

I Made an Adult

Image Descriptions and Enhanced Program Notes

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This document contains two sections intended to provide added context to the 2021 Adelaide Fringe season of I Made an Adult. The first section contains Image Descriptions and the second section provides Enhanced Program Notes

I Made an Adult is written and performed by Tracy Crisp and directed by Maggie Wood. At the Bakehouse Theatre technical design and operation is by Stephen Dean. At Nexus Arts Venue technical design and operation is by

Section One Image Descriptions

In this section I provide descriptions of the images which are shown on the screen at the back of the stage throughout the performance. All of the images have been taken by me, except the photo that has me in it which was taken by Adrian.

The first three images are shown when I talk about making a birthday cake. Three images are scrolled on the screen. The first two are photos of my boys aged about five and three decorating cakes. The third image shows my youngest boy, aged three, putting lollies intended for the cake in his mouth.

A single image is shown at the end of the second scene, when I am sitting at the kitchen table holding my arms as if cradling my baby. At the end of this scene when I talk about looking at my father, there is an image of my father on the screen. He is standing, holding my baby against his chest. Close-up and taken outside, Dad and my baby fill the frame, from Dad's waist up, his thick hands covering the lower half of my baby's body. They are sharply in focus, the leaves of the tree behind him are blurred. Dad is looking directly into the camera and although there is some reflection off his glasses his eyes are clearly visible. his hair, which was red but is fading to grey is shoulder length, thick and slightly flicked away from his face. His beard and moustache are white. They are trimmed, but full.

The baby is a few months old, so all his weight is against his Grandpa's chest. He is facing the same direction as Dad, but his gaze is toward the ground and but only one eye is visible, the other is in the shadows. He is wearing a dark blue babysuit with dark green stripes. It is crumpled and loose-fitting.

A grainy Instagram-filtered photo of Abu Dhabi's Grand Mosque, framed by the upper fronds of a palm tree. the colouring is muted grey but tinged with red and beyond the palm tree the atmosphere is misty as if cloud cover is low. The palm tree is in the foreground, framing the right and top. In the middle distance are the bushy tops of other palm trees. In the background centre are the domes of the Grand Mosque with two tall spires on their left.

The following three images are scrolled on the screen when I am describing the things that I don't understand about Abu Dhabi.

First, a view looking up into the white dome of a building with a chandelier cascading from its centre. Pointed arched windows line the bottom of dome, allowing daylight to come through. The chandelier is not lit, but it is made of fringes of silvery beads that are catching some light. At the top of the chandelier is a star-shaped gold frame. The layers underneath, all formed with these silver fringes, are three circles that graduate down in size from biggest to smallest.

Second, a night time shot of an external carpark, and slightly out of focus, a gold shiny four-wheel drive fills most of the frame. The lights of the carpark are reflected off the car. Parts of other cars are visible, but they are standard colours like white. In the background, the tops of a palm trees line the top edge of the frame.

Third, an Instagram-filtered image of a T-junction outside a school. In the foreground a close up of the road which is coloured deep red. The words 'School Zone' are painted in white in both English and Arabic. A red stop sign says 'Stop' in both English and Arabic. A car is turning right out of the street and is halfway over the speed hump which is striped yellow and white. In the background, several low-rise buildings with cars and a yellow school bus parked in front of them.

When we get to Madrid and I talk about giving my children travel journals and my youngest boy goes back to reading there is an image of my youngest son, aged about six, lying on his stomach, resting on his elbows and reading a book. He is on a bed which is covered in a white quilt pulled tight. To his right, two small Styrofoam containers, one filled with sliced fruit—kiwifruit, peach, raspberries and cherries—the other has dried apricots and cherry stones. In the background a thin rectangular window, its glass open and swung inwards, and wrought-iron bars on the outside.

