

Nottingham Playhouse Theatre Company
and Lakeside Arts present

The Tempest

by William Shakespeare



Introduction

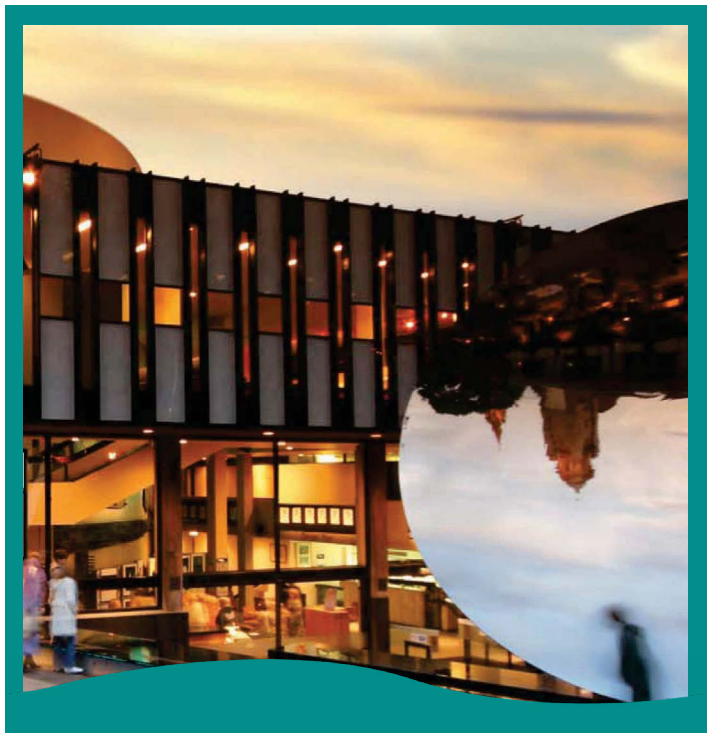


Photo: Drew Baumohl

Nottingham Playhouse makes bold and thrilling theatre, proudly created in Nottingham.

Awarded Regional Theatre of the Year 2019 by The Stage, we create a range of productions throughout the year from timeless classics to innovative family shows and adventurous new commissions. Not to mention the legendary Playhouse Panto. Touring work nationally and internationally, we always remain firmly rooted in our vibrant home city, where our spacious modernist building – fronted by Anish Kapoor’s Sky Mirror – is one of the region’s most popular landmarks.

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.

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Director's Note

'I'm thrilled to be working with such a wonderful team to bring Shakespeare's last brilliant play to life. After a lifetime writing many of the greatest plays of all time, Shakespeare saved some of his best characters, scenes and poetry for *The Tempest*. Playing outdoors is perfect for this compelling tale of enchantment, love and revenge, and we all feel very fortunate and excited to be able to share this magical tale with people of all ages. We have worked very hard to make a show that is energetic, funny, thoughtful, and accessible to everyone – even Shakespeare first-timers.'

Martin Berry,

Director and Head of Participation at Nottingham Playhouse.

Cast and Creatives

'Multi-roling', when an actor or actress portrays more than one role, is a key feature of many Shakespeare performances. Take a look below at how our performance uses a cast of only four!

Cast

Charlotte East

Prospero, Stephano, Ariel, and cast

Edward Watchman

Caliban, Ferdinand, Sebastian, Ariel, and cast

Peter Watts

Trinculo, Antonio, Ariel, and cast

Josie White

Miranda, Alonso, Ariel, and cast

Creatives

Martin Berry

Director

Erin Fleming

Set and Costume Designer

Richard Statham

Lighting Designer and Production Manager

Joshua Goodma

Sound Designer and Composer

Kathryn Bainbridge-Wilson

Stage Manager

Produced by

Nottingham Playhouse and Lakeside Arts

Lakeside Arts

Lakeside Arts is the University of Nottingham's public arts provision which aims to enrich lives through creativity and culture. Lakeside's year round programme includes visual arts, special collections' and museum exhibitions theatre, dance, music, comedy and literature performances, as well as a comprehensive talks and workshops programme.

