

EDC
EXPRESSIONS **DANCE** COMPANY

THE
DINNER PARTY



EDUCATION NOTES

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1 INTRODUCTION

These education notes have been developed to accompany Expressions Dance Company's performance of The Dinner Party and associated school workshops.

They aim to assist secondary school dance teachers with integrating the themes, stimulus and choreographic processes used when developing The Dinner Party into dance classrooms.

All activities directly relate to the Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority (ACARA) Years 7-10 Dance Curriculum as well as the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) Dance 2019 v1.1 General Senior Syllabus for Years 11-12.



2 BEFORE THE SHOW

Read below about the recommended activities to engage with before watching EDC's performance of The Dinner Party.

EXPLORE

Click on the link to read more about EDC and The Dinner Party
<http://expressionsdancecompany.org.au/edc/dinnerparty/>

ENGAGE

Book a workshop with one or more of our EDC Dancers to build on your students dance practice. Send an email to admin@expressionsdancecompany.org.au to book or find out more information.

RESEARCH

Discover more about our previous performance of The Host, of which The Dinner Party is reworked from
<http://expressionsdancecompany.org.au/edc/the-host/>

WRITE

Have your students develop a question prior to coming to view the performance. Ask them to consider what they are most curious or excited about seeing. Students should discuss the answer to their question following watching the performance, and how their initial thoughts or feelings about the work changed after experiencing it.

REVISE

Read through the definitions below to familiarise yourself with the key dance terms used in this resource and in the dance classroom:

Elements of Dance: Four elements that form the basis of any dance work: Space, Time, Dynamics and Relationships.

Choreographic Devices: The tools a choreographer selects and uses to communicate ideas:

- Abstraction
- Sequence
- Repetition
- Transition
- Contrast
- Variation
- Canon

Movement Dynamics: Refers to how the movement is performed. For example, slowly, quickly, accented, softly, sharply, percussive, suspended etc.

Motif: A reoccurring movement or sequence of movement in a dance work that clearly conveys a theme or mood.

Production Elements: Non movement components such as props, lighting, costumes, sound and makeup in a dance performance.

3 ABOUT EXPRESSIONS DANCE COMPANY

About the Company

Established in 1984 and based within Brisbane's Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts, Expressions Dance Company (EDC) is one of Queensland's leading contemporary dance collectives. In addition to presenting an annual program of world-class contemporary dance performances at QPAC and other Brisbane venues, EDC embarks on Australia-wide and overseas tours. EDC's Artistic Director is renowned Australian dancer, dance maker and curator Amy Hollingsworth (appointed 2019).

With the talent of an extraordinary ensemble of 6-8 dancers, the company has achieved significant recognition through national awards and nominations, including 10 Helpmann Award and 10 Australian Dance Award nominations. Acclaimed productions include 4Seasons(2018), Behind Closed Doors (2017), Mozart Airborne (2017), The Host (2015), The Red Shoes (2014), Carmen Sweet (2013), When Time Stops (2013), , R&J (2011) and Where the Heart is (2010).

Recently, EDC's commitment to cultural collaboration has been articulated through its Chinese Australian Dance Exchange Project, a groundbreaking partnership with three of China's leading contemporary dance companies. EDC has also collaborated with Singapore Dance Theatre, Switzerland-based Cathy Sharp Dance Ensemble, Queensland Ballet, Opera Australia, Opera Queensland, Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Camerata, Topology, Southern Cross Soloists and the Queensland Conservatorium.

Artistic Director: Amy Hollingsworth

Amy Hollingsworth is a multi award winning dancer and director, based in Brisbane and was described by the UK Observer as one of 'the most compelling and intelligent dancers on the world stage'.

Born and raised in Australia and classically trained at The Australian Ballet School, she performed as a leading dancer in companies such as Rambert Dance Company, Royal New Zealand Ballet, Peter Schaufuss Balletten, Bonachela Dance Company, Michael Clark Company, Hofesh Shechter Company, George Piper Dancers and Sydney Dance Company.

With an impressive international performance and creative career spanning large-scale classical ballet to independent contemporary dance, film and pop music, Amy is a highly versatile director of dance with a strong, passionate, musical and emotionally resonant creative voice. Her work in direction and education draws from her background and breadth of experience and is as diverse as the companies that engage her to coach and mentor.

