



Things I Know to be True

BY ANDREW BOVELL

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The background of the entire page is a dark blue, textured surface, possibly wood, with numerous autumn leaves scattered across it. The leaves are in various colors including yellow, orange, red, and brown. A white rectangular border frames the central text area.

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CAST



LARA MACGREGOR
Fran Price

Lara works primarily as an actor, director, dramaturg and performance coach in New Zealand.

She studied acting in New York City with Uta Hagen, Anthony Abeson and Tony Greco and subsequently worked for ten years as an actor in the U.S.

She holds a Post-Graduate Diploma in Directing from The National Institute of Dramatic Art in Sydney and has directed over 40 productions throughout America, Australia and New Zealand.

In 2009, Lara was appointed Associate Artistic Director at The Court Theatre in Christchurch, and, in 2010 went on to become Artistic Director at Fortune Theatre in Dunedin. Her directing highlights include *Red; In the Next Room (or the vibrator play); Play; Tribes; Souvenir; The Caretaker; Punk Rock; Time Stands Still* and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*.

Since 2015 she has freelanced with multiple companies including Auckland Theatre Company, Circa Theatre, Centrepont Theatre, South Pacific Pictures, The Actors' Program and University of Otago Theatre Studies.

Her most recent performance credits include: Annie Wilkes in *Misery* (The Court Theatre); Sgt Gillian Carmichael in *Clickbait* (Netflix); Judy in *This Town* (Feature Film); Headmaster in *The Wilds* (Amazon); and Di in *Di and Viv and Rose* (Circa Theatre).



STEPHEN LOVATT
Bob Price

Stephen has performed in theatre, film, and television productions throughout Australasia for the past 30 years.

His most notable television credits include six years as Max Hoyland in *Neighbours*; Tullius in *Spartacus: Gods of The Arena*; Pete in *Top Of The Lake*; Lumsden Pennebaker in *Penn Rides Out*; Sheriff Tom in *Ash vs Evil Dead* (season 2); Arkwright Bimpen in *Foolish Wings* (series 5); Pompey in *Roman Empire: Reign of Blood*; and Dean O'Bannon in *Making Of The Mob*.

Stephen has over 100 theatre credits. He won Best Male Performance in the Wellington Chapman Trip Awards for his performance of Septimus Hodge in *Arcadia*; Best Male Performance in The Herald, Herald On Sunday, and The Listener Awards for his work in *When The Rain Stops Falling*; Runner up in the Safer Homes Theatre Awards for Col. Blimp in *Sgt. Buckle's Dugout*. Performance Excellence in Auckland's Hackman Awards for his work throughout the year, which included Colonel Malone in *Once On Chunuk Bair*; Colonel Sir John Hunt in *Everest: Untold*; King James in *Anne Boleyn*, and Miss Begotten in *Taylors At Large*.

Stephen's most prized theatre work includes Henry in *The Real Thing*; Roy Cohn in *Angels In America*; Macbeth in *Macbeth* and Arkwright Bimpen in *Pilots On Patrol*.

Stephen is currently in development of his one-man show *Gerry - A Mixed Bag*.



CAITLIN RIVERS
Rosie Price

Caitlin is a recent graduate of Unitec, Bachelor of Performing and Screen Arts – Acting. She's also taken Miranda Harcourt's acting workshop.

Originally from Queenstown, she currently resides in Auckland. *Things I Know to be True* is Caitlin's debut performance at The Court Theatre. Her other theatre credits include, *As You Like It* and *Orpheus Descending* (Unitec).

CAST



HEATHER O'CARROLL
Pip Price

Heather O'Carroll is a graduate of Toi Whakaari: New Zealand Drama School (Bachelor of Performing Arts).

Her previous Court Theatre credits include *The Shape of Things* in 2007. Other theatre credits include directing the New Zealand premiere of *Fleabag*, based on the hit UK TV show of the same name at Centrepont Theatre in 2016.

At Circa Theatre she has performed in *The Cherry Orchard*; *West End Girls*; *The Lead Wait* and *Tigers of Wrath*. Most recently she performed in *MoodPorn* at BATS Theatre.

Heather is also the Marketing and Audience Development Manager at PANNZ (Performing Arts Network of New Zealand).



DANIEL WATTERSON
Ben Price

Daniel graduated from The Actor's Program in 2014. He also holds a BA with double majors in Theatre and English Literature.

Venus in Fur marked Daniel's Court Theatre debut in 2017, followed by *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* in 2019. He is thrilled to return to The Court for *Things I Know to be True*. Other theatrical highlights include *The Effect* (Q Theatre); *Lucrece* (Auckland Shakespeare Company); and the 12-week sell-out season of *Twelfth Night* (Pop-Up Globe); in which his performance as Olivia received great acclaim.

Daniel's numerous film and television credits include *The New Legends of Monkey* (Netflix); *Falling Inn Love* (Netflix); and local shows *Dirty Laundry*; *Westside* and *Why Does Love?* He plays a lead role in feature film *Ablaze*, based on the true story of the 1947 Christchurch Ballantynes Fire, New Zealand's deadliest fire.

