

**K A G E**

# ***OUT OF EARSHOT***

*To be out of earshot is to be ... too far away to hear...*

*There is a two-fold Silence—sea and shore— body and soul*  
Edgar Alan Poe



## **EDUCATION NOTES**

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**Imagine listening with your eyes and using your heart, your hands and your instinct to voice your emotions.**

**Imagine music transformed into physicality on a stage where the wildness and passion of bodies moving and colliding matches the rawness of explosive live drumming.**

## **ABOUT KAGE**

**KAGE** has created highly original contemporary dance since 1997. The company produces work from the perspective that dance should play an inspiring, joyful and significant role in modern day Australian life. **KAGE** strives to 'rethink dance', working at the forefront of the development of the form, content and presentation context for dance.

Over the past twenty years of exploration and discovery **KAGE** has created original performances that:

- extend the form of dance through rich, diverse collaborations across disciplines
- engage with important issues
- are staged in surprising places
- captivate diverse audiences in thought provoking ways

## **ABOUT *OUT OF EARSHOT***

KAGE seeks out unusual collaborations to create dance theatre which surprises and thrills. Our latest work is no exception and features dancer Anna Seymour (who is profoundly Deaf) and contemporary jazz musician Myele Manzanza (NZ). Directed by Kate Denborough, *Out of Earshot* explores the power of non-verbal language, intense physical prowess and the role that sound plays within communication. Bodies on stage, like instruments, allowing both sound and silence to merge with the dancers, embracing and denying one another.

You will never experience music in the same way again.

Note: *Out of Earshot* has been created with Deaf/hard of hearing and hearing audiences in mind.

### **Creative Team**

Conceived and Directed by Kate Denborough  
Created in collaboration with the cast.

### **Cast**

Anna Seymour  
Elle Evangelista  
Gerard Van Dyck  
Myele Manzanza  
Timothy Ohl

## ABOUT THESE EDUCATION NOTES:

These education notes are designed to introduce students and teachers to KAGE's production of *Out of Earshot*. You may see this show, hear this show or experience it in other ways. These notes provide you with information as background to the production. They present a series of discussion points and activities that aim to help focus your understanding of the composition of the work including dance, silence, music, and Deafness. KAGE hopes that you enjoy the production and themes it explores.

### CURRICULUM LINKS – The Victorian Curriculum

The activities within these notes address the following learning areas in the Victorian Curriculum:

- The Arts – Dance
- The Arts – Music
- Literacy across the curriculum
- Critical and Creative thinking
- Personal and Social Learning
- VCE Dance – Units 1 and 2

Please see the table at the end of these resources for more specific links



The performers and director in rehearsal

## PRE-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES

*Out of Earshot* is a contemporary piece of dance/physical theatre. It uses abstract or representational movement and does not have a “story” nor necessarily any characters. Teachers and students might find the following activities helpful prior to seeing the performance.

### PROMPT QUESTIONS:

In pairs, small groups, as a class discuss the following prompt questions. They are designed to get you thinking about the art forms used by KAGE in their production. See if you can collectively arrive at answers. At the end, you might need to conduct further research.

#### What do you already know and understand about dance?

1. What is dance? How might you describe it?
2. Have you ever danced?
3. Do you learn dance?
4. What does it **feel** like when you dance?
5. Why do you think people dance?
6. What different types of dance do you know?
7. **Shape, space, rhythm, energy, level, time, elevation, falling, gesture, location, turning, stillness** – what do these mean to you? How might they relate to dance?
8. What does “choreography” mean?

#### What do you already know and understand about music?

1. Describe music? What words and phrases did you choose?
2. Do you listen to music? What other ways do you experience music?
3. What is your favourite type of music?
4. Describe vibration – where do you normally feel vibration?
5. What is the purpose of music? Does it have one?
6. Is music “cultural”? Do different cultures consider music differently?
7. Imagine if you could not hear? How might you experience music?
8. Can you imagine what the world would be like if there was no music?

## ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

The director, Kate Denborough, offers the following notes about how *Out of Earshot* is structured:

There are approximately 18-20 scenes which highlight the **different relationships** between the five cast members. Delving in between the **abstract** and the **naturalistic**, the work explores **different methods of communication**. Dancers are incredibly capable of **translating emotion** through **intricate choreography** and delivering **nuanced performances** which can be clearly interpreted by an audience. Scenes about **trust, betrayal, love and friendship** are all examined closely through **physical duets and partnering**.

### ACTIVITY:

In pairs, small groups or as a class research, discuss and arrive at some definitions of the **bolded terms** in the description above. Then take those understandings into the next activity.





Anna Seymour and Timothy Ohl in *Out of Earshot*

**ACTIVITY:** Look carefully at the image above. It suggests a “duet” – a dance for two people

- What do you think is happening in this image?
- Do you feel this image is **naturalistic/realistic**?
- What might have just happened? What might happen next?
- What **relationship** do you think there is between the dancers?
- Does the image suggest that any of the following themes are being explored - trust, betrayal, love and friendship?
- How is the theme/s being communicated?

### **ACTIVITY – Music Video/Dance Clips Review**

**Imagine that you work for an on-demand television company. You are putting together a series of music/video dance clips for the next on demand program.**

- Have your class select a name for the on demand show
- Divide your class up into pairs or small groups of 3 or 4
- Then select a music/dance clip from Youtube or other online
- You may like to select from one of the songs suggested in the resource below
- As a pair/team prepare *a pitch* that you might give to the executive team of the television show about this clip
- Consider - Who is it? Where was it made? Why this clip? What’s great about it?
- Describe the music – for example style, rhythm, tone, feel, complexity.
- Describe the dance moves – for example style, impact, dynamic, complexity
- Have some members of the group learn and execute the dance moves as part of your pitch

- Why would people enjoy this clip? Why should it be part of the next on-demand program?
- As a class set aside a “pitch” session where all the clips can be screened and your pairs/teams get to pitch to an imagined executive team (or appoint one from within the class)
- **VOTE:** you may wish to set up a voting system where there is a top clip or a top three clips
- **REFLECT:** What did you discover about music and dance through this activity? What did you discover about how we talk about music and dance? Do music and dance have their own “languages”?

**RESOURCE FOR THIS ACTIVITY:**

The following music video captures 27 dance styles into one countdown – from Michael Jackson’s “Thriller” 1982, to “Gangnam Style” in 2012. It may inspire you to choose one to explore and use in your pitch.

**27 Dance Crazes:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ekoo-T4-PzA>

[Note: teachers please note that this video is PG rated and contains **no** offensive language – please watch before using it to ensure it is appropriate for your students]

**OTHER DANCE RESOURCES CAN BE FOUND AT:**

<http://splash.abc.net.au/home#!/search/Dance//>



This is an image of the development/rehearsal process for *Out of Earshot*

**DISCUSS/PREDICT**

- How would you describe this room? What are you drawn to visually?
- Discuss the presence of the drum kit – where is positioned?

- Discuss the person in the foreground sitting at the table – what do you think their role is?
- If you brought an audience into this space, where would you place them? Why?
- Is there any “set”? Do you think there will be?
- Do you think *Out of Earshot* will have a story? What might that story be? What does the title suggest? What do the images in this resource suggest?

***To be out of earshot is to be ... too far away to hear...***

- Discuss this definition.
- What does it suggest? What do you imagine?
- How far away is too far away?
- Could “far away” be a metaphor/have another meaning other than physical distance?

**CRITICAL AND CREATIVE THINKING – THE HUMAN SENSES:**

- What are our “senses”? How many are there?
- Which senses are you most aware of?
- Which senses do you feel you are least aware of?
- Experiment with some simple activities where you close your eyes or cover them, where you use noise cancelling headphones, where you wear thick rubber or gardening gloves to diminish touch
- Do other senses feel heightened?
- Is the sense of hearing needed in order to dance?

