coffers
While our children fade away before their time.”

Old King

“I am an old man in the winter of my days
And I know that many evil things are done in the wide world.
The fierce robbers come down from the mountains
The lions wait to pounce
The pirates lay waste to the sea coast and burn the ships of the fishermen.
Canst thou make these things not to be?
Canst thou undo what was done?
The burden of this world is too great for one man to bear
And the world’s sorrow too heavy for one heart to suffer.
Think no more of dreams
Think no more of what is past
I bid thee
Go back to thy chamber and make thy face glad
Put on the finery that beseemeth a King.”

Young King

“Take these things away.
For though it is the day of my coronation I will not wear them.
On the loom of Sorrow and by the white hands of pain has this
My robe been woven.
There is Death in the heart of the pearl and there is
Blood in the heart of the ruby.”

Courtier

“My Lord, I pray thee set aside these black thoughts of thine
Put on this fair robe and set this crown upon thy head.
For how shall the people know thou art a King
If thou hast not a King’s clothing?
The Old King will not be pleased.”

THEMES

Compassion

Through his three dreams The Young King gains a new understanding of the world around him and how people living around him suffer in order for him to enjoy great wealth. In his first dream the Young King imagines he is in a silk factory and learns how people toil in oppressive conditions to create the beautiful fabric that will make the Robe he has requested for his coronation. In the second dream he finds himself on a slave ship and watches in horror as a young slave's life is expended in order to find the perfect pearl to adorn the ornate sceptre he has had designed to celebrate his ascension to the throne. In the third dream the Young King witnesses death and devastation on an epic scale at a mine site where men die in the hundreds and thousands all to procure the perfect ruby to decorate his kingly crown.

By experiencing these dreams and 'meeting' the people who are affected by his desire for precious objects, a new understanding is woken within him. He develops compassion and care for the workers and their predicament.

Ethical Behavior

The Young King is faced with a choice. Can he ignore these tragedies and still dress in the robe, sceptre and crown? His empathy for the people leads to his ethical choice not to wear the items wrought by misery and death. This is similar to choices that we must all make about where the goods that we purchase and enjoy are manufactured. We may (once we understand the working conditions and economic situation of the people who make our goods) choose to buy Fair Trade items or ensure that the clothes that we buy and wear are made in factories with safe and ethical working conditions. Oscar Wilde was writing about these concerns in the shadow of the Industrial Revolution, a time when many moved from subsistence farming in rural Europe to find themselves working in dangerous factories in crowded cities.

Integrity/sticking to your own moral compass

Having made his ethical decision the Young King is surprised to discover that the people around him do not share his new view of the world. What seems like a natural and simple act of compassion to him is seen as a radical betrayal of the system that the kingdom is built on. Not only do people not understand his choice, but it angers them. He is told he is a fool and that he should not trust in his own dreams and understanding. Even worse, he is accused of increasing the suffering of the poor, by denying them the opportunity for paid work. No matter how destitute their lives are, he is making the situation worse. The Young King must draw on deep internal strength to stick to his choice and not be swayed by popular opinion. He is not demanding that anyone else change their behavior and yet his choice has the capacity to dramatically change the lives of those around him. He is providing a possible catalyst for a more compassionate kingdom. Still the question of distribution of wealth remains unanswered. The Young King is not proposing a complete new political system. He is simply saying no to the current system that sees a large number of people suffering for the benefit of a few.

Coming of Age

Through the story the Young King grows from a boy into an adult who takes responsibility for his own actions. By making a choice to prioritise compassion over luxury he has made himself vulnerable to the ridicule and disdain of those around him. Even his grandfather the Old King tells him he is wrong. But he sticks to his own path. This is a painful process for the Young King as he grows from a child into an adult who is true to his own beliefs.