Her achievements outside of her career as a performer are many, but most notably she was a founding member of Bonachela Dance Company and Assistant Director. She then excelled in her roles as Dance Director for Sydney Dance Company and then Rehearsal Director for Expressions Dance Company before joining Queensland Ballet as Ballet Mistress and Creative Associate in 2016. Her skills in the development of choreographers, eye for detail and coaching excellence of dancers has been widely noted and critically acclaimed.

Amy has also choreographed numerous works, has been involved in the production of dance films and worked across commercial industries.

In addition to her credits as a performer, coach, director and creative associate, Amy is a sought-after keynote speaker at dance industry events, and is currently the Chair of Brisbane's Supercell Dance Festival.

Amy was appointed the Artistic Director of Expressions Dance Company in 2019.



Choreographer: Natalie Weir

Australian choreographer Natalie Weir is known internationally for her highly physical partner work, her organic movement style and her touching insight into humanity.

In her 30-plus year career, she has created major new works for world class companies such as The Australian Ballet, Queensland Ballet, West Australian Ballet, Houston Ballet, Singapore Dance Theatre, Hong Kong Ballet and American Ballet Theatre.

Natalie was resident choreographer for The Australian Ballet and Queensland Ballet and was appointed EDC's Artistic Director, where she held the role from 2009 to 2018, Natalie has also been the recipient of both an Australia Council Fellowship and the Lord Mayor's Fellowship.

Her works with EDC have earned the company and its artists 21 combined Helpmann Award and Australian Dance Award nominations. Her EDC signature productions include where the heart is, R&J, When Time Stops, The Red Shoes, 7 Deadly Sins, Behind Closed Doors and Everyday Requiem.



Dancers

Visit the link below to discover more about EDC's dancers.
<https://expressionsdancecompany.org.au/edc/company/>



Costume Designer: Gail Sorronda

Gail Sorronda is the emotive label of Brisbane designer Gail Sorronda.

Gail completed her degree in Fine Arts Fashion Design at Queensland University of Technology and launched Gail Sorronda in 2005 at Australian Fashion Week after winning the Mercedes-Benz Start-Up Awards with her debut collection.

Since then her dark romantic, collections have attracted the attention of some of the fashion world's most influential people. Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana cherry picked Gail Sorronda to be stocked in the Dolce & Gabbana Spiga2 store in Milan after being a finalist in vogue Italia's Who is On Next competition.

In 2012 Gail Sorronda opened their first permanent flagship boutique in Brisbane's Fortitude Valley, Australia. Since then the brand has collaborated with Queensland Ballet, Expressions Dance Company and Disney and most recently Gail was selected as an ambassador for the Gallery of Modern Art.



4 ABOUT THE DINNER PARTY

An elegant dinner party hosted by an influential young man for his manipulative guests is thrown into turmoil when power meets greed, ambition and jealousy. As the evening wears on The Dinner Party exposes society's insatiable desire for control and status and the power-play between the guests intensifies as the accusations start to fly.

Who really holds the power at this sophisticated table? And who will be in control by the time coffee is served?

Premiering to extraordinary reviews in Brisbane in 2015, The Dinner Party (former title The Host), is gripping contemporary dance theatre from Queensland's award-winning Expressions Dance Company.

You will be struck by the sublime costumes by celebrated Australian fashion designer Gail Sorronda, music recordings from Queensland's highly acclaimed Southern Cross Soloists and inspiring movement by internationally renowned choreographer, Natalie Weir.

Touring QLD, NSW & NT , May - June 2019

Reviews (The Host, 2015)

"... a lively tasting plate offering the audience plenty to savour." The Courier-Mail

"With every new work, EDC continues to solidify their rightful place in the landscape of contemporary dance in Australia." Dancetrain Magazine

"It is impossible to take one's eyes off the guests at this dinner party – a charming, relatable, hour-long production." QT Entertainment



5 THE CREATIVE PROCESS

Choreographed by Natalie Weir, *The Dinner Party* exemplifies themes of wealth, power, manipulation, greed, love and status. These are embodied by the diverse range of characters who move around a central table in the performance. When developing her work, Weir begins by researching the key ideas and themes she wants to explore, for her that preparation is one of the most important steps of the process. This preparation provides Weir with an emotional storyboard that highlights the emotion, images and themes present in the work. Weir used the saying "Absolute power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely" as well as to the dictionary definition of the Host "an animal or plant which parasites live", in order to explore manipulation and the desire for status and wealth. Through tongue and cheek, Weir's choreography focuses on how power can be used in many ways and ultimately misused.