**Further resources for exploring the senses and memory**

<http://splash.abc.net.au/home#!/media/2097744/discover-how-smell-unlocks-memory>



The performers in rehearsal



**Questions:** Closely observe this photo – perhaps copy it and enlarge/project it/powerpoint.

- What appears to be happening in this photo?
- Why might the performers be wearing earphones?
- What do you suppose they are listening to? The same thing? Different things?
- What emotions do you think are being expressed/conveyed?

**Near the beginning of these notes, KAGE state that *Out of Earshot* has been created with Deaf/hard of hearing and hearing audiences in mind.**

*How can one who does not hear a sound contrast noise with silence? Most people use their ears so constantly, they do not realize that the skin of our bodies is so sensitive that we perceive countless vibrations in the air and in objects we touch...Music has always been an exquisite joy to me. Although I cannot distinguish the melody, the rhythm delights and soothes me. In seasons of growth and bloom nature sings into my hand with leaves, grasses and the rippling accents of river and stream – Helen Keller, *Beauty of Silence*, 1935*

Source: <http://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/eras/great-depression/beauty-silence/>

Helen Keller (1880-1968) was an American educator, writer and activist. As a child, she contracted a severe illness which left her blind and profoundly Deaf. Helen's parents pursued specialists and educators who could work with Helen so she could learn to speak and communicate in a hearing and seeing world. In the above extract from a lecture she gave in 1935, Helen Keller talks about music and her experiences of it.

**DISCUSS:**

- What are your thoughts about Helen Keller's description of her experience of music?
- Have you ever thought about the sensitive nature of your skin and its capacity to "perceive vibration"?
- Do you feel that some ways of experiencing might be better than others?
- Does Helen Keller's description allow you to pause and consider how others may experience the world?

**Now read the following description of *sound*, its place, presence or absence in our world:**

*We rely in so many ways on our sense of sound and ability to hear. What happens when you take that away into nothingness, or overwhelm it into oblivion? Sound can be a deeply pleasurable experience and also used as a weapon, to create mood, to warn us of danger, and we go through life more or less unaware of this particular ability we have to use sound to guide us. To me, it points to what we take for granted - Myele Manzanza, musician, *Out of Earshot*.*

**DISCUSS:**

- What do you think Myele means when he says that sound can "also be used as a weapon, to create mood, to warn us of danger"?
- What circumstances do you think he may be talking about?
- What every day sounds are you aware of that act as warnings or indicators?
- Are there any assumption being made in this description about the presence or absence of sound?



## POST-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES

Now that you have seen the production of *Out of Earshot* what are your thoughts and feelings about it? The following questions are posed to get you thinking about its form, its content and its ideas. In pairs tell each other:

- What did the four dancers do? What did the musician do?
- How did they interact? Were there clear “characters”?
- Did you have a favourite performer? Why?
- What was the “story” of *Out of Earshot*?
- Which characters do you remember most strongly and why?
- What music do you remember? Where did it come from?
- What else did you hear?
- What costumes did the performers wear?
- What other costumes could have been worn?
- How did the performers use their physical skills –gesture, movement, facial expression – to move through the space?
- How did the performers use the elements of shape, time, rhythm, energy, stillness, level and space?
- How were elevation, falling, gesture, locomotion, and turning incorporated?
- If you could be one of these performers, which one?
- What is one idea explored in *Out of Earshot* that you found compelling?
- What was the performance ‘saying’ to you?
- If you could *change* something or *add* something what would that be?



What aspects of this image remind you of the production?

## DISCUSS: IDEAS EXPLORED IN THE PRODUCTION

*Out of Earshot* focuses on four different perspectives. **Passion. Empathy. Exhilaration.**

**Intimacy** – Kate Denborough, Director

- What do each of these terms mean?
- What might they LOOK like?
- What might each word SOUND like?
- If they were a COLOUR what colour would they be?
- What are other words you could use instead, that might mean the same?

