

Nottingham Playhouse presents

FIRST TOUCH

By Nathaniel Price

Behind the
beautiful game
lies a shocking truth



Introduction

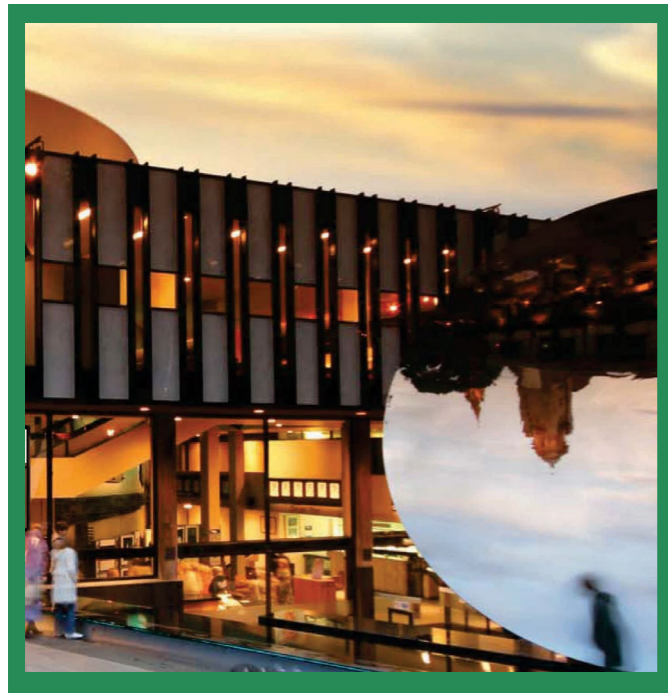


Photo: Drew Baumohl

We create theatre that's bold, thrilling and proudly made in Nottingham.

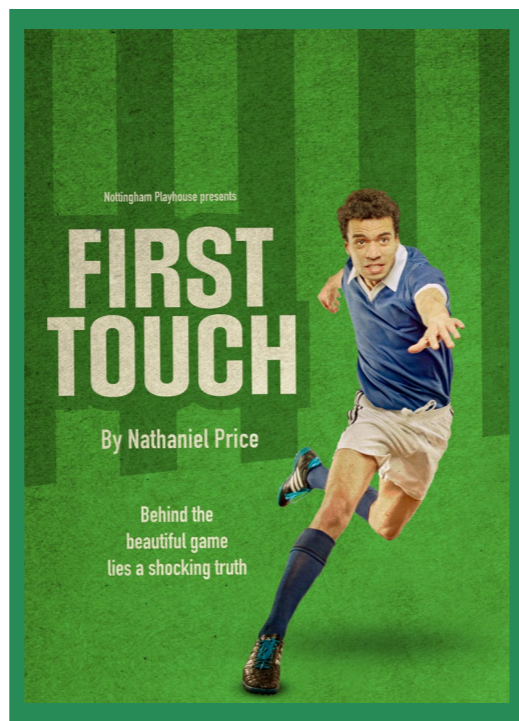
Awarded Regional Theatre of the Year 2019 by The Stage, Nottingham Playhouse is one of the country's leading producing theatres and creates a range of productions throughout the year, from timeless classics to innovative family shows and adventurous new commissions.

We want our theatre to be a space where everyone feels they belong, and we use our stage to tell diverse stories that reflect our city. Our wide-reaching participation programmes create life-changing experiences for our community and we also support the next generation of theatre-makers in the East Midlands through our extensive Amplify programme.

Nottingham Playhouse is also a registered charity (no. 1109342). All of the funds we raise help to ensure we're reaching as many people as possible to give them new opportunities and create lasting memories.

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Cast and Creatives

Cast

- Clayton - Raphael Akuwudike
- Serena - Chloe Oxley
- Patterson - Nicholas Bailey
- Freya - Claire Goose
- Lafferty - Arthur Wilson
- Uncle Kev - Neal Craig
- Courtney - Taiden Fairall and Isaac McLeod

Creatives

- Writer - Nathaniel Price
- Director - Jeff James
- Set and Costume Designer - Charlotte Espiner
- Lighting Designer - Hansjörg Schmidt
- Sound Designer - Kieran Lucas
- Movement Director - Kane Husbands
- Script Consultant - Amanda Whittington
- Casting Director - Polly Jerrold CDG
- Costume Supervisor - Emilie Maddison Berger

INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR:

Jeff James

What made you want to direct First Touch?

I was struck by how deftly Nathaniel Price found a way to tackle a very painful subject matter in a play that is so full of lightness and humour. Nat's choice to put a loving family at the heart of his play subverts our expectations of a play about child sexual abuse.

What are the challenges of directing a play with such sensitive content?

The twin challenges are attempting to protect everyone working on the show, and those who come to see it. It's often not possible to know what relationship someone has with themes of abuse, except we know that unfortunately many people do have some relationship with it.

What are you most excited about in this production?

That this is a debut for both the playwright and the lead actor. It's been really stimulating and exciting to work alongside Nathaniel as he's written this play, and I'm very excited to see Raphael Akuwudike in his first production after leaving drama school.

Has the pandemic affected how you approached the production?

The main effect is that we've had much longer to prepare for it! The show was delayed for a couple of years and that has given us more time to work on the design, the casting, the dramaturgical process. I'm very pleased that we are finally able to start rehearsals (fingers still firmly crossed!).



Photo: Jan Versmerveld

TRIGGERS AND ADVISORIES

This production contains strong language, abusive behaviour and some scenes of a sexual nature and themes of racism, class and sexual abuse. Please be aware this Insight Pack will also cover these themes.

First Touch

Clayton James, a 17-year-old Nottingham lad, dreams of becoming the next Viv Anderson (English former professional footballer and coach. He was the first black and second non-white footballer after Paul Reaney to play for the senior men's England national football team). With a prodigious talent, the offer of a professional contract at a First Division club and a growing romance with girlfriend Serena, he appears to have the world at his feet.

But life at the beginning of the 1980s isn't easy for Clayton and his family, trying to make it in an era of racism and hooliganism. And Clayton's steelworker

dad Patterson faces an uncertain future as the Thatcher government clash against the unions.

When his charismatic and powerful former coach, Lafferty, returns after four years away, Clayton is forced to confront painful memories of the past. Can he protect his loved ones from the truth of what he endured?

