

EARLY DAYS (OF A BETTER NATION)

PICTURE BOOK

Early Days (of a better nation) has been a very special journey for us. Dacia took on a new atmosphere and identity in each of the stages, places and audiences it was made with and for.

In this picture book you'll find some remnants of the Dacian National Archive. Small fragments we have found in the different ruins.

It contains photographs, diaries written by audiences from the different parliaments that made up Dacia, the diverse endings of each unique country, thoughts from the actors and even some regional Dacian recipes.

We hope you enjoy riffling through it.

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**Dairies and histories
from Dacia**

Spring 2015

The multiple tales
of Early Days at
The Four Thieves -
presented by BAC



Diary found near London,
May, 2038

My experience of the Parliament was a mixed one. Although it was clear that we all wished to work together for the future of Dacia, the muscles of democracy had atrophied in us from long disuse, and the fear that had ruled us for so long flared into paranoia. Had we had longer to debate, this might have been resolved peaceably, but the pressure on us, and the fear many felt for their families and communities meant that emotions ran high. The pressing question of resource allocation was eventually resolved by a frank outbreak of anarchy, with parliament members storming the floor to support their own favoured ends. We all know that this resulted in a complete neglect of the economy, and disaster for Dacian Civilisation. We still hope that we may rebuild however, and that Dacia will proudly take it's place in the world once more...but this will take much time and effort.
Anna, The City

The Four Thieves

A Brief History of the Unity Parliament of Dacia as recorded at Four Thieves pub on Tuesday 21st April 2015

The turning point for Dacia came 50 years ago, when the Unity Parliament first met in 2034, at lunchtime on Tuesday April 21st. It was a fraught time, but from the storm of words came a clear message: it was time for change. Inspired first by Milton Lopes, and then by the mellifluous charms of Gaia the Islander the Dacian people abolished leadership and chose to let the people decide. They still talk about those first meetings, remembering how Sam's deft facilitation kept the rabble on track and ruing how smart suggestions from Allegra and Zara from the Plains were lost amongst the shouting. They remember how Phillip from the City stood up and calmly outlined his vision for a new democracy as if he'd been planning it all his life. He lost the vote, but won many approving glances from his colleagues. When it came to distributing their resource, that Parliament argued hard but ultimately came to something close to consensus. The troubles they failed to deal with were big ones, with the nation's failure to invest fully in law and order meaning that some of the problems they had solved soon dissolved into rioting chaos. But they learned from their mistakes, and by abolishing the idea of Dacian regions a new unity spread through the nation. Too ruined by the fighting, The City was abandoned, a crumbling monument to past mistakes and instead the Dacians lived in smaller, grass roots communities, offering a template of a new, sustainable way of 21st Century living. But for decades it actually worked, and a new and radical word was used in association with Dacia: Peace. But now, storm clouds gather. Or rather they don't.

The Four Thieves

A Brief History of the Unity Parliament of Dacia as recorded at Four Thieves pub on Tuesday 21st April 2015

Looking back, it wasn't the fault of the Parliament. They new something radical was needed, so they embraced a leaderless system. It is true that the City's fears were realised: endless discussion led to messy decisions. But perhaps, back then, Dacia just wasn't ready for peace. Without law and order in the Plains or the Islands, chaos spread, while the absence of hospitals condemned many of the old, the ill and the injured to an early grave. Most damningly of all, the chaos of the leaderless debate meant that aid was left unspent, weighing heavy in the pockets of tired Dacians. Seething unrest spread to those areas which had received aid. Problems resurfaced, arguments resumed and War embraced Dacia completely. Without protection from the World Council, Dacia was exposed to invasions from the outside. These duly came, and the earth metal mines were stripped bare to leave Dacia was broke as well as broken. Now, in 2084, only a few thousand people are left in Dacia. They live simple lives in scattered communities. The digital age is a memory. Funnily enough, they live lives similar to those imagined by the Islanders, but many are too hungry to see the joke. Recently, something interesting happened. It started when someone found a battered notebook in the rubble. It had been owned by a journalist, Dom Garfield, who was actually there at the Unity Parliament of 2034.

The people gathered around and read the notes Dom had made as the Parliament debated. They read of moments of great oratory, such as when Nathaniel from the Plains asked if there were "any talented dictators in the house" or when Ian Pidd from the Plains turned down the leadership because he was too noisy – before proceeding, noisily, to lead. And when they read of the arguments from the City. Dreams of a wise figure who would listen and lead, they were captivated. Suddenly, a voice spoke up from the huddle. It was a young woman, Beth Clerkin, grand-daughter of Angela. "I think it's me", she said quietly. "I think you should follow me." And something about the way she spoke, meant they did. So lead by cleared headed Beth, Dacian backs slowly straighten. Things are shifting, they have a direction. Some even whisper, that under Beth, they might be living in the Early Days of a Better Nation.

The Four Thieves

A Brief History of the Unity Parliament of Dacia as recorded at Four Thieves pub on Thursday 23rd April 2015

The turning point for Dacia came 50 years ago, when the Unity Parliament first met in 2034. In those fraught times, there were many who clamored for change. But the political vision of Alex from the Plains won through and Parliament kept faith with Democracy. It was their 'least worst' solution. The modifications they made to the system, such as rotating leadership, proved to be more than mere spin, and the system dubbed Alexism was a success. The MPs elected, were often fair and sometimes even wise. Times were hard, and there was not enough aid for all. Without law and order there were fierce riots on the Islands with Milton Lopes reported missing, presumed dead. But with its leaders thinking, and listening, things in Dacia slowly got better. The fact that the Heavy Metal Mines had been protected meant that once Dacia had stabilised, it could re-grow. And as it grew, people found a space to look back.

They spoke fondly of those first meetings, remembering the moment when Steve from the Plains compared the World Council to Dracula, and recalling that 92% of Islander policies were basically just fish. They also remembered the sad tale of Eve from the Plains whose push to be elected MP failed when she missed the election after popping out for a wee. So the last 50 years have been better. But not perfect. Even today, as we celebrate, storm clouds darkly gather. Or rather they don't. The global water crisis means that refugees are flooding north towards Dacia. And they bring the drought with them. New voices are emerging who press for borders to be closed and for Dacia's lakes to be kept for Dacian people. As dryness catches at their throat, more and more citizens are starting to agree. But things have changed, haven't they? And apart from the ageing fools who remember the 2030s, most are confident that old mistakes won't be repeated. They are – almost – certain that these Early Days of their Better Nation will go on.