Daniel previously practised law as a Barrister and Crown Prosecutor.



SIMON LEARY
Mia / Mark Price

Simon was born and raised in Timaru and is a graduate of Toi Whakaari: NZ Drama School (Bachelor of Performing Arts) and Otago University (Bachelor of Arts).

His most recent Court Theatre credit was *Cinderella in Space* by Kathleen Burns.

Other recent credits include: *Filthy Business* (Auckland Theatre Company); *Hudson and Halls Live* (Clarence Street Theatre); *A Doll's House* (Twist Productions); *Cock*; *Under Milkwood*; and *The Father* (Circa Theatre).

TV credits include: *Friend to the Friendless*; *Dirty Laundry*; *Shortland Street*; *Hilary*; and the voice of 'Spottywot' in Pukeko Pictures' animated series: *Kiddets*.

He has written radio plays *Exit Stage Left* and the award winning *You. Me. Now* for Radio New Zealand. He also co-wrote *Cinderella - The Pantomime* and *Alice in Wonderland - The Pantomime* (Circa Theatre).

Simon was nominated for Best Actor and Outstanding Performance at the Wellington Theatre Awards for his performances in *A Servant to Two Masters* and *Switzerland*.



ANDREW BOVELL
WRITER

Andrew Bovell is an Australian writer with a substantial body of work across theatre, film and television. His most recent work for the stage was the co-authored play *Anthem*, which premiered at the 2019 Melbourne Festival with following seasons at the 2020 Sydney and Perth Festivals.

Other recent plays include *Things I Know to be True*, *When the Rain Stops Falling* and *The Secret River*. Earlier works include *Holy Day*, *Who's Afraid of the Working Class*, *Speaking in Tongues*, *After Dinner* and *Ship of Fools*.

His screen credits include, *Lantana*, *Blessed*, *Head On*, *A Most Wanted Man*, *Edge of Darkness* and *Strictly Ballroom*. His six-part TV adaptation of *Things I Know to be True* has recently been announced by Amazon Studios and will star Nicole Kidman, who is also Executive Producing for Blossom Films.



SHANE BOSHER
DIRECTOR

Shane has been a director, actor, dramaturg and producer for the last 20 years. Following training at Toi Whakaari: NZ Drama School, he has worked for most of New Zealand's major theatre companies including Auckland Theatre Company, Downstage, Circa Theatre, Bats, Fortune Theatre and the NZ Actors Company.

From 2001 to 2014, Shane was the Artistic Director of Silo Theatre. During his tenure, he directed some of the company's most celebrated productions including *Angels in America*; *When the Rain Stops Falling*; *The Brothers Size*; *Speaking in Tongues*; *Private Lives*; *Tribes*; *The Only Child*; *That Face*; *Ruben Guthrie*; *Holding the Man*; *The Real Thing*; *Three Days of Rain*; *Take Me Out*; *Suddenly Last Summer* and *Bash*.

He was named one of the Aucklanders of 2005 by Metro Magazine and in July 2007 was named one of the Most Influential People under 40. He is the recipient of three Auckland Theatre Awards and has been awarded Director of the Year by the NZ Listener four times.

In 2014, Shane was commissioned by Auckland Live to create *Both Sides Now: Julia Deans Sings Joni Mitchell*. This production has since played to capacity attendance at festival engagements across New Zealand.

Shane has been working in Australia since 2014, directing *The Pride* for DTC; *The Kitchen Sink* for Ensemble Theatre; *Straight* for Kings Cross Theatre and sell out productions of *Cock* and *The Bitter Tears of Petra Von Kant* for Redline.

His many recent credits include *A Streetcar Named Desire* for Silo Theatre; *The Things Between Us* for Christchurch Arts Festival; *Venus in Fur* for Auckland Theatre Company; *Homos* for Brilliant Adventures; *Delicious Oblivion* for Auckland Live and *Uncle Vanya* here at The Court Theatre.

2021 also sees him directing *Everything After* for Brilliant Adventures and a trilogy of solo works to celebrate the centenary of Bruce Mason's birth.



ANDREW FOSTER
Set Designer

Andrew's previous Court Theatre credits include *Peninsula and Shepard* by Gary Henderson. His other theatre credits include *Te Po and Mr Red Light* (Nightsong); *Orchids* (Foster-Group); *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Black Confetti* (Auckland Theatre Company) and *Red* and *Venus in Fur* (Circa Theatre).

He has a passion for large-scale immersive and site-specific presentations. These include the works *Mouth* and *Bleach* created with Trouble and Boilerhouse (UK) for the Edinburgh and Glasgow Festivals; *Apocalypse Z*, an immersive theatre work about a Zombie outbreak and *Second Unit: What We Do in the Shadows*, an immersive experience based on the iconic Kiwi movie.

Andrew lives in Auckland with his wife, choreographer Sarah Foster-Sproull, and their two beautiful children, Ivy and Roman.