The following nine images are all of my eldest son aged about nine. They follow one another in quick succession. They are at different scenes in Spain, but all show my nine-year-old boy, with his head bent, a pen in his right hand, a notebook in his left. Standing in a church with a line of pews behind him, facing the side of the church; sitting on a low concrete wall; standing on a footpath with other pedestrians around him; sitting on a step in a plaza, a cathedral in the background (and his brother sitting on the step above him); sitting in a car resting his knee pulled up and his book resting against it; sitting on the step of a house in a row of whitewashed houses that are set at the top of a hill, in the background a sweeping view of hills stretching into the distance (his brother is approaching him with a smile of anticipation on his face); sitting on the ground in the middle of a university plaza that is surrounded by modern buildings constructed of sheets of different-coloured glass; standing in the entrance of a small church, resting his book against the wall while he sketches (his brother is in the background, resting against the back of a pew his head bent over his own sketchbook).

There are two images shown during our time in Edinburgh.

The first is of the boys and I in front of a row of posters stuck to a wall. I am standing on the right, wearing a white jumper and a tidy haircut. The boys are to the left, the eldest behind the youngest with his arms over his shoulders. The youngest is grabbing at his brother's

sleeves and poking his tongue out towards the camera. The Fringe posters, including two showing a headshot of me and my name in white print.

The second is a close up of a glass with bright orange liquid, some ice, and a bent orange straw. The top quarter of the glass is empty. A child's hands playing with a blue paper napkin in the background and blurry.

During my final lines the image of my Dad holding my baby is once again on the screen.

After my final line there is a montage of photos while background music plays. There are fourteen images in all. The first is the four of us—Adrian, me and our children—in a holiday snap, from left to right our youngest boy, Adrian, me and our eldest on the right. They are all sitting and I am standing behind, leaning on Leo, my arm around his shoulder. We are all looking into the camera and smiling. Together we take up most of the frame.

The following images are all of the two boys together beginning with an image of our youngest boy a few days old being held by Adrian, with our eldest boy looking carefully at the baby. The photos then move chronologically through their lives. There are about eighteen months in age difference between them. The images move from being together in a cot, both sitting looking into the camera but neither wearing a shirt, dressed up one with bunny ears the other with a green wig, standing in a garden looking into the camera, wrapped together in a red coat, sitting in a café each with a pack of playing cards in their hands, the eldest showing the other how to hold the cards, lying face-up on a patch of grass, in the back seat of a caravan arms around each other, at a bus station the eldest boy holding the youngest in a hug while the youngest is screwing up his face and laughing, as young adults dressed for a school formal in jacket and ties. The final image, as described in the enhanced program notes, is of an orange-tinged sand dune which takes up nearly all of the image with just a small band of sky at the top. In the foreground, the sand is patterned in waves. In the middle distance, my two boys, aged about eight and six, are running towards the sand dunes and have reached its base, long shadows being cast by their bodies. One of the boys is kicking up sand behind him as he runs.

Section Two

Enhanced Program Notes

Hello and welcome to the debut season of *I Made an Adult* staged at the Mainstage of Bakehouse Theatre as part of the 2021 Adelaide Fringe. The production was conceived and is delivered by me, Tracy Crisp and is directed by Maggie Wood, the sound, lighting and image design and operation is by Stephen Dean.

In this audio guide I provide information so you can get a sense of the production. This includes information about the character's appearance, the set and the visuals including lighting changes that are used in different places of the production. Image descriptions of the images which are used throughout the show are provided in a separate recording. An audio version of the program is also available in a separate recording.

General Information about the Production

I Made an Adult is the fourth in a series of monologues that I have been writing and producing since 2018. I began with *Pearls* in 2018, *The Forgettory* in 2019, and in 2020, *An Evening with the Vegetarian Librarian*. Each piece stands on its own, but because I use events of my life to explore wider themes, there are some echoes between the pieces. For example, people who have been to *Pearls* will know that my mother smoked and sometimes when I mention her in other shows, I will take on her persona by pretending to flourish a cigarette.

I Made an Adult follows a similar format to the previous shows. It is a monologue of around fifty minutes combining elements of storytelling, theatre and stand-up. Its tone ranges from light-hearted to poignant, the set is simple, and I don't move around the stage all that much. On the posters and postcards used to promote the show, there is a photo of me looking into the camera, holding a doll that looks like a baby in one arm with a notebook in my hand, the other arm is resting on a basket of laundry with a pen between my fingers. Under the title, *I Made an Adult*, the tagline reads, "a bittersweet story of beaten eggs, spilt milk and the sifted years of childhood." There is also a review quote from Samela Harris of *Barefoot Review* which reads: "She's whimsical, witty, perceptive, and erudite and she has a glorious way with words."

