Black Diggers
Presented by the Arts Centre Melbourne’s Performances Program 2015
A Queensland Theatre Company Production; Written by Tom Wright, and Directed by Wesley Enoch.
Prepared by Sam Mackie

VCE Drama Unit 3.3
Starting Points – About this resource

These notes have been designed as a supplement to the QTC resources, with a specific focus on the key skills and knowledge for VCE Drama, Outcome 3.3. I have endeavored to provide detailed tables of information that can be the building blocks for further exploration. Teachers should critically study them. As with all theatre what happens one night may not happen the next; that’s why we love it. Consequently, some descriptions may vary to the students’ experience. That’s a good thing too; it encourages them to focus on their own recollections and interpretations.

These are not the answers. They are just one person’s gathering of materials and ideas, combined with his reading of the play and performance. The aim was to give everyone a few starting points.

Sam Mackie

Contents

ABOUT Black Diggers .......................................................................................................................... 3
ABOUT Queensland Theatre Company - the cast and crew............................................................... 4
ABOUT the playwright - Tom Wright .................................................................................................. 5
ABOUT the director - Wesley Enoch................................................................................................... 6
Wesley Enoch on ‘Black Diggers’ ......................................................................................................... 7
Black Diggers background ................................................................................................................... 8-9
Black Diggers structure ........................................................................................................................ 10
Black Diggers and Performance Styles and Conventions ................................................................ 11-15
Black Diggers and the actors and characters – expressive skills and performance skills .......... 16-17
Black Diggers and Theatrical Conventions ....................................................................................... 18-19
Black Diggers and Dramatic Elements .............................................................................................. 20-27
Appendix 1 – scene breakdown ........................................................................................................ 28-29
Appendix 2 – character/actor table.................................................................................................... 30-31

Additional Resources

As part of the season of Black Diggers Arts Centre Melbourne have produced 2 free post-show discussion to further investigate and explored the themes in this landmark play.


A post-show forum was held after the school matinee show, discussing the theatrical elements in the play in regards to the VCE Curriculum

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LLwqeVP2Njo&feature=player_embedded

A post-show panel discussion was held to further discuss the realities faced by families of returned Indigenous ANZACS in Victoria.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=NQjcg7pYQnc
About *Black Diggers*

Inspired by Sydney Festival director Lieven Bartels discovery of a young Aboriginal soldier buried near his home town in Belgium, Researcher David Williams and QTC Artistic Director Wesley Enoch set about ‘Black Diggers’, a major theatre project to explore Indigenous military service in WWI. After extensive research, the inclusion of playwright Tom Wright, and an intensive rehearsal process with 9 Indigenous male actors, the play premiered at The Sydney Festival in 2014, in line with the ANZAC centenary, to critical acclaim. Since then it has toured extensively with some changes to the cast. It comes to Melbourne for the first time in April 2015.

This is how QTC’s website describes it:

One hundred years ago, in 1914, a bullet from an assassin’s gun in Sarajevo sparked a war that ignited the globe. Patriotic young men all over the world lined up to join the fight – including hundreds of Indigenous Australians.

Shunned and downtrodden in their own country – and in fact banned by their own government from serving in the military – Aboriginal men stepped up to enlist. Undaunted, these bold souls took up arms to defend the free world in its time of greatest need. For them, facing the horror of war on a Gallipoli beach was an escape from the shackles of racism at home, at a time when Aboriginal people stood by, segregated, unable to vote, unable to act as their children were ripped from them. When the survivors came back from the war, there was no heroes’ welcome – just a shrug, and a return to drudgery and oppression.

*Black Diggers* is the story of these men – a story of honour and sacrifice that has been covered up and almost forgotten.

Grand in scale and scope, it draws from in-depth interviews with the families of black Diggers who heard the call to arms from all over Australia, as well as conversations with veterans, historians and academics. Young men will step from the blank pages of history to share their compelling stories – and after the curtain falls, we will finally remember them
About Queensland Theatre Company

“Queensland Theatre Company is the state's flagship professional theatre company. We present an annual season of plays every year featuring comedies, classics and new Australian work. We inspire and educate young people through school performances, workshops, and teacher training. We support the industry by creating new work, and providing early-career artists with paid opportunities to develop their talents.”

Taken from their website.
More information on Queensland Theatre Company can be found at:

Credits for *Black Diggers*

| Director: | Wesley Enoch |
| Writer: | Tom Wright |
| Set Designer: | Stephen Curtis |
| Costume Designer: | Ruby Langton-Batty |
| Lighting Designer: | Ben Hughes |
| Composer/Sound Designer: | Tony Brumpton |
| Dramaturg: | Louise Gough |
| Cultural Consultant: | George Bostock |
| Researcher: | David Williams |
| Acting Coach: | Jason Klarwein |
| Voice and Accent Coach: | Melissa Agnew |
| Singing Coach: | Megan Shorey |
| Fight Director: | Niki-J Price |
| Movement Consultant | Nerida Matthaei |
About Tom Wright

Tom Wright has been writing for the theatre for over twenty years. He is currently Artistic Associate at the Sydney Theatre company but he has worked extensively in Melbourne. Amongst his works, both original and adaptation, are productions that have been on the VCE Drama and Theatre Studies curriculums: Babes in the Woods, The Trial, Journal of the Plague Year, Optimism, The Histrionic. His most recent work the Lost Echo, was co-written with Barry Kosky.

Wright was given a ‘telephone book thickness of research’ for Black Diggers, including letters, diary entries and oral histories. This included many contradictory experiences regarding enlisting, fighting and returning home. He brought his own strong sense of history to the project, indeed following the traditions of ‘Brechtian, big picture stories’, whilst at the same time being aware of Indigenous oral history traditions. He said, "If you focus on just two or three narratives, you’re already misrepresenting history," This resulted in a construction approach that adopted a four part definition from the Truth and Reconciliation commission in post-apartheid South Africa – personal truth, social truth, forensic truth and public truth. Rather than telling specific stories they constructed ‘archetypal character journeys in a fragmented view of history’. That has led to a 100 minute play of 64 short sharp scene, ‘a scatter-gun, almost shell-shocked impression of war.’ With Enoch he has inserted a black narrative into what has ‘hitherto been a white narrative’,

“Sometimes the Arts has to smash the vessel of history and say, ‘Look, the story you’ve been telling your people is palpably a lie.”

Sources:

http://www.doollee.com/PlaywrightsW/wright-tom.html


About Wesley Enoch

Wesley Enoch is currently Artistic director of the Queensland Theatre Company. After completing a BA in Drama at QUT he has had assorted directorial responsibilities with Kooemba Jdarra Indigenous Performing Arts, QTC, Sydney Theatre Company, and Ilbijerri Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Theatre Co-Operative. He has enjoyed success as both playwright and director.

Success and recognition came with his production of Jane Harrison’s ‘Stolen’ which charted the experiences of five aboriginal children forcibly removed from their families. It used biographical details including the lives of the five actors themselves. Hilary Glow describes how this play that integrated the personal and the political ‘insisted that the suffering of Indigenous people be acknowledged as a contemporary reality.

Enoch wrote and directed The Seven Stages of Grieving’. It traced Aboriginal history, from the dreamtime, through invasion, genocide, self-determination and reconciliation, all told through the personal narrative of an Aboriginal woman. Whilst politically edged it is fundamentally about storytelling. This one woman show first performed by Deborah Mailman included dance, song, poetry, chant and stories.

His play ‘Black Medea’ re-contextualized the Greek Tragedy into the Australian setting where the central character is a young indigenous woman who leaves her desert home for a city-born lover. More recently he adapted Brecht’s ‘Mother Courage and her Children’ into a ‘Mad-Max-style post-apocalyptic desert.’ ‘The Story of the Miracles at Cookie’s Table’ won the 2005 Patrick White Playwrights’ Award.

On the art of collaborative theatre making Enoch told Glow:

There is a sense of gathering, about participation and... respecting everyone's input along the way. And listening with your heart. That sense of thinking: that rings true, that's got a real kind of integrity, that story has a bigger metaphorical meaning than just your life, your story, it's got something else that rings true ... you can say that's more of a universal story, or if we put it on stage its more than just one person's story, and [it] can resonate for a whole community.'

Wesley Enoch on Black Diggers

The words below represent my attempt to present assorted reflections, in assorted forums, by Wesley Enoch on the process of creating ‘Black Diggers’. They are very much the paraphrasing or quoting of words spoken and written.

In the theatre of war, how does an Aboriginal presence live alongside all those other stories and myths that are made around our nation?

Looking for the story that will resonate - like touching the rim of a glass – finding that note hits the harmonic– finding two tones at the same time that will resonate.

It’s harder to tell one truth because that truth is already contentious.

After about two years of research more than 14,000 pages had been written.

In conversation with historian Kate Evans, Wesley Enoch said that the amount of research material he gathered on the Indigenous soldiers of WWI (and is still gathering) for ‘Black Diggers’ there was a danger of suffocation, ‘a paralysis of integrity’, Contradictory accounts from a range of material left him asking himself, ‘where does the truth lie?’ They allowed all truths to be heard - defined truth, personal truth, collective truth, forensic truth, healing truth. All stories must have equal value and truth. Finding the archetypal stories, rather than the one story allowed ‘traction for as many people as possible’. He saw it in terms of theatre’s opportunity: “Theatre is a dialogue between ‘What’s the impression? What’s the feeling?’ and ‘what’s the accuracy ... the screwed down truth of things?’”

In a sense we tell a bigger truth.

‘Black Diggers’ is a memory play with Uncle George Bostock as its point of reference. He stands and observes much of the action on stage. Often he takes on roles within it. But, wearing his Vietnam medals, he is a man reflecting back on life, his life and the life of so many others.
The momentum from WWII led to the Civil Rights movement and the 67 Referendum, so what happened in WWI? One story would be that after the depression the great social project was about class and meritocracy – the rise of the egalitarian dream. It was not until after WWII that other forms of inequality were then dealt with.

‘Black Diggers’ is a story of responsibility; how Indigenous men acted out their responsibility to their country and to each other. But this was eroded when they came back home. As a contemporary storyteller I must tell it. Over 1000 Indigenous men fought side by side with their white countrymen and forged bonds that would sow the seeds of the modern reconciliation movement.

Luke Carroll as the ghost (production video screenshot)

Sources:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wesley_Enoch
Background to Black Diggers

The following extract is taken from:


Australia, 1914

When the First World War broke out in 1914, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were not considered citizens of Australia, but were rather the wards of the local “Protector of Aborigines”.

They were paid low wages, were often forced to live on reserves and mission stations, could not enter a public bar, vote, marry non-Aboriginal partners or buy property. They were actively discriminated against – and yet when war was declared, many Indigenous men wanted to join up and fight for Australia.

The Defence Act of 1903 (amended in 1909) prevented those who were not of “substantially European descent” from being able to enlist in any of the armed forces. Many Indigenous men who tried to enlist were rejected on the grounds of race, but others managed to slip through the net.