Weir implemented a range of choreographic processes when developing *The Dinner Party*, primarily improvisation and task work. Weir begins by sharing her concepts with the company dancers and then invites them to bring their own ideas, thoughts and movements into the process. For example, Weir describes to her dancers the thoughts and mental state of their characters, to which they improvise and generate movement back to her. The dancers input can often influence the shape of the work.

Weir states that it is important to know when a work is finished. Although often instinctual, she tries not to edit her work so that it is not overly long and so the concept is clear. When stuck, she recaps what she has already created to find her focus and always turns to her dancers for inspiration.



6 MEET THE CHARACTERS

Each character created by Natalie Weir plays an important role in developing the storyline and atmosphere of The Dinner Party.

Each dancer researches their character prior to rehearsals, to ensure they are embodying the absolute essence of their personality when performing.

This process is initiated by Natalie Weir who brings in stimulus such as images and ideas to allow the dancers to connect and relate to their roles.

Natalie states that the dancers play a huge role in developing the characters for The Dinner Party as they bring the work to life.

Character	Character description
The Host	A wealthy, understated yet superior and classy character. He does not need to show off his money – it is apparent in the classic cut and style of his suit. His cool, calm and confident nature ensures he is calculating and manipulative of his guests.
The Hostess	As an older woman who comes from money, she is the true power of the dinner. Her elegant, seductive and old-world personality contrasts her life of solitude.
The Rival	A man of great ambition and charm, he covets the status of the Host. The unscrupulous Rival challenges the Host's power and position and is an imminent threat to the Host's empire.
The Wannabe	A novice with big dreams at the beginning of his professional career, he is prepared to sacrifice his integrity to climb the corporate ladder. He is a willing puppet in the hope of gaining the Host's recognition and ultimately wealth and power.
The Lover	Young, ambitious and seductive, this younger woman is outwardly confident however insecure on the inside.
The Insecure Party Girl	Initially insecure, and overwhelmed, this character feels out of place at the dinner party, portrayed through erratic, twitching movements. However, she soon finds her inner party girl and her vivacious, playful and flirtatious nature comes out to play. Although, this behaviour is ultimately self-destructive and reflects her low esteem.

7 STRUCTURE BREAKDOWN

The Dinner Party follows a narrative which centers around The Host and the manipulation of his dinner guests.

Each scene highlights one or more of the characters personalities, motives or relationship to the Host or another person, with wealth, power and status in a constant state of tension on the stage.

Scene	Action
1	The Host is seen standing on the table with the guests of the dinner sitting frozen around him. He then crouches and begins the manipulation of his guests.
2	The dinner party guests come alive and move around the table, interacting with one another.
3	An altercation occurs between the Host and the Wannabe, resulting in all guests returning to the table.
4	The Hostess enters the room and moves around the table before asserting herself. The group of guests suddenly moves away from the table, taking their chairs with them. The Host and Hostess duet around the table, establishing their troubled relationship.
5	The group returns, placing several chairs on the table. As the Host stands on the table, the Insecure Girl performs her solo in a pool of light. During this, the table is moved to the side of the stage, where the remaining guests freeze themselves. The Insecure Girl then moves upstage left to sit in the Wannabe's lap, and then dances a duet with the Rival.
6	The Host manipulates the Wannabe, moving his chair back into the centre of the stage.
7	The Lover attempts to assert her power over the Host as the Hostess watches.
8	The Host dances with the Hostess, while the Lover is caught between them both. From the Hosts perspective, each woman is using their legs and feet as daggers.
9	The Hostess then performs a solo in which she worries about her age and broken marriage.
10	The Wannabe also performs a solo at the table reflecting on his desire to climb the corporate ladder, have wealth and power, realising he is at the bottom of the food chain.
11	The Insecure Girl returns, finding some strength, becoming the Party Girl. The Rival asserts himself, manipulating the Party Girl.
12	The group then all run at the table together, splitting apart slowly while the Hostess stands at the front of the table with the Host at the back, while the table is rotated.
13	The Host and Hostess move forward and perform a duet.
14	The Rival finds his way onto the table. Then the Host enters and fights the Rival.
15	The table of guests goes crazy, with all guests manipulating the Host.
16	The Host performs a solo.
17	The Host stands and all guests start to manipulate him. The Host puppeteers everyone in response.
18	The Hostess enters the stage, taking over power from the Host, whose spirit is broken, and the performance ends.