TINA
HUTCHISON-THOMAS
Costume Designer

Over the last 20 years, **Tina** has been privileged to work in theatre, film, television, ballet and opera across Australia, China, South Africa and New Zealand.

Her costume design credits for The Court Theatre include *Kings of the Gym*; *Snap!*; *When the Rain Stops Falling*; *Ache*; *Plum*; *Stag Weekend*; *Shepherd*; *Romeo and Juliet*; *Exit the King*; *Badjelly the Witch*; *Macbeth*; *The Streaker*; *The Curious Incident of the Dog* in *The Night-Time*; *Titus Andronicus*; *Ideation* and *Mum's Choir*.

Tina is a multi-award winner in the international competition, World of WearableArt, including the New Zealand Design Award in 2018. She continues to work for Showbiz; GMG Productions; Toi Toi Opera and The New Zealand Musical Consortium. Other costume-making credits include her work for Sydney Theatre Company; Opera Australia and various feature films, such as *Star Wars Episode III*; *Eucalyptus* and costume designer for *The Stolen*.

She has traveled with International productions of *The Lion King* and *The Phantom of the Opera*, and styled for TVNZ; Foxtel; Network Ten (Australia) and various TVCs. Tina continues to design for The Court Theatre and other production companies in Canterbury.



MATT SHORT
Sound Designer

Matt began his career in London at the age of 23, working as a marketing rep for a major London record label. He has since worked professionally in broadcast television and other media platforms.

Matt returned to New Zealand to co-film, record sound and compose music for an adventure guide series for TVNZ. Over the last ten years, he has composed music and designed sound effects for many major brand advertising and marketing films in New Zealand.

Matt joined The Court Theatre as the House Technician/Sound Designer at the beginning of 2018. His recent Court Theatre credits include *Elling*; *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*; *The Arsonists*; *The Pink Hammer* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

Growing up in North Canterbury, Matt developed a passion for music from an early age. He formed rock bands in high school and university, becoming an accomplished guitarist.



SEAN LYNCH
Lighting Designer

Sean Lynch has been working in New Zealand professional theatre for more than 30 years. He is a musician, actor and lighting and sound designer.

Sean has previously worked with The Court Theatre as lighting designer for the 2017 production of *Hudson and Halls Live!*

Previous sound designs include *Havoc in the Garden; Flintlock Musket; Yours Truly; I Love You Bro; Tribes; The Pitchfork Disney; The Heretic; Polo and Hir.*

Previous lighting designs include *Brel; Speaking in Tongues; Chicago; Angels in America; Belleville; Once on Chunuk Bair; Jesus Christ Superstar; The Book of Everything; Live Live Cinema's Little Shop of Horrors; A Streetcar Named Desire and Hir.*



SCOTT LEIGHTON
Stage Manager

Scott is a graduate of Hagley Theatre Company (Diploma in Performing Arts) and Toi Whakaari NZ Drama School (Bachelor of Performing Arts Management).

His previous Court Theatre credits include *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (Assistant Stage Manager); *The Pink Hammer* (Stage Manager); *The Wind in the Willows* (Assistant Stage Manager); *Crash Bash: What's the Rush?* (Stage Manager) and *Jersey Boys* (Assistant Stage Manager).

As a freelance Stage Manager, Scott has also worked with Victoria University of Wellington - New Zealand School of Music on their shows *Eat Your Heart Out, A Feast of Opera Scenes* (Stage and Production Manager) and *Suor Angelica & Gianni Schicchi* (Production Manager); New Zealand Opera's touring production of *Eight Songs for a Mad King* (Stage Manager) and Blackboard Theatre Collective's production of *UGLY: The Untold Story of the Stepsisters* (Stage Manager).



About the Play

Having loved each other for over thirty years, it should be time for Fran and Bob to slow down and smell the roses – until the lives of their adult children come crashing through the back door...

Bob and Fran Price have four adult children: Pip, Mark, Ben, and Rosie. Each child has their unique struggles and secrets that they try to keep hidden from their parents. Yet Fran has a knack for knowing what is true in each of their lives, whether it is an unhappy marriage (Pip), heartbreak (Rosie), identity (Mark), or drug use (Ben). As the children try to redefine their lives separately from the hopes and dreams of their parents, what is real and genuine in the Price family falls apart under scrutiny, and Bob and Fran must redefine their relationships with their children and with each other.

Over a span of one year, for each season, one child tells their story. Each season contains a crisis, a turning point, tough choices need to be made and the ramifications of those choices dealt with.

From the beloved writer of *When the Rain Stops Falling*, Andrew Bovell's *Things I Know to be True* is a heartfelt drama examining the dynamics of family, love and how we understand truth in the face of adversity.

DISCUSS

Whose story is this? As a class discuss who you feel empathy for and why.

HAVE A GO

Work in groups. Imagine you have been asked to write a play based on your family, what would be the main themes? What would be your characters narrative?