## ACTIVITY: Drama/Movement – tableaux

This activity uses tableaux – frozen physical images – and movement transitions to explore each of the ideas the director talks about above.

- **Divide into groups of 4-5**
- The aim is to create an *abstract* interpretation. What does abstract mean?
- It means not necessarily realistic or literal but more REPRESENTATIONAL – so the movements are ones you think best represent feelings or ideas.
- For instance, what would be a movement that represents passion?
- Create an abstract tableau for each of - PASSION, EMPATHY, EXHILARATION, INTIMACY
- When you have agreed on each frozen tableau, create a way of moving between each one – these are called “transitions”
- Think of how you can use and of: slow motion, rhythm, unison, one-by-one, levels, and focus – work as a group here to make decisions. Maybe your teacher could help.
- Consider how you might use SOUND (refer to the previous discussion activity).
- Consider how the transition you choose might relate to the theme tableau you have just created and the theme tableau you are about to create
- Rehearse your four tableaux including the transitions between until you feel everyone is confident they know what they are doing and feeling
- One of you might like to step out and watch and direct the others
- Your final piece will be a performance of your group’s interpretation of the four themes
- Discuss how each group has represented the ideas – similarities, differences
- Analyse how each group has used transitional movement.
- Reflect on how these themes were represented and interpreted in the production

## SILENCE

Quietness, quiet, quietude, still, stillness, hush, tranquillity, noiselessness, soundlessness, peace, peacefulness, peace and quiet...

*I think silence is viewed as something of nothingness, of absence. But I think silence has lots of substance and presence. It is a physical thing. I’m not sure what this (the negative space) means for a painter, a photographer, a writer, an actor but from a dancer’s perspective – this is very fruitful territory to explore. Silence is a very unfamiliar territory and concept for many people. I see it all the time – that people are afraid of silence. Many people want to fill in “empty” space with sound – Anna Seymour, dancer*

## LITERACY – A POETRY RESPONSE

**Haiku** is a traditional form of Japanese poetry. Haiku poems consist of 3 lines. The first and last lines of a Haiku have 5 syllables and the middle line has 7 syllables. The lines rarely rhyme. They can be personal, abstract, funny, philosophical, political, or thoughtful.

For example:

I walk across sand  
And find myself blistering  
In the hot, hot heat

The world is not lost  
If we who are here listen  
It is time to hear

**Consider the words used to describe silence and discuss the thoughts that dancer, Anna Seymour (who is Deaf), has about silence.**

- Write a haiku poem about silence
- Read others' haikus
- Reflect on your poems and Anna's words
- How was silence explored in the production of *Out of Earshot*?
- Do you think *that people are afraid of silence*? Why?
- **EXTENSION:** As a solo, a pair or a trio, create a movement interpretation of one of the haiku poems



Musician - Myele Manzanita in rehearsal

## WHAT THE PERFORMERS SAID

The performers in *Out of Earshot* were each asked a series of questions:

1. What does the title mean to you?
2. Does *Out of Earshot* tell a story or stories? Whose?
3. What languages are evident in the work?
4. What is the role of music?
5. What does it feel like to dance?

Here is a selection of their responses.

**DISCUSS** how the performers and director talk about their creative work, the themes and ideas, languages, music and what it “feels like” to dance.

*The music I’m bringing to the project in this is very much immersed in the movement of the dancers. Playing both the background and the foreground of what’s happening on stage. The dancers and I guide, interrupt and inspire each other - Myele Manzanza, Musician*

*On an apparent level, it means out of hearing range. It refers to the hearing sense and the spectrum of sound that is available to us. As a Deaf person, I have always been fascinated with how sound works and how sound travels and how sound is made, articulated and experienced. Being profoundly Deaf, I have 130 decibels of ‘hearing’ (normal hearing is 15-10 decibels) and I have no hairs on my cochlea which are responsible for transmitting sound. I don’t experience sound through my ears. I only feel low frequency vibrations – Anna Seymour, Performer*

