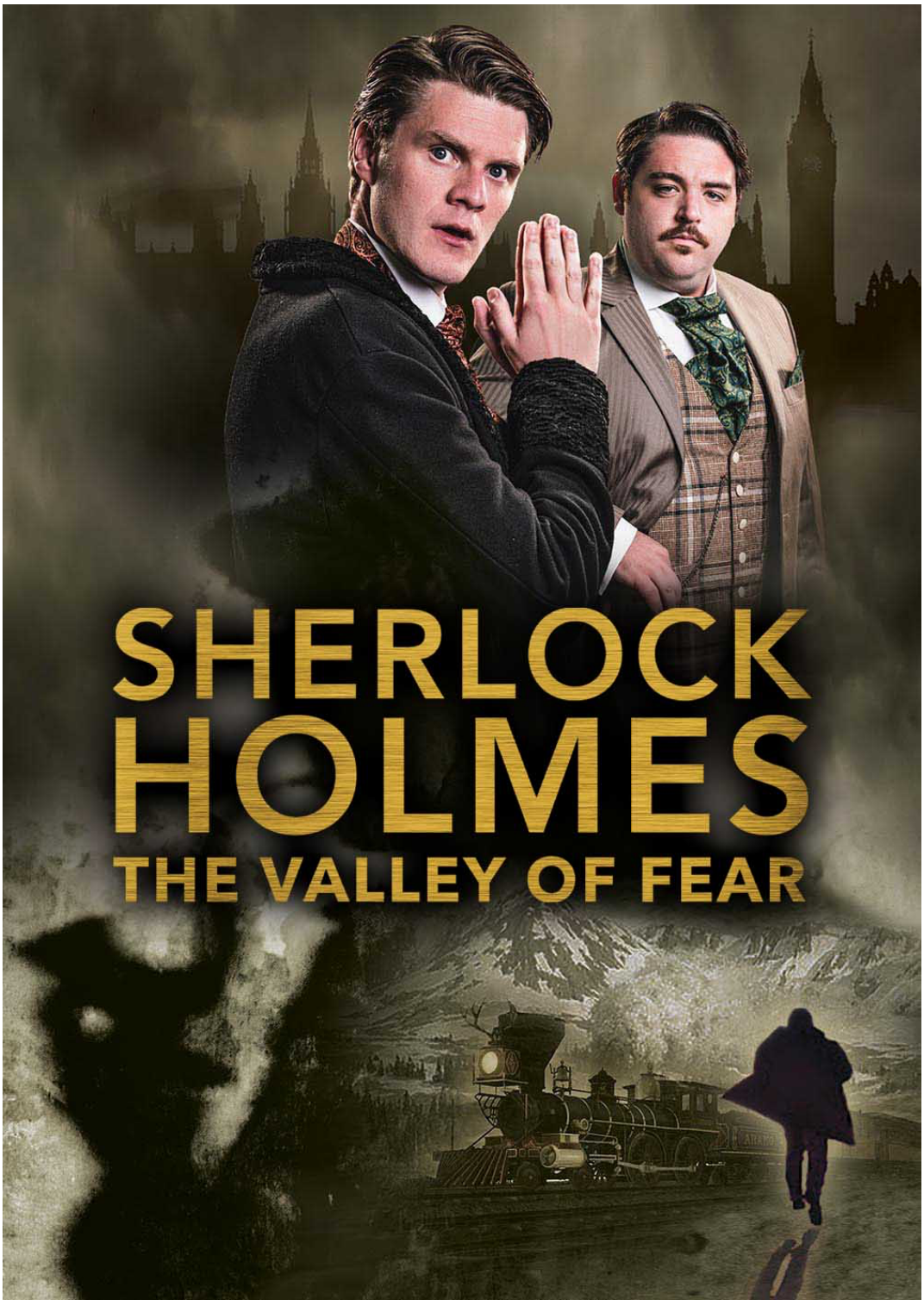
BLACKEYED
THEATRE



EDUCATION PACK

CONTENTS

Page 3	About this Education Pack
Pages 4 - 5	Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
Pages 6 - 8	Synopsis
Pages 9 - 11	Character List
Pages 12	Context
Page 13 - 15	Themes, Motifs, Symbols
Pages 16 - 18	Structure and Language
Page 19	Nick Lane – Writer and Director
Pages 20 - 23	Adapting "Sherlock Holmes – The Valley of Fear" – Nick Lane
Pages 24 - 28	Directing "Sherlock Holmes – The Valley of Fear" – Nick Lane
Pages 29 - 30	Composing the Music – Tristan Parkes
Pages 31 - 34	Designing and Creating the Costumes – Naomi Gibbs
Pages 35 - 38	Set Design – Victoria Spearing
Pages 39 - 40	Action Design – Robert Myles
Pages 41 - 45	Cast Biographies
Pages 46 - 49	Exploring the Text – Drama Activities
Pages 50 - 69	Evaluating the Live Performance
Page 70	Blackeyed Theatre

ABOUT THIS EDUCATION PACK

This education pack has been produced for Blackeyed Theatre's production of *Sherlock Holmes: The Valley of Fear*, to support teachers and students with their study of the book and the adapted play. The information and resources included are designed to support students studying English Literature, Drama and Theatre Studies. The content is suitable for both GCSE and A-Level students who wish for a deeper insight into the performance or the book itself. Alongside the written material, creative exercises are included, which can be used to explore the material in depth and give students an opportunity for greater understanding of the written text.

The pack can be split neatly into sections for English students and Drama and Theatre Studies students. The first section has been designed as a revision guide for English Literature students with a focus on context, themes and form, structure and language. The second section is aimed at drama and theatre studies students with a focus on creating the play, designing the production and the live performance. The aim is to support drama students in their evaluation of what they see on stage and to spark their imagination when it comes to their own creative devising ideas. The final section includes a selection of drama-based exercises which will allow all students to explore the text more deeply. It will allow them to explore characters, character relationships, themes and language by participating in active, physical learning.

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Paige Round

Having trained in BA Acting at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, Paige graduated with first class honours and has gone on to pursue a career in acting.

Having studied A-Level English Literature, in 2015 Paige decided to start teaching English to younger pupils. Initially focusing on 11+ and 13+, Paige helped students to achieve places at some of the top schools in the UK including Royal Russell, Wycombe Abbey and Eton. This later progressed to teaching students up to GCSE level in English Literature and Language, Drama, Maths, Science, History and Geography. In 2021, Paige was awarded online tutor of the year out of hundreds of tutors working for the top three agencies in London. Having an extensive knowledge of the syllabus for multiple exam boards and having worked with many students over the past seven years, Paige's experience is invaluable for students of GCSE and A-Level.