In 1917, following the defeat of a conscription referendum, those restrictions were slightly eased. A new order stated that:

*Half-castes may be enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force [AIF] provided that the examining Medical Officers are satisfied that one of the parents is of European origin.*
Despite the difficulties, it seems that at least 1,000 Indigenous soldiers managed to join the AIF, out of a total of only 80,000 Indigenous people thought to be living in Australia at the time.

Some did so despite being rejected several times for being insufficiently white. Some lied about their age, name or parentage, and some were granted formal permission from their local Protector of Aborigines to serve.

Once past the initial barriers to enlistment, these soldiers fully integrated into the AIF. While almost exclusively of low ranks, the black diggers were paid the same as other soldiers, underwent the same training, and experienced the same hardships.

An unrecognised contribution

As Gary Oakley of the Australian War Memorial has noted on several occasions: “The Army was Australia’s first equal-opportunity employer”. In their civilian life they had to endure constant racist slurs and attitudes. But in the trenches, any negative stereotypes about many Aboriginal diggers quickly disappeared as they lived, ate, laughed and died with these young men.

Indigenous diggers fought in every significant engagement of the war – from Gallipoli, to Palestine, to the Western Front. They served as infantrymen, machine gunners, light artillery and as light-horsemen. They won the respect of their fellow soldiers, and won many bravery awards and commendations.

Many were wounded, some were captured, and dozens were killed. But the most tragic aspect of their service was not that they offered their lives for a country that did not recognise them as citizens, but came after they returned to Australia.

When they came back home they were shunned, their sacrifices ignored and their families oppressed even further by the government. Very few Indigenous diggers were given the land grants offered to returned soldiers, and in many cases the land for grants to war veterans was taken away from Indigenous communities whose men had fought overseas. War pensions and back-pay were frequently denied, and very few Indigenous diggers were welcomed at their local RSL – except sometimes on ANZAC Day.
Black Diggers - Play Structure

The play is made up of 64 ‘units’, fragmentary scenes that employ a range of theatrical devices.

It is broken into 5 sections:

- **Pre-Nation** – a reflection on the wars and experience of Indigenous people before nationhood
- **Enlistment** – the process of Indigenous men signing up
- **The Theatre of War** – the stories from the front as reported in journals, letters, official records and oral history
- **The Return** – the effects of returning and the expectations of both the men who returned and those they were returning to
- **Legacy** – what has been left behind for us.

For a breakdown of each unit, covering action, acting, conventions, elements and stagecraft (not all of everything ... starting points) please see Appendix 1
Black Diggers and ACTING -

With over 100 characters and only 9 actors, 60 scenes presented within 100 minutes, the challenge for every actor was to embody a range of characters quickly, and capture the depth of emotion and response allied to the WW1 experience.

As VCE Drama students you are interested in how they use their expressive and performance skills to realise a character. The definitions below come from the VCAA Drama Study Design:

**EXPRESSIVE SKILLS**

Expressive skills are used to express and realise a character. Expressive skills may be used in different ways in different performance styles. They include:

- Voice
- Movement
- Gesture
- Facial expression.

“Because I played so many different characters [a challenge] was trying to find accents and trying to find different ways to make these characters different within a split second.”

Guy Simon

**PERFORMANCE SKILLS**

Performance skills are used to enhance performance and are inherent in all performances. The performance skills listed below are integrated in performance although each can be explored and developed independently.

- **Focus** - F
  
The ability of the actor to commit to their performance and the ability to sustain character through the use of concentration. Focus can also be used to create an implied character or setting through manipulating the audience’s attention towards a specific place. The manipulation of focus can assist the actor to develop an effective actor–audience relationship.

- **Timing** - T
  
  Used to control or regulate the pace of a performance. Timing can be manipulated in drama to build dramatic tension, evoke feeling, coordinate effective synchronisation within an ensemble and develop the comic potential of a scene.

- **Energy** - E
  
  The intensity an actor brings to a performance. At different times in a performance an actor might use different levels of energy to create different dynamics.

- **Actor–audience relationship** - AA
  
  The way in which an actor deliberately manipulates the audience’s emotions, moods and responses to the action. This can be done through the placement of the performer in relation to the audience, the way the actor addresses and engages the audience, and the emotional and intellectual response to the character’s situation. An actor–audience relationship only exists as part of an actual performance.

Appendix 2 charts the actor’s involvement in every scene.

* This will help remind you of the many different characters each actor played.

For example,
Guy Simon plays; a stockman, Harry’s mate (who knows his history), a primate exhibit, a recruiting official, Archie, assorted soldiers, a Trinidadian ammunition hauler, Bertie’s Mum, a German soldier, a farmer, and a sub-editor.

Appendix 2 provides you with many starting points to answer these questions. You can use it as a trigger, a catalyst, a back-up, a point of contention. It is there to help stimulate your recollections of the performance.

Please note that with changes in cast, some of these roles may have been reallocated. This table is based on the original cast production. The 3 new cast members have been indicated.

FIRST CONSIDERATIONS

As a class discuss and take notes on the actors you wish to focus on (they are all interesting).

It would be worth having a large piece of poster paper or online discussion page for each actor

As you think about different actor’s effort to deliver a range of characters, consider the following:

1. What expressive skills defined and differentiated each character? Was it in:
   - the voice?
   - the posture?
   - the way they moved through the space?,
   - particular gestures or idiosyncrasies?
   - a facial expression

2. When did the actor use focus to draw us towards:
   - themselves?
   - other characters?
   - points of the stage?
   - a prop?

To create the conflicted mother to young Bertie Guy Simon softened his vocal tone and raised his pitch, without ever yielding to caricature. As the lone parent she handled her son with maternal authority and care, dropping the sheets to grasp his shoulders and confront him face to face with his delusions about enlisting, eyebrows raised and eyes wide with sincere concern that she might have 'already lost you'.
• Ourselves?
• Something he saw in his own mind?
• a facial expression

When Bertie returns home he is virtually mute. As the mother Simon never takes her eyes off him, even when the Grandad speaks of the land and fires, she watches her son with forlorn hope. ‘He’s still over there.’ Bertie’s eyes have a distant gaze, looking out beyond the audience. Where the Grandad speaks of irrigation, he sees the trenches, the exploded body of Stan.

3. Can you think of examples when the actor used timing for effect:

• Comic timing?
• A pause?
• A moment of stillness and/or silence?
• To heighten a particular emotional moment?
• a facial expression

In response to the claim that ‘No-one knows what it’s all about’, Simon as Harry’s mate delivers a quick, erudite history lesson on the build up to WWI. His timing and delivery captures the humour of the situation as he begins with more assurance than his character suggests he should have. The language is complex but his relaxed, pacey tone which sustains itself to the end highlights the s that someone like him should know anything at all.

4. Were the energy levels used to:

• Differentiate characters for the one actor?
• Differentiate the state of mind of a given character?
• Heighten the relationship with particular other characters or situations?
5. Actor-audience relationship:

- How was the actor-audience relationship first established for a given character?
- What moments from the performance elicited particular responses in you as an audience member, be it feelings of pathos, empathy, deep seated loathing, a sort of maternal affection, envy, pity, admiration, or something else? If so, what did the actor/s do to draw that out?
- Did the actor ever engage with the audience directly? How? What effect did this have ... to draw you in to their world, to create a sense of intimacy, to challenge you, to share a joke or a smile, to seduce, to win you over, to disgust you?

We meet Archie 3 times across the play, writing letters home to his Auntie May. Each time Simon lies against the wall downstage right, an intimate relationship with the audience he is unaware of. In the first instance, not yet out of the country, his words are laced with hope, as he scrawls lightly and talks of prayers and pelicans. The delivery is quiet, patient, accepting and we feel his goodness, perhaps tinged with naivety. The second letter follows the tragic self-mutilation of Ollie Thomas. Now entrenched in the war, the slowly capitulating repetition that ‘he hasn’t got a face’, emphasises the devastating image he has in his head. Simon stares towards the ground in front of him pounding his knees with his pencil and wiping the tears away, and we share the horror. The third letter is simply a question following a piece of scripture – “'And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.’ What does that mean?” Now his words are delivered quietly, in defeat, his body more slumped than ever. He has lost his faith and we pity the loss of innocence for him and every soldier.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS ON ACTING (expressive and performance skills)

Have a go at some of the following questions to get you going:

- Describe how one actor manipulated their voice to create a range of characters
- Describe Luke Carroll’s portrayal of Nigel, from young boy, to soldier, to prisoner of war, to ex-soldier & opinion letter writer, to sandwich board walker, and finally to institutionalised old man.
  o This could be done for Ern, Laurie, Archie, Harry.
- Analyse Luke Carroll’s use of expressive and performance skills in portraying the ghost.
  o This could be done for Old Ern, Man with a glass.
- Describe Shaka Cook’s changing energy and focus in developing the character of Bertie, from home to the front and back again.
- Compare One actor’s realisation of three different characters across the play
  o Shaka Cook – Bertie, the Taxidermist & Psychiatric nurse.
  o David Page – young Ern, British Captain, Old Ern
  o Colin Smith – Laurie, the school master/minister, the Indian POW.
  o Eliah Watego – Bob, Austrian soldier, Mick Dempsey.
  o Guy Simon – Archie, Bertie’s Mum, German soldier.
- Analyse how one actor used different energy levels to differentiate characters across the show (Eg Colin Smith in a range of characters)
• Describe and analyse several moments where one character used comic and dramatic tension to good effect. (Eg David Page as Ern).
• Analyse how one actor used focus to manipulate the audience into seeing what they saw.
• Uncle George Bostock is a unique performer on stage. Track his performance across the play. Note when he simply portrays himself, an observer of the events as they unfold, and when he takes on characters within the stories. How does his acting change?

Franks is shot (photo courtesy of Jamie Williams)
Black Diggers and PERFORMANCE STYLES

Rather than attempt to write something extensive for which I am not qualified I will begin by offering two resources from which most of my offerings are extracted:

A Brief History of Indigenous Australian Contemporary Theatre by Maryrose Casey and Cathie Craigie, 2011


Mark Eckersley also has an informative blog on 21 century Indigenous theatre:

So, looking at the qualities and conventions of contemporary Indigenous theatre would provide ‘Black Diggers’ with a seemingly easy piece of categorisation. However, looking at all the ingredients of this poignant and powerful piece provided by playwright and director is to see that, like a magpie building its nest, and much contemporary theatre the piece employs many ‘shiny bits’: the acting, directing and stagecraft conventions that achieve the emotional and political imperatives.

Many of the conventions of recent indigenous theatre revolve around the content of the play as the means of staging it (much the same could be said for the absurdist movement). Here are some of those conventions:

- Oral storytelling tradition.
- Focus on the telling of intensely intimate & personal stories (often autobiographical) that combine moments of humour with memories of pain and loss.
- Expression of the political concern of the artists.
- capturing the particular nature of Indigenous experiences in order to achieve a new set of negotiated meanings between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Australians.
- Hence an interlocking of the personal and the political, the historical and the contemporary.
- Witnessing history through lived experience.
- Direct audience address.
- Multiple languages
- Song, chant and dance.

