

Preshow: The Puzzle

Welcome to the Audio Introduction of ***The Puzzle*** by Australia's most prolific and esteemed playwright, David Williamson. The world premiere season of ***The Puzzle*** is presented by State Theatre Company of South Australia at the Dunstan Playhouse.

The Audio Described performances will take place on Saturday, 28 September, with the briefing at 1pm before the performance at 2pm, and on Monday 30 September, with the briefing at 5.30pm before a 6.30pm performance, which is followed by a post-show Q&A.

The performance runs for approximately two hours, including an interval, and contains occasional coarse language.

Drew is a middle-aged accountant. He decides to try and reconnect with his feisty, free-spirited daughter Cassie and books what he thinks is a Mediterranean history cruise for them. He has no idea that 'lifestyle' is a code word for a swingers cruise.

Among the passengers are two suburban couples, Craig and Mandy, Michele and Brian, who are bored with their dull and routine marriages and are on the cruise to add some 'spice' to their lives.

1. Set & Lighting description

The play takes place on a cruise ship, with several decks. The multi-level staging, with steps and pathways, creates a feeling of distance between each deck, and each area on the ship. The areas are the cocktail lounge, the sun deck, the jigsaw table, Michele and Brian's stateroom suite, Craig and Mandy's cabin, and their home balcony, elevated away from the right side of the stage.

During scene changes, the passengers mill between and around the decks, performing different activities, while the Bar Waitress tidies up. The lighting changes hues and intensities, giving a sense of time passing on the cruise.

Across the back of the stage stretches a ceiling height horizontal cloth painted with a rippling texture, like frosted glass. Throughout the performance, the cloth's colour gradient changes, fading between blue, sea-green, and purple, depicting different times of the day at sea.

The cocktail lounge has a curved bar constructed with layers of dark and light timber, lit underneath the counter-top with warm lighting. Three hexagonal stools with timber seats and yellow geometric frames are set by the bar, and the lounge also features four white retro chairs with yellow cushions, accompanied by a low drinks table. In the bar area, the floor and two semi-circular steps depict a graphic mosaic-style painting of a pineapple, vibrantly coloured with long green fronds. An

orange glass pineapple lamp sits atop the bar, and three exposed lightbulbs in geometric pineapple-shaped shades hang above.

Two semi-circular steps lead up to the deck with Michele and Brian's stateroom suite. It has a large circular bed with sparkly silver cushions, flanked by two warm lamps mounted on a wooden bedhead. Warm light emanates from beneath the bed. Set inside the bedhead is a blank gauze used as a projection screen throughout the play, including images of the jigsaw in progress and words denoting the passage of time such as 'The Next Day' or 'Three months earlier...'

To the right of the stateroom is the sun deck, a raised platform with two bright yellow deck chairs. A nautical security light is fixed to the wall beside the chairs. Two rounded white columns, almost ceiling height, feature on either side of the stage, between decks.

At the front of the stage is the Jigsaw table, a low circular timber table on a darker wooden dais with a ridged surface, approximately 4 metres in diameter. The dais extends beyond the front edge of the stage. Two speckled white terrazzo stools are set near the table. The jigsaw's progress is projected on the bed-head screen, as it is slowly pieced together.

Craig and Mandy's suite features a double bed with white patterned sheets and a textured gold bed runner. Wide vertical white blinds, approximately 4 metres high, are to the right of the double bed.

In an early scene, we see Mandy and Craig up on their apartment balcony, which has a black painted railing. The small balcony is crowded with lush potted and hanging plants, lit by a string of warm fairy lanterns.

A neon tube light curved into a halo shape is suspended centrally from the ceiling.

The main lighting has a blue hue, punctuated by pools of warm light wherever the action is happening.

2. Cast, Characters and Costumes

The key passengers on board the cruise ship are:

- Drew and Cassie, a father and 20 something daughter, who are trying to get to know each other better. Drew has no idea that 'lifestyle' is a code word for a swingers cruise
- Mandy and Craig, a couple in their 40s who are new to swinging . They're on the cruise more at Craig's urging than Mandy's choice.
- Michele and Brian, a couple in their 30s are seasoned swingers and regular cruisers.

Drew is played by Erik Thomson. Drew is a conservative, middle-aged accountant, tall, of medium build, and handsome with a silvery thatch of wavy hair. He wears

discreet gold-rimmed glasses which he takes off and on as he reads, does the jigsaw, or chats with others. When we first meet him Drew is dressed in beige lightweight, cargo pants, an open-necked, short-sleeved, cotton shirt, that's untucked. It's dark blue with splotches of colour and he wears white sox with his blue crocs. In the final scene he wears a loose Hawaiian-style shirt in tropical greens and grey hues.

Cassie, Drew's daughter, is played by Ah-honum Aybebe. She is feisty, spirited and worldly-wise. Cassie is quite short, brown-skinned with a slight and slender build. Her waist-length black hair is braided intricately in a box-braid style, and a loose, single braid framing either side of her striking face. Her orange, beaded earrings dangle and swing as she moves and she wears orange towelling slippers. She dresses in layers and mixes and matches outfits in shades of orange and yellow of different fabrics: A chiffon jacket of black and white checks with tropical green hues, a yellow, midriff, tank-top. Long, orange tie-dyed skirts or one covered in bananas. A frayed denim mini skirt with her orange bikini top. In the final scene Cassie wears a long, orange shift, with pencil straps.

Mandy and Craig, in their 40s, have been married for many years. She's happy with life and work. He's bored and thinks a little swinging will spice things up.

