

THE YOUNG COMPANY THEATRE

PRESENTS

# HEADSTART TO HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM

THE PLAY:



*“A magical tale about friendship, love and the power of believing.”*

*Wishfly is a rare theatrical experience that will connect with young people currently transitioning into the high school environment. It provides participants with a sense of belonging and determination.*

## EDUCATION PACK TEACHERS NOTES

# CONTENTS

COMPANY PROFILE .....	3
ABOUT THE PLAY: WISHFLY BY DR JANE MODRIC .....	3
CREATIVE TEAM.....	4
CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS.....	6
CHARACTER STUDY (ROLES & RELATIONSHIPS) .....	7
SUPPORTING THE SIX GUIDING PRINCIPALS OF JUNIOR SECONDARY.....	7
SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING CONNECTIONS.....	8
TOP TWENTY QUESTIONS FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION.....	9
TOP TWENTY-FIVE CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES .....	10
SCRIPT EXTRACT.....	16
Q & A WITH THE PLAYWRIGHT .....	17
Q & A WITH THE CAST .....	18
VIDEO AND WEBSITE LINKS .....	19
REFERENCES .....	19
CONTACTS.....	19

## **A NOTE TO TEACHERS USING THESE TEACHERS NOTES**

All of the activities in this booklet have been created to be used post show. Please enjoy these activities and the show! If you have any questions about the notes, please feel free to email TYCs General Manager, Leigh Boswell: [gm@theyoungcompany.com.au](mailto:gm@theyoungcompany.com.au).

## COMPANY PROFILE

TYC is a multi-award winning, nationally recognized, professional Youth Theatre Company based in Far North Queensland that awakens children and young people's imaginations; inspiring a culture of true creativity. Our mission at The Young Company is to spark the imagination and fuel a sense of discovery in children and young people. We do this through innovative theatre for, by and with children and young people as well as a creative program of learning, in a welcoming and stimulating environment.

We create exceptional theatre experiences that educate, engage, challenge and inspire children, young people and their communities. We inspire generations to explore the wonder of their world and transform the way children and young people engage in and experience live theatre.

We reinterpret classic and contemporary stories for our time and also commission brave and relevant new writing. We are as ambitious as the young people we serve.

TYC is a not-for-profit organization that was established in 2009. It has become a regional beacon of professional quality theatre for, with and by children and young people. We engage our community and regional North Queensland in the power of theatre to enrich and transform the lives of children and young people

## ABOUT THE PLAY: WISHFLY BY DR JANE MODRIC

Duration: 50mins

Recommended Audience: Year 5 - 7

### *Wishing is Serious Business*

A magical tale about friendship, love and the power of believing. Lys and her Dad have moved to a new town, her mum's gone AWOL. Lys has no friends and to top it all off, she's about to start high school. Then she meets the very unusual boy next door and discovers that things aren't always as they seem and that it's how you look at things that make all the difference.

With a good friend and the power of imagination, the world is full of possibilities and you can make your own map to anywhere.

*TYCs General Manager and director of the work, Leigh Boswell explains why she is so excited about the play. "I love that the play explores the often unseen journey from primary school to high school and that it is based upon the true experiences of our regions young people, which often goes unheard in our social landscape. In 2014 we were lucky enough to hold a number of consultation workshops with young people aged 10yrs – 15yrs where they expressed their fears and anxieties as well as their dreams for the future. That's why I truly believe that this is a rare theatrical experience that will connect with young people currently going through the transition into the high school environment and provide them with a sense of belonging and determination."*

*Playwright of the new Australian work, Dr Jane Modric explains how she worked on developing the play from the consultation workshops. "TYC is a vibrant company intent on giving young people a real voice, and as the playwright, I intended to do just that; listen to what the kids had to say and, hopefully, express their stories in the most compelling and unadulterated way I could."*