This is a body of work that Glow says ‘repudiates the triumphalist versions of Australia's history which would seek to emphasise accounts of colonial achievement rather than acknowledge the histories of Indigenous experience under colonialism’; what Helen Thomson called’ a powerful “talking back”, a decolonising act.’ (2001, ‘Aboriginal Women’s Staged Autobiography’ in Siting the Other: Revisions of Marginality in Australian and Canadian Drama.).

As I suggested previously, ‘Black Diggers’ ticks the boxes in so many ways.

Enoch has referred to it as a memory play. Uncle George is a point of reference – his medals are from Vietnam (puts us in the now) – a man reflecting back on life, watching on our behalf.

He describes the humour in his work like a Trojan horse. Black diggers is capital ‘P’ politics, a heavy and political thing. Humour and music and big visuals are wonderful Trojan horses to open up people. It’s the rubber band effect, pull them one way then let them go: get them laughing then you can make them cry.
Wright says the play follows the tradition of "pageant story telling" or "Brechtian, big picture stories". We see a lot in the Epic theatre style book to play with the term: a highly episodic story played out over a long period of time and places; a strong political message: a type of historification; direct address, signposting of scenes, use of song to satirise and make the audience think, and what I call a ‘silent narrator’ in Uncle George Bostock. His stage presence constantly reminds us we are engaged in the act of theatre; we are invited to look at things differently. But, we must balance this with the overwhelming emotional presence. We are constantly drawn into the lives of these characters. It is heavy with pathos. Consider Enoch’s last comment above: get them laughing so you can make them cry.

Defining the performance style is worth discussion but do not feel that need to nail something down. Identify the piece of theatre presented to you. It is unique.

Consider the assorted conventions discussed in the next section.
**Black Diggers and THEATRICAL CONVENTIONS**

Listed below are assorted theatrical conventions employed in *Black Diggers*. This is not an exhaustive list and I have even created conventions of sorts, where the essential realism of the scene was somehow heightened. You may choose to ignore, rename or accept. This does not include stagecraft conventions (covered separately) or conventions of realism.

- **Transformation of time/place/character**
  - Most transitions occur in sight of the audience, while costume changes occur off stage. See contrast in dramatic elements for discussion of transitions between scenes.

- **Multiple roles**
  - Every actor takes on multiple roles, including one female character. This is achieved through manipulation of expressive skills, use of props and costume (sometimes full change, sometimes implied in a single addition).

- **‘Silent Narrator’**
  - Uncle George as a kind of silent narrator. He is on stage most of the time observing the events with us, for us. We are directed by his eyes. We watch his responses. He looks to us on occasion. Sometimes he involves himself in the stage action as Uncle George (final sequence). Sometimes he takes on roles within the narrative.

- **Song**
  - Implicit within the world
    - Sandy Maranoa
    - Our God, Our Help in Ages Past
    - Tattooed Lady
    - Bound for the Promised Land
    - Lest We Forget
    - Last Post
  - Beyond the world of the play
    - The World’s Turned Upside Down
    - Lazarus

- **Comedy**
  - Slapstick
    - Ern, Bob & Norm in enlistment sequence
    - Ern Bob & Norm maimed
- Satire/Irony
  - Harry’s Mate’s speech on background to WWI.
  - Taxidermist on the evolution of man
  - The World’s Turned Upside Down
  - Scouting scene
  - Tattooed Lady

- Heightened Use of Language
  - Laurie in the boat
  - Hymns and prayers

- Stylised movement
  - Officials in enlistment scene.
  - Frank’s death
  - Closing sequence

- Direct address/Monologue (internal and external)
  - Laurie on the boat
  - The ghost
  - Bloke with a glass (to perceived town hall crowd)
  - Minister delivering eulogy
  - Ern as old soldier

- ‘Letter narration
  - Archie’s letters
  - Nigel Letter to editor
  - 7 letter sequence

- Signposting
  - Throughout production
  - Whitewashing
  - The cross

- Layered scenes
  - Final sequence
**Black Diggers and THE DRAMATIC ELEMENTS -**

Here are the VCAA definitions for the dramatic elements that will guide your considerations in Outcome 3.3 and all you do in Drama. After each element I have suggested units or stories as starting points for looking more closely at each one.

**DRAMATIC ELEMENTS**

Dramatic elements are essential features of every performance. Actors manipulate dramatic elements to shape and enhance meaning. They include:

- **Climax** - The most significant moment of tension or conflict in a drama, often occurring towards the end of the plot. Multiple climaxes and/or an anti-climax can also occur. The action of a drama usually unravels after the climax has transpired but the work might finish with a climactic moment.

Because *Black Diggers* is a scatter-gun of fragmented stories the climaxes are smaller, more frequent, and not as obvious. You will need to look at the stories of individual soldiers and see if there is a climax (and indeed a denouement: an unravelling the leads to some sort of resolution).

Starting points:
- Unit 14 – On the Boat – is this the climax of the build up to war? Does Laurie’s heightened moment where he recites the psalm hold us in the climax?
- Unit 15 – Aggressive Soldier gets beaten up (Gallipoli). This simple episode is a strong example of rising tension leading to climax, with an unexpected denouement and resolution. Can you describe it?
- Units 38 – 40 – The rhythm stick begins in Archie’s 3rd letter and takes us all the way to the climactic rendition of ‘Lazarus’ by the cast that finishes abruptly. Describe how the stage action and stagecraft all build to this climax.
- Unit 41 – Archie kills Austrian soldier in a fight 1917. This is the final scene at the front. It is the end of Act One. Is it the climax? Describe the action and the aftermath. What is the effect of the final words and silence between Archie and the Austrian soldier?

- **Conflict** - Conflict generally occurs when a character cannot achieve an objective due to an obstacle. This obstacle may be internal or external – between characters or between characters and their environment. Conflict can be shown in a variety of ways, for example through physical, verbal or psychological means. Conflict can be embedded in the structure of the drama.

Conflict is rife in ‘Black Diggers’, internal and external, and it is manifested physically, verbally and psychologically across the play. You could focus on individual characters or broader thematic conflicts:
- Consider the internal conflict for any of the following characters:
  - Bertie, Laurie, Nigel, Ern, Archie, The British Captain, the ghost.
- Consider the one-on-one conflicts in the following units (note in several cases there are multiple conflicts):
  - Unit 15 – Aggressive Soldier gets beaten up (Gallipoli) – physical and vocal
  - Unit 41 – Archie kills Austrian soldier in a fight 1917 – physical and psychological.
  - Unit 47 – Archie gets turned away from RSL – verbal.
  - Unit 49 – Archie asks station manager for better conditions – verbal

With a fresh perspective on equality and comradeship from his experiences at the front, Archie and a white digger try to enter a Pub/RSL for a drink after a march. The cellarman immediately shows that nothing has changed back home when offers entry to his mate but not Archie, despite the fact that he has ‘Got me tie on. Polished shoes. Presentable.’ The cellarman represents the old thinking – ‘you blokes aren’t welcome any other day’ – and his manner is aggressive, standing over them atop the rostrum and getting increasingly louder. Archie stands there incensed. He challenges him with his rights as a return serviceman and is eventually redeemed by the RSL secretary who proclaims ‘we don’ s see the skin, we see the service’ and lets them in.

Unit 47 – Archie gets turned away from RSL (screenshot from production video)
• Consider the following units as representative of much bigger conflicts:
  o Unit 1 – Robert Grant finds baby Nigel.
  o Unit 2 – Retired Schoolmaster encourages young blokes (ironic conflict)
  o Unit 54 – The letters.
There are so many in 64 units and 100 + characters.

It is also interesting to look where and how conflict is resolved, or indeed not there.

Find and analyse your own examples on all three levels.

• **Contrast** - Contrast presents the dissimilar or opposite in order to highlight or emphasise difference. Contrast can be explored in many ways and can include contrasting characters, settings, times, themes, elements, stagecraft and performance styles.

Contrast is often achieved in scenes that sit side by side in ‘Black Diggers’. It is many regards a strong aim to find contrasting examples in any question to highlight differences in characters, style, setting and especially the dramatic elements.

What form does the contrast take in the following units:
  • Unit 14 On the boat – contrast in style
  • Unit 17 Scouting scene – contrast in mood/audience expectation.
  • Unit 22 into 23 – contrast in place and mood.
  • Unit 32 – Laurie talks to British Captain – contrast in character status … and yet
  • Unit 59 – Nigel’s letter goes to the editor – contrast evoking dramatic irony and pathos

• **Mood** - Mood is the overall feeling or emotion that a performance can evoke. This may be achieved through manipulation of acting, conventions or stagecraft.
As suggested above, contrasting moods often achieve strong dramatic effect. Consider how mood can be achieved through the acting, stagecraft and both. It is often the layering of these that has greater impact, but, equally, a single actor alone on stage in a moment of stillness and silence, can have the greatest effect.

For the following units, analyse how the mood is established and maintained or changed:

- Unit 5 – Monkeys in the museum
- Unit 9 – Norm, Bob and Ern try to enlist a second time (1915)
- Unit 25 – Soldiers play I spy 1917 – a trench
- Unit 64 – Nigel in a wheelchair

As the play draws towards a close many elements combine to create a mood of sombre reflection. The cast are all soldiers in slouch hat, lines up against the back wall, heads bowed, still, holding rifles in front of them, a sign of respect. Except for one, who holds and plays a didgeridoo. This combined with the ensemble singing ‘Lest We Forget’ adds to a sense of reconciliation, of shared sorrow. Over the top of this comes a recording of Prime Minister Keating’s 1993 dedication to the unknown soldier. Uncle George wipes a cross onto the ochre walls stage left and stands back in a narrow beam of light that illuminates his face, a picture of contemplation. As he salutes the cross, Nigel is wheeled in by a nurse, tragically shivering, connected to a drip, barely hanging onto life. Their stories were unknown. Now we know.

**Rhythm**

- Rhythm is a regular pattern of sounds, words or actions. Performances can also have their own rhythm that can be influenced by the emotional nature of the plot, the pace of line delivery, the pace of scene transitions, and the length of those scenes and the dialogue within them.

Rhythm, as suggested by its definition can operate on so many levels:

- The rhythm of the play itself is certainly ‘scattergun’ as suggested by its playwright. Yet the tempo manages to shift all the time. Where are the points in the performance where the tempo shifts, ebbs or flows? Is this achieve through the acting or some other aspect to the production?
- The transitions assist in maintaining this tempo in what could become quite a fragmented performance. Look in the main table at how I have described some of the transitions. As a class, add more of your own. Describe two or three examples and how they maintain or reset the rhythm for the incoming scene. The world has turned upside down (screenshot from production video)

- Rhythm can be more patently heard in the songs or chants that are either central to or undercurrent the action on stage. List the units with song attached and describe the rhythm and mood of each one, alongside the action of the scene. Do they support each other?
- Rhythm can exist within a dialogue or indeed a monologue. Consider the following for the rhythm the actor imbues it with:
  - Unit 4 – Harry and Mate watch recruitment – ironic rhythm
  - Unit 9 – Norm, Bob and Ern try to enlist a second time (1915) – comic rhythm in both the three boys and the army officials.
  - Unit 27 – Ghost – a detailed study in varying rhythm.
  - Unit 26 – Frank’s death – Bertie – rhythm in repetition.