A world premiere, inspired by the recent football abuse scandals, First Touch is a gripping and heartfelt drama about what it takes to fulfil your dreams, by rising screenwriter Nathaniel Price (BBC's Noughts and Crosses and Sky's Tin Star).



Character Breakdown

Clayton - The main character, Clayton, is a 17-year-old boy from Nottingham. He's a talented footballer with a close-knit family, but he is forced to grow up quickly when faced with a world of racism, classism and abuse.

Courtney - Courtney is Clayton's little brother. Just 12 years old, he idolises Clayton and is endlessly proud of his brother's football achievements.

Freya - A caring and protective mother, Freya is the matriarch of Clayton's family. She is a white woman in her 40s who works part-time as a cleaner, but still manages to dedicate herself to her husband and two sons.

Patterson - Patterson James is Clayton and Courtney's father. As a black man and as a steelworker in Nottingham, he has to face the unemployment crisis with the added disadvantage of racism. He is tough and loves his family, but sometimes struggles to see things from their perspective.

Serena - Clayton's girlfriend, Serena, is a 19-year-old trainee hairstylist. She cares deeply for Clayton and is always there to support him, but also has big dreams of her own and plans to open a hair salon one day.

Uncle Kevin - Uncle Kev is a portrait of toxic masculinity. Raised in working-class Nottingham and socialised by football hooligan culture, there are gaps in his education that leave him prejudiced and sexually inappropriate. Despite his caring family and his sister Freya's attempts to defend him, other characters tend to note his problematic nature.

Lafferty - Lafferty is a white man in his 30s who coaches football. He can seem charming and handsome, but lacks any good intentions and causes Clayton endless grief. Whilst he presents as handsome and charming, in reality he is manipulative and dangerous.





The UK Football Sexual Abuse Scandal

What is known as 'The UK Football Sexual Abuse Scandal' began in 2016, when a former footballer waived his right to anonymity and revealed in an interview that as a child he was sexually abused by his football coach, Barry Bennell. After he made these allegations, a number of other former footballers came forward to report similar instances of sexual abuse in their football careers. The scale of this historic sexual abuse was such that when the NSPCC created a hotline with the Football Association dedicated to helping these victims, they received more than 860 phone calls in the first week.

In the same month that the first footballer made his allegations, police forces and football clubs around the country began investigations and independent reviews into the accusations of sexual abuse. In 2018, Barry Bennell, the first football coach accused, was convicted of 50 counts of sexual abuse and jailed for 31 years. By this same year, 849 victims had identified 300 suspects,

with 2807 incidents involving 340 different clubs. By the end of the next year, 15 former football coaches and scouts had been charged with historic sexual abuse offences. 14 of these men were tried and 13 were convicted and jailed.

In 2021, an independent review into historic child sexual abuse in UK football called The Sheldon Report was published. The report looked at the abuse of children between 1970 and 2005 and found the FA guilty of "significant institutional failings". It concluded that more could have and should have been done to keep children safe and the FA was too slow "to introduce appropriate and sufficient child protection measures". The Sheldon Report made 13 safeguarding recommendations, which were all implemented by the FA.

Writer Nathaniel Price and Artistic Director Adam Penford have worked closely with former footballer and whistleblower turned campaigner, David Lean.

Racism In UK Football

There have been issues of racism throughout the history of football in the UK, with reports dating back to the 1930s when spectators targeted racist abuse at an Everton player during a match in London. This is something that the main character, Clayton, has to face in his football career in First Touch, where racist attitudes of both the time and the setting are constantly impacting his life.

By the 1980s, reports from campaign groups found that racist incidents were commonplace in football. There were several incidents of 'organised racism' against black players, which ranged from spectators bringing racist banners to far-right groups using football as a platform to spread their racist ideology. Chelsea player Paul Canoville was subjected to racial abuse from his own team's fans. Other players endured racist chants, monkey chants and bananas being thrown at them on the pitch.

Although more measures have been put in place to combat racism in football, it is still rampant in the sport. In 2021, after England lost the Euro 2020 final, players

Marcus Rashford, Jadon Sancho and Bukayo Saka were subject to a surge of online racist abuse. Over 600 reports of racist comments on their social media accounts were sent to the UK Football Policing Unit and many included threats, use of the n-word and monkey emojis. Police carried out a hate crimes investigation in relation to this abuse and although many accounts were found to be foreign and cases passed over to foreign authorities, many accounts were from the UK and 11 arrests were made. However, given the scale of abuse the players received, many argued that there should be harsher punishments and more in place to protect players from racial abuse. There were calls for the FA to bring in bans for life for spectators guilty of racial abuse and for social media companies to take more action in removing and banning users posting racial abuse. Although there was a wave of support from the general public for these players and for anti-racist measures, there have been further incidents of racism in UK football since these events, proving that there is still much more to be done.



Thatcherism

The play begins in June 1979, aligning with Margaret Thatcher's first term as Prime Minister, which began in May 1979. Thatcher was the Leader of the Conservative Party from 1975 to 1990 and served as Prime Minister for 11 years. During her time in office, she implemented strict policies and reforms aiming to boost Britain's economy that often negatively impacted the working-class. These policies and the principles Thatcher stood for as Prime Minister became known as Thatcherism and during First Touch we see their implementation affecting Clayton's working class family.



Key Definitions and Facts:

- Thatcherism - "the political and economic policies advocated by Margaret Thatcher" (Oxford English Dictionary)
- Thatcherite - "A person who supports the views or policies of Mrs Margaret Thatcher" (Oxford English Dictionary)
- Thatcherism opposes post-war policies, including the welfare state (government funding contributing to the improvement of health, education, employment and social security) and nationalised industry (industry owned by the government as opposed to individual ownership)
- Thatcher's government cut income tax both at the basic rate, which was cut to 25%, and at the higher rate (for high-income earners), which was cut from 83% to 40%
- The privatisation of industry and move away from state ownership affected unemployment levels, which rose throughout Thatcher's term as Prime Minister, reaching to over 3 million people unemployed in 1983
- One of Margaret Thatcher's first aims was to counter inflation. To tackle this, interest rates were raised to 17%, which negatively impacted the manufacturing industry and exports
- She also aimed to grow rates of home-ownership and instated a Right to Buy policy that allowed local authority tenants to purchase their council house at a discount of up to 70%