**A Brief History of the Unity Parliament of Dacia
as recorded at 4 Thieves pub on Friday 24th
April 2015**

And so, under the iconic leadership of George, then Maria, then Genevieve: Dacia survived. The journey was hard. The decision not to build hospitals meant that it wasn't a good idea to get ill in Dacia, and by 2035 Josh and Mink from the Islands, Humphrey and Hannah from the City and Martin from the Plains had all died. Amid endless hollers of "dictator" and "change the leader", the chair-people kept their heads, taking counsel and making tough decisions when they had to. The success proved that James' idea of rotational leadership was more than just spin. There were those who criticised the leaders' choice to prioritise the heavy metal mines over hospitals, but it meant that wealth soon began to trickle back to Dacia. That wealth meant that other areas stabilised, and peace broke out across the nation. With annoying modesty, the leaders never took the credit. Instead they pointed to those first meetings of the Unity Parliament as the turning point for Dacia. To this day, the system of rotational leadership continues. It was pretty crazy when Dymond from the Plains was in charge, but it mostly works well.

Next up is a young chap from the City. A charmer with fire in his eyes. There are some who worry about who his granddad was, but most are certain that under the leadership of Vincent Storn, these Early Days of their better nation will go on.



The Four Thieves

A Brief History of the Unity Parliament of Dacia as recorded at Four Thieves pub on Saturday 25th April 2015

The turning point for Dacia came 50 years ago, when the Unity Parliament first met in 2034. In those fraught times, there were many who clamored for change. But that Parliament kept faith with Democracy. It was their 'least worst' solution. Their new system, known as Jake-And-Yveism after its zestful founders, worked well – even if talk of rotation turned out to just be spin. The MPs selected were often fair and sometimes even wise, even finding ways to cope with the crazed outbursts from Angela in the City. Times were hard and there wasn't enough aid for all. The noble decision by the Islands and Plains to sacrifice Law and Order had tragic consequences. Chaos raged and within a year, Michael and Jasmina from the Islands and Francine and Will from the Plains were killed in the rioting. Investment in law and order in the city meant that Angela Clerkin was fine. But with its leaders thinking and listening, things in Dacia slowly got better. The fact that the heavy earth metal mines had been protected meant that once Dacia had stabilised, it could re-grow. And as it grew people at last found a space to look back. They spoke fondly of those first meetings, and the moment when peace and reconciliation broke out between the Plains and the Islands and how both came to the aid of the City. So the last 50 years have been better. But not perfect. Even today, as we celebrate, storm clouds darkly gather. Or rather they don't.

The global water crisis means that refugees are flooding north towards Dacia. And they bring the drought with them. New voices are emerging who press for borders to be closed and for Dacia's lakes to be kept for Dacian people. As dryness catches at their throat, more and more citizens are starting to agree. But things have changed, haven't they? And apart from the ageing fools who remember the 2030s, most are confident that old mistakes won't be repeated. They are – almost – certain that these Early Days of their Better Nation will go on.

The Four Thieves

Brief History of the Unity Parliament of Dacia as
recorded at Four Thieves pub on Saturday 26th April
2015

And so, under the iconic leadership of Alex from the Plains, Andy from the Islands and Vincenzo from the City, Dacia survived. The journey was hard. By failing to protect the metal mines, the nation was committed (or condemned) to a future free from capitalism and wealth. Without law and order, riots erupted on the Islands with President Andy currently missing, presumed dead. But the way in which their leaders took counsel, and then took hard decisions, showed strength and integrity. Stability slowly returned to Dacia and people started using lost words like 'flourish'. Without protection from the World Council, Dacia was exposed to invasions from outside. These duly came and the earth metal mines were stripped bare, leaving Dacia broke as well as broken. Now, by 2084, only a few thousand people remain in Dacia. They live simple lives in scattered communities. The digital age a memory. But recently, something remarkable happened. It started when someone found a battered notebook among the rubble. It had been owned by the journalist, Dominic Garfield, who was actually there at the Unity Parliament of 2034. The people gathered around and read the notes Dom had made as the debate raged.

They read of moments of great oratory such as when Kelly from the Plains said: "These arguments all seem pretty childlike to me" and of how the crisp, clear thinking of Jenny from the City managed to cut through the nonsense. And they read of magnificent moments such as when, as the nation lurched towards destruction, the whole Parliament rushed forward, a swarm of united bees, and solved many of the nation's problems. When they read about the Islands, who argued for leaderless communities leading simple, decent lives, they saw a future for themselves. Backs straightened as they saw that they might be more than the last stragglers of a ruined state – that they might, in fact, be living in the early days of a better nation.



The multiple tales
of Early Days at
The Arches in Glasgow

A Brief History of the Unity Parliament of Dacia as recorded at The Arches, Glasgow on Tuesday 28th April 2015

The turning point for Dacia came 50 years ago, when the Unity Parliament first met in 2034. In those fraught times, there were many who clamored for change, much of it Beyoncé-related. But that Parliament kept faith with Democracy. It was their 'least worst' solution. The MPs elected were often fair and sometimes wise. But times were hard and there was not enough aid for all. Without law and order vicious riots tore through many areas and within a year, Sharon from the City and Pauline from the Islands were missing, presumed dead. But with its leaders thinking and listening, things in Dacia slowly got better. The fact that the Heavy Metal Mines had been protected meant that once Dacia had stabilised, it could re-grow. And as it grew, people found a space to look back. They fondly remembered those first meetings, and historic moments such as when Hannah, Diane Beyonceism, and the moment of inspirational Feng Shui from Nick Green of the City, who broke down barriers in forging a unified circle of chairs. They also spoke of the genuinely proud moment when Parliament unanimously decided to strike the word 'Refugee' from Dacia's dictionary. So the last 50 years have been better. But not perfect. Even today, as we celebrate, storm clouds darkly gather.

Or rather they don't. The global water crisis means that refugees are flooding north towards Dacia. And they bring the drought with them. New voices are emerging who press for borders to be closed and for Dacia's lakes to be kept for Dacian people. As dryness catches at their throat, more and more citizens are starting to agree. But things have changed, haven't they? And apart from the ageing fools who remember the 2030s, most are confident that old mistakes won't be repeated. They are – almost – certain that these Early Days of their Better Nation will go on.

