

TEACHER INFORMATION PACK

Malthouse Theatre presents

Happiness

By Maryanne Lynch

Directed by Kate Sulan

Design by Anna Cordingley

Composed and sound design by Jethro Woodward

Lighting design by Lucy Birkinshaw

With

Jodie Le Vesconte

Terry Yeboah

Natasha Herbert

James Saunders

“This is a work about fire and ice; about extremities and what happens when we push, and are pushed, to the limit; about endings. The way things vanish, sometimes forever. And how passion, resilience and love can create the possibility of a future.”

At its heart **Happiness** is an opportunity for young people to engage deeply with the theatre making experience from conception, to creation, to presentation. Acknowledging students as young artists, **Happiness** empowers participants to tackle the greatest challenge of their generation – climate change.

Happiness is both a show and an innovative education program by Malthouse Theatre. Equipped with the ‘Happiness’ script, stimulus materials and their own wits, **Happiness** actively engages Year 9 & 10 students within school time across the semester, culminating in a performance day with their peers and a professional cast.

Happiness satisfies the curriculum component for VELS Level 6 Drama, The Arts: Creating and Making and is an ideal foundation for students intending to study Unit 3: Drama and Theatre Studies.

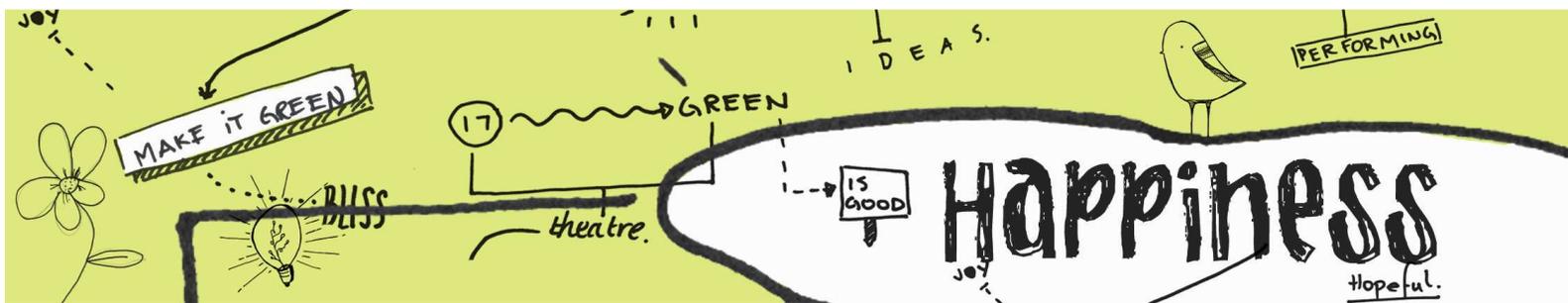
If you have specific enquiries about Happiness please contact Clare or Josh at Malthouse Theatre’s Youth and Education programs on 03 9685 5164 or email education@malthousetheatre.com.au.

**MALTHOUSE
THEATRE**



Department of Education and
Early Childhood Development





Happiness in brief...

Happiness is both a show and an education program. The Happiness script, by Maryanne Lynch is the cornerstone of the program providing a rich textual stimulus which students use to create their own short ensemble piece in school (Term 3). Parallel to this, a Malthouse Theatre ensemble also creates a work and, in Term 4, all participating ensembles come together over one day to present their work.

The performance day is facilitated by an expert who encourages discussion with participants (students, teachers and the Malthouse Theatre artists) about the process of theatre-making and the choices each ensemble has made when approaching the stimulus. Students are approached and encouraged to discuss and present their work as artists who have a shared investment and creative contribution to each work.

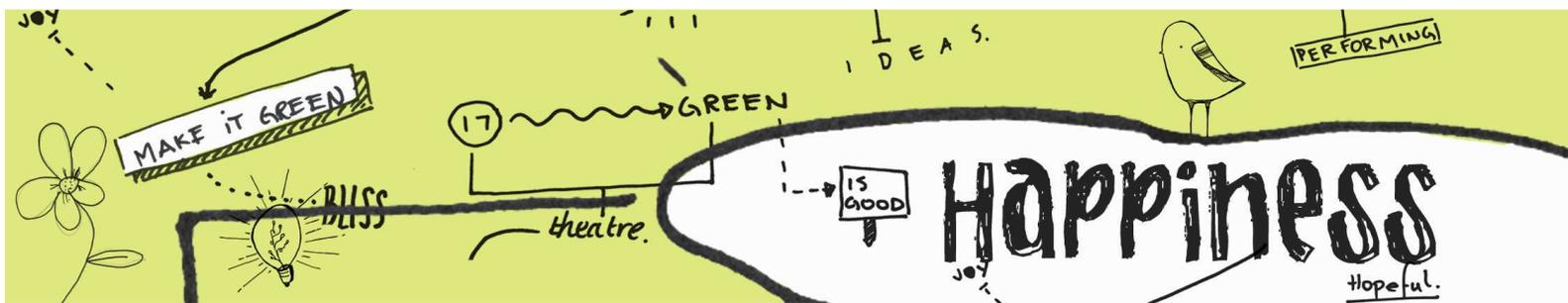
The Happiness Script (and other stimulus materials)

The Happiness script is an episodic theatre work for an ensemble of four actors (minimum) and is approximately 60 minutes in duration consisting of 5 stand-alone Episodes (10 - 12 minutes each). Written by Maryanne Lynch, Happiness is a work that traverses time and space through a variety of theatrical forms whilst approaching 5 cultural responses to climate change within each episode:

