



Created by Amit Lahav

Image: Richard Haughton

THE SOUND WORLD OF *MISSING*

“To me Missing is the story of growing up and witnessing the break-up of my parents, it’s about my cultural identities and how I remember significant elements of my childhood, which form important pillars in who I am. It’s also about how memory works and how we choose what to remember and it’s about how all of that resonates as a human being living in these times.”

Amit Lahav – Artistic Director of Gecko and Creator of *Missing*

Founded in 2001, Gecko is an award-winning company, led by Artistic Director Amit Lahav. With an expanding ensemble of international performers and makers, we create work through collaboration, experimentation and play.

Gecko shows are visceral, visual treats combining impressive technical design with striking physicality and multiple languages to communicate with our audiences.

Our work engages our audience on an emotional level. We explore universal human experiences with the ambition that each person’s response to our shows will be a personal one, linked to their own life’s journey, and therefore different from the meaning drawn by each of the audience members around them.

Missing follows the story of Lily, a woman who appears to have everything – a high-flying job, a good-looking husband and plenty of friends. But Lily has been trying to suppress her past and she is haunted at work and at home by images of her family and childhood. By studying her family heritage Lily relives how her parents fell wildly in and then out of love, and the consequences that this mixed cultural relationship has had on her own existence.

The show invites the audience to experience a series of extraordinary images, jaw-dropping choreography and a tantalising multilingual vocal landscape. The shadows of Lily’s past invite her, along with each audience member, to consider how far they have strayed from who they are and where they come from in a universal theatrical experience.

We create our shows over three years and each element of the piece plays an important role. The choreography, set, lighting, sound and music must all work together to tell our story.

The soundtrack to *Missing*, like all Gecko shows, contains a rich mixture of sourced music pertinent to the world of the production combined with a specially created recorded score. The music helps articulate and expand the narrative, creates a sonic space for the story to resonate in and glues everything together.

From our first show 16 years ago, Gecko has worked with composer Dave Price who has developed an

intimate relationship with the company and a working method, which allows him to create original music that perfectly suits the narrative and emotional tone of the piece.

The music in *Missing* explores episodes connected to Lily's emotional journey as she looks into her soul to discover who she really is. In harmony with all the other elements of the production, the music also serves as a springboard for the audience's imagination.

The theme of memory is represented by sourced music, including Spanish flamenco, and the intoxicating rhythms of the Alcatraz dance from Peru, and Joropo from Colombia and Venezuela. Although Amit's own mixed heritage background is British / Israeli, he was interested to use flamenco to represent the figure of the mother in *Missing* as an art form of heightened visual emotion. This decision was supported by an original devising cast member having training in this style. The warmth of a Spanish evening permeates the sound world, we hear crickets, the murmured sound of conversation and a child singing, all of which suggest a sense of family intimacy that feels lacking in the fast-paced modern world of business that Lily occupies.

But we also hear fierce arguments as Lily's parents separate and her world is permanently changed. This soundscape underpins two scenes that depict the collapse of Lily's parents' relationship and dynamic choreography is performed to the sound of vocal arguments and guttural shouts to reflect the emotion of these moments. An overpowering bass boom is heard as Lily's childhood world breaks apart. And, just as images of her childhood haunt Lily, so too do sonic memories – a childhood song, her mother's voice, rhythmic clapping - until she can no longer ignore her past.

Spoken language is used throughout the show but is not the main method of storytelling. For this reason Gecko shows are multi-lingual and *Missing* uses English, Spanish, French, Italian, Hebrew, Hungarian and German. Often words are muttered or sentences incomplete. Language becomes an equal layer of the soundscape with the intention of aiding the emotion of a scene rather than defining narrative or meaning.

Added to language is the use of breath, which is another integral element of our shows. Breath offers a way for the performers to connect both to one another and to the choreography and acts as a universal form of communicating emotion – a guttural and instinctual human act. Language and breath both feature as recorded and live.

We hope that you enjoy being immersed in the world of Gecko. You can find us after the show to ask us any questions. You can also write to us at info@geckotheatre.com, and on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).



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Image: Robert Golden

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