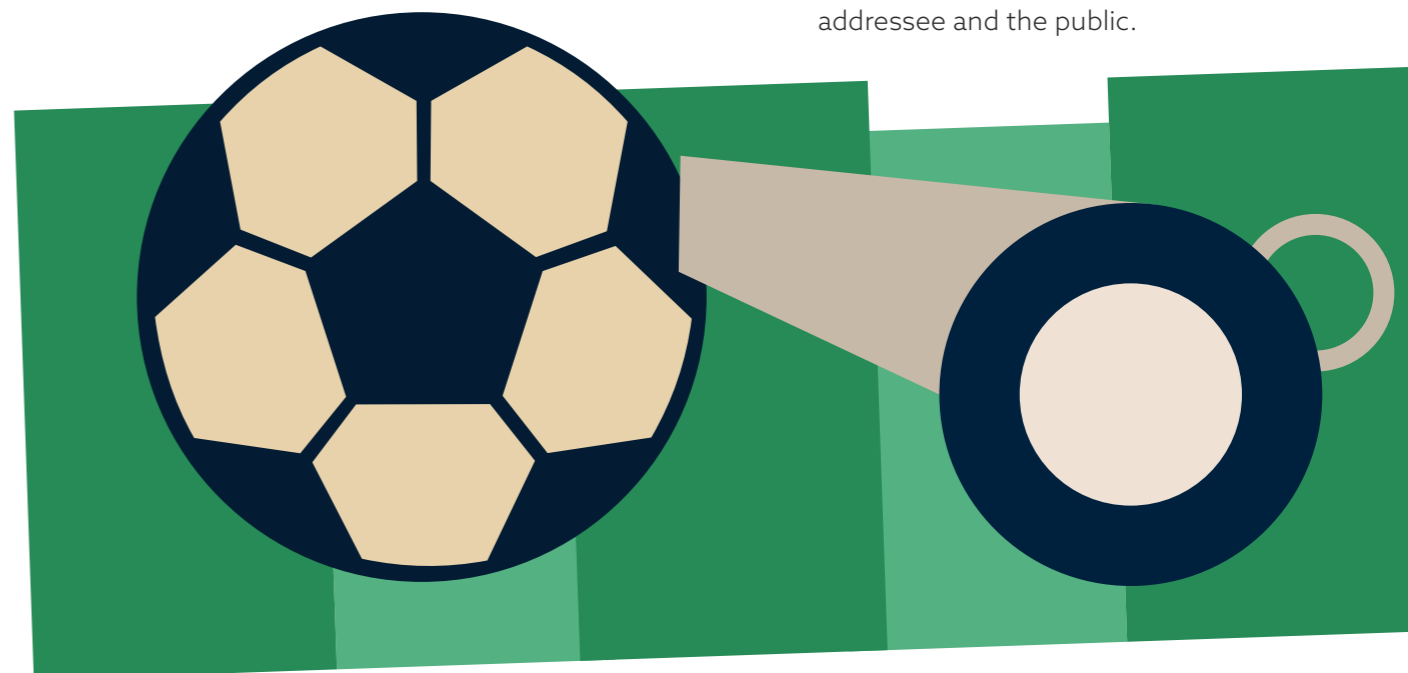
Activities

Task 1: Safeguarding in UK Football

Part 1 (research) - find informative resources, such as news articles or academic papers, about the child sexual abuse scandal in UK football. Research the incidents that occurred and the reactionary measures taken by organisations involved to prevent these incidents ever happening again, such as the implementation of safeguarding measures.

Part 2 (analysis) - evaluate the measures taken by organisations involved in the scandal (e.g. the FA). Consider the advantages and disadvantages of each measure, thinking about their effectiveness in relation to what they're responding to and whether they were implemented soon enough.

Part 3 (writing) - imagine you were in a position of power at an affected organisation. Create a set of measures that would tackle the issues brought to attention in this scandal. Write these into a list of policies, using your knowledge of policies from part two to consider what action would be most effective and appropriate.



Task 2: Racism in Football

Part 1 (research) - find an incident where a football player has faced issues of racism in the sport (this could be institutional or societal). Research what happened, considering the parties involved, the source of the issues, and the public and media reaction.

Part 2 (analysis) - choose a news article, social media post or other piece of writing that responded to this incident. Look at the language used and write an analysis of the piece considering the writer's position, the intent of the piece, and the ideology present within it.

Part 3 (creative writing) - many anti-racist activists use open letters as a form of protest. Open letters are addressed to a particular individual or group, but are also intended for wider publication, so they appeal both to the public and the individual/group that is being asked to take action. Choose an organisation or individual involved in the racist incident you researched and write an open letter to them asking to take action to tackle racism in sport. Think carefully about how your writing should involve facts and emotive language to best articulate your point and effect change from the addressee and the public.

Rehearsal Techniques

Physicality

Animals - This is a Stanislavskian activity and focuses on character physicality, tone of voice and speed of speech. Imagine a character is a particular animal and perform a short scene (either text-based, or improvised scenario) as that animal. Ask your teacher or workshop practitioner to shout out numbers on a scale from 1 - 10, where 10 is the most exaggerated version of that animal whilst the performance style of 1 is very subtle.

Top Tip:
Remember to think about speed of speech and movement as well as allowing your whole body to become that animal. Then discuss your thoughts afterwards and try the exercise again with different characters and animals.

Text Work

Facts and Assumptions

- Starting with your script, and working in groups if preferable, find out all the facts about a specific character. Once you've done that, assumptions can also be made based on these facts, building a set of Given Circumstances for each character in the play. This can then be shared with the group so that the Given Circumstances for the whole play can be set.

Bite Size Storytelling - In groups, take a short scene from the play. The group have to tell the story of the scene in whatever way they feel fit. They can take key lines that highlight the main events, or they can create a series of freeze frames depending on the ability of the group. The scenes need to be kept short and the stories within the scene isolated. You can then stick the whole show (or chunks of it) together so that you create the whole thing in their own way.

Devising

Improvisation with an Object - Each group is given an object. They have to create a short scene with the object as the central focus. You can do this in a couple of ways. First - they have to use the object as it actually is (a brush must be used as a brush), or the object cannot be used literally (the brush becomes a microphone or a spade).