## CREATIVE TEAM

**Playwright:** Dr. Jane Modric

**Director:** Leigh Boswell

**Dramaturge:** Peter Matheson

**Performers:** Michael Elliott, Evelyn McGuinness & Kane O'Rielley

**Set Designers:** Hayley Gillespie and Gio Douven

**Cinematic Design:** Markwell Presents - Steven Maxwell

**Sound Recordings:** Pegasus Studios - Nigel Pegrum

**Voice Overs:** Avril Duck and Grace Fuccilli

**Film/Documentary:** Ewan Culter

**Dr. Jane Modric [Playwright]** is TYCs Playwright in Residence and holds a PhD in Creative Arts (JCU) and a Master of Letters (CQU). Her first play 'Soph and the Real World' was produced by JUTE Theatre Company in 2013, and was written as part of JUTE's Enter Stage Write program. She has a background in music and song writing with two solo albums and a number of collaborations to her credit. Her research examines the creative process, and her interests lie in finding practical ways to enhance creativity in her own life and the lives of others. Jane has a long history with TYC, and worked on their most recent community cultural development project, Headstart, which transpired into the production Wishfly which was first staged in 2015 by both professional as well as young and emerging performers.

**Leigh Boswell [Director]** is the founder and General Manager of The Young Company. Leigh completed a Bachelor of Arts (Drama) and a Bachelor of Education (Secondary) at the Queensland University of Technology where she graduated with Honors, and continued on to study a postgraduate degree in Creative Industries (Arts and Cultural Management). She was an Executive Board Member at Backbone Youth Arts and Youth Arts Queensland in Brisbane, as well as JUTE Theatre in Cairns. Leigh has worked for organisations such as QPAC, deBase Productions, Brisbane Powerhouse, Metro Arts, Brisbane City Council as well as a number of youth arts festivals including Out of the Box, Stage X Festival, The Two High Festival, Visible Ink Festival, Sheila's Shorts and many more. She has been involved in drama education for the past sixteen years in both the United Kingdom and Australia. Leigh has worked with students from pre-prep right through to university level, where she was a tutor and lecturer at James Cook University in the field of Education.

**Michael Elliott [Performer]** is the Artistic Director of TYC and has been working for the company for the past seven years. After graduating high school, Michael studied a Bachelor of Creative Industries, majoring in Theatre at James Cook University. During his studies, he played a role in Louis Nowra's 'Summer of the Aliens' and worked on the Indie Season production 'Fools Freaks and Femme Fatales' at JUTE Theatre. In 2010, Michael joined the ensemble cast of Scott Wit's 'Macbeth' at JUTE Theatre and starred in Ben Ellis' 'Falling Petals' directed by Victoria Carless for Pop Robot. He has performed in numerous productions since a young age and directed over 130 productions for TYC, including the company's Mainstage Production of George Orwell's, '1984' and 'Animal Farm', 'Macbeth Re-Arises' by David Mence and 'Summer of the Aliens' by Louis Nowra. He has also recently participated in JUTE Theatre's Actors/Directors Program with nationally acclaimed theatre director, David Fenton as well as performed in TYCs first production of 'Wishfly' in 2015.

**Evelyn McGuinness [Performer]** is TYCs Production Manager and Associate Artist. She is currently studying Primary Education at James Cook University and has been involved with TYC for the past 5 years. Evelyn holds a Certificate III in Live Production, Theatre and Events, and has performed in Cairns Choral Society's, Legally Blonde and played a leading role in St Monica's school musical. She has also performed in, produced and directed numerous productions with TYC

including *Christmas Unwrapped*, *Neverland*, *Australian Horror Story*, *Animal Farm*, *The Experimental Conundrum* and many more. This year will see Evelyn perform in TYCs Theatre-in-Education production of *Wishfly* by Jane Modric and *The Grumpiest Boy in the World* by Finegan Kruckemeyer.