As an actress her credits include *Hurling Rubble at the Moon* and *Faceless* at Park Theatre (Fringe Theatre of the year in 2017) and national tours of *The Strange case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* for Blackeyed Theatre, originating the role of Eleanor Lanyon. Paige made her television debut for the BBC in *Doctors* in 2020 and in 2022 made her debut at the Birmingham REP theatre in their production of *Tartuffe,* directed by Iqbal Khan (East is East, Commonwealth opening ceremony).

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was born on 22nd May 1859 in Scotland into a prosperous Irish-Catholic family. Charles Altamont Doyle, Arthur's father, a chronic alcoholic, was a moderately successful artist, who apart from fathering a brilliant son, never accomplished anything of note. His mother, Mary, loved books and storytelling and Arthur loved her stories with a passion. Arthur wrote of his mother's gift of "sinking her voice to a horror-stricken whisper" when she reached the culminating point of a story. There was little money in the family and even less harmony on account of his father's excesses and erratic behaviour. Arthur's touching description of his mother's positive influence is also poignantly described in his autobiography, "In my early childhood, as far as I can remember anything at all, the vivid stories she would tell me stand out so clearly that they obscure the real facts of my life."



His father ended up being committed to a mental health institution, and Arthur was sent to boarding school, where beating and corporal punishment were commonplace. Arthur loathed the bigotry surrounding his studies and rebelled against corporal punishment. During those gruelling years, Arthur's only moments of happiness were when he wrote to his mother, a regular habit that lasted for the rest of her life, and when he practised sports, mainly cricket, at which he excelled. Years later he wrote, "Perhaps it was good for me that the times were hard, for I was wild, full blooded and a trifle reckless. But the situation called for energy and application so that one was bound to try to meet it. My mother had been so splendid that I could not fail her." Indeed, it was Arthur's love for his mother that motivated him to do well in life and overcome his difficult childhood.

Initially, Arthur decided to train as a doctor. The young medical student met a number of future authors who were also attending the university, including James Barrie and Robert Louis Stevenson. It is believed that one of his teachers, Dr Joseph Bell, who had exceptional skills for deduction, reasoning and diagnosis, may well have influenced the creation of Sherlock Holmes.

Arthur was twenty years old and in his third year of medical studies when he was offered the post of ship's surgeon on the Hope, a whaling boat, about to leave for the Arctic Circle. The Hope first stopped near the shores of Greenland, where the crew proceeded to hunt for seals. He was appalled by the brutality of the exercise, but he greatly enjoyed the camaraderie on board the ship and the subsequent whale hunt fascinated him. This adventure found its way into his first story about the sea, a chilling tale called *Captain of the Pole-Star*. After another much less successful venture on a boat travelling to the West coast of Africa, he ended up opening his own doctor's practice in Plymouth. It was here that he met his wife Louisa Hawkins, who he described in his memoirs as "gentle and amiable." She was the sister of one of his patients, and together they had a daughter who they named Mary.

It was 1886 when Sherlock Holmes first appeared, in a novel published in *Beeton's Christmas Annual*. Doyle didn't much like his Sherlock Holmes stories, despite them rapidly becoming world famous. He described them as 'commercial' and felt that his historical novel *The White Company* was the best thing he'd ever written. Eventually, however, he began to write regular short stories featuring Holmes and Watson and struck a deal with The Strand magazine to publish them. When he wrote the last adventure, during a trip to

Switzerland, he found the spot where his hero was to come to his end. Upon the publication of *The Final Problem*, in which Sherlock and his arch nemesis Moriarty plunge into the Reichenbach Falls, presumably to their deaths, 20,000 readers cancelled their subscription to The Strand Magazine. Sherlock Holmes had become a worldwide phenomenon.

Now set free from his medical career and from Sherlock Holmes, a fictional character that oppressed him and overshadowed what he considered his finer work, Conan Doyle pushed himself into even more intensive activity. Doyle was quite active politically and stood for office twice as a Liberal Unionist. He famously wrote about the Boer War in South Africa, explaining why he thought the British involvement was justified, and he believed it was for this that he was knighted. He also helped to clear the names of two men who had been wrongly convicted of crimes. This hectic life may explain why Doyle didn't notice the serious deterioration of his wife's health. By the time he finally became aware of how sick she was, Louisa was diagnosed with Tuberculosis.

The end of Arthur's life was struck by tragedy. Not only was his wife terminally ill, but his father also died, and he subsequently poured all his energies into the writing that mattered most to him. He also became fascinated by the afterlife and spiritualism, so when he joined the Society for Psychical Research, it was considered to be a public declaration of his interest and belief in the occult.

The inspiration for his next novel came from a prolonged stay in the Devonshire moors. At first, it was based mainly on an old manor, an escaped convict and a huge black sepulchral hound. As the novel progressed, he realised his story lacked a hero. He is quoted as having said, "Why should I invent such a character, when I already have him in the form of Sherlock Holmes." The author wrote the story as if it was a previously untold adventure. *The Strand magazine* published the first episode of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* in August of 1901.

When Louisa died in his arms on the 4th of July 1906, Arthur slipped into a debilitating state of depression lasting many months. Nevertheless, he was remarried (to Jean Leckie) in September 1907, and with his two children, they all moved to a new home called "Windlesham" in Sussex.

On the brink of the First World War, Arthur - then fifty-five - offered to enlist but was denied by the army. He watched members of his family go off to war and was left devastated by the death of his son, his brother, his two brothers-in-law and his two nephews. This forced him towards spiritualism once again. Because of his deepening involvement in the occult, he wrote little fiction, writing about Spiritualism instead. In the autumn of 1929, in despite being diagnosed with Angina Pectoris, Conan Doyle went off for his last Psychic tour to Holland, Denmark, Sweden and Norway. Bedridden when he returned, on a cold spring day in 1930, he rose from his bed and went into the garden. He was found lying on the ground, one hand clutching his heart, the other holding a white snowdrop.

He died of a heart attack on the 7 July 1930, at the age of 71. His last words were addressed to his wife. He whispered, "You are wonderful."

Background

The Valley of Fear is the fourth and final Sherlock Holmes novel. The story was first published in the *Strand Magazine* between September 1914 and May 1915.