BOB PRICE

A retired auto factory worker. He is married to Fran and father to four children. He worked hard his whole life to provide for his family, giving them a college education. When the factory closed, Bob took a retirement package as he didn't think he would get another job. *"I thought I earned a rest. When I worked all I could dream of was a few extra hours in the day to spend in the garden, but who would have thought that the days would turn out to be so long."*

He loves his family and has a special place for each child in his heart. He believes that he's brought them up well. He is brutally honest in his opinions but weathers each crisis within the family stoically. He supports Pip's decision to separate from her husband, works hard to accept Mark's transition and cries when Rosie tells him she's moving away.

However, he is angry at Ben's mistake, seeing it as a rejection of his love. *"I've got nothing for you Ben. What I had; I've already given. And you never wanted it anyway."* He loses the love of his life before they have a chance to re-connect as a couple now that the children have moved away.



FRAN PRICE

Works as a nurse and is always coming or going from work. Fran is in constant contact with her four children and fusses and pries into their lives. She is not afraid to share her opinions and thoughts with her kids. *"It's a mother's job to make her children cry....so they understand pain."*

Fran balances work and family life, she has kept her independence by putting money aside. She worries about Bob becoming old before his time and wants to take him on a holiday.

Fran sees herself in Pip, and instead of understanding, she disapproves and argues with her. She doesn't understand her son Mark and is offended that he wants to become a woman. She nags Rosie to do something meaningful with her life. She protects Ben when he reveals he has been stealing, even giving him the money to cover it up. Whilst she is the matriarch of the family and very strong, she needs Bob to ground her.



PIP PRICE

The oldest child. She is in a career transition, moving up through the Ministry of Education before being offered a job in Canada. She works hard to have a balance of work and family life and is often criticised by her mother about her commitment to her career. She never really got on well with her mother and has vivid memories of the hard times they had while she was growing up.

Fran says that Pip is too similar to her and that is why they clash. Pip is daddy's girl, finding that she can relate better to him.

She comes to a moment in life where she needs to choose between her comfortable married, middle-class life and the excitement of travel and having an affair. She lies to her family and only explains it in a letter to her mum, as she wonders if her mum ever felt they way she does.



**MIA/MARK
PRICE**

Mia is introduced and seen for the majority of the play as Mark and begins the process of transitioning to female toward the end of the play.

They are the second child born and an I.T. Specialist. In most people's eyes, Mia is the no-drama child, leading a stable, relatively uncomplicated life.

Very close to Rosie, often taking on the 'mum' role when Rosie was a baby. But when they share their true identity with their family, the family's support and understanding are put to the test. They and Fran stop speaking to each other. The love and support from his dad at the airport comes as a surprise.



BEN PRICE

The third child. He works in financial services and is corporate and flashy and likes to spend his money. He is not a natural fit in this high-flying world, coming from a middle-class family who had to work hard to put him through university, so he struggles to keep up with those who come from money.

He tries hard and puts on a show to be different from his family. Ben is rooted to home, bringing his shirts for his mum to wash, visiting once a week. Home is also where he turns for support when it is revealed that he has been stealing from the company. Ben is Fran's favourite, *"What can I say? The boy makes me laugh. He just has to walk into a room and I want to smile."*



ROSIE PRICE

The youngest child, a 'happy accident'. She goes overseas to find herself and thinks that she's more grown-up but realises that she is not ready and comes home.

She is fussed over by everyone in the family but is particularly close to Mark. *"He was more of a mother to you than I was,"* explains Fran. She is daddy's little girl and it upsets him the most when she leaves. Others tell her to grow up, but she likes the protection of family.

Rosie finally stands up for herself announcing that she is going to study writing at university, instead of taking a 'secure' job, as her parents wanted.

She grows as she watches others change and make big life choices throughout the play, at the end of the play she is able to articulate that she knows more 'things' than she knew at the start.

DISCUSS

What do you think would be challenging about being one of the actors in this show?

Which character do you identify with most and why?

AN INTERVIEW **ANDREW** WITH **BOVELL**

What is *Things I Know to be True* about?

The play is a deeply intimate play, naturalistic in style, but also monologue heavy. It's about family resilience, bringing up children who have now moved into their own lives, and the next chapter for the parents left behind. It's also about the circle of life, beginning with the youngest child asking, "*What do I know to be true?*" She doesn't know much at the beginning of the play, but by the conclusion she has learnt more about the world around her. As the children move towards more certainty and follow their convictions, the parents, particularly the father, become less certain.

How much of the story is based on your own life?

There is a lot of my father, he was a quintessential Australian suburban father. It has some of my mum and dad in the characters, but also my partner and I, and how we've felt since our children have all moved out of home. It isn't autobiographical, although the feelings that it creates can certainly relate to my life as well as other's lives. I also really wanted to explore the father role and the place that I live, in southern Adelaide. It was a world where I grew up, ran away from and a place I eventually came back to.

What is the process for your writing?