8 PRODUCTION ELEMENTS

Music and Sound

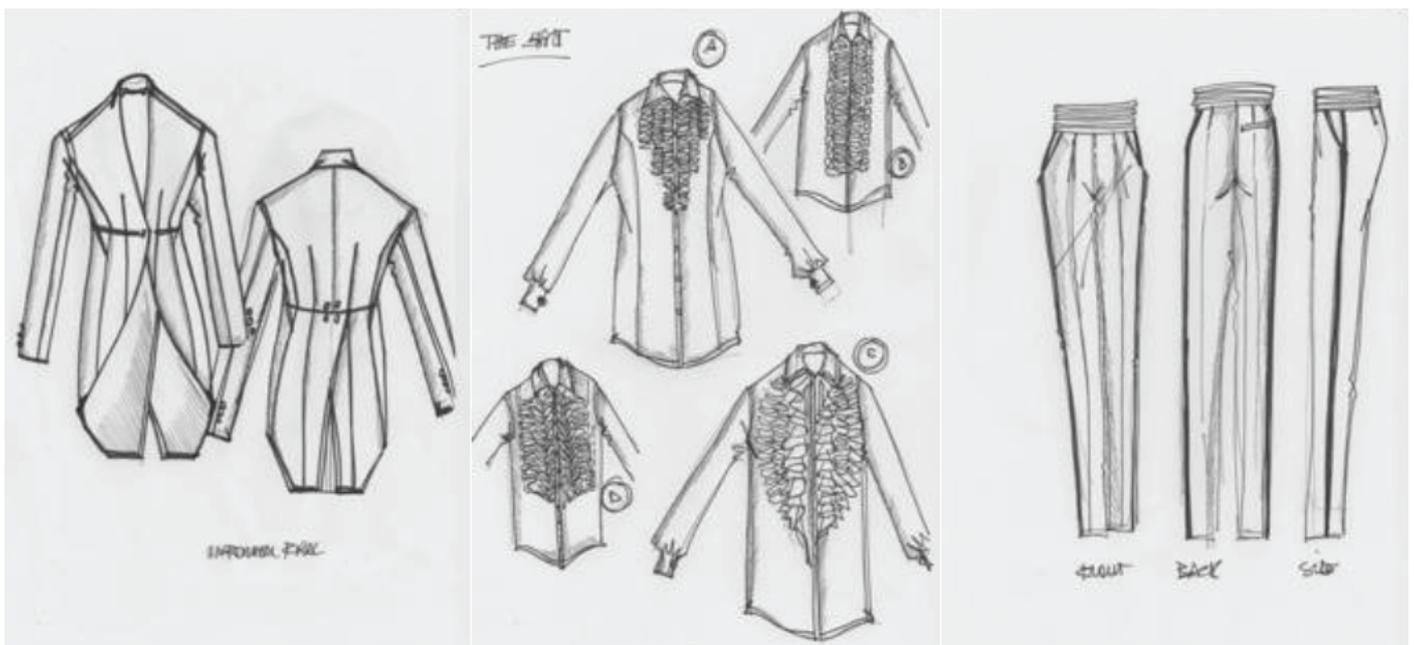
Natalie Weir selected a variety of organic music works to compliment the movement being performed, ultimately enhancing the personalities of each character in the work.

Her selection of emotionally driven music strongly reflects the mood of each of the characters, for example the Hostess' solo in which the dancer solemnly reflects on her life, in contrast to the powerful and fast paced duet that occurs between the Host and the Wannabe.

The music recordings for The Dinner Party were performed by the Southern Cross Soloists
www.southernxsoloists.com

Costumes

The costumes for The Dinner Party have been designed by Gail Sorronda who was also involved in The Host (2015). Gail allowed the costumes to be individualised for each character, while ensuring a connective thread maintained unity with them all. Working with elements to assist the story telling of the work, Gail used techniques such as dark vs light, masculine vs feminine and ruffles vs fluidity to emphasise the contrasting differences between characters.



Have your students consider how the production elements present in The Dinner party contribute to the storyline of the work. Additionally, allow them to discuss:

- How can my deliberate choices about the production elements of my own work affect how audiences perceive my choreography? Additionally, explore your choreography performed to a slow, adagio music choice and then contrasted to a quick and accented piece of music. Note how the music selection can change how the work feels to perform but how others may react to your performance.
- How can my costume designs enhance what my choreography is trying to portray about my dancers or characters?
- How can I experiment further with production elements in my work to consider different dance spaces and a variety of digital technology?

9 CHOREOGRAPHIC TASKS

These choreographic tasks have been designed to encourage your students to explore a variety of movement development techniques utilised when creating The Dinner Party through the making strand, that will ultimately enhance their creative practice.