**Kane O'Rielley [Performer]** is one of TYCs Associate Producer's and has participated in TYC for the past five years and TYCs Teacher Training Program for the past two years. He is also apart of our Young and Emerging Mainstage Performance Troupe and our Advanced Acting Troupe Program, and Theatre Lab Program. Kane brings an enormous amount of technique and creativity to his classes. In 2015 Kane was assistant director and performed in 'High School Musical' at Trinity Anglican School, Cairns where he is also currently the Arts Captain. At the beginning of the year Kane performed in TYC Mainstage Production 'Wishfly' which also toured into local schools. Kane was also a NIDA Open graduate in 2015 and 2017 where he was tutored by Jo Turner and 'The Young Actors Residency' course lead by Garth Holcombe and Pip Edwards. Kane has performed and assisted in over 50 productions including TYC Mainstage productions of 'Animal Farm' By George Orwell and adapted by Shake and Stir, 'Between Us' by ATYP Young Voices Project (Cairns Festival 2016) and 'Lord of the Flies' by William Golding (Cairns Festival 2017).

## CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

### *Learning Areas:*

- The Arts
- Humanities & Social Sciences
- English,
- HPE
- Social & Emotional Learning

### *Key Themes and Issues:*

- Friendship
- Environment
- Regional
- Family Relationships
- Fear of the unknown
- Preconception
- Rite of passage
- Persuasive, Information and Narrative Texts
- Resilience
- Belonging
- Imagination

### *Possible Curriculum Descriptors:*

- ACPPS070
- ACPPS071
- ACADRR045
- ACELY1804
- ACHCS058

### *General Capabilities:*

- Critical & Creative thinking,
- Personal and Social Capability,
- Ethical Understanding

## CHARACTER STUDY (ROLES & RELATIONSHIPS)

### *LYS*

Lys is a young girl trying to come to terms with abrupt changes in her family life. As a result, her sense of wonder in the world has been lost. Lys is about to embark on her journey into high school and is worried about the preconceptions of this rite of passage. Her outlook on life is challenged when she meets Tom who is her opposite in every way and she begins to see a side of the world that she thought she would never see again.

### *TOM*

Tom is a boy filled to the brim with imagination. He is dealing with family issues and uses his imaginative creation of Wish-flies to escape. As the story progresses, Tom finds himself more and more frustrated that things in his life are becoming increasingly difficult. Tom begins projecting his frustration towards Lys' disbelief and in the Wishfly that has attached itself to Lys.

### *DEAN*

Dean is Lys' father who finds himself raising his soon-to-be teenage daughter by himself when his wife flutters off to India to find herself. Dean struggles with relating to Lys as she goes through multiple changes both emotionally and in her home life. Affected by a 'clumsy curse', Dean must find a way to adapt to his new surroundings whilst simultaneously discovering how to parent a young girl as a single father. Attempting to guide his 11-year-old daughter through the important rite of passage into High School, Dean embarks on his own journey to bond with Lys in any way he can.

## SUPPORTING THE SIX GUIDING PRINCIPALS OF JUNIOR SECONDARY

TYCs Headstart to High School Program supports the six guiding principals of Junior Secondary, while giving them a sense of belonging and support through the changes they face:

1. Assisting students to develop a **Distinct Identity** within the wider high school.
2. Assisting with **Quality teaching** in the area of professional development with Junior Secondary
3. Supporting **Student wellbeing** through drama. Exploring social and emotional needs of an outside situation/story provides students with an opportunity to express their concerns within a safe and secure environment.
4. Assisting with **Parent and Community Involvement** through presentations and connecting with a local youth theatre organization.
5. Supporting the process of student **Leadership** selection through identifying those students within the program.
6. Supporting students in exploring how the **Local decision-making** process works within a drama and community cultural development (Social and Emotional Learning) framework.

## SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING CONNECTIONS

TYCs Headstart to High School Program supports Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). By participating in TYCs Headstart to High School Program (The Play and The Workshop) students will develop their knowledge and skills necessary to:

- recognize and manage emotions
- develop care and concern for others
- form positive relationships
- make responsible decisions
- successfully handle the demands of growing up in today's complex society.

These skills can be a safeguard against bullying, peer pressure, disrespectful behaviour toward adults, dangerous risk-taking around sex, drugs, and alcohol and engaging with violence - all those negative behaviours that threaten a child's well-being and a school's orderly functioning.

Students with social skills and emotional awareness do better both socially and academically. They become attached to school and motivated to engage in their studies, work well with other children and demonstrate good citizenship, and handle both stresses and daily responsibilities more effectively.