Polish/Final Stages

Line, Scene, Go - The director shouts a random line to the company. They are instantly expected to get themselves into position and pick up the play at the point of the line. Run a couple of moments - then shout another line which they all then run to. Great for keeping things fun and fresh - and for highlighting points of confusion or those who are less sure of their lines.

Peer Notetaking - Whilst the director is focusing on the overall vision of the piece, peer notetaking can be a really useful tool for each actor. Pair people up with others who aren't in the scene. The actor can tell their notetaker if there is any specific thing that they'd like their notetaker to focus on (such as diction or intonation), or specifics can be stated by the director. Positive notes and room for improvement can be highlighted. You will generally find that they are really positive about each other's performance and it is a great way of developing self-reflection too.



Character/Plot Development

Acting the Objectives - Each actor plays a scene that they have rehearsed, but instead of speaking the dialogue, they state what they WANT to do to the other people in the scene, for example 'I want to make you jealous'. This is useful if you have been able to action the text first, and it also helps with the reactions of the other actors in the scene.

Theatre Practitioners

Bertolt Brecht (1898 - 1956)

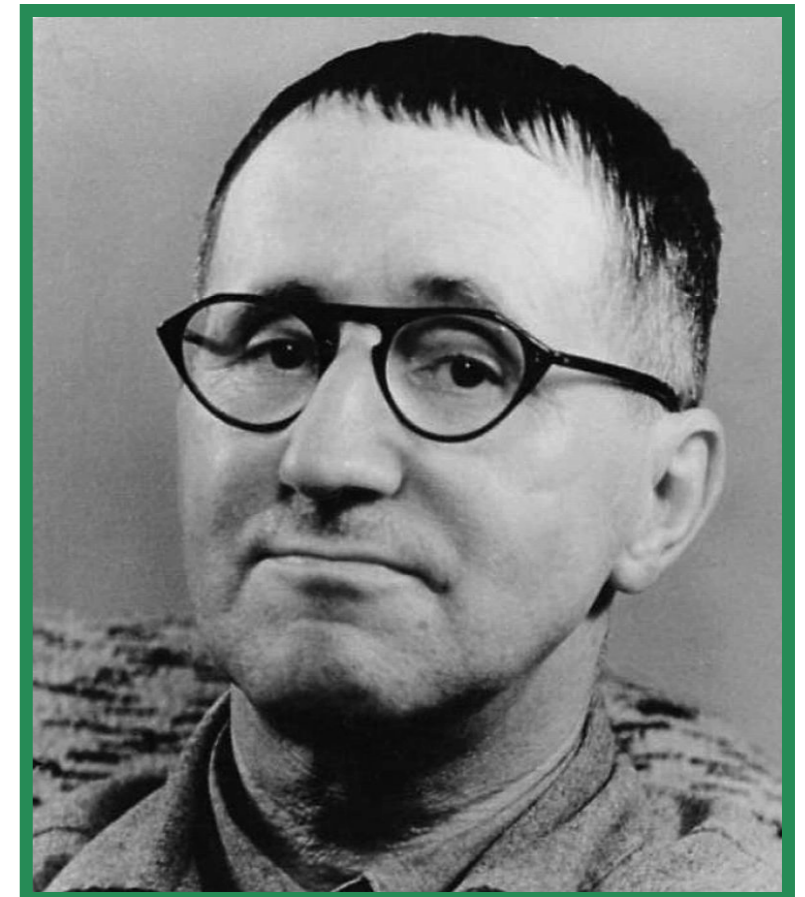
Born in 1898 in Augsburg Germany and sickened by the impact of the First World War, Bertolt Brecht began studying theatre in 1917, and wrote his first plays Baal and Drums in the Night in 1918. By 1921 he had arrived in Berlin where he soon became involved with a large number of Berlin's leading actors and directors.

When discussing Brechtian theatre, we are fundamentally examining **theatre of Politics**. Brecht was reacting directly against the Fascist regime and, following the teachings of Karl Marx, Brecht's writings were focused on a **Marxist ideology**.

Brecht was a playwright, director and poet who created what we now know as Epic Theatre. Epic Theatre was a reaction against Naturalism, and aimed to provoke the audience into action. This was a theatre of change. He believed that theatre should not only reflect the world, but change it. After watching one of his plays, Brecht hoped that the audience would leave the theatre determined to take action against the unfair society they were living in. He did this through the development of the *Verfremdungseffekt* - or **Making Strange**.

The V effect is also known as the A effect, or **Alienation effect**, and is essentially a range of devices that Brecht used to prevent the audience becoming emotionally attached to the characters within the plays. He wanted them to maintain a '**distanced objectivity**' so that they could see things as they really were. An example of these techniques were: **Audience interaction (breaking the fourth wall), Narration, Montage, Gestus (Gesture with attitude), Spass, Song, Mime and Third Person Dialogue**.

Brecht's impact was so pertinent that he had to flee from the Nazi regime in 1933, only to return to Germany in 1948 after the end of the Second World War. In 1949 Brecht created the **Berliner Ensemble** where he continued to develop his work until his death in 1956.



Notable Works

- The Threepenny Opera
- Life of Galileo
- Mother Courage and Her Children
- The Good Person of Szechwan
- The Caucasian Chalk Circle
- Mr Puntilla and his Man Matti
- The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui

Highlighted Information

- Fundamentally examining theatre of Politics
- Writings focused on a Marxist ideology
- Created what we now know as Epic Theatre
- A reaction against Naturalism
- Aimed to provoke the audience into action
- Not only reflect the world, but change it

Theatre Practitioners

Konstantin Stanislavski (1863 – 1938)