Lakeside has a strong commitment to provides transformative experiences for children and families exemplified by premiering new work by innovative companies like Makers of Imaginary Worlds alongside a regular programme of high-quality visiting children's theatre and dance. Being based in one of the city's most beautiful parks, Lakeside is also delivering a programme of outdoor activities to help re-engage with creative activities in a covid-secure space. We look forward to working with the internationally renowned composer Graham Fitkin to create a celebratory performance in partnership with Nottingham Music Hub.

Lakeside is also the driving force behind the Office for Students funded programme Creative

Pathways which offers seven University of Nottingham graduates a paid internship with one of Nottingham's cultural partners including Nottingham Playhouse.

Venues include the Djanogly Recital Hall which stages concerts by internationally renowned soloists and chamber ensembles; the Djanogly Gallery currently housing the first solo exhibition in his home city by YBA Mat Collishaw; the University of Nottingham Museum which has a permanent collection of archaeology covering a period of some 250,000 years; and the Djanogly Theatre presenting UK and international touring work as well as producing and co-producing new theatre and dance.

With its doors closed for much of the past 15 months, Lakeside has adapted to deliver engaging and high-quality online performances and talks, helping to connect artists with audiences during these difficult times. Over 2,250 households have engaged with online events since late last year and everyone at Lakeside look forward to welcoming many more as it continues to reopen.





William Shakespeare Biography

Although he is celebrated as perhaps the greatest playwright and poet in the English language, surprisingly few facts are known about the life of William Shakespeare. He was born in Stratford upon Avon in 1564, the son of John Shakespeare – a glove-maker and alderman – and Mary Arden. He was baptised in the local church on 26 April 1564 and although his exact birthday is unknown, it is traditionally observed on 23 April (St. George's Day). In 1582, at the age of 18, Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway who was eight years his senior. They had three children together: Susanna, born in 1583, and twins Hamnet and Judith, born two years later.

Not much is known about Shakespeare's life between 1585 and 1592 – often referred to by scholars as his 'lost years' – but by 1592 Shakespeare was well established on the London theatre scene as both a playwright and actor, enjoying considerable success as a member of the Lord Chamberlain's Men (later renamed The King's Men under James I).

In total, Shakespeare's surviving works (including some collaborations) consist of more than 38 plays, 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems and several other shorter poems. His plays are known the world over, and have been translated into more languages

and performed more than any other dramatist.

Because of the considerable volume of his work and the perception of Shakespeare as 'uneducated' by Elizabethan standards, some people speculate about the authorship of many of the works attributed to him. Amongst others, it has been suggested that the philosopher and scientist Francis Bacon, the playwright Ben Jonson or even Edward de Vere, the Earl of Oxford, might have been the real author of his work. The 2011 feature film *Anonymous* examines the last of these theories. Equally, due to the mystery surrounding his biography, many scholars have attempted to 'fill in the gaps' in Shakespeare's life. The most famous – and fictional – of these is the feature film *Shakespeare in Love* which imagines what might have been happening to Shakespeare at the time he was writing *Romeo & Juliet* and the effect this might have had on the play.

Shakespeare is also credited with having coined many of the phrases we commonly use today. Phrases such as 'in a pickle' (*The Tempest*) or 'in stitches' (*Twelfth Night*) can be found in his work, along with many other modern constructions still in use, further highlighting the considerable contribution he has made to the English language.

Introduction to The Tempest

'A rich dynamic story of love and revenge that asks us to consider who we are and what we call home.'

Martin Berry, Director and Head of Participation at Nottingham Playhouse.

The Tempest is thought to be the final play that Shakespeare wrote alone, probably written in 1610-1611. Most of the action takes place on a remote island after a tempest summoned by Prospero in the first scene shipwrecks his enemies. Prospero reveals to his daughter Miranda that he caused the storm with the help of Ariel, a magical spirit. He believes that he has been given an opportunity to take revenge on his brother Antonio, Duke of Milan, and Alonso, King of Naples. The pair had usurped Prospero as Duke of Milan twelve years before and set him and his daughter adrift on a ship, eventually becoming stranded on the remote island.