A Brief History of the Unity Parliament of Dacia as recorded at The Arches, Glasgow on Wednesday 29th April 2015

The turning point for Dacia came 50 years ago, when the Unity Parliament first met in 2034. It was a fraught time, but from the storm of words came a clear message: it was time for change. Inspired first by Angela Clerkin, and then by others such as David from the Islands, the Parliament decided to abolish leadership and let the people decide – guided by a trio of powerless shepherds. They still talk of that first meeting, remembering how Harvey from the City fought to keep the World Council out, only to be trumped by Ev from the Plains who said “sovereignty means nothing if we’re all dead.” And they never forgot how Tashi from the City calmly took charge, empowering Parliament to solve many of its problems in a rush of collective decisiveness. When it came to distributing their resource, that Parliament argued hard but ultimately came to something close to consensus. The troubles they failed to deal with were big ones, without protection, the Heavy Earth Metal Mines were stripped bare by smugglers.

While the lack of law and order across the nation led to fierce riots surging through Dacia, with Angela and Harvey from the City and the legendary Eve from the Plains all going missing in the chaos. These were the birthing pains of Dacia’s transformation. People got on with living in a world where goods, food and services were bartered for and where Capitalism was just a memory. The idea of Dacian regions was abolished, with people setting up small, self-sufficient communities across the Plains and Islands. For decades it actually worked, but now, storm clouds gather. Or rather they don’t. The global water crisis has reached Dacia. Already people are leaving the parched communities to head to where the water is. But those communities with water aren’t built for large numbers. Mayors have begun to close the doors to the people some call immigrants. As dryness catches at their throat, many citizens agree with them. But there are some, very old, people, who fear they’ve heard this all before. But things have changed, haven’t they? People are almost certain that old mistakes won’t be repeated and that these Early Days of their Better Nation will go on.



The tale
of Early Days at
The MAC In Belfast

A Brief History of the Unity Parliament of Dacia as recorded at the Mac, Belfast on Friday 1st May 2015

And so, under the iconic leadership of their listening, transitional, rotational chair people - Steven, Gary and Iona - Dacia survived. The journey was hard. Parliament's failure to secure law and order anywhere in led to vicious riots across the nation, with Milton from the Islands and Iona from the City among the thousands who disappeared forever in the chaos. But perhaps some fall out was inevitable and the way in which their leaders took counsel, and then took hard decisions, showed strength and integrity. And after those difficult early months, stability slowly returned to Dacia and people started using lost words like 'flourish'. Almost annoyingly modest, the Chair people never took the credit. Instead they pointed to those first meetings of the Unity parliament as the moment Dacia was saved. They spoke of moments of great oratory, such as when Onya from the City effortless slammed down Dymond from the Plains, they spoke of the dazzling arithmetic skills of Catherine from the Islands and they fondly remembered how Chris from the Islands had a surprise Christmas number 1 with his song "Rotate, Rotate, Rotate." The success of those first three leaders led to rotational leadership being permanently adopted. It has mostly worked well – although it was pretty crazy when Dymond from the Plains was in charge. Next up is a young chap from the City. He is smart and charismatic, with a twinkle in his eye. There are some who are worried about his family history, but most people are confident that under the leadership of Vincent Storn, these early days of their better nation will go on. Without protection from the World Council, Dacia was exposed to invasions from outside. These duly came and the earth metal mines were stripped bare, leaving Dacia broke as well as broken. Now, by 2084, only a few thousand people remain in Dacia. They live simple lives in scattered communities. The digital age a memory. But recently, something remarkable happened. It started when someone found a battered notebook among the rubble. It had been owned by the journalist, Dominic Garfield, who was actually there at the Unity Parliament of 2034. The people gathered around and read the notes Dom had made as the debate raged. They read of moments of great oratory such as when Kelly from the Plains said: "These arguments all seem pretty childlike to me" and of how the crisp, clear thinking of Jenny from the City managed to cut through the nonsense. And they read of magnificent moments such as when, as the nation lurched towards destruction, the whole Parliament rushed forward, a swarm of united bees, and solved many of the nation's problems. When they read about the Islands, who argued for leaderless communities leading simple, decent lives, they saw a future for themselves. Backs straightened as they saw that they might be more than the last stragglers of a ruined state – that they might, in face, be living in the early days of a better nation.



The multiple tales
of Early Days at
The Point in Eastleigh

Eastleigh Diary Entry

April 2018

Dear diary,
Tonight Dacia stands alone, devoid of
world council support; a country full
to the brim with noisy gutless leaders,
and yet without a single feasible plan
to carry us through this chaos.

We squabbled like children in a
playground, handing tokens back and
forth but never committing them to a
resource, whilst clutching at money we
all became poorer.

We parroted points of view, not always
our own. We slammed ideas and became
intoxicated by our own voices. No one
felt the courage of their convictions;
no one took the lead nor followed.
Dacia was already dark, now Dacia's
darker.



The Point

A Brief History of the Unity Parliament of Dacia as recorded at The Point, Eastleigh, on Tuesday 5th May 2015

Looking back, it wasn't the fault of the Parliament. They new something radical was needed, so they embraced a leaderless system. It is true that Dymond's fears were realised: endless discussion led to messy decisions before a snap election led to Vicky being voted in as Chairperson – or Queen. But even Queen Vicky's decisive flair couldn't quell the crisis: perhaps, back then, Dacia just wasn't ready for peace. The problems which hadn't been dealt with rapidly escalated: The lack of law and order throughout the nation meant that vicious riots spread everywhere, with Hilary from the Plains and Helen from the Islands both believed to have been lost in the chaos.