The Valley of Fear is the only one of the Holmes novels completed after Doyle's attempt to kill Holmes off. Doyle wanted to expand his literary ideas beyond the confines of 221B Baker Street; he threw Holmes – along with his mortal enemy Professor Moriarty – off the Reichenbach Falls.



Cover of the September 1914 issue of the Strand Magazine featuring The Valley of Fear.

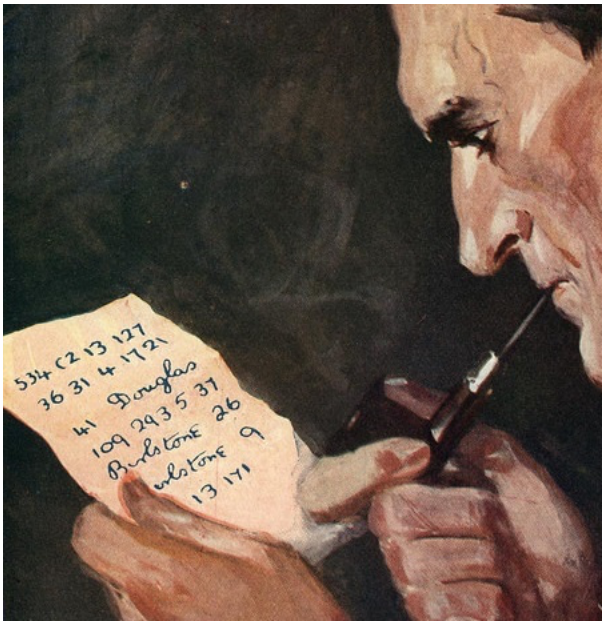
However, when publishers and monthly periodicals that had printed Holmes' adventures and cases reacted negatively to Holmes's demise, Doyle was forced to resurrect to his most famous literary creation. He generated another bunch of short stories, the predominant form for Holmes mysteries, and this one long-form story, ***The Valley of Fear***. While it was written after Holmes' supposed death and subsequent return, the story is set prior to these events. In fact, if you read the stories in chronological order as opposed to written order, this tale would mark one of the first mentions of Professor Moriarty.

A common four-stage structure to Holmes mysteries is the basis for this story - the investigation, the reveal and then the explanation. In the full-length novels, the explanation section wherein Doyle gives his recently outwitted and captured antagonists the chance to explain the motives behind their crimes, is regularly the longest chapter in the book. In ***The Valley of Fear,*** it's not just one chapter, it's a story in its own right; it takes up over half the book.

The two parts – *The Tragedy of Birlstone* (i.e. Holmes' investigation) and *The Scowrers* (the background to the crime) – are split and on first reading appear barely connected at all. Doyle had long since harboured a desire to write about the Molly Maguires (an organised crime syndicate formed out in the coal states of the US) and decided to incorporate his story as part of a Holmes mystery. It is quite a departure for the series of mysteries – an entirely different plot, and one that doesn't involve Holmes at all!

Synopsis

The Valley of Fear starts with Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson engaged in conversation. Holmes is mulling over and questioning a cipher message that he received from Porlock - an associate of Holmes' nemesis, Professor Moriarty. A second message from Porlock, which was supposed to contain the key to the coded message arrives shortly after. It dictates that Porlock himself is frightened that Moriarty will discover he is a traitor and will now not reveal the key to the encrypted message. Holmes deciphers the message and discovers that it is a warning that Douglas of Birlstone Manor is in imminent danger. Shortly after, Holmes and Watson are visited by Inspector MacDonald, a detective of Scotland Yard. MacDonald informs the duo that Douglas of Birlstone has in fact been murdered.



Artist's impression of Holmes decoding the encrypted message in The Valley of Fear


Groombridge Place in Tunbridge Wells is thought to have been Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's inspiration for the moated house of Birlstone in The Valley of Fear

Holmes learns the following details of events immediately following the murder: Douglas had been murdered the evening before. Cecil Barker, a frequent guest at Birlstone House, had been in his room at half-past eleven when he heard the sound of a gun, according to his testimony. He had rushed down to find Douglas lying in the centre of the room nearest the front door of the house, a sawn-off shotgun lying across his chest. He had been shot at close range, receiving the full charge of the shotgun in the face, and his head was blown 'almost to pieces'. Barker had rushed to the village police station and notified Sergeant Wilson, who was in charge of the station. Wilson followed Barker to the house after notifying the county authorities.

Wilson had begun investigating immediately. Barker drew his attention to the open window and to a smudge of blood like the mark of a boot-sole upon the window sill. The drawbridge over the moat had been raised at 6:00 pm. Barker speculates that the murderer had entered by the drawbridge before that time, hid in the room and left through the window directly after killing Douglas. The moat was only a few feet deep and could be easily crossed. Wilson found a card beside the corpse with the initials "V.V." and the number 341 beneath them. Muddy boot-prints were found behind the curtains, bearing out Barker's theory. On the murdered man's forearm was a curious design, a triangle within a circle; it was not a tattoo, but a brand. This mark had been noticed many times before upon John Douglas's forearm. Douglas' wedding ring appeared to have been taken from his hand. The chief Sussex detective, White Mason, had arrived at Birlstone House by 3:00 in the morning and by 5:45 he had sent for Scotland Yard. MacDonald took the case and by noon, he, Holmes and Watson meet White Mason in Birlstone.

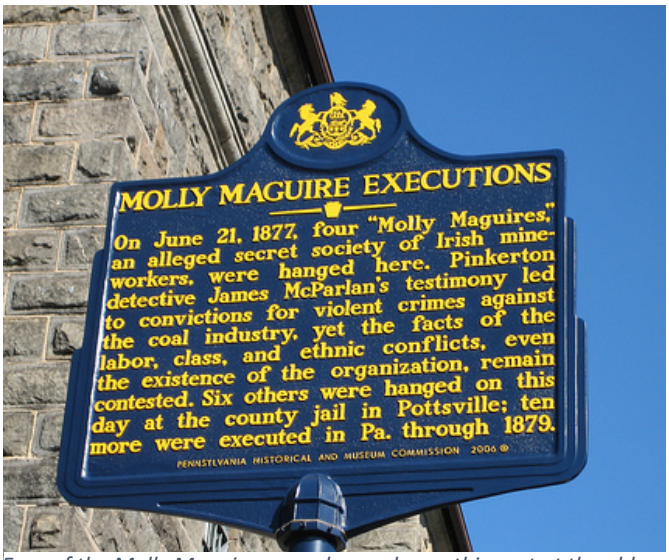
Holmes, MacDonald, and White Mason go to the scene of the murder. They discuss the case, agreeing that suicide is out of the question, and that someone from outside the house committed the murder. Barker believes a secret society of men pursued Douglas, and that he retreated to rural England out of fear for his life. Douglas had married after arriving in England five years earlier following the death of his first wife from typhoid. He had met and worked with Barker in America before departing for Europe. An episode in Douglas's life in America caused him to fear for his life, and Mrs. Douglas reveals that her husband mentioned something called "The Valley of Fear".

