

Dakota of the White Flats | Queensland Senior Syllabus Connections

Red Leaps' *Dakota of the White Flats* is a devised adaptation of the novella of the same name by Philip Ridley. The piece provides multiple opportunities for students & teachers of Queensland to find links to their work across the Dance, Drama, Arts syllabi. The show speaks to a range of Unit Options presented in those curriculums, as outlined below.

Issues

Arts (Unit Option A)

Phillip Ridley's work often explores challenging contemporary issues, in the case of *Dakota of the White Flats*, within a nebulously-localised low-decile urban environment. Students will see themes of urban decay, community, identity, and social justice that emerge through the actors use of voice and movement.

Celebration

Arts (Unit Option B), Dance (Unit Option A)

Within the confines described in *Issues*, the protagonists *Dakota* and *Treacle* uplift and restore aspects of their community, celebrating the identities and sense of belonging that is integral to their immediate neighbourhood and families, in the face of urban isolationism.

Community

Arts (Option B), Dance (Option A)

Dakota reflects key contemporary performance trends, using physical theatre to move beyond text-based drama. It embraces post-dramatic, ensemble-driven creation, where meaning emerges through movement, space, and imagery rather than dialogue. This hybrid form fuses dance, theatre, visual art, and poetry into a visually expressive mode of storytelling.

Technology

Dance (Unit Option D)

Dakota of the White Flats weaves dance and technologies constantly. The show utilises live electronic music, projection mapping, shadow play, performer-operated lighting, among other techniques. Much of this work is brechtian and exposed to the audience, so students can see how the moments of theatre magic are being created.

Reflect

Drama (Unit Option B)

Dakota of the White Flats reflects the lived experiences of Philip Ridley, raised in British tenements, as interpreted and decontextualised by a company of New Zealand devisors. The work reflects the truth and authenticity of urban poverty and generational trauma while simultaneously exploring the capacity of community to heal itself.

Challenge

Drama (Unit Option C)

This work fuses the DNA of classical theatre with modern innovation. *Dakota Pink* becomes a modern tragic hero, her hubris and downfall explored through by choral ensemble. Red Leap reimagines these traditions through physical storytelling, urban settings, and non-linear structures that expose contemporary social inequality.

Commentary

Drama (Unit Option D)

Ridley's text exposes social inequality, giving voice to marginalised communities and challenging audience complacency. Through poetic realism, physical theatre, and symbolic imagery this work transforms lived experience into powerful social commentary rooted in collaboration and visual storytelling.

Conventions used in the performance include:

- Choral Movement & Extended Movement Sequences
- Stylised movement
- Direct Address & Narration
- Dreamscapes and Dream Sequences,
- Multimedia integration (use of live, electronic music, shadow-play and projection mapping)
- Actors in Multi-Role performances
- Soundscape