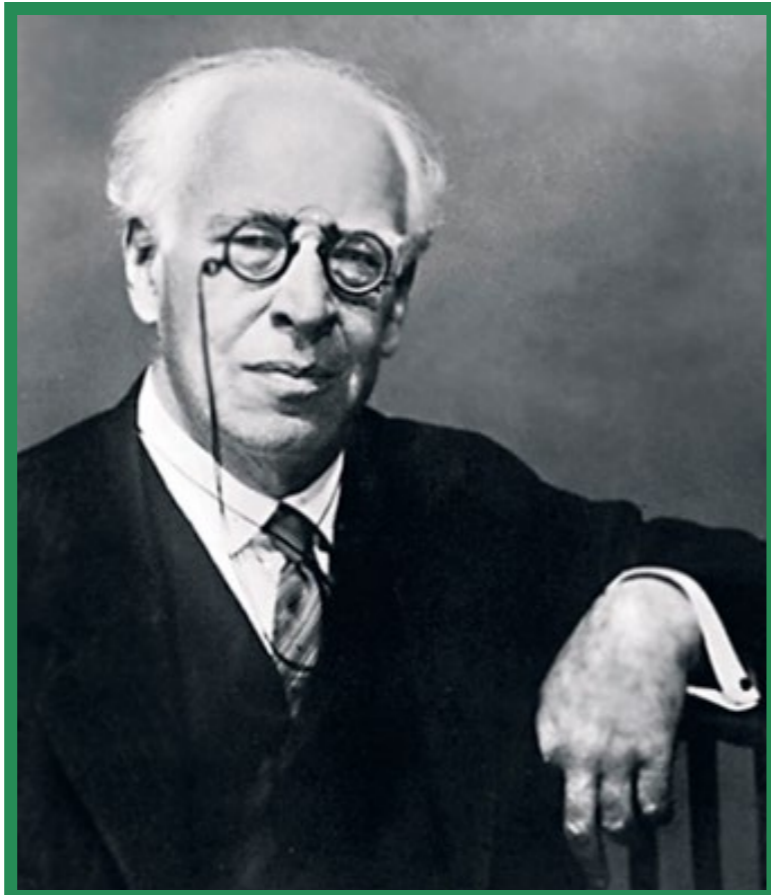
Konstantin Stanislavski, born to one of the richest families in Russia in 1863, is widely credited with the development of the first form of formal actor training in the modern world, most commonly referred to as his System. Set out across three major books, *An Actor Prepares*, *Building a Character* and *Creating a Role*, Stanislavski was the first to document a process which trainee actors could follow in order to create the image of **truth on stage**.

Stanislavski's privilege and wealth enabled him to create an alternative theatre to the melodramatic and declamatory style which was prevalent in Russia at the time. He dedicated his life to changing outmoded practice with a desire for perfection that led to international success. With barely any training, he embarked on a quest for truth in art and devoted his whole life to this journey. In 1897, he and **Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko** created **The Moscow Art Theatre** to develop and shape his ideals.

The System that he developed aimed to be a systematic approach to lay down ground rules for approaching character, and for how an actor could use their voice and body effectively to **fully embody a character** on stage. Working closely with playwright **Anton Chekhov**, Stanislavski was able to experiment with text and actors in order to hone and develop his teachings.

Exercises that are included in The System and that are still widely used in actor training today include: **Emotion Memory**, **The Magic 'If'**, **Circles of Concentration**, **The Method of Physical Actions**, **Imagination**, **Relaxation** and **Action with a Purpose**.

These exercises still form the basis of most actor training in the western world which is a testament to how truly influential Stanislavski has been in the development of actor training.

**Notable Works**

- **Founder of the MAT Stanislavski's 'system'**
- **An Actor's Work**
- **An Actor's Work on a Role**
- **My Life in Art**

Highlighted Information

- The first form of formal actor training
- Create the image of truth on stage
- An alternative to the melodramatic and declamatory style
- Fully embody a character on stage
- A systematic approach

Theatre Practitioners

Steven Berkoff (1937 – present)

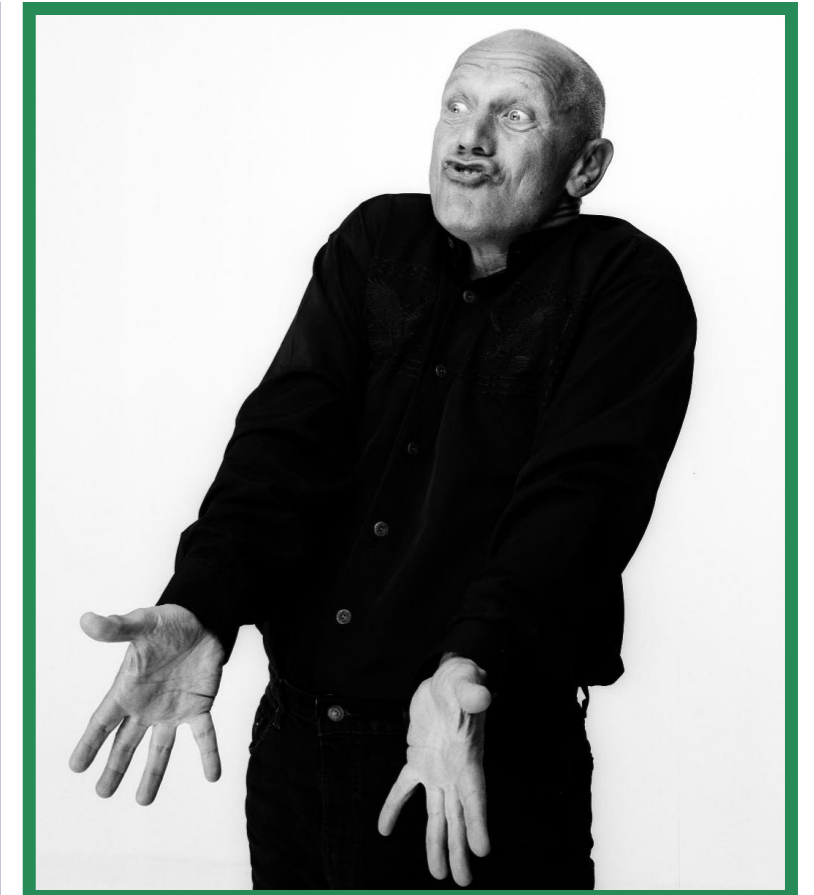
Steven Berkoff is a British actor, director and playwright who was born in London in 1937. Berkoff trained as a mime artist at the **Lecoq School** in Paris before he began developing his own work. Alongside the many plays that he has written, Berkoff has also had a successful career in film; often playing the sinister 'bad guy' character.

Berkoff's approach to theatre is incredibly **physical and non-naturalistic**, often focusing on **movement rather than voice**. According to him, the only purpose of a script is to help '**minimalise and physicalise**' the story; stripping it down to its most basic components.