Character

I am the only person on stage for the entire performance, although I do make occasional references to my partner, Adrian, who is nearly always in the audience. I am a middle-aged woman with brown shoulder-length hair that has some grey streaks. I am wearing a 1950s style dress with a fitted red bodice and flared skirt. The fabric of the skirt has a white and yellow background and is patterned with stereotyped depictions of 1950s or 1960s housewives in a kitchen. They are wearing similar dresses to mine and they are, for example, emptying a dishwasher or sitting at a kitchen table to ice a cake.

Set

As you come into the theatre the set is lit with a soft tone. The set is a simple one, with a rectangular kitchen table covered in a red tablecloth and with four wooden chairs, one on each side of the table. The table is slightly angled with the left edge of the table angled slightly towards the back of the stage and the right angled slightly towards the audience. (Note that when I say 'left' or 'right' I am talking as if from the audience point of view, so 'left' means to your left). There is one chair on each side of the table. The chair on the right and the front edges are angled slightly to face the audience. The other two chairs are behind the table. A white, folded tea towel is draped over the back of the chair that is to the right. To the left is a three-tiered kitchen trolley a little shorter than the table. It is filled with food items you would find in a kitchen—a weetbix box, containers of flour and sugar, a carton of milk, a carton of eggs, some bananas and some bread.

In the centre of the table is a white mixing bowl with a wooden spoon resting inside. To the left is a recipe book on a stand. It is the *Women's Weekly Children's Birthday Cake Book*. It is a soft cover book. On the cover of the book is an image of the cake train. This is made to look like a steam train with four carriages, all iced in different colours.

Also on the table is a teacup on a saucer with a pastel floral design.

At the back of the stage is a screen which is used to show images at some points throughout the show.

Main visuals and actions

Throughout the play I look back and forth to the audience, as if in conversation. At other times, my gaze is more focused as if on a person I am remembering or imagining. The script is written as a series of scenes or vignettes, generally with a shift in mood or tempo with each scene. I convey this shift with my voice and there are also some lighting changes to accentuate this shift. Between some of the scenes I make slight adjustments to the set such as shifting the angle of the chair or picking up the mixing bowl. These movements are not part of the story.

To begin, I enter from a curtained door to the left of the stage and stand close to the front row while the Acknowledgment to Country is played.

As the short piece of music plays I move across the stage to stand behind the table, holding the mixing bowl on the table with one hand and with the other, holding the wooden spoon which I use to stir the cake mix from time to time. When I talk about interviewing Professor Spurrier, I pretend to use the wooden spoon as a microphone. After that, I move to the chair at the right edge of the table and sit there while I continue talking to the audience. When I talk about making a birthday cake, three images are scrolled on the screen. The first two are photos of my boys aged about five and three decorating cakes. The third image shows my youngest boy, aged three, putting lollies intended for the cake in his mouth.

While I am sitting in the chair I brush at something on my skirt, then pick up the tea towel and use it to brush some more. When I ask the audience 'do you like my tea towel' I flick it a little like a matador to a bull and hold it up to the audience. I re-fold the tea-towel and put it back on the chair. As I'm reminiscing about deciding to have children, I move downstage centre and then stage-left where I stand in an isolation light of soft blue. For the final lines of this scene I return to the centre stage, the blue light is dimmed and the golden light returns.

There is a change of pace and mood to the next scene when I say I am sitting at the kitchen table. I move the chair slightly so that it is face-on to the audience. I hold my arms as if I am holding a baby and throughout this short scene I am swaying gently from side to side. During this scene the photo of my father described in the image descriptions fades up onto the screen. The lights are dimmed and the photo fades to end this scene.

The tempo shifts for the following scene, the lighting is again soft gold, and as I list, Weetbix, bananas, milk and toast, I am standing behind the table again, this time as if making breakfast for my children. As I talk about why I love having children, I gradually move from behind the table to sit again in the chair to the right. I stand as I say, 'Will I? Will I really?' I move back and forth along the stage when I describe walking to and from the supermarket.

