



STORYTELLING FOR HEALING

PANEL

EXTEND THE EXPERIENCE – *LOSE TO WIN*

BRIEFING DOCUMENT

Featured Artist:

Mandela Mathia

Mandela Mathia was born in South Sudan and spent much of his childhood in northern Sudan and Egypt due to the civil war. He arrived in Australia in 2008.

Since graduating from NIDA, his theatre credits include *Sami in Paradise* and *The Cherry Orchard* (Belvoir), *The Rolling Stone* (Outhouse Theatre Company), *Prize Fighter* (national tour with La Boite), and productions with Sport for Jove including *Othello*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Macbeth*. He also performed the title role in *HAMLET* with the Sydney Foreign Actors Association.

Context and Purpose

Students will have already viewed the performance. This panel is designed to extend and deepen their understanding of its themes and key questions.

Drawing inspiration from Belvoir St Theatre's *Lose to Win*, the panel explores how storytelling through performance and creative practice can:

- strengthen identity
- foster belonging
- build understanding
- support healing

The discussion will also consider how artists shape, curate, and share stories, and the responsibilities that come with representing lived experience.

Preparing for the Panel (Student Briefing)

This panel is not just about listening, it is about engaging. Students are encouraged to arrive ready to reflect, question, and respond.

The following prompts are designed to stimulate thinking and support meaningful participation.

1. Starting with Self: What stories do I carry?

- What parts of your identity feel most visible? Which feel unseen?
- Is there a story about you that is often misunderstood or untold?
- When do you feel a strong sense of belonging? When do you not?

2. Story and Power: Who gets heard?

- Whose stories are most visible in performance, media, or culture?
- Whose stories are missing or told by others?
- What makes a story feel authentic or truthful?

3. Impact: Why do stories matter?

- Think of a story or performance that stayed with you, why did it matter?
- Did it change how you see yourself or others?
- Can storytelling create change, or does it primarily build understanding?

4. Responsibility: If I tell a story...

- What responsibilities come with telling your own story? Someone else's?
- Where is the line between sharing and protecting?
- How can storytelling be both powerful and vulnerable?

5. Curiosity: What do I want to know?

Students should arrive with at least one question they genuinely want to ask. For example:

- How do artists decide which stories are ready to be shared?
- How do you tell stories involving others ethically?
- Can storytelling be healing if the story is still unresolved?

Curriculum Connections

Senior Secondary (Years 10–12):

- English
- English as an Additional Language or Dialect
- Essential English (Applied)
- Drama
- The Arts (v9.0 Drama)
- Humanities and Social Sciences

Suggested Pre-Lesson Activity

Preparing for the Panel: Story, Identity and Voice

Duration: 45–60 minutes

Suitable for: Years 9–12

Learning Intentions

Students will:

- reflect on identity and belonging
- analyse the role of storytelling
- develop questions for the panel
- practise respectful discussion

Success Criteria

Students can:

- articulate ideas about identity and representation
- contribute thoughtfully to discussion
- generate meaningful questions
- demonstrate awareness of diverse perspectives

Example Lesson Plan

Lesson Sequence

1. Warm-Up: Quick Write (10 minutes)

Prompts:

- A story people often assume about me is...
- I feel like I belong when...
- A moment that shaped how I see myself was...

Students write privately. Emphasise, this is for reflection only, sharing is optional.

2. Pair Discussion (10 minutes)

Students discuss one idea (not necessarily personal):

- What makes a story meaningful?
- Why do people tell stories about their lives?

3. Whole Class Discussion (15 minutes)

- Whose stories are most visible?
- Whose stories are missing? Why?
- Can storytelling shift perspectives? How?
- What responsibilities come with telling real stories?

Teacher note: Guide discussion toward ideas of representation, voice, and perspective.

4. Introducing the Panel (5 minutes)

Share the following framing:

You will attend a panel inspired by contemporary theatre work exploring identity, belonging, and storytelling. The artists will discuss how they shape and share stories, and how storytelling can build understanding and support healing.

5. Question Development (10–15 minutes)

Students write 2–3 questions for the panel. Encourage:

- open-ended questions
- genuine curiosity
- respectful phrasing

6. Reflection (5 minutes)

Students complete:

- One idea I am thinking about...
- One question I want answered...
- One way I will listen respectfully...

Further Information

For enquiries, please contact: education@qpac.com.au