There is no single origin for the plot of *The Tempest*. Shakespeare was likely to have been inspired by several sources, including passages

from Erasmus's *Colloquia Familiaria* of 1518 and tales of the newly discovered South America from Peter Martyr's *De Orbo Novo* (Decades of the New World), 1530. The opening scene is believed to have been partly inspired by the 1609 shipwreck of the *Sea Venture* on the island of Bermuda just one year before Shakespeare is believed to have written *The Tempest*.

The Tempest has more music than any other Shakespeare play, but only two settings of songs used during his lifetime survive. They are *Full Fathom Five* and *Where the Bee Sucks There I Suck*. The music of *The Tempest* has inspired orchestral works, ballets and stage musicals, including both historical and contemporary adaptations. We hope you enjoy the music used in our performance.

Magic

Prospero is a magician whose magic comes from the study of nature. He uses his magic to achieve what he considers positive outcomes. By contrast, Caliban represents an evil magic reflecting the fears of witchcraft in England at the time the play was written.



Synopsis

The play begins with the King of Naples, Alonso, and the Duke of Milan, Antonio, returning to Italy from Tunis when they are suddenly shipwrecked on a remote island by a violent storm known as a tempest. The tempest was caused by Prospero, the usurped and exiled former Duke of Milan, with the assistance of the Ariel - a magical spirit. Prospero has been stranded on this island with his daughter for 12 years and believes this is his opportunity for revenge on his brother Antonio and King Alonso. Prospero uses magic to separate the shipwreck survivors into groups on the island.

Ferdinand, the son of King Alonso, is found by Prospero and Miranda. With Prospero's encouragement, and as part of his plot to regain his title, Ferdinand and Miranda fall in love.

Meanwhile, the king's jester Trinculo and the king's drunken butler Stephano are found by Caliban, a monstrous creature who was living on the island before Prospero and Miranda arrived and now

unhappily serves Prospero. This trio unsuccessfully try to overthrow Prospero.

King Alonso and Duke Antonio are with Alonso's entourage, including his brother Sebastian, his elderly councillor Gonzalo and his two lords Adrian and Francisco. Antonio and Sebastian conspire to kill King Alonso and Gonzalo so that Sebastian can become King, but Ariel prevents this at Prospero's command.

At the play's denouement, Miranda and Ferdinand are betrothed to marry when their masque ceremony is interrupted by the plot to kill Prospero. Prospero instructs Ariel to chase Caliban's group away and bring forward Alonso, Antonio and Sebastian.

He forgives all three saying that, whilst he could blackmail them with the truth, he will not. Prospero's rightful title of Duke of Milan is restored and the reunited group leave the island with Prospero and Miranda. Ariel is set free, Prospero gives up magic, and Miranda and Ferdinand are to be married when they arrive in Naples.

Key Word: **Masque**

Masque - These courtly ceremonies originated in Italy in the 16th and early 17th Century. They involved dancing, music, singing and acting. In *The Tempest*, Prospero summons the classical goddesses Juno, Ceres and Iris to bless the betrothal and impress upon the young couple the importance of remaining celibate until their marriage.





Character breakdown

Prospero The rightful Duke of Milan, he has been usurped by his brother Antonio with the help of Alonso, King of Naples

Miranda The daughter of Prospero

Ariel A spirit in service of Prospero

Caliban A servant of Prospero and a savage monster

Antonio Prospero's brother, the usurping Duke of Milan

Alonso King of Naples

Sebastian Alonso's brother

Ferdinand Alonso's son

Gonzalo An honest old councillor to Alonso

Adrian A lord serving under Alonso

Francisco A lord serving under Alonso

Trinculo The King's jester

Stephano The King's drunken butler

Juno The Roman goddess of marriage

Ceres The Roman goddess of agriculture

Iris Greek goddess of the sea and sky

Master Master of the ship

Boatswain Servant of the Master

Mariners

Nymphs, Reapers

Performing Shakespeare – Then and Now

There are a lot of differences between how a Shakespeare performance may be performed today compared to performances during his lifetime.

Directors

In Shakespeare's time, actors were often responsible for their own direction, choosing their own movement, inflections and interpretation of the text. The invaluable role of director as we know it today did not exist in Shakespeare's time.