The theory of **Total Theatre** is key to Berkoff and stemmed from Artaud's theatre style. Total Theatre maintains that every aspect of theatre must have purpose: to every movement, that is choreographed; to each line, that is learned perfectly; to each lighting effect, that is used to convey a mood or message; to each sound effect, that enhances the audience's experience; to each prop that has a use.

The aim of Total Theatre is to create extreme moods to give the audience an overwhelming experience and to shock, amuse, scare, or amaze them. Berkoff particularly embraced this in his **Kafka adaptations** such as *Metamorphosis*, *The Trial* and *In the Penal Colony*. Total Theatre performances are often stripped back and minimalist with bare stages and little language, so that the focus remains on the physical movement. This serves to detach the audience from the play and make them think about what was being said.

Berkoff likes to use **stereotype and cliché** in order to examine human behaviour. These stereotypes require the actor to demonstrate the character in a heightened manner, through **exaggerated physical movement** and often base, foul language.

**Notable Works**

- **Sink the Belgrano!**
- **Shakespeare's Villains**
- **A Clockwork Orange**
- **Beverly Hills Cop**
- **War and Remembrance**

Highlighted Information

- Physical and non-naturalistic
- Minimalise and physicalise the story
- Every aspect of Total Theatre must have purpose
- Create extreme moods
- To detach the audience from the play

Theatre Practitioners

Augusto Boal (1931-2009)

Born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1931, Boal is most renowned for creating the **Theatre of the Oppressed**, a form of interactive theatre intended to transform lives. Boal's theatre invited **spectators to become performers**, acting out solutions to their own social problems. Boal (like Brecht) believed that theatre should be a **vehicle for social change**, and his Theatre of the Oppressed aimed to show the people what was possible and give them a voice for action.

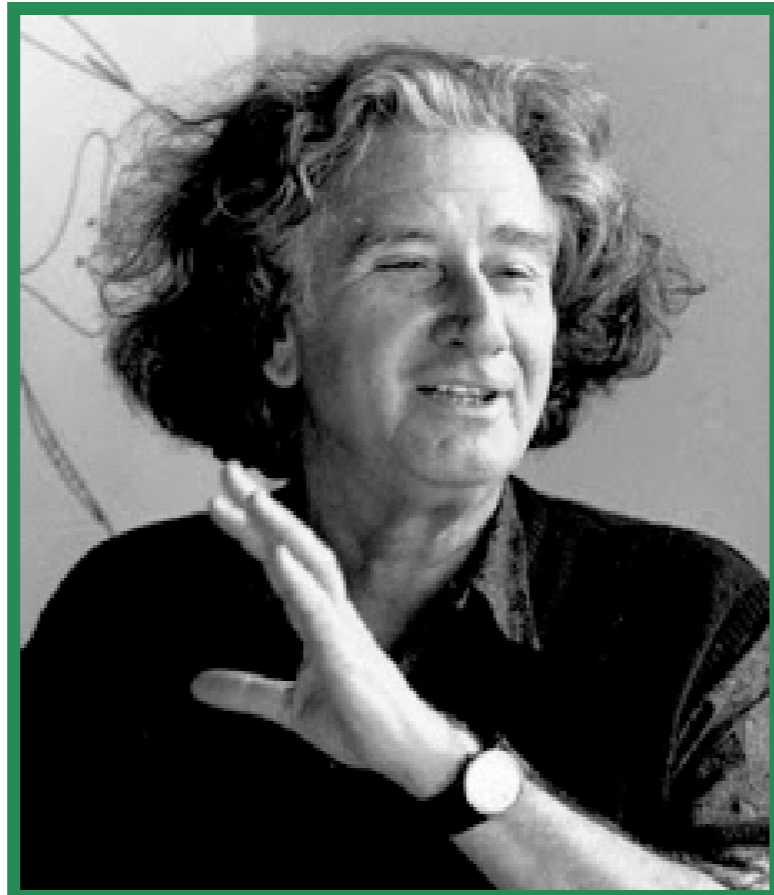
Theatre of the Oppressed begins with the idea that everyone has the capacity to act in the 'theatre' of their own lives; everybody is at once an actor and a spectator. Boal called his audience **'Spect-actors'**.

Theatre of the Oppressed encompasses three key forms:

Image Theatre invites spect-actors to form a tableau of frozen poses to capture a moment in time dramatising an oppressive situation. They are then asked to reflect critically on this situation before being asked to depict an ideal outcome, or to reshape an image to show different **perspectives**.

Forum Theatre is a short play that dramatises a situation, with an oppressive ending that spect-actors cannot be satisfied with. After an initial performance, it is shown again, however this time the spectators become spect-actors and can at any point yell 'freeze' and step on stage to replace the protagonist(s) and take the situation in different directions.

Invisible Theatre is public theatre that involves the public as participants in the action without their knowing about it. The objective is to unsettle passive social relations and spark critical dialogue among the spect-actors. Several actors rehearse a scene which they then play in an appropriate public space in order to provoke a reaction from the public who think they are watching a spontaneous event.



Notable Works

- Torquemada
- Theatre of the Oppressed
- Games For Actors and Non-Actors
- The Rainbow of Desire

Highlighted Information

- Interactive theatre intended to transform lives
- Acting out solutions to their own social problems
- Everyone has the capacity to act in the 'theatre' of their own lives
- Give people a voice for action

Theatre Practitioners

Frantic Assembly

Frantic Assembly are a **physical theatre company** who were formed in 1994 by Scott Graham, Steven Hoggett, and Vicki Middleton, who had all met whilst studying at Swansea University. They aimed to create physical theatre, using **dynamic and engaging movement** with storytelling at the heart of the work.

Scott Graham is still the Artistic Director of the company, who have developed and created a wide range of work. Notable productions include, *Pool (No Water)* by Mark Ravenhill, *Beautiful Burnout* by Bryony Lavery, *Things I Know To Be True* by Andrew Bovell and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Simon Stephens.

Frantic Assembly devise most of their work in **collaboration with a playwright**. Taking the movement as the basis for action, they use a series of exercises to develop physical theatre. Speech and dialogue is then added in order to **create a narrative structure**. The movement and the dialogue go hand in hand to create

visually dynamic and engaging theatre. It is essentially **directing through movement**.

Scott Graham describes their way of working as **'The Frantic Method'**. He says: 'The Frantic Method is approaching devising as a series of tasks, each broken down into building blocks. This is designed to establish progress from the **simplest discoveries**.