By studying Barker's slippers, Holmes determines Barker's shoe made the mark on the window, to give the appearance that someone exited that way. In their lodgings, Holmes tells Watson that Barker and Mrs.

Douglas are lying: the events as they tell them would be impossible. Moreover, Holmes learns that the housekeeper heard a sound - a door slamming - half an hour before the alarm. Holmes believes that this sound was the fatal shot. White Mason and MacDonald track a bicycle found on the grounds of the house to an American staying at a guest house. The American appears to be the murderer, but there is no sign of the man.

Holmes asks MacDonald to write to Barker, telling him that the police intend to search the moat the next day. That night Holmes, Watson, MacDonald and White Mason lie in wait outside Birlstone Manor and see Barker fish something out of the moat. The four men rush Barker and discover the bundle from the moat contains the clothes of the missing American connected with the bicycle. Barker refuses to explain the situation. At that moment, Douglas appears, alive and well. He hands Watson a written account called "The Valley of Fear", which explains why he feared for his life.

Douglas explains that he had spotted an enemy of his, Teddy Baldwin, in the area and expected an attack. When Baldwin attempted to shoot Douglas in his study, Douglas grabbed the gun and, in the struggle, Baldwin was shot in the face. With Barker's help, Douglas dressed the man in his own clothes to deceive the secret society which he and Baldwin had belonged to, since both arms bore the society's mark. Barker and Mrs. Douglas had covered for Douglas, who had been hiding in a secret compartment behind the wall in the pantry. In an interview with Watson, Douglas explains that his real name was Birdy Edwards and he had been a Pinkerton detective in Chicago. Edwards had infiltrated a murderous gang, known by locals as the Scowrers, in Vermissa Valley (a.k.a. the Valley of Fear) and brought them to justice. Afterwards, the criminals attempted to kill him, having been released from jail. Hounded, Douglas had fled to England, where he met and married his second wife.



Four of the Molly Maguires were hanged near this spot at the old Schuylkill County jail in Pennsylvania

Holmes urges Douglas to leave England and warns that a new threat now hangs over him. Douglas takes this advice, but shortly after Holmes learns from Barker that Douglas was lost overboard a boat bound for Africa. Holmes believes Moriarty was responsible for ending Douglas' life. Holmes wants to bring Moriarty down but warns Watson and Barker that it will take some time to achieve.

CHARACTERS

Please note – the characters listed below are the most prominent figures from the novel. Not all characters listed will be in the adaptation by Blackeyed Theatre. Characters may also be added for dramatic purposes and are listed below.

Characters from the novel

Sherlock Holmes

Possibly the most famous fictional detective character of all time, Holmes is a consulting detective described as tall, reserved, thin, with an aquiline nose (like an eagle) and penetrating, powerful eyes. He has a brilliant mind, is moderately vain and can often be impatient with those who cannot keep up with his intellect.

Doctor John Watson

Watson is known for his loyalty to Sherlock and appears alongside the famous detective in almost every Sherlock Holmes story written by Conan Doyle. He is described as stout and to a certain degree withdrawn. Throughout most of the tales, we see events through Watson's eyes, the cases reported first-hand by the Doctor. Watson is an intelligent man but so often he is one step behind Holmes.

John Douglas / Jack McMurdo / Birdy Edwards

These three names all belong to one man. We first meet John Douglas at the start of the tale, and he appears to be (at first glance) the disfigured victim shot with a sawn-off shotgun. He is our faceless victim and the object under investigation by Holmes. However, we later realise Douglas is not our victim at all. He is alive to share his story, which becomes the basis for section two of the book. We discover that he once took the name Jack McMurdo and was a part of a mafia-type gang in America. It is then revealed that Jack McMurdo was just a cover for Birdy Edwards, a Pinkerton detective. No matter what name he decides to use, he is brave, smart and of good humour.

Detective White Mason

He is part of the local law enforcement assigned to assist on the Douglas case. Like MacDonald, he is friendly, helpful and feels he is in way over his head.

Jack McGinty

Alongside Moriarty, Jack 'Boss' McGinty is another key villain in the story. He is briefly mentioned within the first part, but properly introduced in the second. He is the brutal head of "The Scowrers", a fearsome overseer described as almost lion-like in his appearance – fierce eyes and a mane-like beard. McGinty is the unrivalled lord of Vermissa Valley, often referred to as "The Valley of Fear." He rules over the valley with an iron fist and will not hesitate to take out anyone who stands in his way.

Cecil Barker

Cecil Barker is the friend of John Douglas; he is also an American, very wealthy and helps Mrs. Douglas make the crime scene look as though Douglas has been murdered. He further tries to lure the detectives into thinking it was someone from a dangerous crime group who committed the act. First impressions suggest him to be rather arrogant and untrustworthy, but ultimately he his intentions are good.

Inspector MacDonald

A detective from Scotland Yard, MacDonald is friendly and helpful but may feel he is in over his head in comparison to Holmes.

Moriarty

One of literature's most famous creations, Moriarty is Holmes' nemesis and an international criminal mastermind. However he actually only appears physically in one book. In "The Valley of Fear" he is never actually present, and is only referenced to at the end of the book when Sherlock receives the note from him. Despite his lack of physical presence, he is nevertheless one of the central components to this story as he is revealed to be the mastermind behind the downfall and potential murder of Douglas.

Ettie Shafter

Ettie is the daughter of Jacob Shafter, the man who lets McMurdo board with him. McMurdo falls in love with her and she with him. Their relationship is doomed from the start partly because Baldwin has a claim on her and also because McMurdo has unwittingly become a member of the Scowrers, a society Ettie despises. However, when McMurdo reveals his true identity is Birdy Edwards, they flee the valley together. She later dies of typhoid.

Jacob Shafter

Ettie Shafter's father, who provides board for McMurdo and is an adversary of the Scowrers.