In the scene describing my boy's surgery and my father's surgery I am once again sitting in the chair to the right. The chair is back at a slight angle. Throughout this scene when I say the refrain, 'kick, kick, kick' I kick my legs lightly back and forth in time with this tempo.

Through the scene talking about visiting my childhood home in Port Pirie I am standing at the centre front of the stage, holding the mixing bowl in the curve of the elbow of one arm. With the other hand I am holding the wooden spoon and stirring from time to time. As I say, 'I can be that person I saw in my imagination' there is a fade up of the photo of Abu Dhabi's mosque as described in the image descriptions. The photo fades down. When I've listed the ingredients and when I say 'let's put this baby in the oven' there is a blackout.

In the following scene as I talk about my first months in Abu Dhabi I am sitting in the chair at the front of the table. As I list the things I don't understand about Abu Dhabi, three images scroll on the screen, the chandelier, gold car and intersection as described in the image descriptions. When I talk about going to Carrefour, the French supermarket, I stand and move once again to the blue isolation spot stage left.

After the supermarket scene has finished, the blue light goes down and the golden light comes up. I am standing centre stage as I describe deciding to take a trip to Edinburgh and Spain. I stay standing until I talk about my children opening their notebooks, when I return to the chair at the front of the table. While I am talking about my eldest child sketching there is a series of images first of my youngest child on his bed reading, then of my eldest boy sketching. These are described in the image descriptions.

In Salamanca when I am trying to see the frog, I am still sitting in the seat, but am craning my head as if trying to see the frog carved into the facade.

Talking about our time in Edinburgh, I am once again standing centre stage. The image of my boys and I standing in front of the posters of my show is briefly on the screen. This is described in the image descriptions.

I return to chair at the left of the table, but the tone and lighting remain similar for the following scene as I talk about parenting children who are between the ages of nine and twelve.

In the following scene, as I say, 'bicker, wrestle, laugh, repeat' I leave the chair and move around the stage stopping still each time.

The end of this scene is defined with the lights going down and a pause in dialogue as I move to the back of the stage. As the lights come up, I place a fully-completed cake on the table. This cake is the same as the one on the cover of the book and is on a board. As I place it on the table I give the audience a knowing look as if making a joke. I stand behind the table while I am talking about moving back to Adelaide with my children while Adrian stays in Abu Dhabi.

I then move to the front right of the stage, talking about our trip to Bali. My movements become exaggerated, as I talk about my son getting caught in a rip, and I take on his persona when I say his line.

Moving into the next scene, the tone becomes quieter and more reflective, with the lighting dropping down. I sit in the chair to the right. As I talk, I am making small adjustments to the cake to finalise it, playing with the yellow pipecleaner which is threaded with coloured popcorn, the popcorn representing puffs of smoke coming from the train. As I say that train's express and you can't catch your breath, I stand upright and move to the front of the stage.

After I say my final line I move to the left of the stage and while the background music plays, series of around ten photos plays on the screen to end the performance. The first photo is of the four of us, Adrian and our two children, followed by photos of the boys together shown in chronological order from babies to toddlers, primary school aged children, high school. These images are described in the image descriptions. The final image is of an orange-tinged sand dune which takes up nearly all of the image with just a small band of sky at the top. In the foreground, the sand is patterned in waves. In the middle distance, my two boys, aged about eight and six, are running towards the sand dunes and have reached its base, long shadows being cast by their bodies. One of the boys is kicking up sand behind him as he runs.

The music continues to play as the lights come up again and I bow my head to the audience in a sign of appreciation. I also use my arm outstretched to acknowledge the technical crew at the back of the theatre. If Maggie is in the audience that night I also acknowledge her with an outstretched arm. Finally I acknowledge Adrian. I exit the stage through the door to the left.

As you leave the theatre, Adrian has a basket with a small gift for each of you. Adrian is a middle-aged man with very short hair. He is usually wearing jeans and a t-shirt. The gift is a small sealed cellophane packet of rainbow-coloured rock candy. In the middle of the candy printed around the edge and in miniscule script is the name of the show, *I Made an Adult* with a pink heart inside. Each packet has about five small pieces of the candy. With COVID safety in mind, Adrian will use tongs to hand each of you a packet of candy.

Thank you for being part of *I Made an Adult*.