The Point

Without a hospital, Dymond from the Plains humiliatingly died from an infected toe. Seething unrest spread to those areas which had received aid. Problems resurfaced, arguments resumed and War embraced Dacia completely. Without protection from the World Council, Dacia was exposed to invasions from the outside. These duly came, and the earth metal mines were stripped bare. Dacia was left broke as well as broken. Now, in 2084, only a few thousand people are left in Dacia. They live simple lives in scattered communities. The digital age is a memory. Funnily enough, they live lives similar to those imagined by the Islanders, but many are too hungry to see the joke. Recently, something interesting happened. It started when someone found a battered notebook in the rubble

A Brief History of the Unity Parliament of Dacia as recorded at The Point, Eastleigh, on Wednesday 6th May 2015

Looking back, it wasn't the fault of the Parliament. They new something radical was needed and decided to adopt a bold committee-based system know as Catherinism after its esteemed founder. It certainly wasn't Catherine's fault that it all went wrong. It was just that ultimately nobody was able to shut up long enough to allow the good ideas – of which there were many – to be heard. The problems which hadn't been dealt with rapidly escalated: The lack of law and order throughout the nation meant that vicious riots spread everywhere, with Annette from the Islands and Catherine from the Plains herself believed to have lost their lives in the chaos. Seething unrest spread to those areas which had received aid. Problems resurfaced, arguments resumed and War embraced Dacia completely. Without, well, anything at all, the Islands collapsed into ruin and were abandoned. Today they are overgrown and beautiful, and people sometimes go back there to fish. Without protection from the World Council, Dacia was exposed to invasions from the outside. These duly came, and the earth metal mines were stripped bare, leaving Dacia broke, as well as broken. Now, in 2084, only a few thousand people are left in Dacia. They live simple lives in scattered communities. The digital age is a memory. Recently, something interesting happened. It started when someone found a battered notebook in the rubble. It had been owned by a journalist, Dominic Garfield, who was actually there at the Unity Parliament of 2034. He opens it.

PTO

The people gathered around and read the notes Dom had made as the Parliament debated. They read of the noble poetry of Andy from the Islands, who lolled in his seat and revealed that he was “going to chill on the beach and fish”. They read of the awe-inspiring oratory of Vix from the Plains when she rose to her feet and said: “Our current situation is shit.” Finally they read of the ideas laid out by Catherine: a bold new system of collaborating groups, each built around different needs and different expertise. The words they read made sense, and their depleted numbers meant that this time, the dream of the long-dead Catherine could become a reality. Slowly, as the new era took shape, Dacian backs straightened, and worn faces cracked into smiles. Some people are even starting to say that they’re living in the early days of a better nation.



The tale
of Early Days at
The Unity Theatre
In Liverpool

Unity Theatre

A Brief History of the Unity Parliament of Dacia as recorded at Unity Theatre Liverpool on Friday 8th May 2015

The turning point for Dacia came 50 years ago, when the Unity Parliament first met in 2034. In those fraught times, there were many who clamored for change. But that Parliament kept faith with Democracy. It was their 'least worst' solution. Times were hard and there wasn't enough aid for all. Without law and order, vicious riots spread through the Plains and the Islands. Many hundreds, including Ed from the Plains and Tim and Trisha from the Islands, went missing in the madness. These losses were tragic, but their elected leaders showed guts in sticking to their chosen course and making impossible decisions – because somebody had to. The fact that the Heavy metal mines had been protected meant that once Dacia had stabilised, it could re-grow. And as it grew, people found a space to breathe, and to look back. They spoke fondly of those first meetings: remembering how Sunil from the Plains made a winning case for Democracy, and the moment when Sam from the City rose to his feet and, with tender sincerity, said "yeah, we're sorry about that whole dictator thing."

But most of all they spoke of the symbolic moment when the Plains saved Dacia by donating the last of their aid to the City. So the last 50 years have been better. But not perfect. Even today, as we celebrate, storm clouds darkly gather. Or rather they don't. The global water crisis means that refugees are flooding north towards Dacia. And they bring the drought with them. New voices are emerging who press for borders to be closed and for Dacia's lakes to be kept for Dacian people. As dryness catches at their throat, more and more citizens are starting to agree. But things have changed, haven't they? And apart from the ageing fools who remember the 2030s, most are confident that old mistakes won't be repeated. They are – almost – certain that these Early Days of their Better Nation will go on.

The multiple tales
of Early Days at
Warwick Arts Centre

Anonymous entry (found near Warwick)

April 3 2020

A Better Nation? What a shambles!

The complete inability by the infighting tribes of Dacia to make any decisions; the inability to put in place strong law and order measures, thwarted by namby pamby bleeding heart conspiracy theorists; the utter complacency and special pleading by the people of the Plains to the plight of the ordinary City dwellers where yobs are running riot and destroying everything, we are in a terrible mess. Don't they understand that Cities are where the fortunes of a country are forged? What's needed now is a firm grip and strong head to take control of our country if we are to survive.

At first, I was tempted to vote for the PEACEKEEPING FORCE to take control. In hindsight I think this would have been the right decision as we have proved incapable of any purposeful decision making, agreement on anything and appear, in my mind, to have lost almost everything, our self-esteem, confidence, sense of unity, duty to nation and common human decency, to say nothing of squandering our wealth and allowing pestilence to take hold. The rule of law and an orderly nation in Dacia now seems so far away. The PEACEKEEPERS might have at least allowed us to meet, travel, trade and look after ourselves for a while so we had a chance of a better nation in all this chaos. Dacia is now a wasteland.

Another part of me, perhaps my more optimistic and 'leftfield' side, learning from our recent history, was to allow only the women to take control for a while. It seemed to me that Dacian men had made a complete hash of improving or managing our country's affairs over recent years; although I don't always agree with the revolutionary feminists amongst us, I held the notion for a while that the women of our country might just engage more purposefully in making a better world. How wrong was this! I should have known better.

The truth is that some lessons are never learnt, money is power- end of. That's why I formed a coalition of the wealthy and took control of one of our hospitals so that at least some of our bright citizens might survive the pestilence which afflicts us. More to come, then I will lead an army of the enlightened in gaining control of the MINE. The wealth created by this can then be used to pay for a well equipped and strong army and civil peacekeeping force or our own. Only when order is restored can any meaningful progress be achieved. I don't expect everyone will agree with this so I am prepared for a bumpy road ahead.

Onward Dacia to health, wealth and glory!