**In a recent academic study at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville conducted by Professor Jay Greene, reported major benefits for students who attended live theatre. The researchers found that viewing live theatre productions leads to enhanced knowledge of the plot, increased vocabulary, greater tolerance and improved ability to read the emotions of others.**

For more information on this study please visit <http://educationnext.org/learning-live-theater/>

## TOP TWENTY QUESTIONS FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION

Please find below a number of questions which can be discussed post-show during class time:

1. Compare the characters of Lys and Tom. How are they different from each other? How are they similar?
2. If you could give each character a piece of advice what would it be and why?
3. What is a quest that you have been on recently?
4. Why do you think the playwright, Jane Modric, decided not to empower Lys save the tree?
5. The play uses a variety of intertextual references (the shaping of a text's meaning by another text), throughout the script itself and the soundtrack. Can you remember any of them? And how did they enhance the play's meaning?
6. What are some magical things that you believe in?
7. How did Lys' quest to save the tree distract her from the real world around her?
8. Why do you think Tom believes that curses can be resolved with ice cream remedies?
9. Do you think that any of the characters in *Wishfly* learnt to let go? Why or why not?
10. In the play, Dean says to Lys, "*Don't ever give up trying to stop the things you feel are wrong*". Have you ever given up trying to stop something that you felt was wrong? Or have you persevered? Why?
11. Are you the first person in your family going to high school? What are some of the things that your parents and other siblings have been going through at this time of transition?
12. Everyone in the play is experiencing a major change in their life. Why is the theme of change so important in this play?
13. What does the symbol of the Wishfly represent in today's society?
14. What does the symbol of the tree represent in today's society?
15. What do you think Tom meant when he said to Lys that she was, "*as bad as an adult*"?
16. Tom and Lys demonstrated a great amount of resilience in the play *Wishfly*. Discuss what some of the habits that build resilience (self-caring, reliability, planning, perseverance, compassion, courage, citizenship, managing emotions).
17. Why do you think that Lys was cautious to believe in Tom's wish-flies and ice cream remedies?
18. Lys says in the play that she had bullies in her last school. What are some examples of bullying behaviour?
19. The singer David Bowie is referred to in the play and is used throughout the plays soundtrack. Why do you think the playwright referenced him in the play?
20. The playwright refers to the philosopher, Henry David Thoreau in the play. Discuss the following quotes and what they mean to you:

***Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have imagined.***

***It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see.***

***This world is but a canvas to our imagination.***

## TOP TWENTY-FIVE CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

### ACTIVITY ONE

#### *The Life Continuum!*

Ask students to stand in a horse shoe shape. Place a better sign at one end of the room and a worse sign at the other end of the room. Explain to students that this is a continuum. When you say a word or phrase, you want students to stand on a position along the continuum that represents how strongly they feel. For example: If you say the word LIFE, students who think their life will be better at school will stand close to the top of the continuum near the 'Better' sign while those who aren't sure about what will happen to their life will stand towards the middle of the continuum, half way between the signs, and those that think their life will be worse, will stand more towards the 'Worse' sign. Ask students to explain why they are standing in the position they have chosen. Students can change their position while listening to others.

Some suggested words for the continuum activity: bullying, canteen, teachers, subjects, friendships, enjoyment, sports etc.

**NOTE:** For hesitant groups, you could start the group off by asking their opinion on how Lys may be feeling in her new school, and then transition into their own feelings.

### ACTIVITY TWO

#### *The Greatest Teacher For Me!*

Ask students to think about who would be the best teacher for them. Either by themselves or in pairs, ask students to rate the words from most important to least important. Explain that there are no right or wrong answers. It is their opinion. Ask students to present their opinions to the group.

Suggested words: Fair, Organized, Smart, Positive, knows your Name, gives short instructions, good discipline, friendly, fun, persevering, understanding, kind, cool, firm, good sense of humor, talks to students, helpful, answers questions, gives clear instructions, tells you how to do things better, encourages students, laughs, speaks to people by themselves, asks questions.