Mandy, played by Ansuya Nathan, is a publisher. She is an articulate, smart, beautiful woman of Indian origin. She has waist-length, straight black hair that she wears loose. Of medium height and curvaceous, Mandy mostly wears bold colours and styles that show her curves and she loves her Birkenstocks. We meet her first in the ship's jigsaw room, in an ankle-length red and pink striped sun-frock, knotted at the neck. In a scene on their balcony, set three months earlier, she is dressed in lycra activewear, a red shirt and black pants. In their cabin, Mandy wears a full-length purple kimono. To meet Michele and Brian in the cocktail bar she wears a garish, tight-fitting frock in red satin fabric. The frock hugs every curve of her voluptuous body and her platform-soled sandals are a matching red. The frock has a thigh-high split at the front. In the second half she appears in a red and white striped full skirt topped with a white, long-sleeved, cotton shirt that's tucked into the skirt. In the closing scene she swaps the white shirt for a cerise, short-sleeved blouse, knotted at the waist.

Craig, Mandy's husband, is played by Nathan O'Keefe. Craig is an earnest recently-published associate professor, he's tall and lean with thin legs and a thin face. His fair, wavy hair is combed straight back from a receding hairline and curls at the ends, on the back of his neck. He has a close-cropped beard and a fair, wispy moustache. We first meet Craig on the balcony of their home, three months before the cruise. He wears a dark blue, long-sleeved, business shirt with white cuffs and collar, tucked into beige chinos with a brown leather belt. We next meet him in their cabin, on board ship, wearing an oversized, short-sleeved shirt, patterned with swirls of orange and cream, over cream cotton pants rolled to his calf, and brown leather Birkenstocks. When they meet Michele and Brian in the cocktail bar he

wears a short-sleeved red & white spotted polo shirt. The morning after, in their cabin, he's back in the shirt, unbuttoned to reveal a hairy chest and funky trunks.

Michele and Brian, in their 30s and married for several years, are seasoned and regular swingers. They're on the cruise to meet and enjoy NEW swingers.

Michele is played by Anna Lindner. Michele is in Marketing with a flamboyant personality. She's confident and loud, of medium height and a slim, shapely build. She has long coppery-red hair that sweeps past her shoulders, with a severe fringe cut straight across. Michele likes bold pinks and apricots and wears culottes or wide-legged pants in soft, floaty fabrics with fitted tops. The feel of the fabrics she wears are part of her sensuousness. We first meet Michele on board ship, in their stateroom. She is wearing a bright pink, sun-top, knotted at the waist, over pink, patterned, loose-fitting pants. She's in bare feet and carries a pink straw hat. The night they meet Craig and Mandy in the cocktail bar she wears a blended pink and apricot, soft, floaty, outfit: Wide culottes topped with a loose-fitting blouse, knotted at the waist and raffia platform sandals. The morning after, in their stateroom, she wears a mid-length pink kimono. In the second half she saunters in wearing dark sunglasses, in a one piece black swimsuit, with a pink front and back panel and her open kimono floats around her as she strides the decks. Later she opts for a pink, chiffon, jumpsuit, with puff sleeves. On the last day she wears an ankle-length, fitted, bright pink, sun-frock with pencil straps and a thigh-high split at the front of the frock.

Brian, Michele's husband, is played by Chris Asimos. Brian is an electronics and IT engineer, using AI intelligence to do impossible things. He's tall, good-looking, has short, dark hair and is muscle-bound, with a six pack and bulging biceps. He swaggers rather than strides and has a brashness about him. Brian's fashion sense is...unusual! He always has a leather bracelet tied round his right wrist. He prefers fitted clothes and often wears clashing colours and patterns. We first meet him with Mandy in their stateroom. He's wearing a rust-coloured, short-sleeved shirt over mauve, patterned board shorts and brown leather loafers. When he meets Mandy and Craig in the cocktail bar he wears bright green cotton jeans, a fitted, mustard shirt, patterned with pineapples, and a pale pink, sports jacket. When he removes the jacket the short sleeves of his shirt are tight around his bulging biceps. The morning after, in their stateroom he wears a white singlet with dark blue, short PJs. Later, on the sun deck, he wears only his board shorts, his loafers and sunglasses, revealing his muscled torso. When he meets Craig later in the cocktail bar he's wearing a pink and blue short-sleeved shirt, unbuttoned over a white singlet, with green and white striped shorts.

Cocktail Bar Waitress (an occasional non-speaking role played by the assistant stage manager) is dressed in a grey, long-sleeved shirt, black pants and a black waistcoat with her name badge pinned on it. Her long brown hair is pulled back in a ponytail.

3. Creatives

The Creative Team are:

Playwright:	David Williamson
Director:	Shannon Rush
Designer:	Ailsa Paterson
Lighting Designer:	Mark Shelton
Composer	Andrew Howard
Sound Designer	Patrick Pages-Oliver
Video Designer:	Mark Oakley
Intimacy Coach	Ruth Fallon

Getting to the Venue

The production takes place at the Dunstan Playhouse at the Adelaide Festival Centre.

Adelaide Festival Centre is easily accessible by public transport, including the tram (stop at Railway Station), trains, buses and a free bus service that operates on a loop throughout the city and North Adelaide, with stops on the corner of King William Road and North Terrace.

There is an accessible drop off area located off Festival Drive under the Riverbank Footbridge, with a lift to the promenade level.

You can enter the Dunstan Playhouse by foot from North Terrace, Adelaide Railway Station, Adelaide Oval, or King William Road.

From North Terrace, walk down the laneway alongside SkyCity Casino. From King William Road, you can walk over Festival Plaza (there's a lift and escalator down to the Dunstan Playhouse promenade level) or along the Walk of Fame from Elder Park.

Assistance in the venue is offered by venue staff.

This concludes the audio introduction for The Puzzle. Your Describers are Hen Vaughan and Kay Jamieson.

For more information on audio described performances please contact Access2Arts using the email address audio.describer@access2arts.org.au or speak to us after the performance.