Mrs. Ivy Douglas

John Douglas' second wife, Ivy has her own suspicions about her husband's past. However, Douglas decides to keep her in the dark about his life in America. Alongside Cecil Barker, Mrs. Douglas decides to help fabricate the crime at Birlstone Manor House to make it look like Douglas has been murdered.

Captain Marvin

Appearing to stand in McMurdo's way, Captain Marvin is later revealed to have known that McMurdo is in fact a Pinkerton undercover agent.

Ames

The loyal, elderly butler at Birlstone Manor.

Mrs. Allen

The deaf, elderly housekeeper at Birlstone Manor.

Morris

A member and brother of the "Scowrers" who strongly opposes the use of violence.

Scanlan

A member of the "Scowrers" who McMurdo meets on the train. He appears to be a loyal member of the society but reveals he doesn't condone violence as much as the other members.

Evans Pott

A formidable county Delegate of whom even McGinty is wary.

Lawler and Andrews

Assassins ordered to carry out the murders at the mine by Evans Pott.

Chester Wilcox

A mine owner targeted by the Scowrers.

James Stranger

A newspaper editor critical of the Scowrers, who McGinty orders to be beaten.

Characters added for this adaptation

Mrs. Hudson

Sherlock Holmes' landlady and housekeeper at 221B Baker Street.

Moriarty

Although Moriarty is mentioned in the novel, he is not physically present. He makes a brief appearance in this adaptation.

CONTEXT

Wanting to flex his literary muscles beyond the confines of 221B Baker Street, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (spoilers for the short story The Final Problem) pitched Holmes – along with his mortal enemy Professor Moriarty – off the Reichenbach Falls. However, when his literary output wasn't warmly embraced by publishers, Doyle was forced to return to his most famous creation, generating another bunch of short stories (the predominant form for Holmes mysteries) and one long-form story, The Valley of Fear.

Typically, the final part of the full length novels - the explanation - wherein Doyle gives his recently outwitted and captured antagonists the chance to explain the motives behind their crimes, is the longest chapter in the book. In The Valley of Fear it's not just one chapter, but a story in its own right, taking up over half the book. And it serves as a clue perhaps that Doyle had long harboured a desire to write about the Molly Maguires (an organised crime syndicate formed out in the coal states of the US) and decided to incorporate his story as part of a Holmes mystery, thus guaranteeing it wider readership than it might otherwise have gotten.

Doyle had a particular interest in the business affairs and troubles happening on the other side of the Atlantic. Out of the depths of the civil war emerged a 'New America'. The backstory which provides the building blocks for The Valley of Fear comes from a part of American history which has been largely forgotten - the battles in the Pennsylvanian coal fields in the 1870s among labour unions and bosses.

The Molly Maguires were an Irish secret society that used terrorist tactics and murder to maintain power in Pennsylvania's coalfields during the late 1800s. The secret group had started as a society at odds with - and which used violence against - corrupt landlords. However, they turned their attentions to the American coalfields where they opposed the equally corrupt owners of the coal mines. The coalfields had experienced fits of violence for several decades, but through the 1870s Irish miners began to mobilise, especially in response to Franklin B Gowen, known for his domination of the coalmines in the region and his cruel treatment of the miners.

In an attempt to eliminate the threat of The Molly Maguires, Gowen called in the Pinkerton Detective Agency. Allan Pinkerton, the first private detective in the U.S., was known for his brutal methods against strikers. In the second half of the 19th century, mining and railroad owners often turned to the Pinkertons to act as a private military force. To undermine the Molly Maguires, Pinkerton sent in an undercover detective, Irish-born James McParland, who spent over two years as an undercover agent in the secret society.

Under the alias James McKenna, McParland joined a local Irish lodge and eventually gained the trust of the Molly Maguires. McParland sent regular reports to the Pinkertons, who used his information to target and kill several miners. And in 1875, the police arrested 60 members of the Molly Maguires, who soon faced trial. Based almost exclusively on McParland's testimony, the trial sentenced 20 men to death. On June 21, 1877, a day known as Black Thursday, ten members of the secret society faced death together on the gallows.

Doyle's "The Valley of Fear" appeared in instalments in *The Strand Magazine* between September 1914 and May 1915. The themes and ideas would have been known to his readers having potentially lived through the time of The Molly Maguires. This was the last full length Sherlock Holmes novel and does share some structural similarities with the first and second full length tales – "A Study in Scarlet" and "The Sign of Four."

Themes, Motifs and Symbols

THEMES

Deception

The definition of the noun 'Deception' is "the action of deceiving someone." If someone is deceptive or deceitful, they are good at appearing to be someone or something they are not. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle makes sure to include a great deal of deception in his Sherlock stories and "The Valley of Fear" is no exception. Deception is one of most significant themes in this Holmes tale and starts with the central character, John Douglas who we later learn is John McMurdo/Birdy Edwards. Birdy has had to change his identity multiple times as he fears being killed by his enemies. He is able to deceive the Scowrers as well as Ettie Shafter (his first wife) and then later deceives Cecil and Ivy. The deception becomes more complex when he decides to fake his own death, but it doesn't fool Holmes or Moriarty.

In the story, deception is used for both moral and immoral reasons. Edwards deceives in order to get into the secret society of terrorists and murderers he plans to bring to justice. On the other hand, Moriarty uses deceit to gain power.

Authority

Authority can be explored through and seen in many characters in the "The Valley of Fear." Holmes, for instance, possesses an abundance of authority through intellect, intelligence, capability and how efficient he is with his detective work. The Scowrers also possess a great deal of authority but for different reasons. Their authority comes from the ability to instil fear within people; they terrorise, threaten, harm and murder all for the purpose of seeking and maintaining their authority. Their level of authority is not based around the intellect they posses like it is with Sherlock, but is established and maintained by sheer force. This type of authority, Doyle suggests, will never prevail and will eventually fail. At some point there will be people who over power them and then use their force to take the authority. Forcing authority through fear and illegal means is not sustainable and although the police force lack authority due to being over powered by gangsters, the law is on their side when the opportunity comes to take them down.

Power

Power is an extremely significant theme in "The Valley of Fear" and is explored in a multitude of ways. However, Conan Doyle seems to imply that the type of power Sherlock Holmes possesses is the most beneficial. As with his authority, his power is rooted in intellect, logic, problem solving, thoughtfulness, consideration for others and having clarity of thought, which enables him to express things articulately. Holmes uses all of these traits to be able to solve his cases – he reveals Douglas is still alive and is able to return him to his wife without punishment from the law. In the end, Sherlock is unable to protect Douglas and save his life, even though he had warned him that Moriarty will seek vengeance. Doyle also focuses on other forms of power through law enforcement. The police force is useful but depicted as having limited power. There is also the power that comes when people use violence and terror to create fear. However, as we know, having this type of power is also limited and ultimately doomed to fail.

