

Director's Note

Welcome to Poland. Contemporary stories of children who have survived to adulthood in extreme isolation are the springboard. These children organise themselves on the basis of received ideas, hierarchies and rituals that have not been experienced in a "normal" social context. Poland is a room in which lines of control and desire are complex, yet clear to those who have to survive in it. The limits of violence are acceptable. The technics of the theatre and the narrative of the room have been reconciled. Story-telling has found its primal usefulness in navigating the catastrophe of abandonment. A form of happiness has been achieved. When this simulacrum is put under extreme pressure, what results is both crazy and beautiful.

For *Life is a Dream* is crazy-beautiful: Brute force and fairytale, philosophical bewilderment and Catholic affirmation. Castles, princesses and clowns mix with Spanish social mores and breathtakingly modern psychology. Nihilism precedes a reassuring Renaissance-ending. In this production, an attempt at fidelity has been made to translate these extremes, alongside the language and the cultural and historical context of the play.

This production of *Life is a Dream* was originally produced by the Victorian College of Arts and Music in 2008. Over the last three years I have been inspired by the support and resources provided by the college and its students. The cast and I would like to extend our thanks to Sara Koller and all the staff whose generosity, enthusiasm and expertise were vital to this project's inception with special thanks to Richard Murphet for his trust and insights.

A note on the translation...

Beatrix Christian has written a wonderful translation of which I have used fragments, inter-mingled with other "poorer" forms of spoken language. Her version is muscular and poetic - the best prose version around.

- Daniel Schlusser, November 2009

THANK YOU: Todd and Marcus at The Store Room, Pia Johnson, Mary Thompson at TS Publicity, Lauren Bialkower and Kristy Doggett at Melbourne Festival, Kara Ward at Arts House, Tim Bright, Duraan Reid, Rohan Meddings, Emma Valente, Michael Camilleri, RMIT, event equipment, Chris Wenn.

Very Special thanks to Eugene Schlusser and to the original assistant directors Samara Hersch, Paola Unger and Nadia Townsend.

Program cover image by Jeff Busby. All other production photography and publicity design by Daisy Noyes.



The Store Room Presents:

Life is a Dream

Adapted from the play by Pedro Calderón de la Barca.

Translated by Beatrix Christian.

What does the fly understand of the window pane it bumps against till it reaches the point of exhaustion? Nothing in nature offers any such obstacle to its natural instinct as this: a transparent one. We know no more of the transparent void which separates us from others than the fly knows of the insuperable object of that glass surface.

Baudrillard – Cool Memories IV 1995-2000

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