Rehearsals

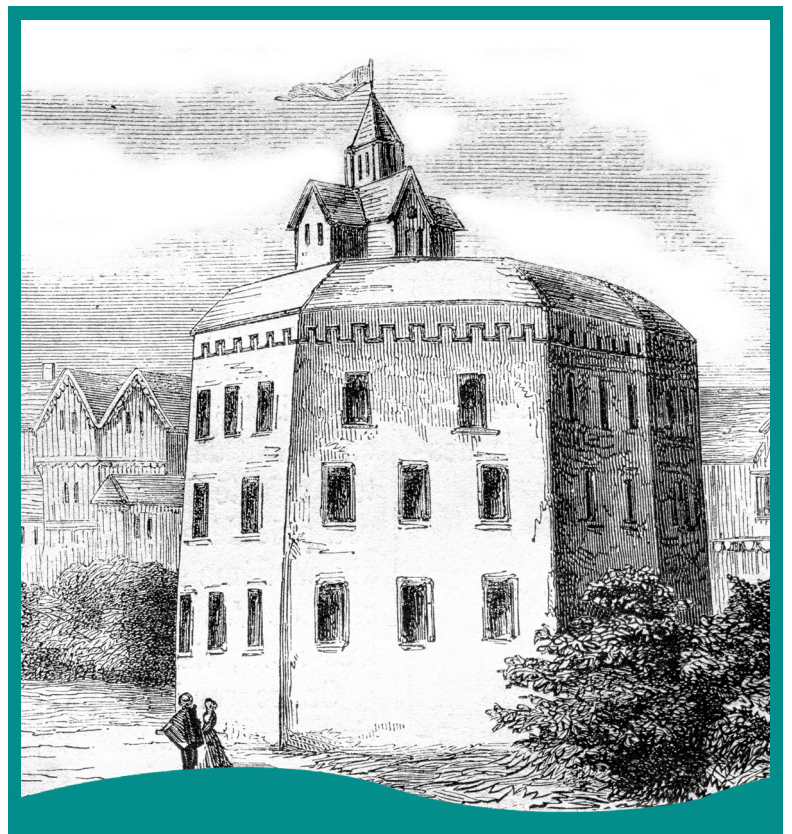
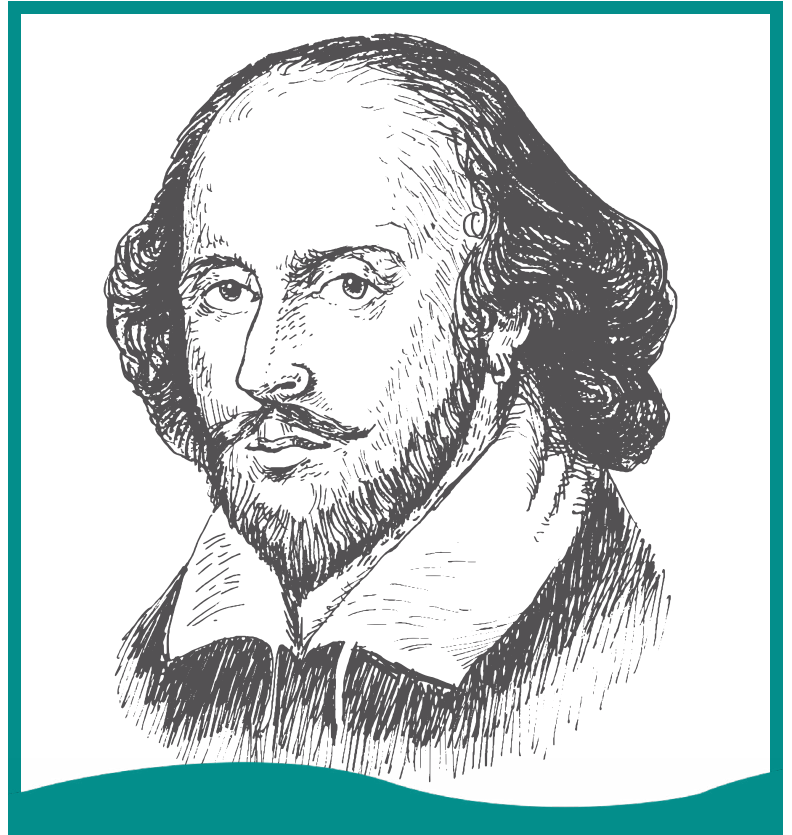
Rehearsals as we know them also didn't exist in Shakespeare's time. Actors memorised their lines on their own, or experienced actors would practice with the younger actors who were apprenticed to them. While fight scenes and other precise moments of the plays would still be rehearsed carefully, this did not apply to the whole performance as it does today.

