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*Scattered Lives* is a contemporary Australian work that explores who and what is 'Australian'. Episodic in form, the play charts situations that have brought people to Australia from the 1950s to the present day. It juxtaposes 4th-wall naturalism with elements of Brecht and Epic theatre, including direct address. It provides a dynamic resource to explore the actor-audience relationship. With over 20 nominated roles, including Narrators who step in and out of the dramatic action, the play includes monologues, duologues, shared-stories and multi-character scenes.

*Scattered Lives* is a deeply researched AWGIE nominated play. Suitable for ensemble performance, it employs a range of performance styles from naturalism to non-naturalism. *Scattered Lives* is episodic in form. Major stories are laced together with verbatim grabs given directly to the audience. The verbatim sections are based on interviews from a range of refugees. Each of these verbatim sections feeds into the longer story it precedes.

*Scattered Lives* draws from the tradition of Epic theatre and Brechtian conventions, employing Brecht's alienation technique to great effect as the actors break through the fourth wall and make direct contact with the audience. This technique invites the audience to enter the work through objectivity rather than emotion. The actor-audience relationship is laid bare as the actors play Narrators who step in and out of the action. This creates a springboard for the students to analyse the actor-audience relationship.

Like Brecht's placards that announce an upcoming event, *Scattered Lives* includes 'audio placards', where the actors talk directly to the audience to announce and contextualise the next story. *Scattered Lives* is a political work with an underlying message aimed towards social reform. The work aims to portray the characters, based on the experiences of real people who have sought refuge in Australia, as having emotions and responses that the audience can relate to and, in doing so, illuminate the 'human' face of the refugee and provide an alternative picture of refugees to that sketched by the media.

The set is minimal and consists of several suitcases that are used as tables, seats and symbols of journey. Props are representative - a handbag for a mother, an apron for the shopkeeper, a bundle for a baby. The show begins with pieces of blank paper taken from a suitcase. These represent a person's story and are scattered around the performance area and referenced through out the show as the stimulus for the next story. The actors are highly experienced and adept at multiple role-playing. Manipulating rhythm, movement, vocal approach and tension, they effortlessly change character in view of the audience. Scenes are punctuated and supported by music and vision, which is delivered via an auto-cued DVD that plays from a computer, which, drawing from Brecht's influence, is operated in full view of the audience thereby exposing the mechanisms of theatre-making and working against the suspension of disbelief. Delivered via a projector, the screened images include a range of material from the actual Chilean rebellion referenced in the play to a series of images of refugees. They are projected onto a cream suitcase, which remains open during the entire performance.

... 'a deeply meaningful and moving piece of theatre'. Juliana Guinane, Kelvin Grove State College

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