



Director's note

There's a particular joy in being able to share this production of CUSP with you in 2023. It's rare for a director to be able to follow a play from the very first discussion with a playwright, through to sitting in the opening night of the finished production. In this case, CUSP's Sydney premiere fell afoul of the COVID closures of 2020. Our three-week season shut down in just three days. We got to see the script receive the accolades it deserved, but the production so clearly warranted a wider audience.

This play offers three beautifully drawn characters, each wrestling with decisions that will change their lives. It's a play about those thresholds in life that must be crossed in one form or another. While hopefully not too many of us will contend with the decisions these characters face, sooner or later we all get our moments of reckoning - those moments in our lives that leave us older, sadder, wiser. But these are the moments that make us the people we become.

Mary Anne Butler has crafted a play that offers a directing opportunity that is equal parts exhilarating and daunting. It is exhilarating in the colour and depth of the story. The language blends poetry and potent imagery with the slap of a teenage turn of phrase. But it is daunting because the language only flies if we genuinely feel for the characters, believe in their relationships, see the truth in their eyes. It is one thing to read the words on the page, it is another to find young actors with the confidence and clarity to bring them to life.

Though the world has changed since we first staged this production, I have no doubt it remains absolutely current. We had a school from Western Sydney join us for a day of rehearsals and the first comment from a student. "It's really powerful to see a play that has characters that we can relate to. It's like what we're dealing with, us or our mates." That is the power of a good play.

It has been a privilege to be a part of this exceptional Australian play's beginning.

Fraser Corfield

Fraser is a director, dramaturge and the Artistic Director of the national youth theatre company, the Australian Theatre for Young People (ATYP). With over 20 years' experience running youth arts companies he is recognised as a leader in the development and presentation of theatre with and for young people.

Fraser is a passionate advocate for new work and has commissioned and staged over fifty productions across theatre, musical theatre and opera. His work has challenged perceptions of 'youth theatre' in Australia, receiving the nation's highest awards for artistic excellence and securing a place for young artists alongside our flagship professional companies. His productions have been presented in every state and territory in Australia as well as the UK, Canada, South Africa, the USA and Japan.

Fraser regularly sits on industry panels and advisory groups for all levels of Government, Foundations, advocacy organisations and peak bodies. He lives in Sydney with his children, Eva and Dylan.