Female performers

All female roles used to be played by young male actors, usually between the ages of 14 and 22. Shakespeare poked fun at this in *The Merchant of Venice*, *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It*, which all feature a woman disguised as a man, played by a man who is pretending to be a woman.

Outdoor Performances

In contrast to the many differences above, outdoor performances were very common during Shakespeare's lifetime, and we are excited to be staging our performance outdoors this summer.



Theatre Practitioners

Bertolt Brecht (1898 – 1953)

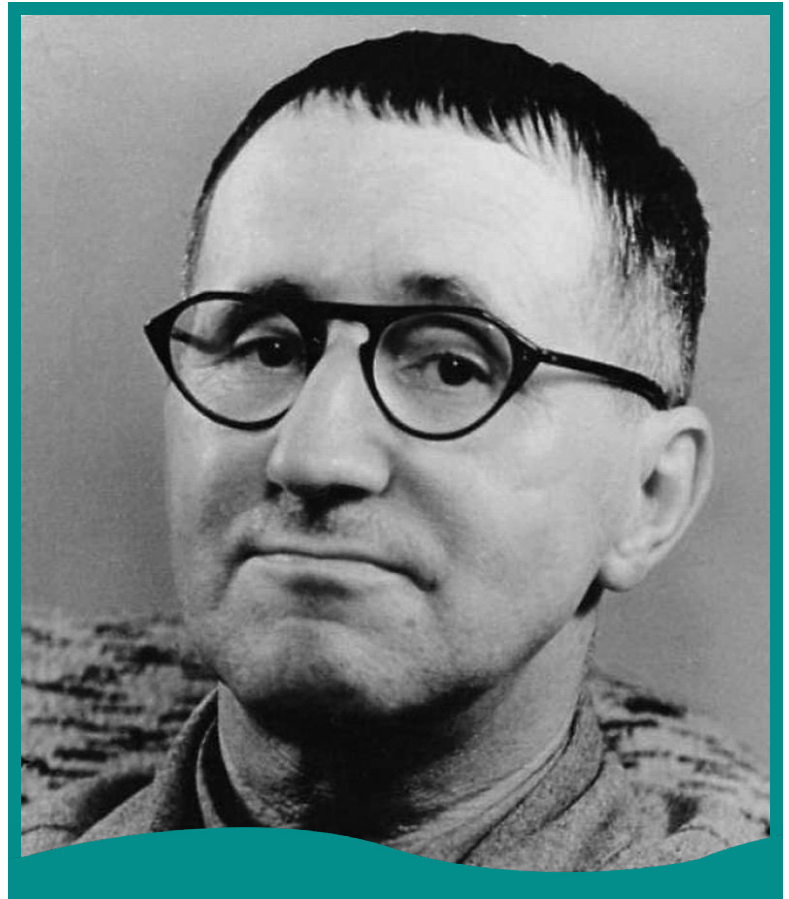
Born in 1898 in Augsburg Germany and sickened by the impact of the First World War, Bertolt Brecht began studying theatre in 1917, and wrote his first plays *Baal* and *Drums in the Night* in 1918. By 1921 he had arrived in Berlin where he soon became involved with a large number of Berlin's leading 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 – 1937)