Performers are encouraged to **take a moment back to its simplest truth and build from there**. This places dancers, actors, students, teachers and all participants on the same starting point. Using these building blocks they are empowered to find and create complex work through a process that is safe, fun and constantly illuminating.'

Performers who work with Frantic Assembly have to have extremely high levels of physical fitness, as their work is very demanding. They do lots of outreach work with schools and colleges to share their methods and encourage participation in physical theatre.



Highlighted Information

- Dynamic and engaging movement with storytelling at the heart of the work.
- Devise most of their work in collaboration with a playwright
- Movement as the basis for action
- Visually dynamic and engaging theatre
- Progress from the simplest discoveries

Job Roles in Making Theatre

You may have heard the phrase 'get a proper job' in relation to working in theatre. But this is very out of date. There are many job roles with good salaries in theatre and culture. Nottingham Playhouse has over 100 permanent staff! Here are just a few...

Actor

Actors bring characters to life on stage with their performances, using speech, movement and expression to act a script or improvise their roles.

Administration

Administrators deal with customers, run offices, and take care of the day-to-day running of the business.

Agent

Agents are often the first point of contact for anyone looking to hire actors. Few actors work without the support of an agent. Agents can also supply artists for corporate and private events. Their clients may include actors, singers, dancers or supporting artists.

Artistic Director

The artistic director makes sure their theatre is putting on the kind of shows that fit with the artistic aims of the organisation.

Arts Journalist

Every show hopes for good reviews. Journalists get the word out about the show to the public. They make sure people know what shows are on offer and what is happening in the world of theatre.

Backstage Crew

Building sets, helping create props and operating equipment, the backstage crew support the designers and performers with the running of the show.

Box Office Staff

Box office staff work in cinemas, theatres and concert halls. They are responsible for taking bookings and payments for tickets. Box office staff also arrange for group visits and discounts. They may also advise on seating for people with disabilities or special needs.

Carpenter

Carpenters and joiners in the theatre and dance sector and crafts sector work with wood. They work in theatres or in workshops. In the theatre and dance sector, they specifically make, fit or repair scenery and props that are part of a play or show.

Choreographer

Choreographers create routines and movement sequences for singers and musicians to perform.

Costume Designer

The costume designer is responsible for designing all the costumes to be worn in a production. This can involve a mix of designing from scratch, and sourcing existing items of clothing.

Dance Teacher

Dance teachers educate and instruct on different forms of dance. They work with individuals and groups of all ages and abilities to help them learn dance practices.

Dancer

Dance is a term for describing ways of using the body to tell stories, interpret music and express emotion. Some dance forms require an intense training starting from an early age; others can be learned later.

Dialect Coach

Dialect coaches or voice coaches work with actors to develop and improve their vocal technique, and help them adopt convincing character accents.

Director

Theatre directors take responsibility for the overall creative production of plays.

Dramaturg

A dramaturg is a theatre practitioner who focuses on how to convey the particular message the director wants to highlight.

Events Staff

Events staff work with centre and gallery and theatre managers to deliver an event. They manage, organise and oversee the running of a venue or function. They are responsible for coordinating all the arrangements such as room bookings, catering and special effects or promotional items.

Finance Staff

Finance staff officers in the performing and visual arts sectors provide administrative support to organisations.

Front-of-House Staff

The 'front-of-house' of a theatre refers to all areas accessed by the public, including the auditorium. Front-of-house staff look after the public to make sure their visit is safe and enjoyable.

Hair, Makeup and Wigs

People that work in hair, makeup and wigs for the theatre and dance sector help to style performers. The style of makeup needed depends on the type of production. The hair, makeup and wigs may be contemporary and straightforward or require more creative approaches. Performers may need to appear as from a different nationality or from a different historical period. The makeup artist will also need to dress wigs and attach them correctly to the actor or performer.

Lighting Designer

Lighting designers work to ensure effective lighting for a commercial property. They aim to enhance a building's environment through lighting.

Lighting Technicians

Lighting technicians are vital to theatre. Their work may involve design, operating lighting rigs, and looking after equipment.

Marketing Officer

Marketing is about understanding what a customer wants and promoting this product, event or service. It is also making sure the public is talking about a brand, which for the arts sector could be a theatre, museum, art gallery or community arts project.

Participation and Education Staff

Arts education staff in the creative industries support teachers and development workers in cultural venues. They work in art centres, galleries, theatres and other venues to provide an educational experience. They may work with individual children or visitors, small groups or a whole class.

Playwright

The playwright or dramatist is the author of a production, the writer or adapter of the original play. Often they work alone, but sometimes they also collaborate with a director and the cast.

Producer (Live Events)

Producers of live events are responsible for running successful live spectacles. The producer works on live shows and events in the music industry such as concerts and music festivals. They must coordinate technical staff and performers to ensure everything runs smoothly. They have to have high-quality acts and performers for a successful event. Live events may be one-offs or regular annual events. They can be held in indoor and outdoor music venues of all sizes.

Props Manager

A props manager supervises the building, making and buying of the props needed for a production.

Puppeteer

Puppeteers animate and manipulate puppets as part of a theatre, television or film production. Puppetry is a performing art used to entertain adults or children.

Sound Designer

Sound design can involve making sure the mix of sounds is correct at a live event, designing the sound effects on a mobile phone, and many other things.

Sound Engineer

Sound engineers work in the theatre and dance sector to handle all aspects of a production's sound. They ensure that speech, music and sound effects can be heard to the best effect in a theatre production.

Sound Technician

Sound technicians ensure that the best sound possible is available in a variety of venues for performances. They prepare, operate and maintain technical equipment to amplify, enhance, mix or reproduce sound. They work in recording studios, films, radio and television programmes (on set or location) and live performances, including theatre, music and dance.

Special Effects

Special effects and pyrotechnics staff are responsible for special effects and pyrotechnics required as part of a production. In some shows, for example using magic, special effects may be an integral part of an act.

Stage Designer

Stage designers are responsible for designing stage settings for productions. This can range from single-scene dramas to complex scenery and scene changes required by major productions.

Stage Manager

Stage managers coordinate all aspects of a theatre production or event, including actors, technical staff, props, scenery and costumes. They make sure technicians and performers alike are in the right place at the right time and ready to meet their cues.