### ACTIVITY THREE

#### *Mapping Activity!*

Tom and Lys lived on the same street. Their mothers also lived on the same street growing up! Design a map of your local area and ask each student to stand in the spot where they live. Describe something special about their street or neighborhood. Then move to where students participate in after-school activities and describe something about it to the class. Then move to their favorite place in Cairns and describe why they selected it.

#### **ACTIVITY FOUR**

##### *The Newspaper Article #1*

You have been asked by the Cairns Post to interview Dean (Lys' dad) for a newspaper article about high school. Answer the following questions, in role as Dean:

- What were the three things you liked best about high school?
- What were the three things you found most difficult in high school?
- What are the three questions you would like answered about your Lys' new school?
- What do you think will be the biggest difference now that Lys is in high school?
- What is your biggest wish for Lys?
- What important things did you learn at school?

#### **ACTIVITY FIVE**

##### *Diary Entry!*

Lys uses many different avenues to express her emotions in the play *Wishfly*. Using the information you can recall and gather, create a diary entry, as Lys, describing your thoughts and feelings about heading into the first day of High School as well as recounting your own actions throughout the day.

#### **ACTIVITY SIX**

##### *Script Writing!*

The Philosopher Thoreau uses the phrase, "*Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have imagined*". Use this quote as a starting point to write your own short scene between two good friends.

#### **ACTIVITY SEVEN**

##### *Newspaper Article #2!*

Design and create the front page of The Cairns Post describing the strange encounters and events that have occurred throughout the region which have been caused directly by the Wish-flies.

#### **ACTIVITY EIGHT**

##### *Recipe for Friendship!*

Tom believed that there was a special recipe to get a wish-fly. He believed you had to wear some sort of hat and click your fingers. What if none of your friends from primary school are going (have gone) to your secondary school? Can you plan to make friends? How did you first make friends when you went to primary school? What things help you make friends? In pairs, make up a fun-filled-recipe for making friends while staying true to yourself.

### **ACTIVITY NINE**

#### *Symbolic Drawing!*

a) In the play, *Wishfly* by Jane Modric, the tree symbolizes many things. One such thing is the ending of childhood and the beginning of adolescence. Individually draw a tree symbolizing your own childhood which could include photos, words, phrases, raw materials etc. Then draw another tree that you wish to symbolize your adolescence.

b) *"It's not what you look at, it's what you see."* Tom sees the *Wishfly* attached to Lys however Lys cannot see it. Create & design the *Wishfly* you can see. What aspects of *your* *Wishfly* are different from a partners *Wishfly* design? What makes yours unique?

### **ACTIVITY TEN**

#### *Performance Work!*

a) Use the *Wishfly* script excerpt found on page 15 to stage your own interpretation of the events.

b) Write your own scene of Lys first day at High School.

### **ACTIVITY ELEVEN**

#### *Qualities of a good friend!*

Discuss why friends are important. Brainstorm the qualities of a good friend (i.e. fun, same interests, habits, loyalty, sense of humour). Students write their selected qualities on cards. They put them in a box once completed. Students then form a horse-shoe shape. The teacher then places one card labeled Most Important at the top of the horse-shoe shape and one card labelled Least Important at the other end of the horse-shoe. Ask students to take one card from the box and place it along the continuum in the relative position of importance. They should then explain to the class why they have placed the card where they have.

### **ACTIVITY TWELVE**

#### *Creative Compliments!*

Ask students to choose a partner. Instruct students to think up three compliments to give to their partner. Look at each other directly and give each other compliments. Discuss how giving and receiving compliments made each student feel.

### **ACTIVITY THIRTEEN**

#### *Mystery Friend Program!*

Each student in the class draws a name of another student out of a hat and takes on the role of being their secret friend. This may involve helpful acts, friendliness or small gifts each week that can be made by the students. Students then try to guess who has been their mystery friend and how they know and how it made them feel.

### **ACTIVITY FOURTEEN**

#### *Friendly Acts!*

Tom instantly started talking to Lys when she first visited the tree. He talked her through her anxieties about starting high school and much more. He did a number of friendly acts. Create a list of friendly acts and write them on cards. Paste the cards, blank side up on a wall and ask students to each choose in turn. They must conduct their friendly act before the following lesson.