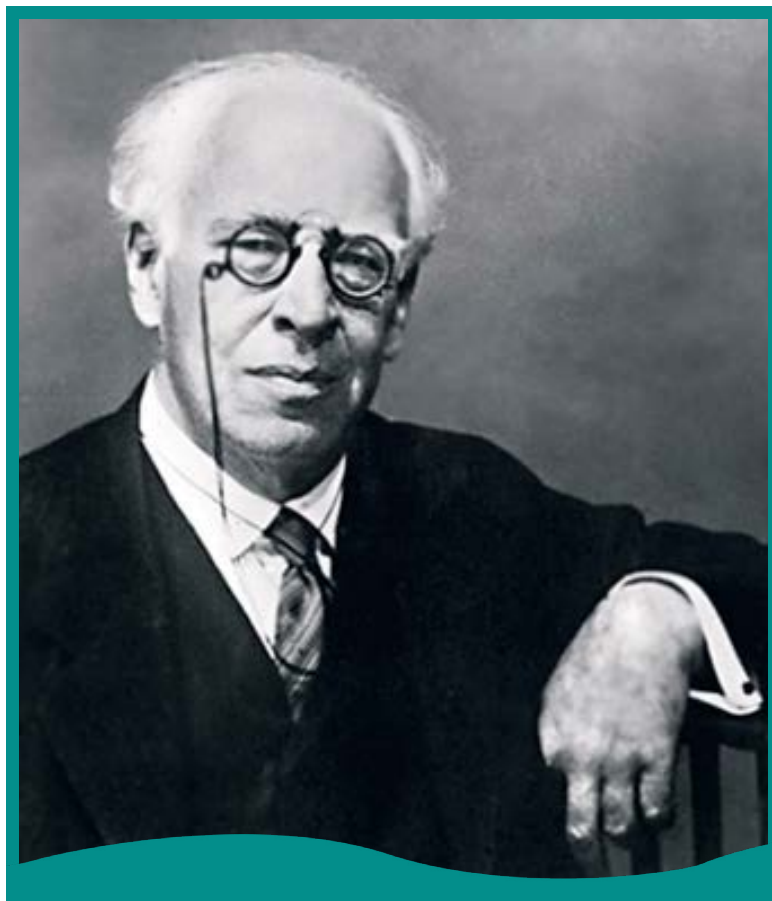
Konstantin Stanislavski, born to one of the richest families in Russia in 1863, is widely credited with the development of the first form of formal actor training in the modern world, most commonly referred to as his System. Set out across three major books, *An Actor Prepares*, *Building a Character* 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 **Nemirochov-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: 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.

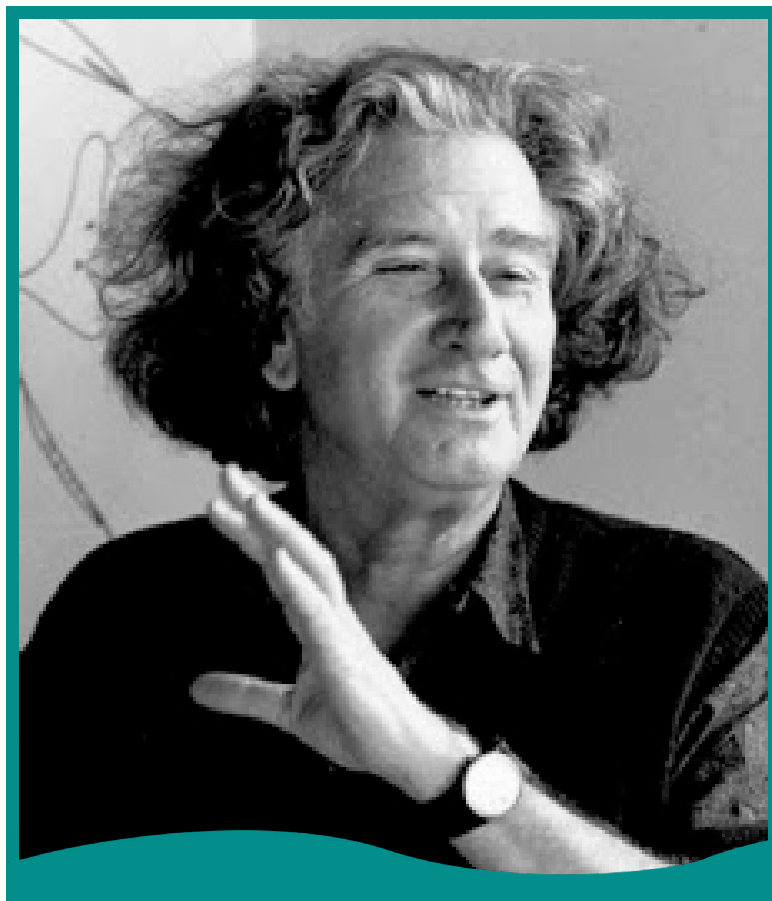
Theatre of the Oppressed begins with the idea that everyone has the capacity to act in the 'theatre' of their own lives; everybody is at once an actor and a spectator. Boal called his audience '**Spect-actors**'.

