



What are the trees doing here?

 **LA MAMA** presents

an O.T.H.A.N Theatre Company presentation

“it’s about... **THE SUBLIME**... in search of”



Mankind’s futile attempt to control Nature

that’s the Sublime

 **LA MAMA**

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Our sincerest thanks to the many volunteers who generously give their time in support of La Mama. La Mama’s Committee of Management, staff and its wider theatrical community acknowledge that La Mama Theatre is on traditional land of the Kulin Nation. We give our respect to the Elders of this country and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people past, present and future. We acknowledge all events take place on stolen lands and that sovereignty was never ceded.

La Mama is financially assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council – its arts funding and advisory body, the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria - Department of Premier and Cabinet, and the City of Melbourne through the Arts and Culture triennial funding program.



Devised and directed by Lloyd Jones with The Ensemble

26 - 30 JUNE, 2019 • LA MAMA COURTHOUSE

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Acknowledgements

The Ensemble: Jo-Anne Armstrong, Pippa Bainbridge, Ayse Bayramoglu, Jessica Cherry, Sandra Chui, Roselle Overland, Tim Ferris, Greg Fryer, Amber Hart, Maureen Hartley, Lisa Inman, Justine Jansz, Rosemary Johns, Zac Kazepis, Elena Larkin, Peter Murphy, Adrian Prosen, Elnaz Sheshgelani, Hannah Spracklan-Holl, Raymond Triggs, Darren Vizer, Scott Welsh, Howard Wilkinson, Rebecca Mezei and Evangeline Oster

Set and Lighting Organisation: Hayley Fox, Lisa Inman with Evangeline Oster

Light and Sound Technician: Lisa Inman

Sound Collage: Zac Kazepis

La Mama staff: Liz Jones, Caitlin Dullard, Sophia Constantine and support staff

We would like to thank all of the above for their generous support and acceptance, without prejudice, of the integrity behind our risk-taking process over many decades.

Director’s Notes

This work was born in February this year. Actually, it’s probably in the process of birth for many years. In this case, it came about when I visited the Art Gallery of New South Wales and came upon a Retrospective Exhibition of the work of Tony Tuckson. I only knew a small amount about his work, as he was seen by many in the Art world as a quiet achiever. In fact, his first major exhibition was thirty years after his initial beginnings as a painter. Tuckson was an astonishing painter and draftsman, who never ever seemed to want his ego to be shown, for example he avoided the tradition of signing the artist’s name, or even providing some clue in his title. Almost all of Tuckson’s work had, as a title, “Untitled”!

My particular interest in the exhibition came when I had a sudden explosion of excitement because in his writing, Tuckson, when describing his overall philosophy, hit a nerve. Having previously determined to further develop the work we made in December of last year, suddenly I was drawn to see what could be made of Tuckson’s (and others’) philosophic thinking about art in general. Because here that the concept of “THE SUBLIME” would not stay out of my focus.

With the support of The Ensemble members, I found myself hungry for the extensive information available regarding the sublime in Visual Art, Poetry and Music. I then began to find ways in which we could deploy these concepts from centuries including the twentieth, to the theatrical space. I am unashamed to say that I have developed a concept which is called non-theatre theatre. It is not by any means a new thought, but it is one I feel is not very often, if at all, adopted in the Australian theatrical community.

The notion of non-theatre theatre does not imply antipathy to other art formats. It comes, from my point of view, because of my training in the visual arts, and my comprehension and interpretation of the history of Western Art across many centuries and especially the last 200 years. The influence on the non-theatre theatre is drawn from a very wide range of European, USA and Australian artists, including Nolan and Boyd. But I must not omit J W Turner of the 19th Century.

Many amongst you may not be familiar with any of these artists. I strongly recommend that you try taking in the intensive expression of life and though that they offer. Start at NGV Melbourne.

Some thoughts from our research:

Three aesthetic concepts established during the Romantic era included the Sublime. Edmund Burke (1757) refers to the thrill and danger of confronting untamed Nature and its overwhelming forces, such as thunderstorms and deep chasms. The Sublime, to Edmund Burke, is a humbling reminder that humanity is not all-powerful.

Challenging, exciting, incomprehensible, humbling,and more.

Awe inspiring... and all-swallowing in devouring ‘its’ succinct meanings along the way.

Since 1900, there has been a rush toward doing things “fast”. This cultural turnabout continues into the 21st Century... and for some, a severe departure indeed the degradation of the notion of *what is art?*

Surveying the historical advance of Music made through Beethoven, we may define it as the winning of a faculty previously withheld: in virtue of that acquisition, mounted far beyond the region of the aesthetically Beautiful, into the sphere of the Sublime.

E. T. A. Hoffmann used the same word ‘sublime’ to convey similar sentiments. He referred to Beethoven as the “sublimest” of composers: his music induces terror, fright, horror and pain. It awakens that endless longing which is the essence of romanticism. It opens the realm of the colossal and the immeasurable. It leads the listener away into the spiritual and the infinite.

The above extract reminds us of the connection between the sublime, the subliminal and... THE LIMINAL. The Liminal is something that our Workshops strayed into, which we are often thrown to do, and awoke a magical notion beyond, yes BEYOND, where the sublime does not seem to reach, and then another word was thrown at me... the ineffable. We are now moving our thinking and our performance into the transcendental. Whether we have arrived there is another matter.

The Malaysian conceptual artist Redza Piyadasa has defined Four Propositions - Non Art, Art, Anti Art and Un Art (makes us quite conventional).

Tuckson came to revisit this “watery” sublime in a more epic transcendent form than as previously. It was not through literal evocation of water, but what water might suggest: an immeasurable space of light, colour, and fluid energy.

One can never search for The Sublime - The Sublime will only come to you, perhaps in a flash, a moment within a moment, or something more lasting, as in for remembering it throughout your lifetime. There is never the implication that you or anyone else can only experience the Sublime once.