THEMES

Excerpt from Wikipedia:

“In genre studies, a coming-of-age story is a genre of literature and film that focuses on the growth of a protagonist from youth to adulthood (“coming of age”). Coming-of-age stories tend to emphasize dialogue or internal monologue over action, and are often set in the past. The subjects of coming-of-age stories are typically teenagers.[1] The bildungsroman is a specific subgenre of coming-of-age story. It is especially prominent in literature and focuses on the protagonist’s psychological and moral growth, and thus character change is extremely important.”

Leadership

In the final moments of the Young King we see the people of the kingdom bow to their newly transformed King. In Slingsby’s staging of the story the Young King reaches the edge of the forest and seems willing to abdicate from the throne. He is willing to walk away from the privileged role of leader. At this moment something magical transpires. The people gathered literally see the young man in a new light – the sun shines down and the briar crown that he has put on blossoms, he is bathed in a robe of golden sunlight and the goatherd staff that he carries sprouts. By sticking to his beliefs the Young King’s true self is revealed to all who are there. Perhaps it is precisely because he does not seek the role of leader at any cost, that he is finally recognised as the ideal leader.

What the future holds is anyone’s guess, but in this final moment the Young King has earned the throne not by birthright but through strong leadership.

PLEASE NOTE

In Wilde’s original story, the Young King is crowned in a church/cathedral, and it is God who decides that he shall be made King. The Young King does not want to wear his fancy robes and jewels. He does not condone the sacrifice made by the poor, who struggled to create them. God shows his approval of the Young King’s heart and this is shown by the beautiful light which illuminates him through a stained glass window. In Slingsby’s show, the young king is crowned by nature, in the forest.

SYMBOLS

Forest

In *The Young King* the forest symbolises all the natural world, a place where humans can be in touch with their better, truer natures. Oscar Wilde wrote this story following the peak of the Romantic era, a time when artists and thinkers across a range of disciplines idealised the natural world and sought to remind us of the sublime power to be found in returning to nature. This was a reaction largely to the dehumanising effect of the crowded and impoverished cities that had developed as a result of the Industrial Revolution.

Excerpt from Wikipedia on Romanticism:

Romanticism (also the Romantic era or the Romantic period) was an artistic, literary, and intellectual movement that originated in Europe toward the end of the 18th century and in most areas was at its peak in the approximate period from 1800 to 1850. Romanticism was characterized by its emphasis on emotion and individualism as well as glorification of all the past and nature, the latter also being celebrated. It was partly a reaction to the Industrial Revolution,[1] the aristocratic social and political norms of the Age of Enlightenment, and the scientific rationalisation of nature.[2] It was embodied most strongly in the visual arts, music, and literature, but had a major impact on historiography,[3] education,[4] and the natural sciences.[5] It had a significant and complex effect on politics, and while for much of the Romantic period it was associated with liberalism and radicalism, its long-term effect on the growth of nationalism was perhaps more significant.

The movement emphasized intense emotion as an authentic source of aesthetic experience, placing new emphasis on such emotions as apprehension, horror and terror, and awe—especially that experienced in confronting the new aesthetic categories of the sublimity and beauty of nature. It considered folk art and ancient custom to be noble statuses, but also valued spontaneity, as in the musical impromptu. In contrast to the rational and Classicist ideal models, Romanticism revived medievalism[6] and elements of art and narrative perceived as authentically medieval in an attempt to escape population growth, early urban sprawl, and industrialism.

In the original Oscar Wilde story of *The Young King* the final moments of the story take place in the Cathedral. With the goal of creating a secular ending to the story Slingsby's production of Nicki Bloom's adaptation of the story transposes the final moment to the edge of the forest. This builds on the romantic symbolism of the natural world and its role in representing the opposite of the cloistered world of the castle and its morally questionable social structure. By leading the people back to the edge of the forest the Young King is reminding society of another possibility, the opportunity to be true to our better, humanist natures.