Observation

There is a strong case to suggest that observation could be one of the most important themes in "The Valley of Fear". Readers are encouraged by Doyle to play the detective, make their own observations, conclusions and discoveries. The reader is expected to flex their muscles when it comes to making connections as Doyle is

sparing with his details and particulars of the case. All the evidence presented to Holmes at the beginning of the story is the same evidence presented to the reader; Holmes is incredibly smart and Doyle challenges the reader to match Sherlock's intelligence. Doyle becomes a teacher and the readers are his students; notice every detail, no matter how small and always remain open-minded to the possibility that everyone could be a suspect.

Faith

Although readers enjoy the stories for Sherlock's deductions, they couldn't get through the case without Watson. The relationship between Holmes and Watson is symbiotic, and although they may differ on many levels, their relationship works because they complement each other. Watson has faith in Sherlock in every case they take on and this faith is clear in "The Valley of Fear". As wild as some of Holmes' methods may be, and as impossible others may think they are, Watson is always supportive and never falters in his belief in his friend. It's a dynamic partnership and the audience needs both to enjoy Doyle's story.

Fear

It is clear before readers even begin to indulge in this tale how big a role 'fear' plays in "The Valley of Fear". Physical fear is presented through the Vermissa Valley tale; Vermissa is the heart of the Pennsylvania coalmining industry – a symbol of oppression, fear and exploitation. Douglas seems trapped in the valley psychologically, as even though he has physically escaped, it haunts him and has created the fear that he will eventually lose his life. He is trapped in this endless cycle of fear with no way out unless the Scowrers come to their end first.

Morality

Morals are always questioned within Sherlock Holmes stories, and Doyle is clear about morality in "The Valley of Fear". The Scowrers are seen as immoral people, characterised by their extreme violence and tyranny. They are indiscriminate in their violence and refuse to tolerate anyone who threatens their authority. However, if they are supposed to be reminiscent of 'The Molly Maguires', then they also use their power to try and free those who are oppressed from corrupt, powerful coal mine owners. They push back against the cruel treatments of miners as they know these people deserve better. Doyle also points the finger at Douglas/McMurdo/Edwards as to where their moral compass sits. Whilst undercover and a member of the Scowrers, he would have undoubtedly threatened and beaten people. Furthermore, he may even have killed people to maintain his cover. He would have watched people meet their end and said nothing, though he does save a stranger from being beaten to death.

MOTIFS

Encirclement

Encirclement suggests a situation where one is unable to escape or is surrounded. It is an extremely strong motif in "The Valley of Fear" and enables the audience to feel the fear that Douglas feels; it represents his struggle to escape the violence of the Scowrers. The idea of being surrounded can be seen in many elements of the tale: the moat surrounding Birlstone Manor House, the triangle inscribed in a circle (the mark of the Scowrers) and even the endless cycle of finding a new identity and running from the old one. Douglas' wedding ring is an obvious circle and says he has worn it so long, he cannot get it off. The Vermissa Valley is the ultimate symbol of entrapment, typically sunken and surrounded by mountains.

SYMBOLS

The valley

The Valley is a physical symbol of fear and oppression. People are trapped working in the valley for corrupt people and are plagued by the Scowrers. Even if you manage to escape the valley physically, it will haunt you (like it does to Douglas) until it takes its revenge. The readers learn early on that Douglas lived in a literal valley – Vermissa Valley – in the USA. Even having fled, he continues to live in what his wife describes as a 'valley of fear'. The Valley becomes a metaphor for being trapped in a never-ending cycle that you can never escape.

The Shotgun

The murder weapon at the beginning of the story is described as a "sawn-off shotgun" and is a very important symbol throughout. It has an immediate purpose in that it's the murder weapon; more importantly, it is an American weapon. The choice of weapon is important, a clear connection to America and a hint at the origins of the case. The weapon not only represents America and the Vermissa Valley, but is a symbol of the Scowrers. It is a cold, merciless and exceptionally dangerous weapon. Holmes points out that the triggers on the gun are wired together, allowing both barrels to fire at the same time. This maximises the impact the gun has and ensures whoever is on the receiving end of those barrels does not walk away. The clever thing about a sawn-off shotgun is that it is shorter than a normal shotgun. Therefore the weapon can be easily hidden or concealed within a jacket or coat. However, the noise it makes when it's discharged is incredibly loud. The weapon could even be seen a metaphor for the Scowrers.

Moriarty's Note

A particularly short message consisting only of two sentences is one of the most precocious pieces of text in "The Valley of Fear". Through the six words on Moriarty's note, Holmes is able to come to the conclusion that Douglas must be dead, and he has come to his untimely end at the hands of his nemesis. The arrogance of the note is a reflection of Moriarty's personality; to a stranger, the note seems so innocent and polite in its language, and yet we know the message means so much more. He is gloating and taunting Sherlock, disguised as an ordinary maths professor. He is extremely clever, as is his note.

STRUCTURE

"The Valley of Fear" is split into two parts. The first takes place in England at Birlstone Manor House where the lord of the manor has been murdered in strange circumstances, and the second part happens twenty years earlier in America, where a secret society is wreaking havoc on the Vermissa Valley.

The first part of the book is reminiscent of Doyle's other Sherlock stories; it has the mystery and intrigue which engages the reader to try and decipher the clues along with Holmes. However, the second part is a little slower to develop but unravels to explain the origins of the mystery. Therefore, the reader is presented with a mystery accompanied by a compelling story; it allows us to see what life was like in America during the late 1800's with mafia-like gangs ruling over many districts.

Doyle's Writing Style

To a modern reader, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's writing may seem dated. However, his use of the English language could be considered ahead of its time. He was extremely clever in the way he tamed his writing, compared to the literary expressions of his peers, and was able to write for the masses. However, there is nothing basic about his words; he incorporates literary devices regularly and often in single, simple sentences rather than very long sentences. His style of writing has often been critiqued as "flowery" and too literary, but especially for the Sherlock Holmes stories, the long-winded nature of his descriptions lends itself to the plot he creates. His creative and distinctive writing style often employs imagery, metaphor, foreshadowing and analogy, and he often uses these devices as turning points.