All tasks make strong connections to the Australian Curriculum Dance Aims of:

- Body awareness and technical and expressive skills to communicate through movement confidently, creatively and intelligently
- Choreographic and performance skills and appreciation of their own and others' dances
- Aesthetic, artistic and cultural understanding of dance in past and contemporary contexts as choreographers, performers and audiences
- Respect for and knowledge of the diverse purposes, traditions, histories and cultures of dance by making and responding as active participants and informed audiences

Task A: Character Development

This task introduces students to the characters from The Dinner Party.

- Firstly, read aloud the descriptions of each character, then have students select one and brainstorm the personality traits and nuances this character might have.
- Students can then draw their character on a flashcard and consider the costumes, makeup, props and other production elements associated with this character.
- Then have your students create an 8 count motif that reflects this characters personality. Students can manipulate and extend on this by layering choreographic devices onto their movement. To generate this, have students consider what purpose their character would be at a dinner party for and how they can achieve this intention.

For example, the insecure girl may use small movements, making her body smaller to hide herself away whereas the Host and the Wannabe could both be illustrated through much bigger and more dynamic movements. Greater complexities and subtleties of characters could be explored at higher age levels.

By allowing students to share their character resources with others, an inclusive environment for developing new ideas and concepts for movement development will be promoted.

This task uses the following 21st century skills

- Creative Thinking
- Communication
- Critical Thinking

Relevant Senior Dance Syllabus Objectives:

- Demonstrate an understanding of dance concepts and skills
- Apply literacy skills
- Organise and apply the dance concepts
- Realise meaning through expressive skills
- Create dance to communicate meaning

Task B: Building duet work through character relationships

This task allows students to explore creating movement in response to other dancers in the context of The Dinner Party.

- After selecting one character each, students should pair up and brainstorm how these two characters might react to one another at a dinner party.
- Students should then develop an 8 count motif that exemplifies how their characters move around one another.
- This activity could also allow students to build duets from a call and response scenario that is non-contact to form a conversational movement piece, or contact between dancers can be introduced to highlight contrasts such as struggle and tenderness. Each student may use their character motifs as a base and find connection points to develop a duet from.
- Encourage your students to consider the below questions:
 - What levels does your character move on?
 - How far apart are the two characters in the space?
 - What dynamics do they move in?
 - Can you find a piece of music to perform this to that summarises the relationship?

This task uses the following 21st century skills

- Creative Thinking
- Communication
- Critical Thinking
- Collaboration and Teamwork
- Personal and Social Skills

Relevant Senior Dance Syllabus Objectives:

- Demonstrate an understanding of dance concepts and skills
- Apply literacy skills
- Organise and apply the dance concepts
- Apply technical skills
- Realise meaning through expressive skills



Task C: Character Manipulation

In this task students will explore a variety of characters from The Dinner Party while developing their choreographic skills from a diversity of active roles. This activity also primarily explores the theme of manipulation from The Dinner Party and allows students to create duet work while providing the opportunity for students to take on a directorial choreographic role.

- Separate students into groups of four and either assign students one of the below roles each or allow them to select one
 - The Director
 - The Observer
 - The Manipulator
 - The Manipulated
- Explain to students that the Director will provide choreographic instructions to the Manipulator, who will move the Manipulated student accordingly. The Observer will watch this process, taking choreographic notes and drawing shapes or moments that are interesting or exemplify the characters intentions.
- The director may give any choreographic instructions either freely, from the choreographic notes in this education resource or from their own motifs and movement sequences developed so far, while students explore how their character would react and embody these instructions in their role.
- The manipulator may move students whole bodies and be choreographic in their manipulation so the result is a responsive and collaborative duet, rather than one person shifting another.
- When observing and writing choreographic notes, students may include how to make the movement more interesting from their perspective as an audience.
- Students should take turns rotating through all of the roles and may like to compare their notes and drawings at the end of the activity.

Before commencing this activity, ensure students are comfortable taking directions and moving one another.

A class discussion that explores students experiences of this process may also help students to develop movement.

This task uses the following 21st century skills

- Creative Thinking
- Communication
- Critical Thinking
- Collaboration and Teamwork
- Personal and Social Skills

Relevant Senior Dance Syllabus Objectives:

- Demonstrate an understanding of dance concepts and skills
- Apply technical skills
- Realise meaning through expressive skills
- Create dance to communicate meaning

Task D: Inner Dialogue

This activity will allow students the opportunity to choreograph from a written stimulus, an approach taken by the EDC dancers when developing *The Dinner Party*.