Blossoming

In the final moments of *The Young King*, the heir to the throne undergoes a transformation. Just as the Young King is about to disappear back into the forest of his childhood the sun shines down and his crown and sceptre blossom. This 'blossoming' symbolises a coming of age, a transition from one stage of his life to the next. This growth sees him become a true leader. The symbolism of the blossoming is linked to the changes of the seasons from winter into spring. Spring is a time of new life, a new beginning. In Slingsby's production of *The Young King* not only do the crown and sceptre blossom, but also spring comes to the forest and to the people gathered there. In this symbolic way a new beginning emerges for the kingdom, a chance for the society to start afresh with great potential.

SYMBOLS

The Victorian Era

The 'Victorian Era' refers to the time of the reign of Queen Victoria, monarch of Britain from 20th June 1837 until her death on 22nd January 1901. During this time England was the most powerful nation in the world, and the quote "The sun never sets on the British Empire" was coined. Victoria's long reign of 63 years has only recently been surpassed by the current Queen Elizabeth II. Literature in the Victorian period evolved and changed somewhat, however the following themes were evident throughout:

Social advancement: improving oneself and moving up in society was the motivation of many Englishmen and women. Often this was found through marriage, financial, intellectual or educational means. Improving a person's social status and behaving in a "proper manner" was encouraged.

Nationalism: this was strong and the idea of what constituted being an "Englishman" was explored through literature. Being "proper" was paramount. Many politicians thought it important to have set codes of standard and conduct and writers' work was often censored.

The 'Romantic Era' refers to an artistic and cultural movement in the second half of the 1800s. Romanticism placed emphasis on emotions, a connection to the glory of nature and a reverence for history.

During this time the aristocracy flourished but the gap between the rich and poor increased. Oscar Wilde was a member of the aristocracy however, much of his work satirized the elite. Wilde came on to the literary scene towards the end of the Victorian Era when seeds of rebellion were being sewn and a number of writers began rebel against idealism and stereotypical "codes of conduct".

In Wilde's time, alongside Romanticism, the movement of Aestheticism, "Art for Art's sake" grew in popularity. This was a contradiction to the political and social aims of early Victorian literature. This led the way for the Modernist Movement to begin.

aestheticism

[es-thet-uh-siz-uh m or, esp. British, ees-]

noun

1. The acceptance of artistic beauty and taste as a fundamental standard, ethical and other standards being secondary.
2. An exaggerated devotion to art, music, or poetry, with indifference to practical matters.
3. A late Victorian movement in British and American art characterized by a dedicatedly eclectic search for beauty and by an interest in old English, Japanese, and classical art.

<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/aestheticism>

EXCERPT - *"The philosophical foundations of Aestheticism were formulated in the eighteenth century by Immanuel Kant, who spoke for the autonomy of art. Art was to exist for its own sake, for its own essence or beauty. The artist was not to be concerned about morality or utility or even the pleasure that a work might bring to its audience. Aestheticism was supported in Germany by J. W. von Goethe and in England by Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Thomas Carlyle.*

SYMBOLS

EXCERPT - *“Oscar Wilde did not invent Aestheticism, but he was a dramatic leader in promoting the movement near the end of the nineteenth century. Wilde was especially influenced as a college student by the works of the English poet and critic Algernon Charles Swinburne and the American writer Edgar Allan Poe. The English essayist Walter Pater, an advocate of “art for art’s sake,” helped to form Wilde’s humanistic aesthetics in which he was more concerned with the individual, the self, than with popular movements like Industrialism or Capitalism. Art was not meant to instruct and should not concern itself with social, moral, or political guidance. Like Baudelaire, Wilde advocated freedom from moral restraint and the limitations of society. This point of view contradicted Victorian convention in which the arts were supposed to be spiritually uplifting and instructive. Wilde went a step further and stated that the artist’s life was even more important than any work that he produced; his life was to be his most important body of work.”*

<http://www.cliffsnotes.com/literature/p/the-picture-of-dorian-gray/critical-essays/oscar-wildes-aesthetics>

narrative

[nar-uh-tiv]

noun

1. A story or account of events, experiences, or the like, whether true or fictitious.
2. A book, literary work, etc., containing such a story.
3. The art, technique, or process of narrating, or of telling a story:
Somerset Maugham was a master of narrative.