This has been a long process, starting with an idea about three years ago. It began with a group of people who wanted to create together, including the director, Georgie Brookman and the actors. Right from the beginning I also knew that Frantic Assembly would be involved, which meant doing some research on the company's devising style. However, Scott Graham told me not to pre-empt the physicality, "*Let me respond to what you write.*" In the early stages we all came together and shared stories about ourselves as artists and as people. During this process we all told stories about family. Tilly Cobham-Harvey spoke about travelling to Europe for the first time, the big ritual so many young people undertake, going to the old world that is more sophisticated. | She had her heart broken and became home-sick and was standing on a train platform making a list of the things she knew to be true. That became the starting point of my play.

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By Robyn Brookes | State Theatre Company South Australia

HAVE A GO

Using the starting point of *Things I Know to be True* have a go at writing a short monologue. What are the things you know to be true, what are the questions you have about the world...?

THEMES AND IMPACT ON THE AUDIENCE

DISCUSS

What do you think are the major themes in the play and what impact these have on the audience.

HAVE A GO

As an audience member what does this play make you think about? Using the headings below as a starting point explore how the play made you feel about these topics and what choices the production team made to get you thinking this way.

Familial Love

AUDIENCE RESPONSE	WHAT MADE YOU FEEL THIS?

Expectations

AUDIENCE RESPONSE	WHAT MADE YOU FEEL THIS?

Cycle of Life

AUDIENCE RESPONSE	WHAT MADE YOU FEEL THIS?

Parent-Child Relationship

AUDIENCE RESPONSE	WHAT MADE YOU FEEL THIS?

Home

AUDIENCE RESPONSE	WHAT MADE YOU FEEL THIS?

The Director's Vision

SHANE BOSHER (DIRECTOR)

This play is about love. Love can nurture and protect, but it can also crush and devour.

The director of The Court Theatre's production of *Things I Know to be True*, Shane Boshier, wanted to create a piece of theatre that allowed audiences to connect to the play through whichever characters they connected with most. Shane believes that everyone has a relationship to the concept of family and that this production uses the very specific story of one family to enable the audience to think about the themes explored in the play and allow them to have different relevance and meaning for each audience member.

This piece is an exploration of home as a theme and explores the parent and child relationship in the context of four different children in the family. Exploring the idea that often, we find that our childhood home is a place that we simultaneously want to escape from and a place we want to run back to. It is also about resilience, and how we cope with change.

This play touches on the heart-breaking truth that we all at some stage experience losing someone we love. The writer, Andrew Bovell, lost his mother while writing this play and it would be reasonable to think that this experience had an impact on the way the play was written.

DISCUSS

The original production of *Things I Know to be True* was created in collaboration with physical theatre company Frantic Assembly. How do you think movement was used to support the storytelling in The Court Theatre's production?

RESEARCH

Do some investigation into the original production at The State Theatre Company in Australia and the work of Frantic Assembly. Compare what you find about this production with the production you watched at The Court Theatre. What similarities can you see? What are the differences in the approach?



PRODUCTION TECHNOLOGIES

The Set

ANDREW FOSTER (DESIGNER)

The set is inspired by Shakespearean staging, with one playing space that allows the performers to transform the space. At any moment, the space can be transformed into the garden or the kitchen but also to hold transitional moments that allow the characters to show their journey without being tied to one physical space. The walls suggest the enclosure of a home whilst also feeling like you could be in the garden. The area at the back of the stage symbolises the home and is lit like a giant lantern glowing from the back of the stage. This is intended to give a sense of warmth and heart emanating from the area that we visualise as the 'home'.

The set design allows a very wide playing space allowing the actors to work at a distance from each other as well as being close and intimate.

The designer wanted to escape naturalism and find a style that felt more painterly and allowed for abstract moments, an example of this is the upside-down tree. The tree represents many things, the sense of the outdoors and the garden that is important to Bob and Fran and the idea of the family being rooted in that garden and in that place as a unit. Trees are almost identical above and underground so at times the tree could be seen as being the branches and leaves sprouting and growing and at other times the roots, grounding and supporting.

Items on the stage that seem literal also expand to have more meaning and give us a sense of story. The swing on the set is used to show the journey for Mark as he transitions to Mia; it gives a sense of flight, release, and liberation. The chairs on stage are sometimes left empty symbolising the family members who aren't currently present and sometimes a family member is sitting in the chair even though they are not in the scene to symbolise that their presence and energy is still felt even if they aren't physically there.

The play takes place over the course of a year with each season relating to one of the children and their story. There is an expression of the change of seasons that is articulated through the set design and the use of the roses. Bob cares for the roses with as much care and attention that he shows his family and as they change throughout the seasons so do the children grow and develop.

DISCUSS

How does the set design help support the story telling?



PRODUCTION TECHNOLOGIES

Costume Design

TINA HUTCHISON-THOMAS (DESIGNER)

There is a base colour of blue for all the characters in the play, each character then has their own colour scheme that is secondary to that.

Fran is the centre of the family and the colour blue comes from her nursing uniform which she is often wearing with other cardigans and layers added on top. This helps show how connected and central her role as a nurse is to her identity.

Bob's costume shows that he is mainly concerned with being comfortable, he is far more interested in function and practicality than style. Bob's wardrobe is faded and worn, he is the kind of man that would not see the need to replace clothing or buy fancy new things.