Stagehand

Stagehands in performing arts are the behind-scenes support staff for a production. They carry out a wide variety of jobs backstage to ensure a production is successful.

Technical Manager

A technical manager in the theatre and dance sector coordinates a production's technical staff. This could include the set-making staff, lighting staff and props-making staff.

Wardrobe Assistant

Wardrobe assistants work to provide support with costumes and accessories. Performances like plays and musicals rely on a strong wardrobe team to make the production look credible.

A Glimpse Into Theatre Careers

A chat with Joanne Blunt

ASSISTANT PRODUCER

Tell us about your role as Assistant Producer.

My role is very varied and contains a lot of different elements. Broadly, I look after shows from the initial idea through to the end of the performances. I could write a very long list of what I do, but some highlights include: Getting creative teams for the show on-board, contracted and paid; keeping an eye on budgets and creating lots of spreadsheets to help plan different aspects of the production; producing projects of my own including the Neville Studio Christmas show and tour; looking after access performances



Joanne Blunt

such as BSL and captioned performances and helping to programme the Neville Studio. On top of that, I do a lot of other

admin support to make sure things run smoothly.

What does a day in the life of an Assistant Producer look like?

No two days ever look the same! Most of my day is spent on emails and spreadsheets and talking to people about projects. You can often find me absorbed by a spreadsheet (which I honestly love) or dashing round the building coordinating something and getting info from different departments.

How does your work interact with the shows being put on at Nottingham Playhouse?

I work with shows from the early concept phase through to the closing performance.

Most of my interactions with the show are with the creative team - the director, writer, designer, stage managers and making sure that we have the right people for the show and they have everything they need to do an amazing job.

What do you enjoy most about working in theatre?

Seeing a whole show come to life that started from a small conversation over a cup of tea is an amazing process to be part of from start to finish.

A chat with Adam Collins

PARTICIPATION PROJECT COORDINATOR

Tell us about your role as a Participation Project Coordinator.

I work in Nottingham Playhouse's Participation Department, and we run over 30 programmes to bring drama to the community. I coordinate the work we do with schools, which includes the provision for our five 'Primary Partner' schools who we are partnered with to integrate drama at all levels of the primary school curriculum.

What does a day in the life of a Participation Project Coordinator look like?

My average day involves

speaking to a wide range of people, including school staff, freelancers, and other departments in Nottingham Playhouse, to make sure that everything comes together on our Participation projects. Our projects are varied, so on any given day I might be planning an inset day for teachers, organising filming with industry experts, or delivering drama workshops to young people.

How does your work interact with the shows being put on at Nottingham Playhouse?

As part of our 'Primary Partners' programme, I arrange backstage tours and show

tickets for our partner schools so that their students can come and see live theatre at Nottingham Playhouse. The practitioners I send into schools often deliver workshops on the themes of our shows, especially with texts such as 'Private Peaceful' which are taught in schools.

What do you enjoy most about working in theatre?

I enjoy how theatre brings people from all walks of life together, and I enjoy seeing our participants develop confidence and self-advocacy through theatre and performance.



Adam Collins

A Glimpse Into Theatre Careers

A chat with Beth Shaw

SOUND AND VIDEO TECHNICIAN

Tell us about your role as Lighting, Sound and Video Technician.

As a lighting, sound, and video technician, it's my job to make sure that all the lights are pointing the right way, everyone on stage can be heard, and that pieces of video blend seamlessly into a production. It's very varied, as we work on all manner of shows, from big shows that we produce in-house, to touring dance shows, and events with some of the best comics in the country. No two days look the same; one day you're sat at a desk plotting lights for a theatre show, the next you're hanging out of the ceiling in a harness to make sure that the lighting designer gets "that shot". It's physically taxing and stressful at times, but the first time the audience clap on opening night? That somehow makes it worth it.

What does a day in the life of a Lighting, Sound and Video Technician look like?

It depends on what we're working on! If a show is up and running, or it's a simple one man and a mic event, I might not start work until 5pm, in which case, I'll spend my daytime catching up on everything people usually use their evening for - food shopping, hobbies, and batch cooking food so that I have healthy things to eat for tech weeks. In that case:
5pm: arrive at work. Read events checklist/show checklist. Switch on LX and sound equipment and do a rig check.
5:30pm: cast/talent arrives. If it's a one-night show, we work together to create some lighting states, run through how the show works, and do a sound check.
6:30pm: cast/talent warm up on stage. Usually I use this time to check my show file and tidy things up a bit.
6:55pm: the half an hour call for a 7:30pm show! We do a blackout check, show the iron to the duty manager, and then open the house.
7:30pm-10pm: Showtime!
10-10:30pm: shut down equipment, tidy up, and go home!

Tech week is a bit different. Typically our week looks like so:
Sunday (10am-10pm): Fit up LX, sound, video, and set.
Monday (10am-10pm): Finish fitting up, install cue lights and working light, and focus

lighting. Quiet time for sound, and prep actors' mics.
Tuesday-Thursday (10am-10pm): Tech time! We go through the show slowly, and plot in lighting and sound cues, as well as running through actors' movements on the stage.
Friday-Tuesday (1pm-10pm): shows! Friday, Saturday, and Monday's shows are all previews, which means that we come in early before the next show to work on the show, so we can iron out any issues before Tuesday, which is press night!

How does your work interact with the shows being put on at Nottingham Playhouse?

During production week (as outlined above), my job is key to putting a show on. My job on each production varies, but it's vital that I am there, otherwise, none of the actors can be seen or heard! It's great to be so involved with our productions, I feel really connected to each show that we create! Everyone here really takes pride in their work, and I think that is reflected in the quality of the shows that we produce!

What do you enjoy most about working in theatre?

There's so many things! I love the people - not just those that I can name-drop in conversations (thanks, Sir Ian McKellen!), but also the people I work with on a day-to-day basis (the Playhouse has the best staff, and I'm biased, but also it's true). I love the combination of practical skills and creativity and artistry that my job calls for, which is something that I didn't think I'd ever find in a career. But, the thing I love most of all? The fact that sometimes, the way that a bit of light hitting a piece of set, or just the right angle of an actor's face, can make you feel something. It makes you teary-eyed, or happy, and it's literally just a light pointed in the right direction, possibly with a bit of colour to it. We make magic, good old-fashioned theatre magic.