- Begin by setting a context for students that is relatable and accessible, such as the nerves experienced before performing on stage or delivering a speech.
- Students should then write the key words, emotions and actions that occur during this experience, and build into a written dialogue of this experience.
- This can then be developed into a series of small gestures that exemplify the key words and eventually a short movement sequence that explores this experience.

This task uses the following 21st century skills

- Creative Thinking
- Communication
- Critical Thinking
- Personal and Social Skills
- Information, Communication Technologies (ICT) Skills

Relevant Senior Dance Syllabus Objectives:

- Demonstrate an understanding of dance concepts and skills
- Apply literacy skills
- Organise and apply the dance concepts
- Apply technical skills
- Realise meaning through expressive skills
- Create dance to communicate meaning



Task E: Choreographic Example

During this task, students will experience and extend on a section of choreography from EDC's The Dinner Party. This activity provides teachers and students with the opportunity to learn repertoire for replication and as an inspiration for creating their own movement phrase.

See section 10 Repertoire Notes.

- Students should begin by learning one step or line of choreography from the repertoire notes.
- From here, join students into small groups and have them combine their movements together into a fluid motif. Combine groups of students again to blend motifs into a short movement sequence.
- To further develop the complexity of this sequence, students can layer choreographic devices and add dynamics, canons, spatial relationships and props to their movement.
- Students should also be encouraged to consider their posture and other body language when sitting around the table. What mood will they convey about their character if they perform their movements with a straight back? Slumped over the table? Hands closer to the body etc.

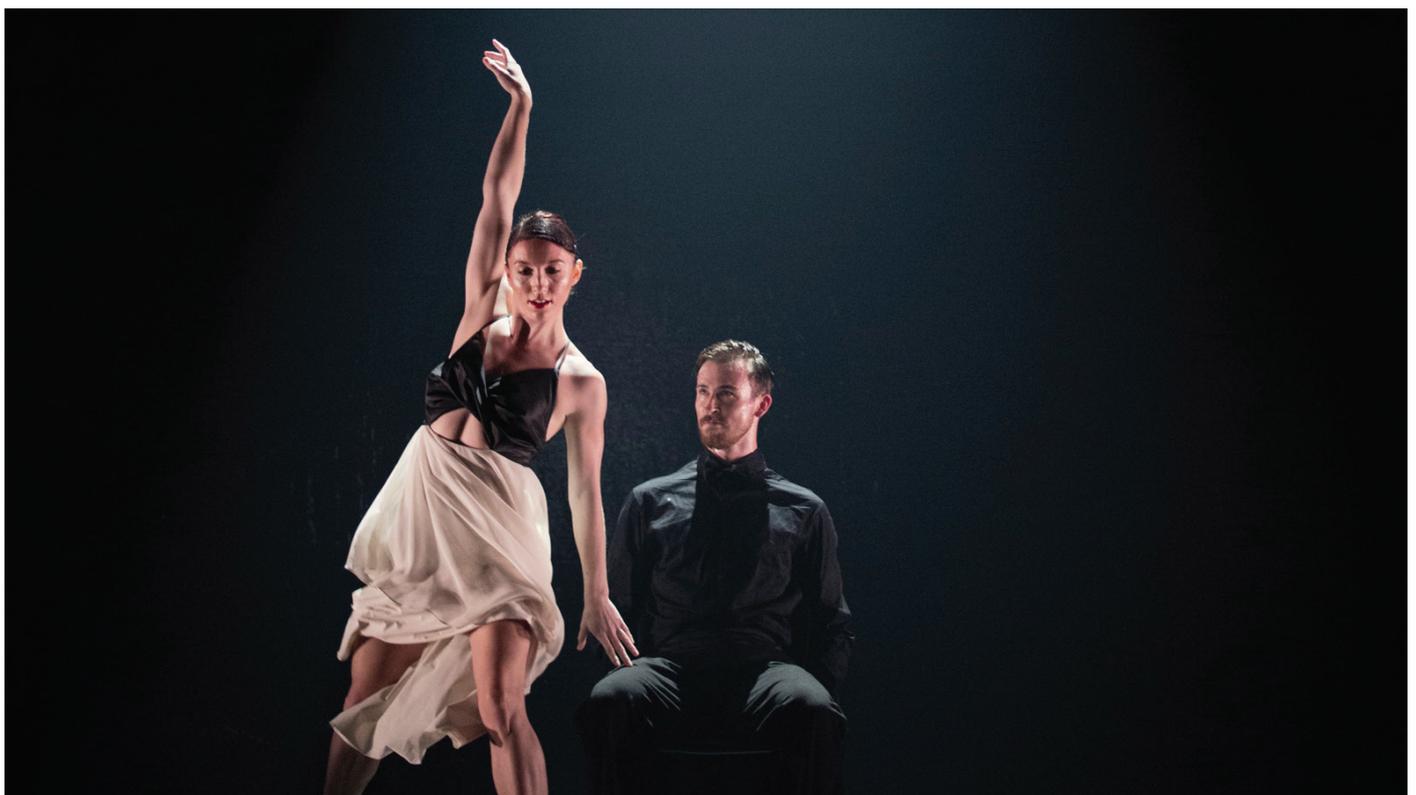
Students may also like to develop their own contexts for a dinner party and collaborate with their peers to develop movement for this. This allows students to build their own scene and react individually, assisting them in developing their own choreographic intentions and styles through improvisation.