- Sound - Sound is created by the performer through the possible use of voice, body percussion and objects to create an effect in performance and enhance meaning. Sound may include silence or the deliberate absence of sound.

Closely allied to rhythm, sound here is considered as a tool of the actor, not the stagecraft. Consider moments across the production when the voice captured more than the words themselves; when alone or as part of a group, added to the meaning within the scene. This can happen in naturalistic and non-naturalistic ways:
- Unit 39 – Bertie is discharged – what is the impact of the chorus of voices chanting ‘Lazarus’ beginning here?
- Unit 11 – voice from an old newsreel – what does the accent and megaphone do to our understanding of the scene?
- Unit 31 – Aunty May letter #2 – how does the singing of ‘Our God, our Help in Ages Past’ contrast with Archie’s voice and the content of the letter?

- Space - Space involves the way the actor/s use/s the performance area to communicate meaning, to define settings, to represent status and to create actor-audience relationships. This may be achieved through the use of levels, proximity and depth. The use of space may be symbolic.
Given the number of scenes and settings, the use of space in ‘Black Diggers’ was critical to meaning and understanding. The set was basically a black box with a long rostrum running through the middle, and few set pieces – the ‘eternal drum’, trestles, ammunition boxes, a chair or two, and the assorted painting materials. Gaps in walls provided entrance and exit points while the walls themselves were inscription points (Brechtian signosts) for time place and character. It was the blocking of actors and their use of the space that defined so many settings and added to the mood and meaning of each scene. It is hard not to discuss the set when discussing the use of space. Ensure if it about the dramatic element that your attention is on how the actor uses it, more than what it offers the actor. Almost every scene invites discussion on the use of space:

- Get the class to break up the scenes and work in small groups titling, illustrating and annotating simple diagrams for each one. Put these up on the walls as triggers to remembering every scene. Consider actor placement, movement, relationships, other stagecraft, overall effect.

Full expanse of stage creates a greater sense of space - used for many of the outback scenes (prod. video screenshot)

- A more active approach can be to create ‘picture postcards’ for each scene. One or two good illustrators draw each scene while the rest of the class build postcards of each scene – three dimensional arrangements. Students go out one by one and indicate who or what they are and how they are manipulated. Do this quickly and move onto the next, but ensure they capture more than just the placement.

- Here are some good units to get them going and be the focus of a written task. Describe how the actors and director have used space to effect the ideas after each one.
  - Unit 5 – Monkeys in Museum (1895) – arrangement of actors in the space
  - Units 6-10 as a sequence – Ern, Bob and Norm enlisting – how time and space sequences, split focus, and comic effect
  - Unit 14 – On the boat – creating time and space – the boat – then pulling us out of it into a moment – Laurie.
  - Unit 18/25 – Nigel jumps in with the wrong battalion (1917 – Bullecourt) – establishing place and changing mood
  - Unit 23 – Bertie wants to enlist 1917 – Frying Pan Creek NSW. – use of whole stage – sense of space.
  - Unit 33 – Nigel talks to Indian POW 1917 – Zossen POW camp – arrangement in the space – creating atmosphere.
  - Unit 48 – Farmer scene – manipulating space for status and intimidation.
  - Units 62-62 – building multiple layers into a single space.

- Symbol - Symbol is used to create meaning that is not literal. Symbol allows performers to communicate ideas and themes through words, stagecraft and expressive skills.
Symbol is tied to many of the themes in ‘Black Diggers’. As indicated, it can be in a word, a gesture, a prop, a sound, a colour, a light. More often than not, it becomes symbolic because it recurs in the performance, or reminds us of some prior event in the narrative.

Consider the following themes. I have in some cases offered specific examples or units to recall. Otherwise invite the class to consider how that theme was symbolised across the production:

- **The importance of the land – at home and abroad:**
  - Now it’s all fences, ... but this is about a bigger world ... Bertie to Grandad unit 23
  - We’ve been fighting for country for a long time ... Grandad to Bertie Unit 23
  - Ern in the trenches - ...we gain another cricket pitch worth of Belgium, the horn blows, they chase us out (unit 25)
  - Bertie at the death of Frank (unit 26) – All these elms and oaks and that ... we don’t know the names of any of them. And when they burn the smoke is different and it will lead him in a different way.
  - Unit 27 – the ghost – sections across the monologue.
  - Grandad to Bertie – land here and the land there – parallel – unit 55
  - Ern (old soldier) – and the iron harvest – bits of metal that are forgotten and rise to the surface ... unit 61 – link to war, the land, remembering ..

- **The colour of your skin**
  - If you can fire a gun and stand in the sun they might forget you’re ... (major blows a whistle) & Unit 13 – Yeah, can’t put my finger on it. Like they’ve forgotten you’re – (flash)
  - ‘substantially European’ – Unit 9.
  - Newsreel – unit 11
  - Maybe he thought I had better camouflage in the dark. – unit 17
  - ‘Bastards said I didn’t wash’ – Mick – Unit 21
  - They have Africans in Australia – Indian POW to Nigel – unit 33
  - This one’s not getting any cleaner - sapper about Harry after they unearth him – unit 37.
  - Black Devil ... with white eyes ... last thing I see (translation) – Austrian soldier (unit 41)
  - We don’t see the skin, we see the service – RSL secretary to cellarman after refusing Archie entry (unit 47).
  - They painted my colour back on the day I got off the boat - Norm (unit 50)

- **The evolution of man**
  - Monkeys in the Museum – actors play stuffed exhibits ... dialogue.
  - Unit 22 – Was auf der Erde bist du?
  - But he hasn’t got a face Aunty May ... Archie’s 2nd letter – unit 31.
  - You speak English well - Nigel to Indian POW unit 33
  - Unit 36 – measuring Nigel’s cranium - ... what is noble and what is weak
  - Tarzan. At the Empire. Tarzan. Ape Man! Nigel with sandwich board – unit 59.

- **Names**
  - Enlisting – units 7 & 9
  - Unit 18 – nicknames in the trench – Judge, Darkie ... reconsider this.
  - Unit 52 – eulogy for Tank Stand Tommy ...
  - Keating afterward – dedication at the tomb to the unknown soldier ... leads into final sequence – Unit 63/64

- **The equalising and impact of war**
  - ‘here in the shit, every face is brown.’- The world’s turned upside down
  - Seen hundreds of bodies. This is the first one that looks like me (Bertie at Frank’s death – unit 26)
  - Warrior blood in my veins – Mick in unit 28 after massacre of German soldiers.
  - Curse war, but bless it, for it brought me into the fold. Man with glass (unit 42)
  - Noone cares what bloody colour you are you useless bastard, get on with it ...And when they called me mate they meant it – Norm (unit 50)
• What happens to the dead?
  o Unit 1 - Taxidermist (to picaninny) — Back from the dead, if only you knew it (foreshadow)
  o Unit 26 – whole scene – cutting a part of his hair.
  o Unit 27 – the ghost – whole monologue... and I’ll be here till everyone’s forgotten everything that has happened and the dirt goes back to being just dirt.
  o You’re like Lazarus - -- sapper to Harry after they unearth him – unit 37.
  o Laurie, back from the dead. So, what was it like? – Laurie’s mate to him on demobbing (unit 45)

• Change
  o The world’s turned upside down – units 15 & 16
  o Harry on going home – All I hope is that it’s changed - unit 24
  o Maybe the folks will be different. But the land stays the same. Norm on returning home – unit 35
  o Now let’s make sure things don’t go back to the way the were, eh? Mick to Archie on demobbing – unit 44.
  o For you the war is over. What’s starting to dawn on me is that, for us, it’s never going to bloody end. Mick (unit 48)
  o The only thing that’s changed around here is you – Old hand to Archie – unit 49
  o A bridge. ... I said we don’t need a bridge, the world’s changed - Norm (unit 50)
  o ... even when the fires had been through, the little green shoots came up everywhere. ... but that’s all lost now – Grandad to Bertie (unit 55)

• Beliefs
  o Archie’s first letter – unit 12
  o Laurie’s psalm – unit 14
  o Lord’s prayer for Frank unit 26.
  o Our God, Our Help in Ages Past – unit 30
  o Exchange between Lurie and British Captain – Unit 32
  o Archie’s third letter – unit 38 – lost faith.
  o Lazarus (lyrics) – why did they put you in to that tomb? (war)
  o Bound for the Promised Land – unit 51
  o Laurie to churchgoer – unit 57.
  o Lest we Forget – unit 62

• Letters and papers –
  o Note all the different occasions where letters or documents symbolise colonial bureaucracy, oppression, authority, or protest.

• Tension - Tension is the suspense that holds an audience’s attention as a performance unfolds. The release of tension can have a comic or dramatic effect.

Tension crosses over so many elements and is integral to any narrative. Conflict, climax, mood, rhythm and sound are each allied to the level of tension in a scene. Spatial arrangements heighten the tension between characters. Contrast is inevitably a comparison between two moments and the inherent differences in tension. While there is tension there is interest. Across the narrative that tension tightens and relaxes. These are often directly related to drama and comedy but not always (black comedy can raise the tension stakes more).

Think about the production and identify key moments of dramatic and comic tension. Inevitably these will be the moments that impacted upon you most as an audience member; the memorable ones where you laughed out loud, held your breath or sighed with despair.

Once you have the moments, discuss how that tension was built, held, and /or released in each one

Here are some to get you going (by now you should be combining expressive skills, performance skills and other elements into your answers):

• Unit 17 – Scouting scene (1917 Passchendale)
• Unit 20 – White soldier realises Ern is Aboriginal 1918.
• Unit 21 – Mick punches out racist Trinidadians 1917 – Ypres.
- Unit 26 – Frank’s Death.
- Unit 41 – Archie kills Austrian soldier in a fight 1917 – Messines.
- Unit 46 – Bertie gets off the boat.

Note how as you complete each one of these they become highly integrated: they are the core ingredients to your theatrical cake mixed in different ways for different tastes. As you prepare for your SAC or the final written examination aim to find the examples that you can use because they capture assorted elements, allowing your response to be more complex, detailed and engaging.
Black Diggers and Stagecraft

Set

Wesley Enoch suggested Stephen Curtis’ set gave him a ‘box of memories’. Indeed it is a metaphoric space, not a literal one, and also quite a Brechtian way of dressing the space. Critical to this was the walls, a place where dates and the names of people and places could be inscribed across the show. The most effective materials for painting ended up being ochre for its malleable, wet and dry quality. What else is ochre used for and how does this relate back to the play?

How many inscriptions can your class recall?

Half way through they will ‘obliterate it all, ‘whitewash’ it. What can we interpret this to mean? What is happening at the same time in the narrative arc?

The eternal flame sits in a drum that lights the way through the show. It is symbolic reminder of us to remember – ‘lest we forget’: what does putting it in the 44 gallon drum add in the way of meaning? It is also a place where we gather and share stories. Does the flame go out?