*Dancing is the embodiment of being alive. It allows a type of expression that no other words could possibly match. It feels humbling, vulnerable and exhilarating – Kate Denborough,*

*Music in the work is not only sonic, but it is felt and visualised as vibration. It is means by which Myele can speak to Anna. And it is a familiar sensation for Anna – Gerard Van Dyck, Performer*

*Out of Earshot tells the story of innovating language, of physicality and contact in its rawest of forms – Gerard Van Dyck, Performer*

*To me, out of earshot means something that is just out of reach, around the corner, like a whisper, a shadow, slightly intangible but with the possibility of touching it, tasting it, reaching it...somehow... Kate Denborough, Director*

View Anna’s responses to these questions here:

Question 1: <https://vimeo.com/217997731>

Question 2: <https://vimeo.com/217995668>

Question 3: <https://vimeo.com/217992918>

Question 4: <https://vimeo.com/217989715>

Question 5: <https://vimeo.com/217940357>



*I am fascinated with the shape and physicality of sound. If sound was a colour(s) what would it look like? What is the sound of colour? I have always been mystified with speech that is invisible coming from the mouths of the hearing. How can something that is invisible have substance? How can sound travel unseen through the invisible air through the hearing ear? How is sound transmitted to the brain where it is heard and deciphered? All of that is a big mystery to me – Anna Seymour, Performer*

*There is a strong sense of connection when I dance in this work. It feels like my senses are heightened because I am working with music, rhythm, sound and silence. It has been very interesting finding ways of how we can show sound and rhythm through our bodies – the physicality of sound. It has been a long time dream of mine to work with a drummer and it has been very exciting to have the opportunity to push the boundaries between drummer and dancer, becoming intertwined rather than separate entities in the space – Anna Seymour, Performer*

*Dance is the pinnacle of non verbal language. The body is a clear story teller and we use the body to full effect in *Out of Earshot*. Drumming and rhythm are equal partners in establishing our physical language which can express emotion as well as communicate the story – Kate Denborough, Director*

*I think it is important to emphasise the strong and vibrant physicality of *Out of Earshot*. Not just dance but movement and partnering and physical connections create surprising and exciting situations. The relationship between the dancers and the drummer is potent, powerful and visceral...a constant game of teasing, provoking and cherishing – Kate Denborough, Director*

## **CREATIVE AND REFLECTIVE ACTIVITY**

### **How would you respond to the following questions?**

1. What does the title mean to you?
2. Does *Out of Earshot* tell a story or stories? Whose?
3. What languages are evident in the work?
4. What is the role of music?
5. What does it feel like to dance?

#### **Your response could be any of:**

- Written - short answers, and essay, a written conversation with yourself, a stream of consciousness, an interview with another person, a poem
- Spoken or signed – as a speech, as a poem, a spoken word performance, a rap
- Composed – as a song, as a collage of music, original composition
- A visual response – collage, multi-media presentation, drawing, painting
- A dance that interprets your responses – each of the questions may provoke a movement sequence – enjoy.

## VICTORIAN CURRICULUM – Links

The following table suggests ways that *Out of Earshot* as a performed work and the activities within these education notes can address aspects of the Level 8 and Level 10 Achievement Standards.