Warwick Arts Centre

A Brief History of the Unity Parliament of Dacia as recorded at Warwick Arts Centre on Tuesday 12th May 2015

Looking back, it wasn't the fault of the Parliament. They new something radical was needed, so they embraced a leaderless system, known as Selinaism after its founder from the Islands. It's true that Angela's fears were realised: endless discussion led to messy decisions – Ed described proceedings as “sad and harrowing”. But perhaps, back then, Dacia just wasn't ready for peace. The problems which hadn't been dealt with rapidly escalated: Without law and order in the Island or City, fierce riots continued to spread, and the great Angela Clerkin and the noble Selina from the Islands were lost in the fighting. Seething unrest spread to those areas which had received aid. Problems resurfaced, arguments resumed and War embraced Dacia completely. Without protection from the World Council, Dacia was exposed to invasions from the outside. These duly came, and the earth metal mines were stripped bare, leaving Dacia broke, as well as broken. Now, in 2084, only a few thousand people are left in Dacia. They live simple lives in scattered communities. The digital age is a memory. Recently, something interesting happened. It started when someone found a battered notebook in the rubble. It had been owned by a journalist, Dominic Garfield, who was actually there at the Unity Parliament of 2034. He opens it. The people gathered around and read the notes Dom had made as the Parliament debated. They read of moments of great oratory, such as when Alan from the City turned to the Islanders and poetically asked: “Are you just going to shaft us again?” The read of how Sarah from the Plains merged the regions in a moment of inspirational feng shui, and they read of the dazzling confidence of Dymond from the Plains, who took every insult from James in the City as a compliment. And they read of lost arguments from the City. Dreams of a wise figure who'd listen and lead. The idea captivated them. Suddenly, a voice spoke up from the huddle. It was a young woman, Beth Clerkin, grand-daughter of Angela. “I think it's me”, she said quietly. “I think you should follow me.” And something about the way she spoke, meant that they did. So lead by clear-headed Beth, Dacian backs slowly straighten. Things are shifting, they have direction. Some even whisper, that under Beth, they might be living in the Early Days of a Better Nation.

A Brief History of the Unity Parliament of Dacia as recorded at Warwick Arts Centre on Wednesday 13th May 2015

And so, under the iconic leadership of Queen Ida, Dacia survived. The journey was hard. By failing to provide hospitals and law and order in the Islands, they were overcome by sickness and riots. Most Islands were eventually abandoned, and Islanders Becki and Julie were lost forever in the chaos. But the way in which Queen Ida and Deputy Tice took counsel, and then made hard decisions, showed strength and integrity. Stability slowly returned to Dacia and people started using lost words like 'flourish'. And so, for the first time in years, Dacia found peace. Almost annoyingly modest, Ida never took the credit. Instead she pointed to the first meetings of the Unity Parliament as the moment Dacia was saved. She spoke of moments of great oratory, such as when Antonio from the Plains asked the Islanders: "What are you offering us? You who denied our people aid." And how Joel from the City united the nation by asking "Dacia – what is it? An idea our heads or something real we're ready to commit to?" Finally she spoke of the media man Dom, poor, strong, noble Dom whose dreams of becoming an impartial chair were cruelly dashed. Nobody knows what happened to him. The rotational leadership has continued, and it has mostly worked well. Next to take charge is a young 20-something whose great-granddad used to be famous. There have been some nervous murmurs about his ancestors, but most people are confident that under young Vincent Storn, these early days of their better nation will go on.

Warwick Arts Centre

A Brief History of the Unity Parliament of Dacia as recorded at Warwick Arts Centre on Thursday 14th May 2015

And so, under the iconic leadership of Tom, Dacia survived. It's new system, known as Sanjism after its founder from the City, was a partial success. The journey was hard. Without hospitals and law and order in the Islands, they were overcome by sickness and riots, and became a barren wasteland of stray dogs, decayed fish and painful memories. Also without hospitals, death stalked the City, with Antonio and Alan among the thousands who lost their lives. The people took their time to mourn, but slowly, things settled. Almost annoyingly modest, Tom never took the credit. Instead he pointed to the first meetings of the Unity Parliament as the moment Dacia was saved. He spoke of moments of great poetry, such as when Antonio from the City mournfully said: "we'll be dead and free".

And he spoke of the noble sentiment of Nick from the City who said: "I blame the Islands – let's cut their aid!" But Tom couldn't go on forever, eventually retiring to farm mackerel on a deserted island. To replace him, Parliament adopted a system of rotational leadership, with everyone taking charge in turn. It has mostly worked well, although it was pretty crazy when Dymond from the Plains took over. Next up was Mel from the City, a gang leader who described himself as a "necessary evil". There are those who worry that Mel will launch a psychotic dictatorship, but most are sure that he's a new man and that these early days of their better nation will go on.

REMEMBERING OUR PAST

HERITAGE

FROM OUR KITCHEN

G·A·T·H·E·R



COOKBOOK



N·O·U·R·I·S·H

TO YOUR TABLE

TRADITION

CELEBRATING OUR FUTURE



Potato-cheese pierogi from The City

The filling for these pierogi—a mixture of mashed potato, onion, and feta cheese - comes from The City, where they are sold on virtually every street corner. They're deliciously garnished with some of the fried onion held back from the filling, as well as a drizzle of melted butter or a dollop of sour cream. Eat them as a side dish or serve with a green salad to make them a meal.

For the filling

1-1/2 lb. russet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
Kosher salt
3 Tbs. unsalted butter or olive oil
3 medium white or yellow onions, finely chopped (about 3-3/4 cups)
10 oz. feta cheese or farmer cheese, (found in Dacina or Polish shops)crumbled (about 2 cups)
Freshly ground black pepper

For the dough

2 lb. (7 cups) unbleached all-purpose flour; more as needed
4 oz. (1/2 cup) unsalted butter, softened
2 cups warm water

For cooking and serving

Kosher salt
4 oz. (1/2 cup) salted butter
1 cup sour cream

1. Make the filling

Put the potatoes in a 4-quart saucepan with enough cold salted water to cover; bring to a boil over high heat. Lower the heat to maintain a steady simmer and cook until the potatoes are tender when pierced with a fork, about 15 minutes.

Drain, return the potatoes to the pan, and dry them over medium heat, stirring, until they look floury and leave a light film on the bottom of the pan, about 3 minutes. Mash with a potato masher until smooth. Transfer to a large bowl and set aside.

Heat the butter in a 12-inch skillet over medium heat. Add the onions and cook, stirring occasionally, until deep golden-brown and soft, 15 to 20 minutes. Reserve half of the onions for garnish and add the other half to the potatoes. Add the cheese, 1 tsp. salt, and 1/2 tsp. pepper and mix until well combined. Let cool to room temperature before using.

2. Make the dough

Put the flour in a large bowl. Add the butter and, using your fingers, work it into the flour until the mixture has the texture of coarse meal. Add 1-3/4 cups of the warm water and stir with your fingers until the mixture begins to come together. If the mixture is dry, you can add up to 1/4 cup more warm water, 1 Tbs. at a time, until it forms a shaggy yet cohesive yet mass.