The rostrum provides the stage with levels as well as unique spaces, corners, behind and in front, most significantly as the trench where these soldier will pass their days. How else do the actors define different places through their arrangement in the space?

Aside from this simple set pieces emanate from the world of the play: trestles, table top, ammunition boxes, a chair or two. Consider scenes where any of these pieces (including the drum) add to our sense of place or character.

Costume & Props

Costume appears to operate on two levels. First of all it brings an authenticity to the world of the play. More often than not actors change costume for contextual accuracy and characterisation. There are occasions when only a single piece of costume is added or subtracted in the actor’s transformation to another character. Similarly the addition of a prop will add accurate detail and support the action of the play. Look through the character table. Consider particular characters who are – in part – defined by what they wear. Are there occasions when they are set apart, or the opposite? Guy Simon talked of being ‘trained with real rifles how to aim and even how to put them down correctly (of course, in the actual production they use prop-rifles). Everything was made to look as authentic as possible.’ Discuss the use of the guns by different characters. Did the way they handled it tell us anything more about their character?
Makeup

In Indigenous culture the white ochre is symbolic of grieving. Describe how it is applied to the ghost and the other possible interpretations it could enhance.

Sound/Lighting

Sound and lighting combined most frequently to create the atmosphere of home and, more significantly, abroad in the heat of battle.

Lighting also helped to isolate characters and spaces, create intimacy, expanse, focus, and distraction.

Try and think about moments when lighting and/or sound fx enhanced the atmosphere of a given unit. The scene table has some examples to get you going.

The majority of tunes heard were of two types: the first had connections to missions and Christianity, as many enlistees were from there, going to holy lands. The second were passed down from different theatres of war but had some of the words changed to shifted perspective.

Look at the list provided in the theatrical conventions list and work out which was which. Consider how the mood of the music enhanced the mood of the scene. Did it always match?
THEATRE ETIQUETTE

Live theatre differs greatly from other medium such as film or television. For audiences, the experience of seeing a live performance differs to that of watching a pre-recorded one. For performers as well, working to a live audience is vastly different to performing in a studio to a camera.

What constitutes appropriate audience behaviour at a live theatre event?

Certain behaviour is expected of audiences at live theatre events. Please ensure that you observe the following;
Arrive on time. Missing the start of a performance will diminish your enjoyment and/or understanding of the piece. It will also disrupt the show for others.
Turn off any mobile phone, MP3 player or other electronic device. These are disruptive to the performance and distracting to audience members and performers.
If necessary, visit the bathroom prior to the commencement of the performance. Going to the bathroom during the performance disrupts the show for yourself as well as others.
A member of the front of house staff will usher you to your seats. Follow their directions.
When the lights dim, it is a signal to quiet down.
During the performance observe the following;
No photography
No talking
No eating food
Remain seated
Applauding or cheering is the most appropriate way to acclaim the performance and performing artists. Ordinarily this occurs at the conclusion of the performance.

All of the above are to ensure that you and other audience members get the most out of the production and your visit to the theatre.
Appendix 1 - Black Diggers – table of units

There are 60+ units broken into five parts:

- **Pre-Nation** – a reflection on the wars and experience of Indigenous people before nationhood
- **Enlistment** – the process of Indigenous men signing up
- **The Theatre of War** – the stories from the front as reported in journals, letters, official records and oral history
- **The Return** – the effects of returning and the expectations of both the men who returned and those they were returning to
- **Legacy** – what has been left behind for us.

Note – the character references in the draft of the script I had access to do not always seem to accord with stage action. Decisions may have been made to swap characters in certain scenes for various reasons (through-lines of action, management of characters and actors). Students and teachers should confirm this in their own viewing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Style/Conventions – acting is realistic unless otherwise stated.</th>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Stagecraft</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-show</strong></td>
<td>Standing around in small groups chatting. Some around 44 gallon drum. George Bostock arrives as signal to begin. He puts on slouch hat. They move across and watch as Nigel paints sign onto back wall – 1887 Nigel.</td>
<td>Actors as actors – out of role. Signposting – time and character established (both clues to Brechtian nature of production).* Don’t overstate this.</td>
<td>Symbol - 44 gallon drum – flames emanating – ‘the eternal drum’ - a gathering place – where stories are told.</td>
<td>See full description of set * Sound – woomera, winds, nature (mystical). Costumes – neutral pants and shirts (mainly collarless), many in bare feet .. Lighting – cool blues into blackness – night – emphasises the drum and dim light</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Transition** – sfx – two gunshots echo and galahs flying off, lights flash to gunshots, 3 actors snap to position – others run off
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit 1 – Robert Grant finds baby Nigel. (1887 Bellenden Ker, QLD)</th>
<th>3 men post ‘attack’ – small ‘picaninny’ (Nigel) left behind. About to be shot when taxidermist takes as ‘perfect specimen’ ... ‘Back from the dead if only you knew it’ – foretells what’s to come (Lazarus)</th>
<th>Acting is realistic. Language colloquial – ‘picaninny, humpy, itty ’... accents broad Australian, except for Professor with pronounced English accent (suggests white and educated).</th>
<th>Tension – immediate dramatic tension in narrative – the crying picaninny and what to do with it?</th>
<th>LX warm from SL (sunset/rise) SFX – gunshots and nature – birdsong Props – picaninny (rolled up grey blanket, imitation rifles (implied).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transition – Taxidermist - ‘...If only you knew it’ into Retired Schoolmaster – ‘I don’t know ...’ sign – 1914 painted ...</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 2 – Retired schoolmaster encourages young blokes. (1914 Somewhere on the Gwyndir)</td>
<td>Ironic scene as white schoolmaster berates young lads – ‘sitting on their backsides’ when invaders could have ‘over-ran our country, imposing their foreign ways ... ’ to which Harry in larrakin fashion responds sarcastically, ‘Yeah, imagine.’</td>
<td>Comedy – humour undermines topic and schoolmaster’s patriotic delivery and concern: “ far disatant lands over the horizon ... Dimboola? ... Further than that my friend ... Coonabarabran?”</td>
<td>Tension/contrast -</td>
<td>Set – with almost every scene one of the cast members paints a name, place, and/or date upon the walls of the set, in assorted sizes. Brechtian signposting of scenes also inscribes the set with meaning – it will eventually be ‘whitewashed’. See if students notice particular additions at given points/units.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition -</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 3 – Song – Sons Of The Southern Cross</td>
<td>Norm, Ern and Bob mocking on stage form into a march as they sing, waving off the retired schoolmaster – all bar he a bit tongue in cheek (‘We’ll be there’ as they laugh and wave him away).</td>
<td>Song – patriotic song for soldiers marching off to war – new lyrics to old tune?</td>
<td>Sfx – music – accordion + .. Costume – changes in caps and the like.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 4 – Harry and Mate watch recruitment Parade (1914)</td>
<td>Harry’s mate watches naively.</td>
<td>Comedy – irony - Harry’s mate is the unexpected font of knowledge – he knows the background to the war – language is historically accurate and the delivery is pacy, informed yet relaxed. First glimpse of Ern, Bob and Norm as comic threesome, seated together like the 3 brass monkeys.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 5 – Monkeys in museum (1895)</td>
<td>Young adopted Nigel is shown an exhibit of primates by his ‘Dad’ and questions his own ancestry, immediate and beyond. Nigel’s questions take us back to scene 1 Theme – how are we connected?</td>
<td>Tableaux on the rostrum – the actors play the primates, posing in an array of levels and positions. Father and son operate in a corridor of light in front. Young Nigel is naïve and inquisitive with his high pitched questions, his body a perfect L shape on the ground as his hands draw circles on the floor and other more insecure actions. His father moves around with strong</td>
<td>Lx - Blue exhibit downlights on specimens – pools of shadow and mystery. Sfx – distant sounds create a sense of mystery.</td>
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</table>
posture (a more developed species) and educated, deep and resonant voice.

Transition – ‘Were they scared?’ – Nigel’s challenging question is met with silence. The primates all slowly come to life and move towards him, before a sudden scare, followed by laughter. Everyone one moves off casually. Ern, Bob and Norm place one leg each up onto rostrum to snap scene to life. Scenes 6-10 flow into each other with minimal transition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit 6 – Norm, Bob and Ern in pub (1916 Boundary Hotel Brisbane)</th>
<th>The three lads share out their few coins – post protectorate - and wonder on the financial benefits of signing up.</th>
<th>Style is realistic with a light comic touch. Norm’s responses in three liners set up comedy of naïve ignorance …</th>
<th>Light accordion in background keeps mood light.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit 7– Norm, Bob and Ern try to enlist (1915)</td>
<td>Recruiting sergeant and corporal go through the motions with Ern before rejecting his effort to enlist</td>
<td>Acting - Corporal and Sergeant are light hearted – not that fussed about whether they are black or white, but there are rules.</td>
<td>Tin whistle, accordion occasional horns and snare drum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 8– Norm, Bob and Ern read rejection forms (1915)</td>
<td>Next (whistle) … Lads look at reasons for being rejected … of strongly aboriginal appearance flat feet, no white parentage</td>
<td>Brief segue to next scene</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 9– Norm, Bob and Ern try to enlist a second time (1915)</td>
<td>Second attempt to answer assorted questions in next town. Army officials discuss merits of including blacks and go with it.</td>
<td>Simple circuit of stage by threesome before re-entering new scene. Implied new town. Split focus – assorted army officials meet</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 10– Norm, Bob and Ern go for a medical (1915)</td>
<td>Ern, Bob and Norm line up and answer questions with help of recruiting sergeant</td>
<td>around the drum – exaggerated gestures – staring back at boys, use of books. Ern, Bob and Norm stand in line – opportunity for comic three line set-ups -</td>
<td>Boys strip down and go through medical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 11– Voice from an old newsreel (1915)</td>
<td>Newsreel voiceover emphasises the inherently British White patriotism – littered with irony to the indigenous Australian.</td>
<td>Actor stands on ladder SR with hand to ear as if recording. Language and accent is overtly educated, British, white and patriotic. Irony is manifest. Nasal but clear diction.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 12– Dear Auntie May #1</td>
<td>Short letter writing excerpt from Archie as soldier before departure – reference to Christian faith and memories of home.</td>
<td>Simple, personal, actor voices the words he writes. DSR, he leans against wall in a small pool of light.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 13– Norm, Bob and Ern pose for a photograph (1915)</td>
<td>Fragmentary scene as boys in uniform pose for portrait photograph. Discuss change in attitude that comes from wearing uniform ‘clobber’:</td>
<td>Ensemble all pose in small group – Ern Bob and Norm CS. More larrikin humour – ‘they’ll think we’re the police.’</td>
<td>Language – avoid the a-word (aboriginal) – ‘like they’ve forgotten you’re –’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 14– On the boat</td>
<td>Now group of soldiers</td>
<td>Actors move quickly but</td>
<td>Space transformation –</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Unit 15—Aggressive Soldier gets beaten up (Gallipoli) | on boat close to beach, under attack. As they land all but Laurie disperse. He recites from Psalm 23:4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death. Ironic final line: ‘If you’d told me I’d be in a boat arriving uninvited on someone’s beach I would never have believed it.’ (sporadically into huddle, form a frieze – archetypal image. Lines are rapid-fire, as is landing and exit of all but … Laurie – in a single pool of light/sfx – heightened moment (poetic language and still pose) in time– looks to heavens as he prays. Then drops back into natural speech patterns for ironic last line – as others re-enter and establish next scene dispersed group become single huddle CS staring in all directions = boat under attack. But, group is compact = unified. Mood = dangerous/before ominous. Contrast – noise and movement interrupted by moment out of time – stillness, almost silent but for the prayer. turns to blue. SFX – series of explosions – overwhelming SFX – deep resonant sound creates ominous undercurrent to Laurie’s prayer. Costume – all in uniform now – we are at war. | }