<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/narrative>

EXCERPT - History of Narration or Storytelling

Storytelling is an essential part of human nature. Man is the only creature that tells stories. Man has been telling stories and listening to them since the time he learnt to speak. The storytelling began with oral traditions and in forms of myths, legends, fables, anecdotes, ballads etc. These were told and retold and were passed down from generation to generation and they show the knowledge and wisdom of early people. The basic theme of the above mentioned forms of stories were fears of natural forces, deeds of heroes, gods and goddesses, and they might be told to learn a lesson from an experience. Biblical stories have the primary purpose of teaching spirituality. Most biblical stories were performed in churches to convey spiritual messages to the masses. The modern narratives have a broader function. After a close study of famous examples of Modern narrative, one would realize that such narratives do not merely entertain but serve as ways to communicate writers’ moral, cultural and political perspectives. Moreover, narratives have contributed to achieving educational objectives in our everyday life. Different forms of media are enabling people to express and record their real life stories and to share their knowledge and their cultural values across the world. In addition, many documentaries on television adopt a narrative technique to communicate information in an interesting way.

EXCERPT - Function of Narrative

Storytelling and listening to stories are part of human instincts. Therefore, writers employ narrative techniques in their works to attract readership. The readers are not only entertained but also learn some underlying message from the narratives. Moreover, a narrative is set in specific cultural contexts. Readers can get a deep insight of that culture and develop an understanding toward it. Thus, narratives can act as a binding force in uniting humanity.

<http://literarydevices.net/narrative/>

DRAMA REVIEW PREPARATION

Created by Hannah McCarthy-Oliver © 2016

After watching the show, answer these questions as soon as possible while it is fresh in your mind! When writing a Drama review, you are required to describe and evaluate the choices made by the cast and technical team. Your writing should capture the whole experience, going into detail about specific technical elements and evaluating what you witnessed. In answering the questions below, you will create the content required for a thorough and well-rounded Drama review, especially suitable for SACE Stage I and II Drama submissions. On completion, simply take out the headings and questions and you will have your first DRAFT ready to be refined and edited.

Answer In Full Sentences

Initial Responses...

- When the audience entered the Dazzeland foyer space, what did they think, feel and see?
- When the audience entered the performance space, what did they think, feel and see?
- List up to 6 adjectives to describe the experience which was Slingsby's "The Young King".
- Source/record a number of direct quotes from Slingsby's "The Young King" performance and take note of the characters who said them. Use these throughout your review to enhance the point you are endeavouring to make.
- Write a one sentence statement introducing Slingsby's "The Young King" to someone who has never seen it.

Plot/Themes/Historical Context

- What is/was the plot of Slingsby's "The Young King"?
- Who is the author of the original story "The Young King" and when did he write it?
- What message was the author was trying to communicate to his readers?
- List the themes that were explored in Slingsby's "The Young King".

Take note of the evidence you see of the themes in the performance.

Direction

- What was the director, Andy Packer's intention? What did he want his audience to experience?
- Describe the staging and blocking that you witness (where the characters move and how the show flows from scene to scene).
- What choices were made by Packer and his team to tell Slingsby's interpretation of "The Young King" story?

Ensemble

- The actors face the big challenge of frequently switching from being narrators to characters in the story, as well as manipulating and interacting with props and technical devices... Do you think they did this successfully? Why? Why not?
- What did Jacqui Phillips have to say about bringing the character(s) to life? (See Study Guide – but write in your own words – unless using direct quotes.)
- What choices did they make to bring their character(s) to life? E.g. vocal and physical expression, energy, focus, interpretation of role etc. (Your own observations.)
- Did they do this successfully – were they convincing? Why/Why Not?
- Did the two key performers interact with each other and the audience (energy exchange) successfully? Why/Why not? Describe their interaction.