This task uses the following 21st century skills

- Creative Thinking
- Communication
- Critical Thinking
- Collaboration and Teamwork
- Personal and Social Skills

Relevant Senior Dance Syllabus Objectives:

- Demonstrate an understanding of dance concepts and skills
- Organise and apply the dance concepts
- Apply technical skills
- Realise meaning through expressive skills
- Create dance to communicate meaning



10 REPERTOIRE NOTES: THE TABLE SCENE

See section 7 Structure Breakdown for scene 2

- Stretch flat hands forward on the table and then pull them back towards self
- Change hands from fists then back to flat hands, repeat with right hand, left hand, back to flat hands, then repeat with right hand and then left hand
- Create a circular motion with right hand across the table, curving the body to the side, then sit back up tall, repeat on left side of body
- Pull left hand back across the table towards body, then repeat with the right hand
- Shrug shoulders and on return lower head and chest into a C curve
- Lift right elbow from the shoulder and lay head onto arm, then return body and arm back to neutral Left hand is placed over the right hand
- Tap fingers
- Then grab chin with right hand, push it up to the ceiling and then back to neutral
- For 8 counts – interact with others at the table
- Lay hands on the table and look up at the host, then grab your chair and pull in close to the table
- Your left hand reaches across your body as if you're grabbing your neighbours dinner setting, then repeat with your right hand
- Bring your right hand then your left hand behind your back and cross your fingers in a promise
- Move your chair out from the table
- Place hands back on to the table
- Swing legs over to the right side of your chair
- Run around chair, keeping hands on the table
- Place your right hand forward splayed while the left hand pulls it back across the table

11 APPRECIATION TASKS

These tasks aim to develop students ability to describe, explain, evaluate and critically analyse dance works through the responding strand. Throughout these activities, students will be able to unpack and explore The Dinner Party through the elements of dance, choreographic devices and production elements used by Natalie Weir.

Task A: Write

This task will allow students the opportunity to critically reflect, analyse, evaluate and justify their professional opinion of The Dinner Party.

- Begin this task by asking students to describe their impression of the work and why they believe this referring to specific examples from the performance work.
- Students should then complete a review that details and justifies their artistic opinion of the work. Students may also like to select a focus such as the characters, choreographic devices or elements of dance used.
- Once written, students can swap their reviews and compare and contrast their written work. Students may take this a step further and consider the opinions of published media reviews also.

This task uses the following 21st century skills

- Creative Thinking
- Communication
- Critical Thinking
- Collaboration and Teamwork
- Personal and Social Skills
- Information, Communication Technologies (ICT) Skills

Relevant syllabus objectives:

- Demonstrate an understanding of dance concepts and skills
- Apply literacy skills
- Organise and apply the dance concepts
- Analyse and interpret dance concepts and skills
- Evaluate dance, justifying the use of dance concepts and skills

Task B: Explore: Creative Concepts

This task encourages students to think creatively when it comes to the structure and storyboarding of choreographic works.

- Firstly print out the storyboard included in these notes and cut each scene or small sections of events out for students.
- Then have students physically rearrange the order of events or implement chance to re-determine the flow of choreography.
- Students should then consider the following questions:
 - How has the re-sequencing of events changed the original story line?
 - Would you change the order of events again? Why and how?
 - What would happen if you changed just the start and end of the work? Or if you removed several scenes?
 - What scenes of your own would you include?

Students may take this activity further and develop a motif for each scene or a short sequence of movement and rehearse their order of events in groups. Ensure students consider the transitions between each scene also.