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

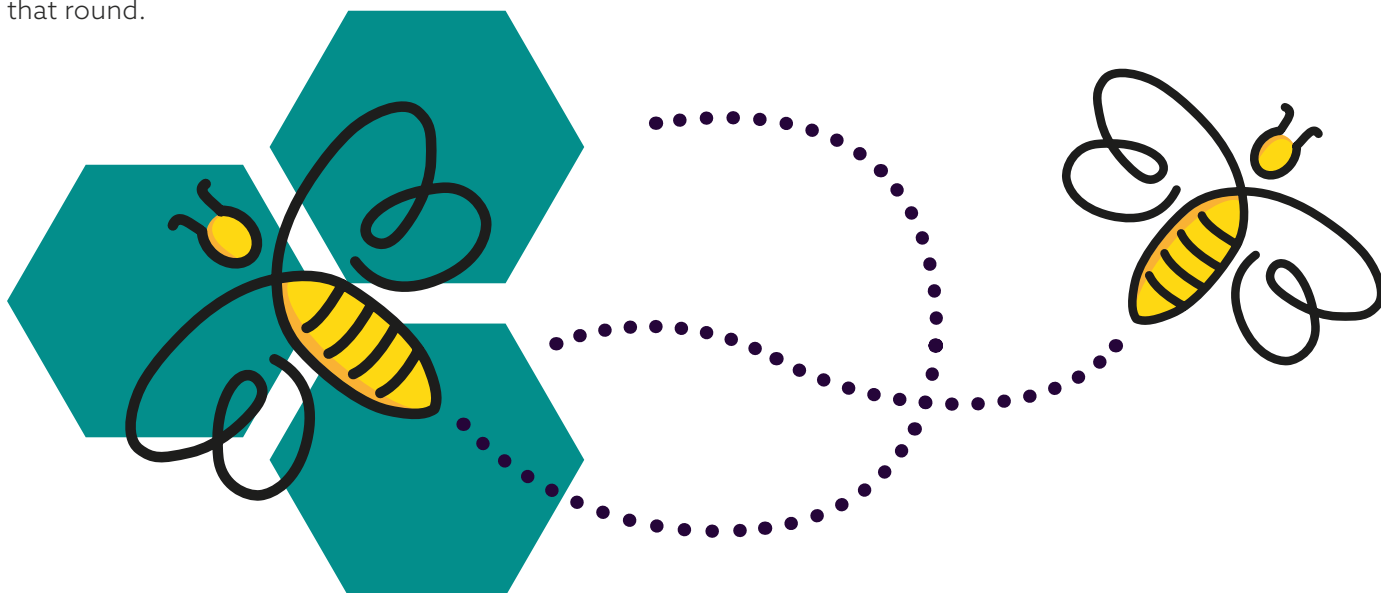
Rehearsal Techniques

Warm Up Games

• **Grandma's Footsteps** is a great one.

You can use it at every stage of rehearsal to build group co-hesion, play with character relationships, or build obstacles that they have to overcome. Fun and great for focus. Try changing the shape of the space, playing the game as characters or playing in pairs on piggyback!

• **Buzzy Bees:** Walk around the space, 'buzzing' like a bee and flapping your wings. On the call, get into groups (which can be determined at the beginning of the game). Once in the groups, form an image starting with a specific letter of the alphabet. This image could be random, or it could be something from the text they are working on. (eg: Create something beginning with the letter D that you might find in Romeo's bedroom!) The best image is deemed the winner by the facilitator, and if you create the same thing as another group, you lose that round.



Text

• **Facts and Assumptions:** Starting with your script, and working in groups if preferable, find out all the facts about a specific character. Once they'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.

Rehearsal Techniques

Devising

• **One Word Storytelling:** In a circle, a story is created using only one word each. You can give each story a theme or a stimulus, or you can see where the story goes and use that as an idea for devising. (Beware of rude stories!)