<b>LEARNING AREAS</b>	<b>Level 8 Achievement Standards</b>	<b>Level 10 Achievement Standards</b>
The Arts - Dance	By the end of Level 8 students choreograph and perform dances to communicate ideas and intentions. They improvise movement and select and organise the elements of dance, choreographic devices and form to communicate choreographic intent. Students learn, rehearse and perform dances, demonstrating technical and expressive skills appropriate to the dance style and safe dance practice. Students identify and analyse the elements of dance, choreographic devices and production elements of dances in different styles and apply this knowledge to dances they make and perform. They evaluate how they and other dance practitioners from different cultures, times and locations, communicate ideas and intentions through dance.	By the end of Level 10, students choreograph dances by manipulating and combining the elements of dance, choreographic devices, and form and production elements to communicate their choreographic intent. They choreograph, rehearse and perform dances, demonstrating safe dance practice and technical and expressive skills appropriate to the style and genre. Students analyse choreographers' use of the elements of dance, choreographic devices, and form and production elements to communicate choreographic intent in dances they make, perform and view. They evaluate the impact of dance from different cultures, times and locations
The Arts - Music	Students identify and analyse how the elements of music are used in different styles and apply this knowledge in their performances and compositions. They evaluate musical choices they and others have made to communicate ideas and intentions as performers and composers of music from different cultures, times and locations.	They evaluate the use of elements of music and defining characteristics from different musical styles. They use their understanding of music making in different cultures, times and places to inform and shape their interpretations, performances and compositions.
Literacy across the Curriculum	In the areas of speaking, writing and creating, by the end of Level 4, students compose and edit a range of texts across learning areas, use pair, group and whole class discussion to explore and represent ideas and to prepare for creating texts. Plan, rehearse and deliver presentations incorporating appropriate visual and multi-modal elements.	In the areas of speaking, writing and creating, by the end of Level 6, students compose and edit texts, use pair group and class discussion as learning tools to explore possibilities and prepare for creating texts. They plan, research, rehearse and deliver presentations, selecting appropriate content and visual and multi-modal elements to suite different audiences.
<b>CAPABILITIES</b>	<b>Levels 8 – Achievement Standards</b>	<b>Level 10 – Achievement Standards</b>
Personal and social capability	By the end of Level 8, students explore the values and beliefs of different groups in society. They identify indicators of respectful relationships in a range of social and work-related situations. They explain the extent to which individual roles and responsibilities enhance group cohesion and the achievement of personal and group objectives.	By the end of Year 10, students evaluate personal characteristics, strategies and sources of support used to cope with stressful situations and life challenges. They critique their ability to devise and enact strategies for working in diverse teams, drawing on the skills and contributions of team members to complete complex tasks.
Critical and creative thinking	By the end of Level 8, students demonstrate flexibility in thinking by using a range of techniques in order to repurpose existing ideas or solutions to meet needs in new contexts. Students independently segment problems into discrete stages, synthesise new knowledge during problem-solving and develop and apply criteria to assess ideas, proposals and emerging thinking.	By the end of Level 10, students identify, articulate, analyse and reflect on their own and others thinking processes. They use, monitor, evaluate and redirect as necessary a range of learning strategies. Students develop, justify and refine criteria to evaluate the quality of ideas, proposals and thinking processes. They demonstrate a willingness to shift their perspective when generating ideas, resulting in new ways of perceiving solutions.

## VCE DANCE – Units 1 and 2

Out of Earshot may enable students of VCE Dance to consider the following Units, Areas of Study, Key Knowledge and Key Skills and Outcomes

### Unit 1 – AOS 1 – Dance Perspectives – Outcome 1

Students are able to describe and document the expressive and technical features of their own and other choreographers' dance works, and discuss the influences on their own dance-making

### Unit 1 – AOS 2- Choreography and Performance – Outcome 2

Students are able to choreograph and perform a solo or group dance work and complete structured improvisations

### Unit 2 – AOS 1 – Dance Perspectives – Outcome 1

Students are able to analyse use of the elements of movement – time, space, energy – in selected dance traditions, styles and dance works.

## LINKS:

### ARTS ACCESS VICTORIA

Phone: 03 9699 8299

Email: [info@artsaccess.com.au](mailto:info@artsaccess.com.au)

Website: <https://www.artsaccess.com.au>

Address: 222 Bank Street, South Melbourne, 3205

### ART FOR EVERYONE: AN INCLUSIVE PRACTICE GUIDE

LINK: <https://www.artsaccess.com.au/inclusive-practice-guide>

### VICDEAF

Website: [www.vicdeaf.com.au](http://www.vicdeaf.com.au)

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[www.deafness.org.au](http://www.deafness.org.au)