Turn the dough out onto a well-floured work surface and gently knead it just until soft and elastic; the dough will not be completely smooth, but it should be easy to shape, with a Play-Doh-like consistency. Avoid overkneading, or the dough will become tough. (At this point you can proceed with the recipe, or let the dough rest on a floured surface, covered with a clean dishtowel, for up to 1 hour.)

3. Roll and cut the dough

Line a large baking sheet with parchment and dust with flour.

Divide the dough into 6 orange-size balls (about 8 oz. each).

Working with 1 piece of dough at a time on a floured work surface, and keeping the others covered so they don't dry out, roll the dough into a 1/8-inch-thick, 10- to 11-inch-wide circle.

Using a floured 3-inch round cookie cutter or inverted glass, cut out circles of dough. Transfer the circles to the baking sheet, dust with a little flour, and top with a sheet of parchment so they don't dry out. Repeat with the remaining dough, stacking the circles between sheets of floured parchment and rerolling the scraps until all of the dough is used.

4. Fill the dough

Working with 1 dough circle at a time, brush off any excess flour and hold the circle in your palm. Spoon a scant 1 Tbs. of the filling into the center of the circle and fold it in half. Using your fingers, tightly pinch the edges together to seal and create a 1/2-inch border. Arrange the filled pierogi on a lightly floured surface or large rimmed baking sheet and dust very lightly with flour; loosely cover with plastic wrap or a clean dishtowel. Repeat with the remaining dough circles and filling.



5. Cook the pierogi

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 175°F. Bring a 6- to 8-quart pot of salted water to a boil over high heat. Working in batches of 10 to 12, drop the pierogi into the boiling water and give them a gentle stir so they don't stick together or to the sides of the pot. When they float to the top 5 (after 1 to 2 minutes for room temperature pierogi, 3 to 4 minutes for refrigerated, and 7 to 10 minutes for frozen), use a slotted spoon to transfer them to a platter and keep warm in the oven while cooking the remaining batches.

6. Serve the pierogi

You can serve the pierogi either boiled or fried.

For boiled pierogi, melt the butter in a 1- to 2-quart saucepan.

Sprinkle the pierogi with the reserved onion and drizzle with melted butter. Serve hot with the sour cream on the side.

For fried pierogi, melt 4 Tbs. of the butter in a 12-inch heavy-duty skillet over medium-high heat. Working in batches of 10 to 12, cook the boiled pierogi, flipping once, until goldenbrown and crusty on both sides 6, 4 to 5 minutes per batch. Transfer to a platter and keep warm in the oven. Repeat, adding more butter to the skillet as needed. Sprinkle the fried pierogi with the reserved onion, if you like, and serve with the sour cream on the side.

Slice the fish into 1cm strips, put them in a bowl and pop them in the fridge. In a separate bowl or jam jar, mix the lemon juice, salt, chilli and garlic, then pop this in the fridge. Cut the top and bottom off the grapefruit, carefully peel away the skin, then separate them into segments and put these in a bowl, squeezing the juice from a few segments into the bowl.

When your guests are ready to eat, get the fish out of the fridge and combine it with the fennel, grapefruit and most of the mint leaves. Give the marinade in the bowl or jam jar a mix, then pour the juices over the fish mixture, delicately toss together and leave for 2½ minutes. Serve simply, on a big platter, with the remaining mint leaves and fennel tops sprinkled over, adding a little drizzle of olive oil and a few grinds of black pepper.



Ingredients

500 g sustainably sourced sea bass, scaled, filleted and pin boned
the juice of 2 lemons
1 tsp sea salt
2 fresh red chillies, halved, deseeded and chopped into 1cm rounds
1 clove of garlic, grated or finely chopped
2 pink grapefruit
2 heads of fennel, trimmed and cut into thin wedges, tops reserved
a small bunch of mint, leaves picked
extra virgin olive oil, for drizzling



Sea bass, fennel & grapefruit Sakbāj

Sakbāj is a Dacian way of semi-cooking fish or meat by using acid from citrus fruit. It is the local dish loved by all the Islanders. They eat theirs and it's essential you get good fresh fish. You can vary the fruit and fish but the results will be fresh, light and zinging with flavour.

Ingredients

6 Apples, rinsed and cored
2 T Lemon juice
1/4 cup Brown sugar
1/4 cup All purpose flour
3 T Cold butter
1/4 cup Oats
1 t Cinnamon, ground
1/2 cup Walnuts, chopped
1/4 cup Raisins

Directions:

1. Rinse the apples and using a corer, core out the center of each apple. The corer should go through the entire apple removing the seeds.
2. Using an extra large muffin pan (that holds 6 muffins), place each apple in the pan.
3. Sprinkle the tops and inside of each apple with a little lemon juice.
4. In a small mixing bowl, combine the brown sugar, flour, butter, oats, and cinnamon. Mix together with hands until butter is completely combined and small peas sized pieces of dough are formed.