| Unit 16—Song – The World’s Turned Upside Down | Soldiers assemble as one CS and sing ‘The World’s Turned Upside Down’. Chorus of soldier sing boisterously ... as one. Echo of 14 in arrangement but mood | |
| **Unit 17—Scouting scene (1917 Passchendaele)** | Three soldiers scouting at night, two white and one black. Conversation highlights preconceptions of white view of blacks: ‘I thought youse blokes could see in the dark … have a fifth sense … pick up special skills from your wise old blokes.’ | Comic scene in Laurie’s responses to their black expectations – *Nah that’s rabbits … I grew up in Camberwell … maybe he thought I had better camouflage in the dark.* | Despite situation **mood** is light. Racial tensions have gone despite comments. | SFX/LX – transforms scene from day to night, festivity to danger. |

| **Unit 18 – Nigel jumps in with the wrong battalion (1917 Bullecourt)** | Night - Nigel asks to join group of white soldiers having lost his own battalion. He removes helmet and they see he’s black. ‘You’re a long way from home’. Introduced to all other soldiers. Transforms directly into ... | Realistic, tinged with larrikin humour in names: *(as he meets ‘Darky’- ironically the whitest of the actors): In light of recent reinforcements we may have to reconsider this.* Potential racial tension is quickly eased by comradeship. | Space – this becomes a repeated spatial motif – the trench. But mood shifts with each return. | LX – night-time blues. Intimate warm light within trench. Distant SFX – assorted war sounds and nature. Prop – lantern and rifles. |

<p>| <strong>Unit 19 – Song – Sandy Maranoa (1918 Villers)</strong> | They all begin to sing in the darkness ... | Singing is part of the world of the play – it is | Mood is quiet. Lyrics suggest the storm that is | Subtle LX shift. |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Bretonneux)</th>
<th>Sandy Maranoa tells of ‘Happy drovers’’ life back home. Verses interrupted with call to ‘prepare to move out’. Soldiers gradually rise, equip themselves and move out.</th>
<th>for them, not us. Soldiers do this to raise spirits, as they fix bayonets for battle, but it is not convincing. Voices are pensive, wary. Movements are patient, tired.</th>
<th>to come. Far from heading into ‘sunny NSW’, the future suggests impending tragedy.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Transition – as soldiers exit voices peter out, leaving two soldiers in front of eternal drum singing last lines – song links one to the next. ‘Love that song.’</td>
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<td>Unit 20 – (White Soldier realises Ern is Aboriginal 1918)</td>
<td>Ern meets white soldier Perce Hourigan. They are from same place but it is only when Ern lights a cigarette that Perce sees ‘Your old man took his belt to mine a few times,’ but Perce assures that if they get home you’ll be walking into the front bar, mate.</td>
<td>Realistic. Two soldiers. Still. Small gestures and glances reveal the changing relationship between black and white. Voices: Ern’s tone is tinged with sarcasm, Perce’s with bush naivety (‘Strewth … don’t worry about that!’)</td>
<td>LX – dark – important for ‘reveal’. Backlighting from drum adds to darkness of faces. Prop – cigarette lighter/match lights up face.</td>
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<td>Unit 21 – (Mick punches out the racist Trinidadians 1917 – Ypres)</td>
<td>Group of Australian soldiers, including Mick, share the space with other coloured soldiers – West Indian ammunition holders. They bait Mick with racial taunts, who cuts loose and punches up the lot of them. ‘Bastards said I didn’t</td>
<td>Characters defined strongly with WI accents. ‘He’s quiet mon … They slow them Australian niggers.’</td>
<td>Space. Two groups SL &amp; SR – ends of the rostrum. Like a boxing ring, they step in and invite Mick to fight. He finally succumbs, enters and brawls.</td>
<td>Props - Ammunition holders handling assorted crates. Bombs and gunfire start up again to break scene - (symbolic).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 22 – (Nigel is taken POW 1917-Bullecourt)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Scene</strong></td>
<td><strong>Conflict</strong></td>
<td><strong>LX and SFX</strong></td>
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<td>Nigel – as the shortest (not blackest) – is sent to retrieve field set but is caught by German soldier – ‘Was auf der Erde bist du? (What on earth are you?).’</td>
<td>Scene is dangerously real. Nigel’s final response to being caught seems typical larrikin – ‘Oh bugger.’ Undercuts consequences.</td>
<td>Conflict is external – danger surrounds Nigel and others. Dialogue is spasmodic.</td>
<td>LX and SFX and smoke add to war zone – flashes and explosions. Builds tension.</td>
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**Transition** – SFX of Kookaburras and galahs followed by LX transition from cool blues to warm straws. Nigel and German walk out USL through this as Bertie and family enter DSL. We are back home.

<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Unit 23 – (Bertie wants to enlist 1917 – Frying Pan Creek NSW)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Acting</strong></th>
<th><strong>Family conflict</strong></th>
<th><strong>SFX</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Out on a mission, Bertie, only 15, wants to join up. Mum is cynical – <em>Suddenly you’ll be a man, and a white one at that? That doors will open for you?</em> Grandad’s cynical interjections don’t help. Bertie wants to ‘be a fighter too’. Despite her protestations, his mother knows she has ‘already lost him (you)’ and lets him go.</td>
<td>Acting – strong battle of wills and generations. Bertie is wide-eyed, energetic, positive, bouncing round the stage as he takes on every retort from Mum and Grandad. Mum played by male – simple maternal gestures – folding blankets, touching her son’s face – open eyes and softened voice sincerely capture internal struggle to keep her son. Grandad sniggers and mumbles his bent backed ways with his comical quips – ‘we been fighting for country for a long time … Mum - you been hanging</td>
<td>Family conflict is played out in front of us. We see internal and external struggles of mother and son. Space – Bertie bounces around like an electron, owning CS, as his Grandad sits SR and his mother works away SL. Climax – ‘So you’ll write it anyway?’ – silent moment as mother and son stare at each other and defeated decision is made. Language – What’s palaver? Speak the King’s English. Grandad’s exit speaking his</td>
<td>SFX – birdsong – Australian landscape. Props – Mum and washing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 24 – Soldiers talk about going back home 1917 – Polygon Wood</td>
<td>Mick and several white soldiers discuss life after the war. Foreshadows key theme to Act 2 – ‘All that I hope is that it’s changed.’</td>
<td>Acting – understated, personal. Few demonstrative gestures. ‘You’re as good as a white man, Mick.’</td>
<td>Space – DSR against wall – intimate -</td>
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<td>Unit 25 – (Soldiers play I Spy 1917 – A trench)</td>
<td>Trench – ‘languid’. Passing time. Soldiers play eye-spy: moon, munition case, mud, mortar, matchbox! Ern talks of meaningless of it all – ‘we’ve moved 7 feet since April’. Captain stands and heads out of trench on ironic ‘Bulls-eye’ and is killed</td>
<td>Acting – realistic, postures are all weary, collapsed, flaccid. Game and conversation are interspersed. Voices are tired. Ern is cynical but lacks conviction. Shooting – heightened moment – LX/SFX highlight Captain as he poses for a moment before collapsing …</td>
<td>Mood – ‘languid’ Space – return to trench motif – now more exhausted, more splayed. One is upside down, one sleeps on his arm. Language – ‘Rather grow old than never grow old’ (play on Anzac oath). ‘It’s a stalemate, innit? Stale, mate.’</td>
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<td>Transition – Captain being shot becomes Frank being bombed. Assorted soldiers spread leaving Bertie &amp; Tommy. Strong LX &amp; SFX heighten magnitude of event.</td>
<td>LX/SFX for shooting at end – explosion, Blue downlight highlights Stan with sniper gunshot. Props – note how different soldiers carry their weapon. Bertie is often childish in the way he grips it.</td>
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<td>Unit 26– (Frank’s Death)</td>
<td>Bertie and Tommy are confronted by their first dead aboriginal soldier. They scramble over</td>
<td>Acting – realistic. Bertie, too young for this is traumatised. His voice is desperate, tremulous,</td>
<td>Conflict – external – two soldiers too young to know how to deal with the situation. Internal –</td>
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<td>Prop – Tommy cuts the lock of hair that Bertie will carry for the rest of the play.</td>
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<td>Sfx – sounds of home – chanting/didge.</td>
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what to do before Tommy cuts a lock of his hair while Bertie frets over how to get his spirit home. He begins native chant.

Theme – key discussion emphasises important relationship indigenous Australians have with the land.

snivelling, child-like, especially as he demands, ‘... we need to make sure he knows how to follow me, to get back, follow me on the ship, follow me on the train ...’ He moves erratically, in an edgy manner, as he calls out to the world (home?) and not just Tommy

confronted by a death so much more immediate ... the first dead one I seen.

Transition – Previous version – As Bertie recites Lord’s Prayer the others move off. Uncle George approaches the body of Frank. In a ritualistic/spiritual tempo of fluid movement, Frank rises and leaves with Uncle George MSL. At the same time the ghost crosses from DSL stepping with hauntingly slow steps to DSC. LX changes to focus in on the ghost. Bertie’s prayer continues over the beginning of the monologue, until the light fades.

New version – Body remains as Bertie chants (with sfx and others). Uncle George stands close and observes as others exit and body slowly rises – now covered in white ochre. Ghost steadies himself and moves DSC into light.

Unit 27– (Ghost Monologue)

7+ minute monologue by ‘your humble narrator’ tells the story of our unknown soldier (recurring theme). From shearing days and swollen rivers, ‘the big event sort of fell on top of us, didn’t it? Then he is crossing the Somme trying to get ‘a bit of bush, a wood you know?’ He finds himself in the heat of battle – ‘I had this hand around

Acting – direct address. Storytelling between one man and his audience. He barely moves from his spot. The emphasis is on gesture and facial expressions. His hands rediscover the gullets of German shoulders, the ‘quivers and forgetting’, the humble narrator. His voice is gentle, intimate. It too quivers

The focus is direct – his eyes seek out his audience, or occasionally into his own mind and soul.

Make-up – painted in white ochre – symbolic of the dead – it coats his helmet, his face, his hands and spattered on his uniform. It is earthy, wet and dry. He becomes whiter than white.