DRAMA REVIEW PREPARATION

Technical Elements

The key here is to be as descriptive as possible and to show that you understand how all these elements worked together to create the audience's experience of "The Young King" and to tell the story. You need to read the show "visually", listen, observe and evaluate.

- Who designed the performance space/set?
- What did they want the audience to see, think and feel?
- Choose 4 adjectives to describe the performance space and "set".
- Does the set/performance space look like anything you have seen before? Describe?
- Describe the "visual devices" that were used in Slingsby's "The Young King".
- How did they enhance the story being told? Were they successful? Why/Why not?
- Describe and evaluate the lighting choices used in "The Young King".
- How did the lighting assist in creating different moods and atmospheres? Note some specific examples.
- How did the lighting direct the audience's focus to different locations in the performing space?
- Describe and evaluate the costumes, accessories and makeup choices in "The Young King".
- How did the design of the costuming and makeup aid in visually showing the audience who the characters were? (*Don't forget to note the colours, textures of fabric and how they worked with the lighting and moved through the space.*)
- Who was the composer?
- Was the music live or recorded?
- What were his motivation and intentions?
- Describe and evaluate the musical choices/soundtrack used in "The Young King"?
- How did the music assist in creating mood and evoke emotional responses from the audience?
- Choose one key scene... for example, when the boy was crowned king... describe in detail everything the audience saw, heard and felt? Be as descriptive as possible.
- How did all the technical elements work together to create this scene?

Audience Response

- How did the audience respond to this scene?
- How did the audience respond/react to "The Young King" as a whole?
- What would the audience be thinking about as they left the theatre?
- Can you source a quote from "The Young King" which you think also summarises the whole show?
- What can the audience learn from Slingsby's "The Young King"?
- Come up with one statement to summarise Slingsby's "The Young King" and then include one statement about what the audience members were called to think about.

THE END.

THINGS TO REMEMBER AND TIPS

Drama reviews must be written in past tense. The show you saw is over!

Throughout your review, write the show title in italics or in quotation marks.

Write as if the person reading your review has never seen the show.

Ensure that the spelling of all names and theatrical terminology is correct.

When writing about specific designers/directors/actors etc, you should write their full name the first time you mention them, and then when you reference them again you should only use their last name. For example: Director of the show, *Andy Packer* successfully led his actors and creative team to create an experience for the audience which was moving, visually spectacular and emotionally charged. *Packer's* choices in the blocking for his actors also....

Ask someone else to read through your review and seek their feedback, particularly, whether they understand everything you have written.

Avoid using the words I or You. Instead write from the perspective of "the audience".

Look at these links:

<http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/PlayReview.html>

(This is great! For SACE reviews it is unnecessary to put the date, time etc. into the introduction. These should be written in your titles.)

<http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Play-Review>

(SACE students - ignore the sample reviews in this one!)

<https://www.sace.sa.edu.au/web/drama/stage-2/support-materials/assessment-task-exemplars-student-responses>

(SACE Exemplars and Assessment for Stage 2 Drama - Click on TASK 2 options)

<http://www.mtc.com.au/education/teachers-notes-resources-and-forms/>

Download some of the Teacher's Notes and take note of the questions asked about the production itself including Acting Performances etc.

ACTIVITY IDEAS

Design Process

- Brainstorm as many adjectives as you can to describe Slingsby's "The Young King".
- Research all you can! Make notes.
- What colours come to mind when reflecting on this production?
- Make a list of all the themes and symbols.
- Who is the audience for this show?
- What message(s) did Slingsby want its audience to receive?
- Collect a number of images which incorporate/symbolise all of the above and stick them into a Visual Diary.
- Sketch out or list your ideas.
- Stick these in!
- Work towards a final product and let all of the above inform your designs. Everything included should be there for a reason.