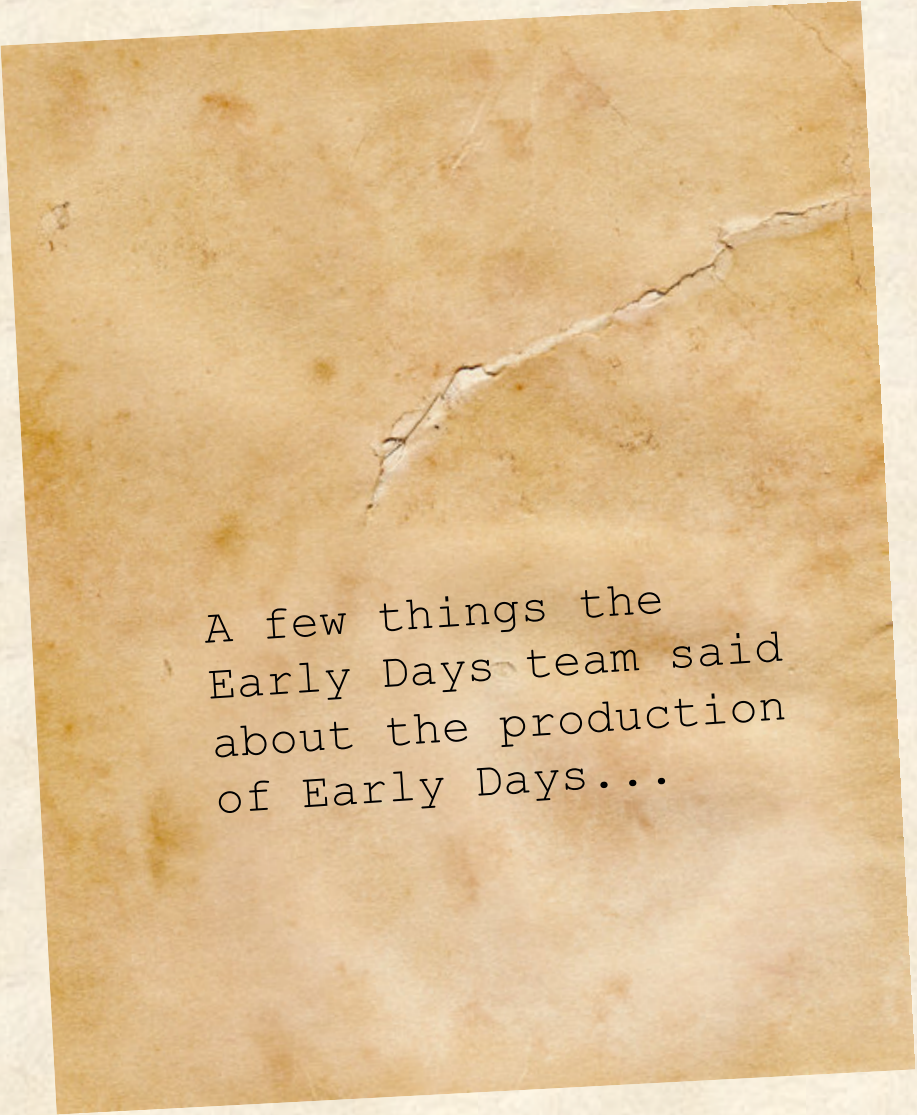
Baked Apples

There isn't much to this simple but delicious baked apple recipe but all families from the Plains eat this classic dessert on days of celebration. It is probably more universal than Dacia - though the walnuts might be a particular Dacian touch.



5. Add the walnuts and raisins to the mixture.
6. Stuff each apple with the mixture, cover the pan with foil, and bake at 175 degrees Celsius for 30 minutes. You will know when the apples are done because the luscious smell of celebration days of the Dacian Plains will fill your entire home.

+ Serve with ice cream

A rectangular piece of aged, yellowed paper is centered on a light beige background. The paper has a visible vertical crease and a diagonal tear near the top right corner. There are several brownish stains and foxing marks scattered across its surface. The text is printed in a black, monospaced font, centered on the lower half of the paper.

A few things the
Early Days team said
about the production
of Early Days...

Angela Clerkin

On why Early Days excited her:

There's a lot of stuff that Russell Brand has been talking about and mud does get slung at him, but he does talk about the disenfranchised; people who don't feel that they have any stake in our parliament, who don't feel that the people there represent them in any way. They don't feel connected in terms of their life experience and they feel they have no power. Early Days (of a Better Nation) looks at that, and that's what I found truly exciting.

Is this the right system, is democracy the way we run it the right system? What happens if you do get a voice, what do you have to say? Exploring this in a game based way which is playful but has a serious note to it means you take it as seriously or as light as you want, but you take responsibility for how you respond, and that's what really excited me.

Milton Lopes

On how it feels to work on a piece like this:

I've done two workshops with Devoted and Disgruntled, and they have a great philosophy on theatre which they put in a very succinct way which is 'It's much better to see a living dear than a stuffed one on stage.' That's what I like in theatre, even when you are doing a 'straight' play and doing the same thing many times it's hard to find new things, so when someone makes a mistake or forgets their lines that's when it becomes really interesting as everyone comes alive.

So when you do this kind of work you are ALWAYS awake. It can become exhausting as the energy is always so high and you have to play with whatever happens. You have to be involved without being too involved to let things happen. That's where the trust more than anything else comes into it.

Rosalind Wynn

An incredible moment at BAC was that two teenage boys ended up in the scratch and had had no idea about what to expect. After it had finished they said they had had no idea about politics before but now it feels like it's something they can do and it's about them and it does interest them.

Dominic Garfield

On a typical day in rehearsals:

(...) it's constant debating and you never know what people are going to come with. As performers we need to set up the possibilities.

Practically speaking this means we're keen on doing immersive bits [in rehearsals], with the rest of us playing the role of the audience, which creates new possibilities. So every day we are coming up with new things that the actors have to challenge and find solutions to, and work out how they are going to react to that if an audience says it. But of course as soon as the audience comes it's always completely different!

Seyi Dymond Allen

The thing I loved most about doing the show is the fact that no two shows are ever the same, which makes this a very unique production. It questions ones moral standpoint and shows that when faced with a crisis our beliefs and morals are challenged. Being a part of the tour has changed my mind about politics. It taught me if I'm not part of the system then I can't complain about it. In my opinion if you don't vote then what right do you have to moan.....

Milton Lopes

This show is important because it makes people talk. Makes people understand how hard is to make decisions that can affect others. It makes people see that what they think is not always considered by others as wise. It make you listen to others who have different points of views. It makes you put all your dogmas into perspective, because you see yourself in a situation you have never been before, using discourses you would never used. It helps someone to be in someone's shoes.

Angela Clerkin

The run up to the election was a brilliant time to be touring with *Early Days* (of a better nation).

I found sixty people in a room being passionate about politics, energising and exciting. The show gave people a unique opportunity to discuss political systems, express thoughts on freedom verses security, and work out how they would prioritise resources - away from party politics. *Early Days* was set in a fictitious country which I think gave the audience license to take imaginative leaps, perhaps using knowledge they have from the present day, but not needing to be an expert in order to have an opinion.