LX is a simple soft pool of warm light. Simple fade to black when the story is done.
some German gullet and you know this forearm has taken the wool of ten thousand sheep ...’ He is awarded a DCM – ‘The half-caste was rising in estimation.’ But he is ‘torn in two by a a shell that chose to land in my lap. A boy with his boots off ... arrive before you hear it, yeah?’ He was ‘splattered over that damp soil and specks of me dribbled back through the wood into the river ... But me, I’m moving ... I’ll be here till everyone’s forgotten everything that happened and the dirt can go back to being just dirt.

<p>| Unit 28– (Mick kills five Germans 1916-Poziers) | Mick and another soldier hold five prisoners. One bends down and Mick shoots. He then executes the rest. It is an ironic massacre. | Mick lacks conviction, shaking as he pronounces ‘Warrior blood in my veins’ trying to justify his actions. He stands, shaking, not even looking at what he has at time. It often gently questions his own details or to see if the audience also understands, feels. | SFX – gunshots. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit 29 – (Bertie watches Tommy get buried alive 1916-Poziers)</th>
<th>’Just the excitement. Long line of fighters. My ancestors./ ... what war did they win?</th>
<th>done.</th>
<th>Acting – neither coping – voices hysterical, childish – their movements erratic.</th>
<th>Sound – after the explosions and screams of Bertie we are left with silence. Contrast – George and the scene he watches and ... A hymn transitions us into the next scene.</th>
<th>SFX – relentless loud explosions and LX flashes and darkness capture the moment of Tommy being buried alive.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 30 – (Song – Our God, Our Help in Ages Past)</td>
<td>A field burial. As soldiers sing a hymn George CS sits and removes his slouch hat. Other soldiers stand still or paint on walls.</td>
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<td>Unit 31 – (Auntie May letter # 2)</td>
<td>As the hymn continues Archie writes another letter, this one far more graphic and horrific, echoing out that after Ollie Thomas shot himself ‘he hasn’t got a face’.</td>
<td>Archie slowly capitulates as he writes, voicing his words, capitulating on the final repetitions, his body, too, wilting.</td>
<td>Focus – Archie’s eyes take us into the memory of this horrific moment.</td>
<td>Intimate LX stage right.</td>
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<td>Unit 32 – (Laurie talks to British Captain 1917 – Beersheba Palestine)</td>
<td>Looking over the Holy Land, DSL, a British captain and Laurie share the view, their Both actors look beyond the audience to see Beersheba. There is a stillness to them both as focus – seeing the view, seeing the future, seeing each other and acknowledging.</td>
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<td>SFX – distant winds. Anthem follows. Costume – officer uniform, hat &amp; glasses.</td>
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<td>Unit 33– (Nigel talks to Indian POW. 1917 – Zossen POW camp)</td>
<td>At a POW camp for non-white prisoners a German soldier – through his megaphone – spouts negative propaganda about their colonial oppression. Around the warmth of the eternal drum Nigel talks to 3 Indian prisoners. The find their similarities and differences as subservient to the British colony. They find, ‘We are your comrades now.’</td>
<td>Context – accents, rapid speech (overlaid) and expressive hands provide Indian characters (archetypal – border on stereotype?) . The cold – all characters embrace and rub their bodies, step left and right, or warm hands towards the drum. Comedy – in the cultural exchange – ‘you speak English well’, ‘The same might be said of you.’ ... ‘They have Africans in Australia?’.</td>
<td>Contrast – themes of colonial oppression non-existent in previous scene.</td>
<td>Costume – head wraps and scarves suggest subcontinent characters. Eternal Drum becomes part of setting.</td>
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<td>Unit 34– (Bertie writes to his mother 1917)</td>
<td>As Bertie writes letter pleading for Mum to disclose his age and get him home, Uncle George – in contemporary dress – advises him ‘You need</td>
<td>Time is crossed – then and now plays out as George talks to Bertie. Bertie is still struggling, forcing his words out, a child who wants to come</td>
<td>Contrast – generational. Young and restless, over his head. Old and battle hardened, knowing.</td>
<td>LX – small warm light DSR.</td>
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**Black Diggers Appendix 1 – Unit Breakdown**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Unit 35– (Bob, Norm and Ern in hospital with disabilities 1918 – Abbeville / Infirmary)</th>
<th>to cover it. ... tell your mom not to worry. She’ll know to start worrying then.” He responds and uses the Nerrandera analogy.</th>
<th>home. George is sage in his delivery, a calm voice of support, experience.</th>
<th>Acting – realistic but the comic element of the trio is still there (albeit diminished in their suffering), with the exchange between deaf and blind and maimed – trying to get a cigarette or ‘Going home, not poem’.</th>
<th>Timing – comic timing in delivery between deaf Norm and Ern.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit 36– (Nigel gets his cranium measured 1917 - Zossen)</td>
<td>Like the three brass monkeys Ern is maimed, Norm deaf, Bob blind. They talk of returning home and how they will cope; of change (theme). ‘Maybe the folks will be different but the land stays the same.’</td>
<td>Acting – Nigel becomes a character that we sympathise for. His voice is gentle (echoes of the young Nigel), polite, civilised, despite everything implied by his circumstances. His body remains still, passive. Accent defines German professor</td>
<td>A/a relationship ..</td>
<td>Costume and props - cranial measuring devices - add authenticity to scene.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 37– (Tommy is excavated from his living grave)</td>
<td>Tommy – like Lazarus – is dug up alive after 3 days. As they try to clean him up one lightly quips, ‘This one’s not getting any cleaner’.</td>
<td>Acting – strongly physical as he is comforted and cleaned up, wiping his face as he is cradled. Tommy remains dazed – his face a picture of oblivion</td>
<td>Space – DSL – return to scene of bombardment.</td>
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<td>Unit 38– (Auntie May letter # 3)</td>
<td>Archie’s 3rd letter is a single Biblical quote and question: ‘And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. What does that mean?</td>
<td>Archie’s deterioration is manifest. He is collapsed, his voice one of defeat and hopelessness.</td>
<td>SFX – simple beat begins here. SFX -single tapping of a stick continues (rhythm) – an undercurrent bass sound gradually evolves.</td>
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<td>Unit 40– (Song - Lazarus)</td>
<td>Cat continue to paint and sing. One cast member DS sings the verse ‘Why did they put you into that tomb?’ (symbol) Stops suddenly on final note – snaps into …</td>
<td>Heightened scene as actors change the set and single actor sings directly to us – inferring - why were we sent to war?</td>
<td>Space – transformed – whitewashed – see notes from interview</td>
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<td>Unit 41– (Bertie killing Austrian soldier in a fight 1917 - Messines)</td>
<td>Berite attacks an enemy soldier and as he holds him, breaks his neck.</td>
<td>As prescribed in stage directions, Highly physical and realistic attack is bestial, desperate. Soldiers grunt and puff and roll and stab and struggle. The soldier, wounded,</td>
<td>Climax to the horrors built up over last 4 units. Stillness as perpetrator and victim stare at each other, before he dies.</td>
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<td>Unit 39– (Bertie is discharged) – moved from original version!</td>
<td>Discharging officer tells Bertie of his discharge but he does not respond – he lays there clasping dead Austrian soldier. Many of the cast ‘whitewash’ the names and dates and places on the walls (using ochre). They chant ‘Lazarus’.</td>
<td>Bertie DSC clasps the hair lock in his hand and mumbles (the Lord’s Prayer?). His focus is internal. He appears not to see or hear the DO. The chant builds and repeats .. leading into the hymn ...</td>
<td>SFX – discharging voice is amplified and delayed – taking it out of time and into head of Bertie.</td>
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| Unit 42– (Bloke with a glass of wine. 1952 – Glebe Town Hall) | Unknown speaker (on the death of Dave Sands – indigenous boxer) – It is after WWII and a self professed aboriginal pronounces the benefits of – not war – but being a soldier in it. ‘It grew us up.’ | Monologue – speech - direct address – audience as town hall audience. | Prop - Glass of beer - how we deal with war ... ‘and celebrate. 
Costume – cut of suit shifts us to 1952 |
| Unit 43– (Song – Tattooed Lady) | Singing on the boat – disembarkation - | Song – echoes of boat singing – chorus of men singing – more boisterous, vulgar, satirical. | Song |
| Unit 44– (Mick and Archie) | Final words between Disembarking - Series of... | | |

Black Diggers Appendix 1 – Unit Breakdown
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>get off the boat</td>
<td>black and white soldier mates– the past and the future short poignant scenes as war is left behind and peacetime existence back home is welcomed … but not for all. Acting is simple, realistic. Ern is left waiting but no one comes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 45– (Laurie gets off the boat)</td>
<td>Laurie is warmly received by a friend</td>
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<td>Unit 46– (Bertie gets off the boat)</td>
<td>Bertie is welcomed by Mum but he is not there.</td>
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<td>Unit 47– (Archie gets turned away from RSL)</td>
<td>Drum roll. RSL. Archie and another soldier are denied entry to RSL until the secretary welcomes them</td>
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<td>Unit 48– (Farmer scene)</td>
<td>Assorted farmers – black and white – argue with a public servant over the compulsory acquisition of land. Mick Dempsey questions whether there is aboriginal entitlement, but ‘this isn’t the same country as before the war’</td>
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<td>Unit 49– (Archie asks Station Manager for better conditions)</td>
<td>Archie and Manager argue about conditions for blacks. Archie’s mates also question his behaviour.</td>
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<td>Unit 50– (Ern talks about Nightmares)</td>
<td>After 49 … Ern tells Norm about his nightmare</td>
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<td>Unit 51– (Song – Bound For The Promised Land)</td>
<td>As they sing all the ex-soldiers write over the whitewash – the names of all the soldiers (ensure they are not unknown)</td>
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<td>Unit 52– (Tank Stand Tommy’s Funeral)</td>
<td>A minister speaks of Tank Stand Tommy – he had a name .. - a profanity taking refuge in a bottle – but then they found his service medals – he is the Lazarus we have seen</td>
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<td>Unit 53– (Pharmacy scene)</td>
<td>Ern passes on medals to RSL secretary (George)</td>
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| Unit 54– (Letters) | Harry, Bob, Norm, Ern, George, Laurie, Archie each pronounce their letters to the audience. | Direct address … One transitions to the next, words over riding each other, emphasising the endless number f cases. They are public declarations, protests, affirmations.  
To snare drum and minor piano.  
Subtle crossfade of single light from one to the next.  
Letters held out |
| Unit 55– (Grandpa with Bertie) | Grandpa talks to Bertie about the landscape after a fire, unaware of the parallel in Bertie’s head. The irrigation s the trenches. | Bertie – acting – distant focus on war landscape – parallel to Grandad and this land – eyes glazed, hands fidget with lock of hair, lips mumble ‘lord’s Focus.  
Wind (woomera) evening birdsong. |
The mother joins and sees her son ‘not coming back from the world of the grown-ups’. Some stuff just stays back there … The little green shoots … up from the bones … into trad. Language.