### **ACTIVITY FIFTEEN**

#### *A is for Anger*

Tom gets angry when he sees that Lys has a wish-fly following her that she can't even see. He says that she has ruined everything and that he wished she had never come! He is angry at her. Make a list of things it is useful to be angry about (war, cheating, pollution, Racism) and a list of things it is not useful to be angry about (what other people think, insults from people, television).

### **ACTIVITY SIXTEEN**

#### *Mapping the Problems!*

Distribute maps of school to students – get students to mark a cross in areas that they consider unsafe and tick in the areas that they consider safe – and question mark in areas they are unsure about. They can then discuss the issues their maps raise and report to the class. The class could then swap ideas about possible responses to these issues. An opportunity to discuss your schools Anit-Bullying Policy.

### **ACTIVITY SEVENTEEN**

#### *Busting the Bullies!*

When Lys was at her old school there were only seven girls in the class. Whenever the class was asked to form pairs she was always the odd person out. At lunch times the other girls rarely thought to include her in the things they were doing. She felt lonely and worthless. What is the problem. If they were the victim, what outcome would they want? List as many options as possible to achieving this outcome. Next to each option, list all the possible ways the bullies might react. Then choose one that you think is the best option.

### **ACTIVITY EIGHTEEN**

#### *Feelings!*

In the play Tom tells Lys that her mother is calling. Lys walks away from Tom as she is hurt by his comment. Can you usually work out the feelings of other people? What do feelings affect? Physical condition? Actions/behaviour? Thinking? Do other people usually understand your feelings? Who? Is it helpful?

## **ACTIVITY NINETEEN**

### *The Thought Police*

Shark thoughts (negative) Vs Dolphin thoughts (positive). Go on a hunt for dolphin and shark thoughts. Listen for the way people talk about these ideas.

## **ACTIVITY TWENTY**

### *Big Problems Vs Little Problems!*

Lys and Tom were confronted with a number of social, environmental and family problems in the play *Wishfly*. These included Lys mother being away, the tree being cut down and Tom's mother being sick. Other problems included Lys dad buying her a pink hat, Dean not being very good a cooking and Tom not being able to get his own wish-fly. Develop a list of situations (ie getting a cold, forgetting someone's birthday, not getting invited to a party, moving house). Discuss these in small groups in a way to make them Big problems and then discuss a way to make them Little problems.

## **ACTIVITY TWENTY-ONE**

### *Bouncing Back!*

Lys tried very hard to save the tree. She wasn't able to save the tree from being cut down but she bounced back and decided to plant a new tree in its place. Lys bounced back from not saving the tree. Write about or discuss in pairs something that you have done of which you are proud of. What was the hardest thing about doing what you did? Why were you proud of it? Are you most proud of those things that were the hardest to do?

## **ACTIVITY TWENTY-TWO**

### *Admiration!*

Tom admires the music of David Bowie. Both Tom and Dean tell Lys that he was the greatest singer of all time! Write down someone who has done something that you admire and what they have done to earn your admiration? Write down some of the difficulties they might have overcome to be the person you admire.

## **ACTIVITY TWENTY-THREE**

### *Postcards!*

Lys mum was traveling extensively throughout India to find herself. She enjoyed sending post cards to close friends and family members. You have received a postcard from your future self. Where would you want it to come from? What would you be doing? Who would you be with? Draw your postcard below and keep it for the future.

**ACTIVITY TWENTY-FOUR***Personal Emblem or Motto!*

Companies and organizations often have personal emblems or mottos. (i.e Be Prepared. Just Do It etc). See the characters personal mottos below::

**T**eriffic  
**O**rganised  
**M**otivated

**L**oving  
**Y**outhful  
**S**upportive

**D**edicated  
**E**nergetic  
**A**ctive  
**N**ice

List your name and find a word to express each letter of your name:

**ACTIVITY TWENTY-FIVE***Goal Setting!*

Complete the following goal setting chart. Make sure it is a clear goal too!