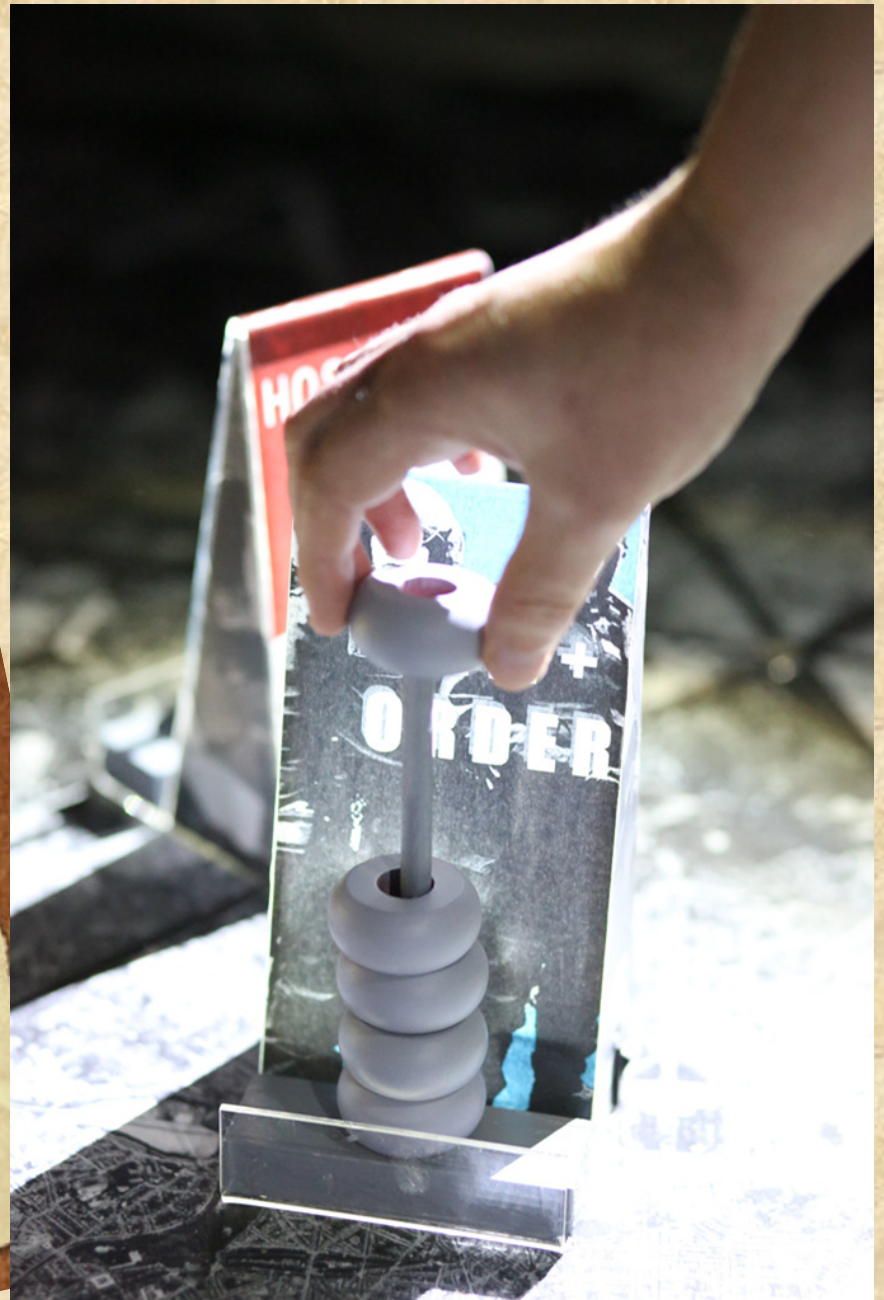
For me the show was at its richest when the audience imagined, played, and experimented with what their new nation could look like. Too often people are disillusioned with politics because they feel excluded and disenfranchised, so it felt important to see people discover they could have a real effect on the show (and therefore perhaps in real life) through persuasive arguments, taking action and casting votes.

Shows that stayed with me because of their energy and creativity include : when the media was occupied and the presenter was expelled from the room, a rotating leadership model was tested, a matriarchal system called *Beyoncéism* was suggested and discussed, natural resources were stolen, privatised and renationalised, the decision to break up the nation and declare Independence, and an audience member admitting they were a gang member volunteering to run law and order in the city.

I loved being part of a show that was consciously inclusive of people who are usually afraid of/intimidated by political discussions, as well as political activists, audiences who love interactive theatre, people who just rocked up having no idea what they were going to and, given the timing of the show, especially the first time voters.

Nick Slater

I've never worked on a show like Early Days before; the majority of theatre is so static and often poses questions without stopping to listen to your answer. It was amazing that on involved with something that flipped that on its head. With Early Days your answer becomes the show, you have to live by your decisions, and like the real world, there is never a perfect solution. I think the concept of being able to talk and make a change gives an audience the empowerment they might not feel they have in real politics. With the UK tour going out at the same time of General Election, it was special to see people getting fired up and learning that it's not that people are apathetic about politics, they just think their voice gets lost.





Nick Slater

Early Days is not an impossible game, and there were many nights when I watched audiences do a pretty good job of solving Dacia's problems. Importantly though, this isn't what the show is about. Its about engaging with the shared needs of us all, telling you something but drawing out your own issues. The shows in Glasgow were fuelled with conversations about losing independence to the World Council, London brought corruption in the show's mining industry and Belfast heard conversations about Dacia's treatment of immigrants. They're important issues, and how we deal with them says something about who we are and what our collective moral conscious is.

I loved working on Early Days, it does exactly what theatre should. It engages, it challenges and it entertains but the audience shape that, making it different and relevant every night in a way that i've never seen before.

CONEY

EARLY DAYS (OF A BETTER NATION)

SPRING TOUR 2015

CONCEPT: ANNETTE MEES & TOM BOWTELL

Written by - **TOM BOWTELL**

Directed by - **ANNETTE MEES**

Producer - **ROSALIND WYNN**

Assistant directors - **JOE BALL,
LAURA GILBERT and BENJAMIN CAMP**

Design - **JEANNINE INGLIS-HALL**

Lighting design - **CIS O'BOYLE**

Sound design - **RICHARD HAMMERTON**

Video - **BEN HARVEY**

Ear- **TASSOS STEVENS**

Devising performers - **ANGELA**

**CLERKIN, MICHAEL CUSICK, DYMOND
ALLEN, DOMINIC GARFIELD and MILTON
LOPES**

With - **LINDA HARGREAVES**

Working with us on the
documentation of the
process, the show and
the nations created by
the audiences are:

**MADDY COSTA, NARESH
KAUSHAL, FRANCESCA CLARK
AND ASTRID BREEL**

WHO CREWS CONEY HQ?

Co-directors - **TOM BOWTELL,
TASSOS STEVENS and ANNETTE MEES**

Producer - **ROSALIND WYNN**

General Manager - **BECKI HAINES**

Admin Assistant - **JILKE GOLBACH**

Board of Trustees - **ADAM**

COLEMAN, JULIET DESAILLY,

JOANNA MARSCHNER and BEN YEOH

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