**Unit 56**– (Harry begs for money on the street)

| Harry and Stan – accidental meeting, memories, a few coins to We that are left grow old. | Harry’s delivery stumbles and mumbles, more colloquial – down and out. Stan – almost apologetic as he realises inequity of situation. | Costumes match status/affluence. |

**Unit 57**– (Laurie is recognised by Churchgoer)

| Laurie quickly denies a chance meeting with another soldier. Leave it all behind you. I like to stay in the light, not wander back into the dark |  |

**Unit 58**– (Nigel’s letter)

| Nigel narrates ‘good turn of phrase for a darkie’ letter ‘forget’ is brushed into the whitewash. | Reading letter to himself, as if to confirm the expression and clarity of meaning. | Well dressed in tie and red cardigan |

Transition - Editor Snaps letter from Nigel as he pronounces ‘This is good.’

**Unit 59**– (Nigel’s letter) Editor and subbies Pathos – return moment Contrast – rhythm and Prop – sandwich-board with Tarzan movie
<p>| <strong>goes to Editor</strong> | discuss the potential benefits of printing Nigel’s letter. Tragic irony of last line – ‘he must be doing alright for himself’ is contrasted with Nigel on street wearing Tarzan movie sandwich board, a tragic figure, drinking. | to Nigel – final apology to his Dad. Acting – Nigel – voice drawls on words, almost wailing ... childlike final cries, ‘Sorry Dad’. | upbeat manner of journalists contrast with laboured, defeated tempo of nigel. | poster. - humiliating |
| <strong>Unit 61 – (Ern’s Old Soldier monologue)</strong> | Ern, now older sits on a chair and tells us about reopening an old wound. Shell | Monologue – direct address. Acting – storytelling real. | | |
| <strong>Unit 62 – (Song – Lest We Forget)</strong> | Memorial service. Uncle George attends and honours the fallen. Song Lest We Forget is sung. A didgeridoo plays. Keating’s dedication to the unknown soldier is played. | Layered scene: Chorus of soldiers form a line of honour along back wall and sing. One plays a didgeridoo (others hold rifles in similar pose). Heads bowed in deference. Uncle George brushes a cross into wall SR and stands CS in respect. Keating’s speech played as voiceover. Nigel is wheeled into sun DSL by male nurse. | Focus – note shifts in focus with layers building. Space – building of space – collage of events - building to a climax. Mood – sombre reflection | SFX – Keating speech Sound – live didgeridoo and chorus. Costume – All in full uniform except Nigel and nurse: Eternal drum – out? |
| <strong>Unit 63 – (Keating) Afterword</strong> | | | | |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Unit 64– (Nigel in wheelchair)</th>
<th>Nigel is wheeled outside by a nurse.</th>
<th>Final dialogue – Nurse talks at surface level, while Nigel talks of things far deeper. Acting – Nigel’s aging tormented body sits weakly in chair, hand shaking, voice feeble. Nurse is relaxed, almost upbeat. They talk of service tomorrow with bugler = transition to final moment.</th>
<th>Manipulation of time through layering. Contrast – final two characters – young and old, experienced and not, then and now.</th>
<th>Costume: Nigel in identifiable red cardigan; nurse in casual contemporary clothes. Props – wheelchair and drip.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Last Post</td>
<td>A bugler SL plays the last post. Nurse takes Nigel’s shaking hand</td>
<td>Sound – silence between bugler sections. Climax – to the last blackout</td>
<td>LX – light fades down to isolate bugler, George and the cross. Down to George – who looks to us – and smiles. It is over.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit/Actor-character</td>
<td>Luke Carroll</td>
<td>Shaka Cook</td>
<td>Trevor Jameison</td>
<td>Kirk Page</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 1 – Robert Grant</strong>&lt;br&gt;finds baby Nigel. (1887 Bellenden Ker, QLD)</td>
<td>Hunter Page-Lochard (orig.)</td>
<td>Settler</td>
<td>Boundary Rider</td>
<td>Taxidermist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 2 – Retired schoolmaster encourages young blokes. (1914 Somewhere on the Gwyndir)</strong></td>
<td>Harry</td>
<td>Young bloke</td>
<td>Harry’s mate</td>
<td>Retired Schoolmaster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 3 – Song – Sons Of The Southern Cross</strong></td>
<td>Harry</td>
<td>Ern</td>
<td>Harry’s mate</td>
<td>Retired Schoolmaster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 4 – Harry and Mate watch recruitment Parade (1914)</strong></td>
<td>Harry</td>
<td>Ern</td>
<td>Harry’s mate</td>
<td>Bob</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 5 – Monkeys in museum (1895)</strong></td>
<td>Nigel (young)</td>
<td>Primate exhibits</td>
<td>Primate exhibits</td>
<td>Taxidermist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 6 – Norm, Bob and Ern in pub (1916 Boundary Hotel Brisbane)</strong></td>
<td>Ern</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Primate exhibits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 7 – Norm, Bob and Ern try to enlist (1915)</strong></td>
<td>Ern</td>
<td></td>
<td>Recruit sergeant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 8 – Norm, Bob and Ern read rejection forms (1915)</strong></td>
<td>Ern</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 9 – Norm, Bob and Ern try to enlist a second time (1915)</strong></td>
<td>Army official</td>
<td>Army official</td>
<td>Ern</td>
<td>Recruit sergeant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 10– Norm, Bob and Ern go for a medical (1915)</td>
<td>Assistant</td>
<td>Army doctor</td>
<td>Ern</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 11– Voice from an old newsreel (1915)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 12– Dear Auntie May #1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 13– Norm, Bob and Ern pose for a photograph (1915)</td>
<td>Soldier</td>
<td>Soldier</td>
<td>Ern</td>
<td>Soldier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 14– On the boat</td>
<td>Soldier</td>
<td>Soldier</td>
<td>Soldier</td>
<td>Sergeant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 15– Aggressive Soldier gets beaten up (Gallipoli)</td>
<td>Aggressive soldier</td>
<td>Soldier</td>
<td>Soldier</td>
<td>Soldier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 16– Song – The World’s Turned Upside Down</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 17– Scouting scene (1917 Passchendaele)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 18 – Nigel jumps in with the wrong battalion (1917 Bullecourt)</td>
<td>Nigel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 19 – Song – Sandy Maranoa (1918 Villers-Bretonneux)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 20 – (White Soldier realises Ern is Aboriginal 1918)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ern</td>
<td>Soldier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 21 – (Mick punches out the racist Trinidadians 1917 – Ypres)</td>
<td>Soldier</td>
<td>Soldier</td>
<td>Trinidadian</td>
<td>Trinidadian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 22 – (Nigel is taken POW 1917– Bullecourt)</td>
<td>Nigel (‘Snowy’)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 23– (Bertie wants to enlist 1917 – Frying</td>
<td>Bertie</td>
<td>Grandad</td>
<td>Mum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit</td>
<td>Scene Description</td>
<td>Character(s)</td>
<td>Role 1</td>
<td>Role 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Soldiers talk about going back home 1917 – Polygon Wood</td>
<td>Soldier</td>
<td>Stan</td>
<td>Mick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>(Soldiers play I Spy 1917 – A trench)</td>
<td>Captain, Bertie, Ern, Soldier, Archie, Laurie, Stan, Mick</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>(Frank's Death)</td>
<td>Frank's body, Bertie</td>
<td>Soldier, Tommy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>(Ghost Monologue)</td>
<td>Ghost</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>(Mick kills five Germans 1916-Poziers)</td>
<td>POW, POW, POW, soldier, POW, POW</td>
<td>Mick</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>(Bertie watches Tommy get buried alive 1916-Poziers)</td>
<td>Bertie</td>
<td>Tommy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>(Song – Our God, Our Help in Ages Past)</td>
<td>soldier, soldier, soldier, soldier, Archie, soldier, soldier, soldier</td>
<td>Soldier</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>(Auntie May letter # 2)</td>
<td>soldier</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>(Laurie talks to British Captain 1917 – Beersheba Palestine)</td>
<td>British Captain, Laurie</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>(Nigel talks to Indian POW. 1917 – Zossen POW camp)</td>
<td>Nigel, German Prison Guard, Indian POW, Indian POW, Indian POW</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>(Bertie writes to his mother 1917)</td>
<td>Bertie</td>
<td>Uncle George</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>(Bob, Norm and Ern in hospital with disabilities 1918 – Abbeville / Infirmary)</td>
<td>Ern, Bob, Norm</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>(Nigel gets his cranium measured 1917 - Zossen)</td>
<td>Nigel, Professor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>(Tommy is excavated from his</td>
<td>Sapper, sapper, Tommy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Black Diggers Appendix 2 – Character/Actor Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene</th>
<th>Characters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Living grave</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 38</strong>– (Auntie May letter # 3)</td>
<td>Archie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 39</strong>– (Bertie is discharged)</td>
<td>Bertie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 40</strong>– (Song - Lazarus)</td>
<td>Discharging officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 41</strong>– (Bertie kills Austrian soldier in a fight 1917 - Messines)</td>
<td>Ensemble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 42</strong>– (Bloke with a glass of wine. 1952 – Glebe Town Hall)</td>
<td>Man with a glass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 43</strong>– (Song – Tattooed Lady)</td>
<td>Ensemble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 44</strong>– (Mick and Stan get off the boat)</td>
<td>Soldier, Soldier, Stan, Mick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 45</strong>– (Laurie gets off the boat)</td>
<td>Laurie, Laurie’s mate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 46</strong>– (Bertie gets off the boat)</td>
<td>Bertie, Ern, Mum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 47</strong>– (Archie gets turned away from RSL)</td>
<td>Cellarman, Archie, First digger, RSL secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 48</strong>– (Farmer scene)</td>
<td>Farmer, Farmer, Farmer, Police constable, Farmer, Public Servant, Farmer, Mick Dempsey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 49</strong>– (Archie asks Station Manager for better conditions)</td>
<td>Mate, Manager, Archie, Old hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 50</strong>– (Ern talks about Nightmares)</td>
<td>Nigel, Subbie, Editor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 51</strong>– (Song – Bound For The Promised Land)</td>
<td>Ern, Ensemble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 52</strong>– (Tank Stand)</td>
<td>Minister</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

*Source: Arts Centre Melbourne*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Scene/Event</th>
<th>Character(s)</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>(Pharmacy scene)</td>
<td>Ern</td>
<td>RSL secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>(Letters)</td>
<td>1st letter 4th letter</td>
<td>7th letter 6th letter 3rd letter 2nd letter 5th letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>(Grandpa with Bertie)</td>
<td>Bertie Grandad Mum</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>(Laurie is recognised by Churchgoer)</td>
<td>Churchgoer Laurie</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>(Nigel begs for money on the street)</td>
<td>Nigel</td>
<td>Stan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>(Ern’s Old Soldier monologue)</td>
<td>Ern</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>(Song – Lest We Forget)</td>
<td>Ensemble as soldiers</td>
<td>Uncle George</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>(Keating) Afterword</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>(Nigel in wheelchair)</td>
<td>Nigel Psychiatric Nurse Ensemble as soldiers Uncle George</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>