**My major goal related to having fun for this year is:**

<b>School Work Goal</b>	<b>The Habits I must develop</b>	<b>Implementation Plan</b>

## SCRIPT EXTRACT

### Scene Ten: Wishfly

*The tree. Tom's there. Lys enters. Tom stares at her in amazement.*

Lys I've got ten signatures!  
Tom Wow! How did you do that? Did you snap your fingers?  
Lys No Dad helped. We went to every house round this whole block and tomorrow we're going to do the next one over.  
Tom You must have snapped your fingers. And wished. What did you say?  
Lys I told them about the tree and . . .  
Why do you keep talking about finger snapping?  
Tom You've got a wishfly.  
Lys A what?  
Tom Wishfly. It's following you. How did you get it? Were you eating ice cream? When you snapped?  
Lys *(Waving around as though shooing a fly)* Where? I don't see a fly.  
Tom Maybe it's a birthday wish. Did you use your birthday wish?  
Lys What? Is it really small? Shoo! Shoo!  
Tom It'll hang around for a while, then it'll just fade away. From disbelief.  
Were you wearing some kind of hat?  
Lys What?  
Tom You've got a wishfly!  
Lys There is no such thing!  
And your name isn't Harry Potter either.  
Tom No, you're right, it isn't.  
Lys Thankyou! Finally a bit of sense.  
Tom It's Doctor Who.  
Lys What?  
Tom No, Who. Doctor Who.  
Lys Oh very funny.  
*(Aside)* Imaginary character from a tv show.  
Tom Shut up.  
Lys No, you shut up.

Tom Alright then, what's a wishfly?  
What's the point, you can't see them.  
No imagination.  
Lys Well, I think that if I have to imagine them, then they're not real are they?  
Tom It's not about thinking is it, genius?  
Lys What's it about then?  
Tom Believing. You're as bad as an adult.  
Lys I am not!  
There's no such thing as a wishfly! Where'd they come from? Mars I suppose?  
Tom *(laughs)* Of course they didn't come from Mars!  
They're not Marsflies. Marflies are red.  
Lys There are no flies on Mars! There's nothing on Mars.  
Tom Shows what you know.  
Lys *(groans in frustration)*  
Tom Just give the wish to me. You don't believe in it anyway.  
Lys No.  
Tom You have to believe in it for it to work. It's just wasted on you.  
Lys It's following me, isn't it? Therefore it's mine.  
Tom You're just being selfish. Look, I need the wish. It's important.  
Lys Oh, right so you can wish for a tardis and fly to LaLa land.  
Tom Why don't you just go back where you came from!  
Lys Why don't you just grow up?!  
This is stupid. I'm going!  
Tom Good! Don't come back!

*Lys storms off. Tom looks up at the white thing out of reach, at the tree.*

Tom Why her? She can't even see it.

*He snaps his fingers. Nothing happens. He spins around and snaps. Nothing happens. He looks very disappointed and sad. He walks off.*

## Q & A WITH THE PLAYWRIGHT

*Dr. Jane Modric - Wishfly Playwright.*

### **1. Can you describe the process of writing Wishfly?**

Writing *Wishfly* was an organic process. The Young Company Theatre commissioned me to write a play about the transition from Primary School to High School, and we decided that this story needed to grow out of the experiences of the children who were either facing this transition or, who had just been through it. We conducted a number of workshops at TYC with some amazing kids, and, it became clear fairly quickly that there were some recurrent themes, the most prominent being the importance of friendship. I took these themes as the starting point for the script.

### **2. How did Wishfly emerge as a play script?**

The workshops had given me what I considered to be the main themes of the play, and so I began to think about how I wanted to tell this story. Starting High School can be daunting, and so I wanted the show to be uplifting and inspiring; a kind of pathway through the change. I wanted to illuminate some possibilities for the audience members, engage with their imaginations and encourage them to be themselves. I then wrote a treatment which just laid out the characters, a rough plot, and the inspirations (director Miyazaki, the songs of Bowie, the philosophy of Thoreau) which is really my way of doing a preparatory sketch. After this I had a quite clear vision of the work, and then it was just really uncovering and unearthing.