• **Improvisation With 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).



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.

• **Warm Up Games in Character:** Playing warm up games such as Grandma's Footsteps or Name Volleyball can be really useful for character development to help explore attitude and relationships with other characters. Competition can help to highlight status of characters and can provide an interesting discussion when things don't follow the same outcomes as the play.



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 Note Taking:** Whilst the director is focusing on the overall vision of the piece, peer note taking 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 note taker if there is any specific thing that they'd like their note taker 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.



Timeline of Making a Show

Assembling the Creative Team

Theatre making is a collaborative process, and appointing the right creative team is essential to the success of a production. Usually the Producer will appoint the Director first, as the Director will want to play a part in selecting the other members of the team. These are likely to include a Designer (set, costume or both), Lighting Designer, Sound Designer, Stage Manager(s) and Specialists (such as Choreographer, Musical Director, Fight Director etc), depending on the needs of the show.

Casting

Some people say that theatre-making is 90% about the casting. Certainly getting the right actors to play the roles and to work with in rehearsal is vitally important. Bigger shows work with a Casting Director, who helps the team to find the right actors. The most common way of finding actors is to run auditions, where the actors will present their skills to members of the Creative Team. Sometimes there may be a 'straight offer' where the actor is so perfect for the role, or quite famous, or well known to the Director, that they don't have to audition.

Pre-Rehearsal Meetings

The Creative Team will meet regularly before rehearsals begin, to plan and develop the vision and designs for the show. The Director will usually be at all of these meetings to ensure an overall coherent vision.

Script Preparation

Long before rehearsals begin, the Director will do a great deal of work on the script and in researching the play and context. This ensures she/he is highly knowledgeable about the play and can run the process and the rehearsal room calmly and effectively. Sometimes the Assistant Director will help with this preparation.

Model Presentations

The Designer will usually create a detailed small-scale model of the set to aid visioning and discussion. There are 2 stages to this process: the white card and the full model. The white card model is made of card and is a very basic model that allows for lots of changes to happen easily. The full model is painted and contains lots of detail – at this stage there are unlikely to be many further changes. The full model will usually be shown to the actors at the start of rehearsals to help them imagine the set in rehearsals.

The Read Through

The cast, creative team, producer and often others with an interest in the process will sit around a large table and hear the play read aloud by the cast. This is very exciting and quite nerve-wracking for the actors who may have only just met one another. The read through may be the only time some of the stage management team and technical team will hear the play before they work on it in the theatre space – so it is an important part of the process.

Rehearsals

The period of time – usually between 3 and 5 weeks – when the cast, Director and creative team work intensively to make the show, often including table work (where the script and research are examined), blocking (where the moves for the actors are decided), games, exercises and run-throughs of scenes, acts and the whole show. The Deputy Stage Manager (DSM) is a crucial member of the rehearsal room team, keeping notes, organising schedules and acting as a conduit between the producing team and the rehearsal room. The DSM will usually also be in charge of cueing the lighting and sound for performances, so they create and keep the 'bible' – a version of the script with all the cues and notes needed to operate the performances.

Technical Rehearsals

Always happening on the stage – the technical rehearsals usually take between 3 and 5 days, and are a chance for the lighting, sound, set, costume, projection, and all other elements to be carefully brought together – all under the watchful gaze of the Director. Technical rehearsals are vitally important and can be very slow and laborious, but also a really exciting chance to bring all the collaborators and their work together.

Dress Rehearsals

These are the final rehearsals – a chance to run the show as if it were in front of an audience. Unless something goes very wrong – the dress rehearsal would not be stopping for notes or to alter anything. Instead the creative team will write lots of notes, and then share these with the cast and DSM in a meeting straight after the dress rehearsal.

Previews

Some shows have preview performances. These are performances in front of an audience, but where everyone understands that the show is very new and one or two things might not go quite to plan. The tickets are usually cheaper to attend these performances. The Director and creative team will always give notes to the cast and team after a preview show so that it keeps getting better before the opening night.

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.

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.

Administration

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

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.

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.

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 Work

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, Make-Up 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, make-up and wigs may be contemporary and straightforward or require more creative approaches. Performers may need to appear from a different nationality or 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 or residential 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.

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.