

SHARING MIDNIGHT:

National and Generational Perspectives on a Theatrical Journey

Through Japan and Australia



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Abstract

This study focuses on performance for and by young people at the intersection between national identity and generational identity. The study began by researching the different national perspectives surrounding the contemporary Japanese/Australian theatrical production *Once Upon a Midnight*. As the production developed, generational difference became a strong discourse inside and outside the rehearsal room, leading the participants to reassess their cultural assumptions. This thesis demonstrates that when interculturalism is explored in relation to contemporary performance by established artists and academics, the emphasis is primarily on national-cultural factors with less regard for generational-cultural factors. When emerging artists and academics enter the discussion this emphasis is reversed.

The study explores *Once Upon a Midnight*'s festival background and the playwright's introduction to national-cultural debate through the works of Edward Said, Rustom Bharucha and Noël Grieg. It further incorporates the generational-cultural perspectives raised by Mark Davis and Ryan Heath, and develops through the work of Rob White and Johanna Wyn, Mary Bucholtz, Bryan S. Turner, and Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim, highlighting the production's position as a cultural artefact situated within conflicting frames. The study then goes on to chart the development of *Once Upon a Midnight* itself from character and story creation, and the pop cultural references running beneath the text, into thematic decisions that would impact not only the play's narrative, but the cast and creative team's discussions inside and outside rehearsal as generational-cultural conflict became the overarching journey.

Through a candid analytical account of the artistic process and performance outcome of *Once Upon a Midnight*, and through audience and critical responses and comparisons with a similar work, this study asserts that the forces of nationalism and generationalism must be considered in tandem. Contemporary intercultural performance is a combination of these strong cultural influences.

Some of the tension between these cultural influences can be resolved through transnationalism, as established by Arianna Dagnino. This study investigates cultures as constantly evolving, not only through the force of globalisation overcoming national borders, but through the changing attitudes of new generations and their demonstrated ability to reposition the concept of national-cultural perspective within a wider cultural frame.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signed: _____

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