Publicity

Follow the process above and create your own "The Young King" poster, billboard or program cover.

Front of House

Slingsby's "The Young King" includes a wonderful "Front of House" experience. Following the process above, can you create your own for this performance or another show?

Film

Using the process above, design (create a story board) and film a 1 minute trailer or advertisement for your own production of "The Young King".

Set and Costumes

Following the process above, design your own set and costumes for the scene where the Young King is crowned in the forest.

Writing

Write a 1-2 minute monologue (Narrative) for either the Young King or another character in the show. The character could reflect on his/her experiences and voice thoughts on the events in the story.

OR Either individually or in pairs, write the next chapter of the Young King's story. It should be approximately one page in length.

ACTIVITY IDEAS

Presenting

When the previous written task(s) are completed you could... illustrate your story, read it to the class, get into groups of three or four and “act it out” – (rehearse and perform), make a short film or animation, design the costumes or a set for it, create a front cover or devise a dance/drama performance.

OR In groups of 3 or 4, work together to create your own abridged version of “The Young King”. The performance length should be no more than 1-2 minutes. Your aim is to re-tell the story in this time. Rehearse then perform to the class.

The above performance could either be performed as a “skit” or in a dance/drama format where students move ritualistically to create physical shapes and gestures to represent the events and messages of the story.

If you do undertake any of these activities, we’d love to see them! Send a copy to schools@slingsby.net.au

****Note There May Be Exercises In Slingsby’s “The Young King” Activity Book That You May Like To Undertake Also.**

ESSAY QUESTIONS

“The Young King” is a story full of visual imagery. How does Oscar Wilde use language to paint pictures with words?

In much of Wilde’s writing there is a concern with the materiality of existence. How is this demonstrated in “The Young King”?

The Young King goes through metamorphoses as the story progresses. What influences these changes and what is the end result?

Each of the Young King’s dreams provide him with the opportunity to learn about the world around him. Discuss.

What lessons can be learnt from the Young King’s experiences and are they as relevant today as they were in Wilde’s time? Discuss.

What are the themes in Slingsby’s “The Young King” and how are they explored?

Wilde’s tale proposes decency and generosity in human relations. Discuss.

In what ways has the Romantic Era style of writing influenced Wilde’s story?

Research Activities

The Young King is faced by a choice. He feels empathy for the people toiling and suffering to make his robes and source his jewels. Today there are still human beings who suffer to make clothing and other goods for the Western World. Research FAIR TRADE clothing and summarise your findings. What is your stance on this issue?

Read the original version of Wilde’s “The Young King”. How does this compare to Slingsby’s interpretation?

Research Oscar Wilde’s life and make note of key events. Write one paragraph summarising who this man was.

Research the Victorian Era and make notes. Summarise this era in one paragraph.

Research Aestheticism and make notes. Summarise this movement in one paragraph.

Research the Romantic Era and make notes. Summarise this period in one paragraph.

FAIR TRADE

Fair trade

noun

A way of buying and selling products that makes certain that the people who produce the goods receive a fair price:

The charity says that fair trade brings a better standard of living for poor farmers in developing countries. Fair trade coffee/ chocolate/clothing.

<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/bring>

Choosing Fair-trade gives small-scale farmers the power to improve their livelihoods. Fair-trade labelling is based on a set of international standards guaranteeing producers in developing countries a fair and stable price, regardless of global market fluctuations.

The benefits of international trade are not shared fairly by everyone in the world. Small producers have limited access to market and price information. As a result, they are often dependent on middlemen and receive smaller returns for their work. Many plantation and factory workers endure low pay, unsafe working environments and poor living conditions.