As the reader reads the tale, they peel back layers of the story and piece together the clues until the case finally unfolds with a confession from the criminal. The criminals are always written to give extensive details into their motives and how they carried out their crime. Throughout the case, the reader is presented with lots of specifics – what people wear, how they look, how the events of the crime occurred, what the weather is like, Holmes' expressions and Watson's feelings.

Another key device is the use of Watson as narrator. In many ways, the reader becomes Watson, because we see everything through his eyes. Sherlock's genius mind is then used to challenge the reader with his examination of the case to make the plot less predictable. By using Watson in this way, Doyle allows all readers – whether budding detective or complete beginner - to participate in solving of the case. Doyle uses Watson, and his way of delivering details of the case, to build anticipation for the big reveal at the end. The events happen in a linear, chronological sequence in order not to give things away too early. And by allowing Watson to control how details and clues are revealed, Doyle manages to put the reader very much at the heart of every scene. Doyle also makes use of direct speech/dialogue in order to bring his characters and the plot to life.

Doyle manages to write about everyday (and seemingly mundane) themes and subjects that incite surprise, fear and wonder. A key element to the Sherlock Holmes stories is the way he conjures mystery in the characters and settings. Doyle introduces his characters in stages and through the developing plot and unfolding of events.

Metaphors

Chain of Criminality

Holmes compares the criminal world and his relationship to it as if it were a chain – each person provides an essential link. Porlock is identified as a weak link within the criminal chain and it is this fragility which allows Sherlock access to the chain in its entirety.

Holmes' Brain as a Tool

"A long series of sterile weeks lay behind us, and here at last there was a fitting object for those remarkable powers which, like all special gifts, become irksome to their owner when they are not in use. That razor brain blunted and rusted with inaction." This comparison that Watson makes of Holmes' brain to a tool allows the reader to understand that when Holmes is not using his brain, it becomes rusty and lacks vitality. However, when he is using it and flexing its potential, it springs to life with energy and power.

Similes

The Fly-like Press

White Mason says, "We'll have the pressmen down like flies when they understand it". The simile refers to flies being attracted to something that stinks and implies that this case is the one people will want to smell. It is compelling and monumental which draws the reader in cleverly.

Moriarty's Misleading Character

"When he put his hand on my shoulder as we were parting, it was like a father's blessing before you go out into the cold, cruel world." MacDonald describes how his meeting with Moriarty left him feeling and the simile illuminates the most perturbing things of Moriarty's demeanour. He is so cunningly clever to be able to appear that he is as warm and tender as a father would be to their child. He is the ultimate master of deceit and manipulation. Although MacDonald knows this about Moriarty, he cannot help thinking about this moment with positivity for the intelligent professor. It is almost a type of admiration for a man who has so many faces.

Chemistry

When Holmes learns of the murder of Douglas, after concluding that Moriarty is the sender of the note and what it alluded to, Holmes portrays almost no emotion: "his face showed rather the quiet and interested composure of the chemist who sees the crystals falling into position from his oversaturated solution." The direct comparison made by Watson highlights that Holmes sees things analytically rather than emotionally. His cases are his science experiments and he reviews them methodically and with very little feeling.

Imagery and Description

The Valley

The impressions of the Valley from McMurdo are vividly memorable. Depicted as isolated, a "gloomy land of black clag and tangled forest" with abrupt peaks. This landscape and its ruggedness seem to reflect perfectly

the people who inhabit it. “It is the Valley of Fear, the Valley of Death. The terror is in the hearts of the people from the dusk to the dawn.”

The Town

“Dead level of mean ugliness and squalor” with muddy, cragged streets and ugly old houses. This description is important because it once again mirrors the people who settle there and the tyrants with a hold over them.

The Crime Scene

This description and its vivid detail are one of the most crucial parts for the reader. It contains the clues they need to try and solve the case along with Holmes. All the information given should be noted – the muddy print, the dead body, the missing dumbbell, the missing ring, the unrecognisable face of the victim and the card left by the side of the body.

McGinty

The memorable physical description of McGinty matches his demeanour and influence. Large and imposing with a friendly aura, but underneath cruel, vindictive and merciless. He is described as having “notable proportions” but “strange dead black eyes.”

Mr Douglas

“In age he may have been about fifty, with a strong-jawed, rugged face, a grizzling moustache, peculiarly keen grey eyes, and a wiry, vigorous Figure...”

“He was cheery and genial to all, but somewhat offhand in his manners, giving the impression that he had seen life in social strata on some far lower horizon...”

Moriarty

“The greatest Schemer of all time, the organiser of every deviltry, the controlling brain of the underworld, a brain which might have made or marred the destiny of nations - that’s the man!”

Sherlock

“Sherlock Holmes’ eyes glistened, his pale cheeks took a warmer hue, and his whole eager face shone with an inward light when the call for work reached him.”

NICK LANE – WRITER AND DRIECTOR



Nick started his career as an actor until a car accident damaged his back and brought his acting career to a premature end. After that he turned to writing and directing. From 2006-2014 he was the Associate Director and Literary Manager of Hull Truck Theatre, a company with which he has had a long association.

For Blackeyed Theatre, previous adaptations include *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde, The Sign of Four* and *Jane Eyre.*

Nick has adapted *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde* (Hull Truck/Theatre Mill) named one of the twelve best regional theatre productions in the UK 2015. Other adaptations include *The Wakefield Mysteries* (Theatre Royal Wakefield), *Frankenstein*, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (Hull Truck) and *1984* (Northern Broadsides), as well as a co-adaptation of *Moby Dick* for Hull Truck with his friend John Godber. Original adult plays include: *The Derby McQueen Affair* (York Theatre Royal), *My Favourite Summer* (Hull Truck), *Blue Cross Xmas* (Hull Truck), *Me & Me Dad* (Hull Truck), *Housebound* (Reform), *Seconds Out* (Reform), *Royal Flush* and *Odd Job Men* (Rich Seam Theatre).

Nick is also an accomplished children's playwright – his credits include: *A Christmas Carol*, *Beauty & The Beast*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *The Snow Queen* (Hull Truck); *Pinocchio* (SJT); *Snow White* and *Little Red Riding Hood* (York Theatre Royal); *The Elves & The Shoemaker* (Hereford Courtyard); and *Hansel & Gretel* (Pilot). His original work for children includes the acclaimed *Ginger Jones and the Sultan's Eye* (Polka/ Drum Theatre Plymouth/ York Theatre Royal), *'Twas The Night Before Christmas*, *When Santa Got Stuck in the Fridge* and *A Christmas Fairytale* (Hull Truck).