Pip's colour palette starts in maroon and burgundy but as the play goes on and she starts to soften, the colours lighten to become softer pink tones.

Ben is often in Grey and blue suits; he is stylish and takes care of his appearance, although he would like to be wearing a designer suit, he is more likely to be sporting a high street brand. After he has his crisis, his costuming changes to become crumpled and has been treated to make him look sweaty.

Mia/Mark is dressed in very neutral colours which help them to remain discreet and unseen. They are hiding their true self and choose clothes that won't make them stand out. They are well dressed and well-groomed but have the ability to disappear into a crowd. When we see them at the end of the play their costuming has a subtle nod to the beginning of her transition.

Rosie wears clothes that are bright and fresh, lots of yellows. She has a very contemporary feel, wearing things that you might imagine could be purchased at high street shops. There is a sense of openness and possibility for this character and her costuming is cheap and cheerful.

HAVE A GO

Choose one of the characters from the play. If you were the costume designer for this production how would you choose to dress this character and what would your decisions say about them? Present your ideas in the form of a mood board, using images from magazines.

PRODUCTION TECHNOLOGIES

Sound Design

MATT SHORT (DESIGNER)

The sound design is an original composition. Using a lot of light piano and ambient keyboard sounds creates more of an underscore to support the action on stage.

The idea of this sound design is to augment and enhance the emotions not to manipulate or stamp the feelings into the audience. The intention is that the music should be poignant and allow the space to open up so every audience member can go on their individual journey with the story.

In the text, Pip talks about a song that her mother would listen to called 'Famous Blue Raincoat' by Leonard Cohen. *"I never really understood the song when I was a girl. But I knew enough to know that it was about love and that each time you played it you wanted to cry."*

She hums a few bars before she announces she is moving to Canada and in the letter to her mother she sings part of it again. *"Thanks for taking the trouble from her eyes. Do you remember that line from the song? That is what this man has done for me. And I'm wondering if there was someone who could have done it for you, if you let them."* At this moment, she understands her mother like she has never been able to before.

HAVE A GO

Choose a song that a family member loved and shared with you while you were growing up. In groups try writing a monologue that explains why you think that song meant something to your family and you. Try performing your monologue or swap monologues with another member of your class and perform for each other. Would you choose to have the song playing in the background or not?

PHYSICAL THEATRE

The original production of *Things I Know to be True* was created in a collaboration between The State Theatre Company in Australia and physical theatre company Frantic Assembly. In The Court Theatre's production, there is not as much focus and time spent on physical theatre as in the original production but movement and spatial relationships between the characters are used to support the storytelling. Below we explore viewpoints as a way to think, talk about and devise physical movement to support storytelling in theatre.

VIEWPOINTS

Viewpoints is a technique of composition or staging of movement that gives actors a vocabulary to talk about movement, gesture and creative space. Originally developed in the 1970s by choreographer Mary Overlie as a method of movement improvisation, The Viewpoints theory was adapted for stage acting by directors Anne Bogart and Tina Landau.

The Viewpoints are

- Tempo (the speed at which you do something)
- Duration (for how long you do it)
- Kinesthetic Response (when you do something, and how the people around you affect that)
- Repetition (repeating movement from others)
- Spatial Relationships (how you are positioned compared to the other performers)
- Architecture (how the space is informing what you do)
- Topography (how you move in the space)
- Shape (the shapes your body makes)
- Gesture (recognisable human gestures that indicate mood, time, place or character)

DISCUSS

Think about the section of the play where Mark transitions to Mia. How is movement used to represent this transition?

HAVE A GO

In groups devise how you would stage the opening section of the play. How would you use movement to support Rosie's opening monologue? A copy of the monologue can be found on page 20 of this pack.

EXPRESSIVE V DESCRIPTIVE MOVEMENT

When creating a performance, it is possible to stage descriptively or expressively. Descriptive staging repeats the external physical and vocal reality of an event, whereas expressive staging is more concerned with what an event felt like and finds a way to physically and vocally represent those emotions.

DISCUSS

Identify a point in the production where expressive movement is used and a point in the production where descriptive movement is used. What do you think is most effective about each of these choices?

FIND OUT MORE

Anne Bogart; Tina Landau (1 August 2004). [The Viewpoints Book: A Practical Guide to Viewpoints and Composition](#). Theatre Communications Group. pp. 7–12. [ISBN 978-1-55936-677-9](#).

Ask an Actor

LARA MACGREGOR AS FRAN PRICE

How did you prepare for the role of Fran?

In terms of research, Fran is a contemporary, relatable character, from this part of the world, who is very accessible. Because of this, there wasn't a huge amount of research that I had to delve into. Whereas in *Misery*, the last play I performed in at The Court, I had to do a lot of pre-production preparation eg: accent, personal training and reading about the real-life person that character was based on - this play has none of that. I have my own accent, no major physical challenges in this play, and she's not based on a particular figure in history.