The Fair-trade approach offers an alternative way to the injustices of conventional trade which traditionally exploits the poorest, weakest producers and misuses natural resources. Fair Trade provides a fair price for goods and services, safe working conditions and a commitment to environmentally sustainable production. Not only about buying and selling, fair trade practice supports welfare programs, education, healthcare and training for marginalized workers. This holistic approach makes fair-trade unique and empowers disadvantaged communities to play an active part in their own development. What Fair-trade ensures is that producers receive a fair price no lower than the market price. It also ensures that there is accountability and transparency in the supply chain so you can be sure your product has been sourced ethically.

<http://www.ethical.org.au/3.4.2/get-informed/issues/fair-trade-clothes/>

RESOURCES

<http://www.wilde-online.info/oscar-wilde-biography.htm>

<https://faculty.unlv.edu/kirschen/handouts/victorian.html>

<http://www.biography.com/people/oscar-wilde-9531078>

<http://www.thefamouspeople.com/profiles/oscar-wilde-63.php>

<http://www.wilde-online.info/oscar-wilde-biography.htm>

<http://literarydevices.net/narrative/>

<http://www.slideshare.net/Q7MustafaQ7/the-period-of-the-importance-of-being-earnest-19122014>

https://books.google.com.au/books?id=a_2yBEk8MD4C&pg=PA105&lp=PA105&dq=when+did+Oscar+Wilde+wrtie+the+young+king&source=bl&ots=XWluGTVent&sig=Ur8I7OyRUpNDuuO4PUYr6EhYII&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj8sKbYk4XKAhVi2KYKHRYICFMQ6AEIOzAF#v=onepage&q=when%20did%20Oscar%20Wilde%20wrtie%20the%20young%20king&f=false

<https://truelovewaitsinhauntedattics.wordpress.com/2013/03/31/essay-1-oscar-wilde-and-the-victorian-society/>

http://www.oscholars.com/TO/Specials/Tales/Christ_Kirkpatrick.htm

OTHER USEFUL LINKS

Slingsby's "The Young King" Synopsis (*Audio Track 4 minutes*)

<https://soundcloud.com/slingsbytheatre/the-young-king-synopsis>

MTC Teachers Notes (*Excellent Questions to guide review writing included*)

<http://www.mtc.com.au/education/teachers-notes-resources-and-forms/>

Oscar Wilde's "The Young King" (*Audio Track – 35 minutes*)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fwy8vEHgem0>

Oscar Wilde's "The Young King" – Story (*Written*)

<http://www.eastoftheweb.com/short-stories/UBooks/YouKin.shtml>

Adelaide Festival – "The Young King" Link

http://www.adelaidefestival.com.au/2016/theatre/The_Young_King

Who is Oscar Wilde?

(*2 minutes documentary*) – <http://www.biography.com/people/oscar-wilde-9531078>

<http://www.wilde-online.info/oscar-wilde-biography.htm>

RESOURCES

OTHER USEFUL LINKS

Story Quest – *“How to turn children into storytellers”*:

<http://alt.childrenandarts.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/StoryQuest-Project-Pack-for-Website.pdf>

Drama Games

<http://alt.childrenandarts.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Drama-Games-for-KS3.pdf>

Australian Curriculum Link (Drama F-10)

<http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/the-arts/drama/curriculum/f-10?layout=1>

Australian Curriculum Link (English F-10)

<http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/english/curriculum/f-10?layout=1>

SACE Drama Link

<https://www.sace.sa.edu.au/web/drama>

SACE English Link

<https://www.sace.sa.edu.au/learning/learning-areas/english>

Glossary of Theatrical Terms

http://www.iar.unicamp.br/lab/luz/ld/C%EAAnica/Gloss%E1rios/a_glossary_of_teatre_terms.pdf

People, Places and Things in the Theatre

<http://www.capa.com/files/about/education-/theatreterms.pdf>

Aestheticism

<http://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/aestheticism-and-decadence>

<http://www.cliffsnotes.com/literature/p/the-picture-of-dorian-gray/critical-essays/oscar-wildes-aesthetics>