- Episode One: Passion (Life is full of Promise)
- Episode Two: Resilience (Hope in the face of fear)
- Episode Three: Procastination (Leave as is)
- Episode Four: Desperation (A warning)
- Coda: A step into the Unknown... (A call to action)

The Happiness program uses a NiNG (educational social networking website) to provide participating artists with instructions and materials including:

- The Happiness script by Maryanne Lynch
- Instructions on the Happiness program and how to approach and plan
- Stimulus materials (photos, YouTube links)
- Background information including design and staging specifications, Director's Notes on the Happiness script, lighting states, props lists
- One-on-one advice and guidance on approaching the Happiness program



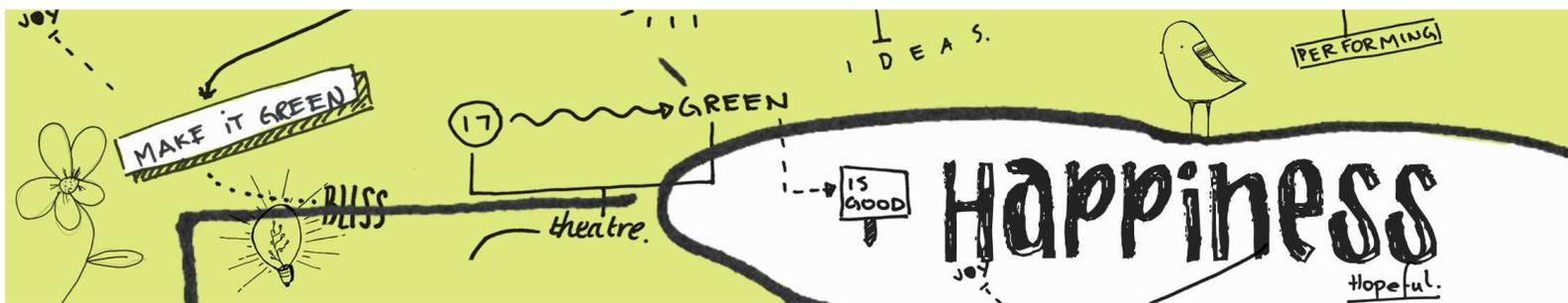
Happiness in School Time

Throughout Term 3, each school works in ensembles (i.e. a drama class) to devise a work based on the Happiness script.

Ensembles can approach one or more of the episodes in the Happiness script and have a performance time of up to 30 minutes. Inspired by the stimulus materials, ensembles develop their own interpretation of the script, creating, rehearsing, designing and performing as an ensemble.

There are many ways teachers can facilitate each ensemble to devise the Happiness works. We have proposed a timeline for teachers to follow below...

TERM 3 Week 1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register all artists on the NiNG • Gather your items • Spend time brainstorming and improvising on the theme of climate change • Explore and research non-naturalistic performance styles
TERM 3 Week 4-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the Happiness script • Decide which Episode(s) you'd like to perform • Organise roles (including directors, stage management, composers and designers) • Spend some time developing characters • Get the actors on the floor and start rehearsing your Episode(s), continue playful investigation of performance styles and characters
TERM 3 Week 7-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue rehearsing the selected Episode(s) • Refine and consolidate performance style choices • Finalise blocking and lines (delete, rewrite or add to the script as you go!) • Create a prompt script which includes lighting decisions • Design and finalise costumes, props and use of sound/music • Design/build/find your suitcase to carry all your props and design choices
TERM 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrive at the performance venue • Present prompt script to the Stage Manager • Get costumes and makeup on • Present suitcase ready to go • Break a leg!



Happiness Rules

- Happiness is an experiment in process and interpretation. Be bold. Take creative risks and have fun.
- Your ensemble should have at least 5 participants but no more than 30
- Each ensemble must assign roles e.g.. actors, directors, scriptwriters, designers, stage managers, musicians, dancers, singers, dramaturges
- Your ensemble (i.e. a drama class) can perform for up to 30 minutes (maximum)
- The Happiness script is a stimulus material and should be approached as a working script which you can cut, re-write or change to suit your needs
- Use the NING. This is the best way of keeping in touch with all of the artists involved in the project and to gain further information about Happiness

Malthouse Theatre's Top Tips for Happiness...

- Happiness is a script in five episodes. You can choose one episode to perform in its entirety or take up the challenge of tackling multiple episodes. Why not do an edited version of all five?
- There are a lot of lines to learn. If it's too long, make cuts to ensure that you can focus on your performance
- Work with a combination of naturalistic and non naturalistic performance styles
- Not everyone wants to be on stage. If you have enough actors for an ensemble, add musicians, makeup artists, dancers, directors, sound designers, costume designers, lighting designers and stage managers
- If you have a large group, think about doubling/tripling/quadrupling characters and incorporate the use of a chorus in the Coda. Physical theatre, dance and music all provide strong performance elements to any work
- Consider creating transitions between each episode if you are performing more than one

"It was so scary when the lights flickered and all the characters were standing right in front of me. Sitting at the front was probably the best place to sit for this one, and that's where I was! The last scene, which was meant to be a kind of cautionary tale, made me actually want to do something about climate change. When it finished, I was shaking and I wanted to see it again. I think it was mainly the lighting and sound that made such a big impact on me as a member of the audience... It was so captivating that I couldn't look away."

- **Year 9 participant response to the Malthouse Theatre ensemble's performance of Happiness, 2011**

"I really enjoyed the rehearsal process and playing around with all the different ways of staging/interpreting the script. I also loved performing and seeing the actors' interpretation of our script."

- **Year 10 participant response to the Happiness program, 2011**