### **3. What appeals to you the most about writing for young people?**

First, there's something very exciting about adolescence, it's such a turbulent and challenging time; a quickening. There's this sort of wildness about it. It's fascinating for me because I kind of forget.

Second, I would love to see young people having more opportunity to express their ideas, concerns and experiences to the broader society, and helping that along in any way is good.

### **4. In Wishfly you refer to the philosopher Thoreau. What was the reasoning behind this?**

The wildness that I mentioned earlier is part of this impulse, in that Thoreau was very much in tune with that wild element of nature, which he referred to as a tonic, and which was a constant source of inspiration for him. He was a great promoter of civil disobedience, an abolitionist, and, I feel, an appropriate hero figure for this age group.

He wrote,

*Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have imagined.*

That says it all, really.

### **5. Thinking back over the years, what productions, texts or other sources have profoundly influenced you as a playwright? And how does this inspiration manifest itself in your work.**

Wow, what a question! How long have you got? Well, I am also a musician, a song writer and I write fiction too, so I'll have to answer the question from all those perspectives but how about I just

respond as an artist. I find that it's a process of cross-pollination really, where a piece of music can spark an image which might become a short story, or a painting might spark a song. This will explain my particular method of writing treatments, which is, as I said above, like a sketch, but it's also creating an atmosphere, a soundscape and a vision to work from.

Honestly I am very often profoundly affected by all kinds of art. I seek these experiences as they enhance my creativity and provide inspiration. Ok, so, but if I have to choose something, a lot of important things happened in, yes, you guessed it, adolescence. I first connected in a big way with music through this period, it became personal, the sound track to my life. It was the Rolling Stones, Bowie and Pink Floyd, and Rickie lee Jones and Tom Waits very early on, and then the punk movement in my later teens, and when I started travelling in my late teens and twenties I began to be exposed to art too, to seek it out.

I lived in Spain and saw Gaudi, and heard incredible flamenco on the street, and in Paris, The Pompidou Museum of Modern Art just blew me away. The Surrealists loomed large and still do, as did DaDa.

At university I studied Philosophy and read Shakespeare, and so much great literature but also anthropology theory and psychology and so on, and on. Reading Hemingway's thoughts on writing the truest thing you can has remained so resonant and I really try to find that true thing in everything I construct. Just finding the way to let some truth shine through in anything I do, that's it really. It's what always speaks to me in art; truth.

## Q & A WITH THE CAST

### 1. **Why do you believe the play is an important tool to discuss the transition into high school?**

*Evelyn:* The transition into high school is one that is filled with nerves and scary preconceptions however people rarely talk about it. *Wishfly* is a way for students to discuss their fears and shows them that they are not alone in thinking that high school is nerve wracking. Being able to see a production that tackles the nerves that surround big changes in our lives can result in students understanding that everyone feels the same way.

### 2. **Wishfly breaks the stereotype of traditional rite of passage narratives. What do you feel a youth audience can take out of a pre-starting high school narrative rather than the customary 'first day' plot?**

*Michael:* I believe it is important to tell the story of a character who has unanswered, preconceived notions of the high school experience. In exploring Lys' journey between the end of primary school and the beginning of high school, the narrative can explore more of the fear of the unknown that many young people experience in the lead up to this important rite of passage. *Wishfly's* unique narrative structure also allows the audience to experience the effect on the other characters in the protagonist's life and how their own journey's intersect with Lys' in both positive and deleterious ways.

### 3. **What advice would you give to a young person starting High School this year?**

*Tom:* Just keep at it. I found, personally, it was really tough at school, and I even considered giving up a lot of the time. The key is keep at it. The key is to dedicate yourself, but also stay true to yourself, because school shouldn't also change who YOU are. So don't let it change you, use it to discover who you are to begin with!

## VIDEO AND WEBSITE LINKS

Theatrical Trailer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2tUrHNSPLJw>

The Making of Wishfly

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=99FKXsLoh1M>

The Young Company Theatre

[www.theyoungcompany.com.au](http://www.theyoungcompany.com.au)

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