This task uses the following 21st century skills

- Creative Thinking
- Communication
- Critical Thinking

Relevant syllabus objectives:

- Demonstrate an understanding of dance concepts and skills
- Apply literacy skills
- Organise and apply the dance concepts



Task C: Choreographic Notes

This activity allows students to reflect upon, describe and explain their own choreography and promotes the sharing of choreographic resources, ideas and concepts amongst students.

Choreographic notes are used by choreographers and their assistants to record both movement and the intentions which get lost in merely observing video footage.

- After creating a motif or small sequence of movement, students can write their work into a series of choreographic notes to be swapped around the class and interpreted by other students.
- Drawings may be included in the original copy of the notes or added by other students to emphasise shapes and dynamics.
- By layering the elements of dance onto these sequences, students can begin to consider how they effectively communicate the intent of the movement. A table detailing several of the elements of dance present in *The Dinner Party* has been included for your reference.

This task uses the following 21st century skills

- Creative Thinking
- Communication
- Critical Thinking
- Collaboration and Teamwork
- Personal and Social Skills
- Information, Communication Technologies (ICT) Skills

Relevant syllabus objectives:

- Demonstrate an understanding of dance concepts and skills
- Apply literacy skills
- Organise and apply the dance concepts
- Realise meaning through expressive skills
- Create dance to communicate meaning



Suggested Elements of Dance:

Some of the table has been filled out already, encourage your students to complete the rest.

Space	Time	Dynamics	Relationships
Variety of levels: jumps, rolls on floor and standing middle level work.	Movements performed in canon, unison and individually around the table.	Contrast of slow, suspended movements with sharp, accented gestures.	Dynamic duo performed between the Host and the Hostess.
Sharp movements forwards, backwards and side to side.		Through twitchy, fidgeting and short, sharp movements, the insecure, party girl reflects her shy and scared nature.	All dancers interact with and around the table.

Additional Inquiry Questions:

- What elements of dance did Natalie Weir use and how did these develop the storyline of the work?
- What choreographic devices did you notice and how did these add interest to the work?
- How did the production elements enhance the characters personalities and intentions?
- How would you describe Weir's style of choreography? Make a list of words that detail your reaction to what you see and how it makes you feel.



12 SAFE DANCE PRACTICES

In order to ensure students are comfortable, confident and producing their best possible creative work in the classroom, a safe dance environment is crucial. Teachers can play a fundamental role in ensuring this occurs for their students.

If you would like to learn more about safe dance practices in your classroom, you can book a school workshop with our EDC dancers.

Techniques to promote improvisation and contact duo work:

- Encourage students to stand in a circle around the room, facing outwards with all mirrors covered, while the teacher stands in the middle of the circle. Students can leave their eyes open and move freely while the teacher gives directions for movement. For beginners to improvisation, encourage students to create angles and rounded shapes and write words with different parts of their bodies. Allow students the time to either write down or visually record the movement they create.
- Set up a buddy system where students can choreograph and improvise freely and then discuss ideas with their buddy before presenting to the class or the teacher. This allows them to build confidence in their ideas and refine their work prior to being watched by the class.
- Additionally, you can read out directions or lines of movement for students to interpret through improvisation. Students can work in pairs and draw one another dancing and furthermore interpret one another's drawings into further choreography.
- Have students build a rapport with their contact duo partner to ensure they are comfortable exploring movement together. This can be achieved through ice breaker activities and trust exercises over a period of time.

Tips from the EDC Company Dancers:

- Ensure students have enough space to practice movements full out without being afraid of injuring other dancers, or themselves.
- Allow them the chance to learn, mark and perform in small groups, not just split groups at the end of the class, otherwise alter the choreography to suit the space.
- Ensure students are aware of the floor and surfaces they are dancing on and whether bare feet or socks are best.
- Encourage students to be responsible for their own sweat and any blood during class and cleaning it appropriately to ensure the safety and consideration of the other dancers in the class.
- Make sure students are aware of the ceiling height for jumps and lifts, as well as any poles that may be in the dance studio.
- Teachers should always emphasise the importance of basic parallel position, knees tracking over the second toe in a plie and correct ankle/pelvis/ribs/shoulder/head alignment.

Ultimately, the students are collectively responsible for everyone's safety in the room – EDC Dancer, Isabella Hood



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Education notes by April Williams

Cover and internal photos by Megan Cullen from "The Host"(2015).

Back cover photo by David Kelly