



FACULTY OF THE  
VCA AND  
MUSIC

**School of Performing Arts  
Department of Theatre  
Master of Writing for Performance**

24/1/19

To Whom It May Concern,

Letter of Support

I'm writing to express my support for Sophia Simmons and Shannon Rush in their pursuit of funding their Umbrella production of 'Limit' with State Theatre South Australia. I taught Sophia last year throughout the course of the Masters of Writing for Performance she was undertaking in Theatre at the Victorian College of the Arts. I was immediately impressed by her talent and passion as a writer and the way she approaches her creative practice with rigor and curiosity.

Sophia possesses a unique voice in theatre writing in this country, one that is able to draw on a range of emotions and dramatic contexts within a contemporary cultural milieu. She possesses extraordinary gifts as a writer; her work is complex and acutely observed, and displays a natural grasp of dramatic action and structure.

I am familiar with Sophia's script for 'Limit' as I provided dramaturgical support on the project during the course. The writing is fresh and original and I was impressed with the ideas she presents forth in the script. It is a brilliant play, at once hilarious and deeply ironic, and penetrating in its observation of human frailty and personal relationships. Having found the perfect metaphor to explore the relationships between her characters, Sophia's natural inventiveness is given full-reign to explore the world in her play through disquieting personal content and the world of science and fiction through to the desire to explore our true capabilities. Sophia never loses sight of her ability to skilfully turn the audience's gaze upon itself.

Sophia is committed to the evolution of the script and has taken on board my feedback with excitement and rigour. Throughout my time knowing her she has always been open to having dialogue about her work and is eager to have her ideas challenged in order for the work to thrive. I understand the work has already undergone some professional development with actors and the script is ripe for production. I wholeheartedly believe this play is going to be a success when it hits the stage in October and will delight and inspire audiences in Adelaide and hopefully reach a wider audience in the future. Sophia's work is timely, her voice is new and exciting and she is an artist worth backing.

Sophia is always enthusiastic, supportive and hardworking when it comes to realising her projects and possesses incredibly drive and energy to build amazing creative teams around her work and present it to the public. Sophia has consistently been very driven, and has a proven track record of producing high quality theatre. I believe Sophie is a writer who is most deserving of support to take her work into professional production.

Please don't hesitate to contact me, should you wish to discuss further.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Raimondo Cortese". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Raimondo Cortese  
Postgraduate Lecturer in Theatre  
Master of Performance Writing  
Victorian College of the Arts  
University of Melbourne

2/2/2019

To Whom it May Concern,

I'm writing in support of Sophia Simmons' and Shannon Rush's application seeking funding for the development and production of Sophia's play, *Limit*, to be produced as a part of State Theatre Company of South Australia's Umbrella Program.

In 2015, I directed a week of developments and a rehearsed reading of *Limit* as a part of Playwriting Australia's Home Grown program in the National Play Festival. The assistant director assigned to me on that project was Shannon Rush. Later that year I got to work with Sophia again as an actor when I directed her in *Middletown* at AC Arts.

*Limit* is a smart play that speaks to the here and now, but also asks bigger questions of us as the human species. It is particularly relevant for South Australia presently with the forthcoming space agency to be established here, and globally with the work of Space X and other private enterprise space focussed companies.

The play also asks questions of humanity's need to explore, what it means to leave everything you know, the future of humanity, and who we are as humans.

Working on *Limit* in 2015, I found both Sophia and Shannon to be intelligent artists with a keen sense of story, drama and dramaturgy. Shannon's suggestions and ideas in the rehearsal room were always welcome, relevant and insightful. Sophia's responses to provocations and suggestions from Dramaturg Nicki Bloom and myself, were considered, perceptive and brave.

State Theatre's Umbrella Program presents a tremendous opportunity for both Sophia and Shannon to create a new work and realise it themselves. They will develop invaluable industry knowledge and experience, as well raising their profiles and gaining deserved recognition for their respective talents.


*Limit* has undergone considerable development and is ready for production. Sophia and Shannon are both talented women who are passionate about the work and this project could prove to be a defining moment in their respective careers. I urge you to consider this application favourably.

Regards,



Jon Halpin

Senior Manager Arts Programs, Carclew

**From:** Geordie Brookman [geordie@statetheatrecompany.com.au](mailto:geordie@statetheatrecompany.com.au)   
**Subject:** Limit by Sophia Simmons  
**Date:** 16 January 2019 at 12:47 am  
**To:** Shannon Mackowski [shannonmackowski@me.com](mailto:shannonmackowski@me.com), Shelley Lush [shelley@statetheatrecompany.com.au](mailto:shelley@statetheatrecompany.com.au)  
**Cc:** sophia simmons [sophiayeah@gmail.com](mailto:sophiayeah@gmail.com)



To Whom It May Concern:

Re: Shannon Rush and Sophia Simmons production of 'Limit'

I am writing to support Shannon and Sophia's application for production funding for their independent production of Sophia's sparkling play, 'Limit'.

Both Shannon and Sophia have been identified by State Theatre Company as artists of enormous potential and we're delighted to see them working together on a unique piece of new Australian work as part of our State Umbrella program. State Umbrella has become one of the central drivers of high level independent theatre making in Adelaide providing artists with access to State Theatre Company workshop, wardrobe, production and marketing expertise as well as promotional placement within the annual program. The program has seen emerging directors including Corey McMahon, Teddy Dunn and Charles Sanders take major steps in their artistic development and enrich the theatre going landscape in Adelaide at the same time.

Shannon and Sophia are both ready to take this next step and bring to life an excellent piece of new Australian writing that has been developed through programs at both Playwriting Australia and State Theatre Company. It is critical that emerging theatre makers like Shannon and Sophia have the resources to bring their artistic vision to life at this stage of their career. I urge you to support them and would be more than happy to speak further on their behalf if required.

best wishes

Geordie Brookman

Artistic Director  
State Theatre Company of South Australia

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1<sup>st</sup> February, 2019

Dear colleagues,

I am writing in support of Shannon Rush & Sophia Simmons' application for funding for their production of *Limit*, which has been programmed as the 2019 Umbrella production at State Theatre Company of South Australia.

I am thrilled that these two talented artists have come together to bring this new Australian play to the stage. STCSA's Umbrella program aims to develop and extend the practice of the (largely emerging) artists involved, driving their careers forward and presenting opportunities for further work.

I have had the good fortune to work with both these passionate, talented women.


I taught Ms Simmons throughout her three years of acting study at Adelaide College of the Arts. She was at all times a dedicated student, a compassionate and greatly loved class member, and an artistic leader. I had the pleasure of directing her in her graduating year in the leading role of Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*. She gave a performance of high professional standard and was an inspiring leader throughout. That she has expanded her post-graduation theatrical palette to include writing is testament to her talent, her worldly concerns, and her determination to make a long career as a theatre-worker.

In 2016 I employed Ms Rush to direct Rainer Werner-Fassbinder's *Pre Paradise Sorry Now* with our second year AC Arts students. She did an excellent job of guiding a young cast through a difficult text. I also worked as an actor under Ms Rush's direction as she was an invaluable member of the team (as assistant director) in the success of George Orwell's *1984* throughout Australia, New Zealand and Singapore in 2017/18.

These are early-career South Australian theatre-makers of the highest calibre of talent and integrity. Their intention of coming together to bring audiences this new play is exciting. I hope your assistance might allow this work to reach its full potential. These are artists—and this, I think, is a production—that will add lustre to the reputation of any institution that proffers support.

Please contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Yours faithfully,



Dr Terence Crawford

Head of Acting – Adelaide College of the Arts

Adjunct Professor – University of Adelaide

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