Research for this was more around senior nursing, as that is her profession, and the genesis of the play and its first production which was the collaboration between the State Theatre Company in South Australia and Frantic Assembly in the U.K. As the story is based loosely on Andrew Bovell's life, I read interviews with him about his background and his process of writing the play.

Other preparation consisted of mining the play for as many clues about who Fran is as possible. This is important to do before I even step into the rehearsal room so I have some grasp on what makes her tick. Clues are often held in what the other characters say about her, how they see her versus how she sees herself. What relationships she has and with whom. Some clues might be: How long have Fran and her husband Bob been together? How does she relate differently to each of her children? What is her profession? And in her case, how long has she been a nurse? What are her secrets? Is she religious? Does she have a sense of humour? etc...

Why do you think Fran's story is important to tell?

Fran is a marvellous complicated creature who represents all our mothers in some way.

The matriarch of the family, who has worked very hard all her life to ensure her kids want for nothing. Although she harbours a few secrets, she is probably most guilty of loving her children too much.

She has a hard lesson to learn - just when to step in and when to step out of her children's lives.

She's funny, and fractious, delicate and dominating.

Through portraying Fran as clearly as I can, I hope to fulfil Andrew Bovell's desire that *"People emerge from the play with a new sense of love and understanding."* What could be a more important message to share right now?

What were the biggest challenges during the rehearsal process?

As I write this, I'm halfway through the process. It's been so hard and fast hitting the rehearsal room floor, it's really just about doing the work. There's not much time to get caught up in difficulties. However, a current focus is how I emotionally transition from scene to scene. The play stretches over a year and is divided up into seasons. Each of the seasons is dedicated to one of the children and a crisis. So technically I have to find a way to transition from season to season without bringing the emotion of the previous scene with me into the next.

What do you think are the main messages in *Things I Know to be True*?

Home and familial love. Andrew Bovell says: *Being a parent is a painful experience but being a child is painful too.* This seems really central to the core of the play.

Generational expectations are at the heart of the piece too. Bob and Fran both project their expectations of how they were brought up, and what they believe to be true, onto their children. This is where we see friction happen. And in the same vein, the children project their generational beliefs, values and morals back at their parents.

Longevity winds its way through the play. Being in it for the long haul. Not giving up. When it comes to Fran and Bob's marriage and their commitment to their children.

Patterns and the repetitive circles of life. We see this in the relationship between Fran and her eldest daughter.

Pressure - of anger, love and resentment.

Forgiveness.

Anything else interesting you would like to share about your experience being involved in this production and playing the role of Fran?

I was lucky enough to play Elizabeth seven years ago in one of Andrew Bovell's other plays *When The Rain Stops Falling*. He would easily be one of my favourite playwrights. For many reasons - his process of writing, his subject matter, his craft on the page. So, when the opportunity came up a year ago to play Fran at Circa Theatre in Wellington with this production team, I jumped at it. However, we were three days into rehearsal when the theatre announced they had to close due to COVID and we were to cease rehearsals. It's difficult to stop mid-process on creation and it was a blow to us all.

So, mostly I feel privileged that Shane Boshier, The Court Theatre and Circa Theatre could make this collaboration happen and I could remain on this project. We know Fran. We see her in us, our own mothers, and our Grandmothers before them - funny, brash, hard-working, opinionated, sacrificing, suffocating, stubborn, and smart. She's an unsung hero. And I'm proud to play her.

REFLECTING ON THE PLAY

HAVE A GO

In groups work to complete the tables below. Use the information in this pack and add your own ideas and thoughts on how The Court Theatre's production of *Things I Know to be True* used drama elements, techniques, conventions and technologies within this performance. Remember to consider why the director/designer/actor made these choices and what impact this had on your interpretation of the play.

DRAMA ELEMENTS AND HOW THEY IMPACT THE MEANING AND UNDERSTANDING

ELEMENT	HOW IT WAS USED	THE IMPACT
TENSION		
SITUATION		
MOOD		
CONTRAST		
TIME	The play covers an entire year and jumps seasons and character focuses, showing us the important moments for the characters.	The audience only sees the dramatic and emotionally heightened moments for the family. We don't see much of everyday normal life. This makes the play intense and consuming to experience.
CAST		
LANGUAGE		

DRAMA TECHNIQUES AND HOW THEY IMPACT MEANING AND UNDERSTANDING

TECHNIQUE	HOW IT WAS USED	THE IMPACT
USE OF SPACE		
BODY		
MOVEMENT		
VOICE		
MONOLOGUE		

PRODUCTION TECHNOLOGIES AND HOW THEY IMPACT MEANING AND UNDERSTANDING

TECHNOLOGY	HOW IT WAS USED	THE IMPACT
SET		
LIGHTING		
PROPS		
SOUND		
COSTUME		
EFFECTS	The leaves, petals and rain that fall from the ceiling at different points of the show.	

Rosie's Monologue

Berlin. A winter coat. A travel bag. A red nose. And a broken heart.

I'm standing on the platform at the train station. It's cold. The train is late and my socks are wet. I'm not quite sure how I got here or where I'm meant to go next.

I met him four nights ago and he was the most beautiful boy I had ever seen. His name was Emmanuel, of course and he came from Madrid.

I'd been travelling by myself for three months. The great European adventure. London. Dublin. Paris. Prague. Then Berlin. I'd been saving for a year. Café work, bar work, babysitting. Mum and Dad said don't go by yourself. It's too dangerous. Go on a tour or at least with some girlfriends.

I'll meet people. I told them. I'll be fine. But meeting people is harder than you think. I mean I did, meet people, at hostels and stuff but mainly other Australians. And it was fun for a night or two. But the boys just wanted to have sex and I guess that's alright but if I wanted sex with an Australian boy I would have stayed in Hallett Cove.

So I go to the churches and the museums and the galleries and I walk through the cobbled streets and I sit in cafes trying to look mysterious and everything is so beautiful. Everything is what I was expecting it to be. And yet somehow I want it to be more.

I skype home once a week and tell Mum and Dad what an amazing place Europe is. They've never been. I tell them I'm having the best time because I can't bear the thought of them being disappointed for me. And when I skype my brother Mark, I pretend the camera on my laptop is broken because he knows me and he will see it in my face. He'll see that it's all a mess and he'll tell me to come home but I can't go home, not yet, I mean then, I couldn't go home then because it would be such a.... defeat.

I don't know what it's meant to be. I don't know what I'm meant to do. I keep wondering when it will start. Life. When will life start?

And then there he is. At a club in Mitte. Dancing. With his shirt off. And I think, wow, that guy can really dance. That guy is like... fire. And then he looks over at me. Me? And I am gone. I pretend not to be. I try to be cool. To make it seem like I'm not interested. But I am so interested. And we dance until the sun comes up. And as we come out of the club into the light, I think this is it. This is life. I am living. And I know he wants to take me home. To his place. Or to his friend's place. Or to someone's place, I'm not quite sure whose place it is and I say ok. Because at last I am living and I don't want life to stop.

And when he kisses me I want to cry. Because I'd never been kissed like that. Not in Hallett Cove. And I'd never been kissed where he kissed me or touched quite like that. He seemed to know things and for once it didn't seem to matter that I didn't. Three days. Three days we stayed in bed. And after three days I knew some things too.

We don't even get up to eat. He disappears and comes back with a bowl of cereal and two spoons. And that's all we eat. Cereal. Out of the same bowl. For three days. On the third night I watch him sleeping and I do that thing you shouldn't do. I think about the future. I imagine taking him home to meet Mum and Dad and my sister and brothers and how they will all love him, like they love me. And how clever I am and brave to have found such a man, such a beautiful man, different but the same and brought him all the way back to Hallett Cove and then, there I 31 am.... Oh, I am so embarrassed but suddenly there I am in our back yard with Dad's roses all around us and I'm walking across the lawn on his arm, and he's got tears in his eyes and Mum's there in a new dress, which she never lets herself have and my sister Pip is there with her husband, Steve and their two girls. She got married in the backyard too. And Mark, my oldest brother who I adore is there with his girlfriend, Taylor. And then there's Ben, my other brother who's there with a girl who's new and won't last because they just don't with Ben and I love them all so much, sometimes I think, too much, if you can love too much but now I have to make room for Emmanuel who's standing there in a suit and he is just so, so... so handsome.... And I... I'm wearing a white dress... And I'm kind of surprised, kind of shocked because I never even knew that that's what I wanted. And maybe it's not what I want, it's what I think Mum and Dad will want for me but anyway I'm there in a white dress on my father's arm walking across the lawn and

Then he wakes up and he looks at me as if he knows what I'm thinking and as if he wants to get up and run so I kiss him on his lips before he can. And he smiles. And I'm gone all over again. And we make love, so tenderly, so sweetly and after, as I drift off to sleep, lying on his chest, listening to the beat of his heart, thinking I could listen to this for the rest of my life, I think is this it, is this what falling in love is?

And when I wake up in the morning he's gone... along with 400 euros from my wallet, my iPad, my camera, my favourite scarf and a large piece of my heart. I find a girl in the house, smoking a cigarette at the kitchen table and ask if she's seen him. She shrugs and says that he said something about going to see his girlfriend in London. She tells me to get my things and to get out of her house.

I walk through the streets of Berlin. I feel small. I feel like I'm 12 years old, I feel ridiculous. I want to cry but I won't. Well I do, a bit. But not as much as I want to. I want my dad. I want my mum. I want my brothers and my sister. I want to hear them laugh and argue and fight 7 and tease me. But I can't think of them much because if I do my chest will explode. I feel like I'm going to literally fall to pieces. That my arms are going to drop off and then my legs and my head. And so to stop myself coming apart I make a list of all the things I know.... I mean actually know for certain to be true and the really frightening thing is.... It's a very short list.

I don't know much at all. But I know that at 25 Windarie Avenue, Hallett Cove, things are the same as when I left and they always will be.

And I know that I have to go home.