ADAPTING SHERLOCK HOLMES - "THE VALLEY OF FEAR"

An Interview with Nick Lane

What was your process for the adaptation of this novel?

After the success of our adaptation of, "The Sign of Four" – *one of the other long-form Sherlock Holmes mysteries – Adrian (McDougall, Artistic Director of Blackeyed Theatre) thought it would be good to try another. Those of you who know the canon will know that there are only four full-length Holmes novels written by Sir Arthur Conan-Doyle in existence (or at least in print) –* "A Study in Scarlet", "The Sign of Four", "The Hound of the Baskervilles" *and this one,* "The Valley of Fear." *Of those, the one that appears to have had the least adaptations of was the last, and so that's what we chose.*

Once that decision was made and before I started to write I was told how many actors I'd be writing for. I don't know about any other writer but for me, knowing what you're working with is vital. Blackeyed Theatre has a well-earned reputation for a particular storytelling style, and part of that is using actors in multiple roles. I enjoy that style – it's how I developed when first moving into writing – but it's vital to your decision-making process to know whether, for instance, certain characters have to be cut, certain characters changed, amalgamated and so on.

Next is structure planning. Holmes novels typically end with the apprehended criminal revealing the whys and wherefores of his or her crime and "The Valley of Fear" *is no exception... the difference here is that what would normally comprise a long chapter (or scene) at the conclusion of the drama is here longer than the preceding mystery itself! If you've read it, you'll know that it's practically a different novel with its own narrative arc. Left chronologically the audience would lose Holmes and Watson before the interval and they wouldn't return until the very end, and I wasn't keen on that. Audiences that don't know the novel might be a little put out that the characters they've come to see have concluded their business before a single interval drink has been consumed. So, decisions had to be made – and we'll deal with some of those in a minute – about how to tell both stories without losing the ubiquitous Detective and his dogged partner for a long period of time.*

Using filmic language for a moment I thought it would be fun to cross-cut (or jump) from one story to another, both narratives moving forward together. It was tricky but I enjoyed the process very much. Once the cross-cutting was decided upon, it was into the first draft – your 'throw everything into the mix' draft – to see what works. First drafts are always way too long (mine are anyway) and some ideas and concepts land while others are rightly removed for one reason or another. I was lucky in this instance because Adrian arranged a reading of that draft for me with three of the five cast members (the other two were yet to be cast), the Stage Manager, the composer and Adrian himself. We all read the parts yet to be cast and it was useful, as you can imagine, because as well as hearing what worked (and what instantly didn't), I was given some great feedback and suggestions as to where to take the second and subsequent drafts. In fact, as I write – well, maybe not exactly now this second – members of the company have the current draft and are going to feed back to me on whether a particular scene works as well or better than one from the previous draft.

What is that scene? You will never know...

This is the process though – it's collaborative where it needs to be, it's structured before a word is typed (I would have said 'written' but my handwriting veers from the dreadful to the frankly disturbing) and it's tailored to the specific requirements of the production.

Obviously not being able to include every intricate detail from the book, what were the most important things you wanted in your adaptation?

The key to any adaptation, I think, as well as getting the story across effectively, is to capture the feel of the novel. I don't mean paper. The tone, the mood – Conan-Doyle was writing exciting, suspenseful crime procedural stories and I think it would be all too easy, in trying to capture every nuance of Holmes, of Watson... how they talk, who

they are... to lose the mood. What you don't want is to sit there, as an audience member, and think, "Wow. This is boring."

What you also don't want to do in my opinion – because you can't – is try and put the book on stage. That's what the book's for. An adaptation is a way of looking at a story. It's telling that story from a particular perspective. And you have to be mindful that there will be people coming to the theatre to see this show that only know Sherlock Holmes as a character; a concept. They may not have read the books. They may only recognise his name from television. That is of course fine, and it reaffirms the mission to make the adaptation as enjoyable and accessible a play as possible. I would never want watching it to feel like a test. Ideally you want the two audience groups to have an equally entertaining experience – so that yes, those that know the book can debate the finer points of how the story was chopped up, what was omitted from the source material, what was retained – and in some cases added – and whether they themselves would approach their own adaptation like that, while those that don't know it discuss the plot, characters, structure and so on from a purely theatrical perspective. Or don't discuss it at all and just enjoy it.

I think that's what I'm saying in a roundabout way – the important things are to tell the story, capture the tone and make it accessible and enjoyable for all.

What are you hoping the audience take away from the play?

The main purpose of art is to feed. Imagination, creativity, debate, opinion... any or all of the above, and more besides. And as long as the audience finds something to feed from – and are entertained as they do so – I'll be happy. I don't need everyone to feel they have to 'get' everything; art should never feel like a test. I'll just be happy if people come away from the performance wanting to go back to the theatre. And telling other people about the show wouldn't be a bad thing either!

Are there parts of the book you've changed to heighten the drama or suspense?

Accommodating the dual narratives playing concurrently within this adaptation of "The Valley of Fear", *it was inevitable that decisions were made to change certain elements. Some of those changes do impact on the drama and suspense of the play, and this is to do with the process of editing down each individual story while still trying to paint the same picture as the novel.*

In Holmes' half of the story for instance, it's partly about offering the audience the opportunity to follow the logic of Holmes himself (questioning the suspects, building a theory and so on), but it's also about the larger 'game' Holmes is playing. In the novel's early chapters, Holmes indicates to both Watson and Inspector McDonald of Scotland Yard that he believes the criminal mastermind Professor Moriarty is somehow involved in the proceedings. Now in the book, this is mentioned, dropped and then picked up at the story's conclusion. For me, however, I felt it was too good an opportunity to miss. Holmes' nemesis is almost as well-known in the context of his stories as the great detective himself (yet he only appears in person in one of Doyle's stories – The Final Problem*) and I felt that, in order to maintain that pulse of suspense throughout, his presence should be felt a little more closely. This way, as well as Holmes looking into the mystery at Birlstone Manor House, the audience are hopefully aware that Holmes is fighting his battle against crime on two fronts, if you like – both in his pursuit of the truth and his attempt to foil Moriarty.*

With the story in Vermissa Valley, the tension is derived from the classic Western trope of a 'stranger' in town. None of this isn't in the book but what I've tried to do in trimming down this part of the novel is to unsettle the audience with regard to the central character's motives. Is he a good guy in a bad crowd, or is he worse than the worst of them? The tension of this journey is helped by the structure – since both stories are linked by a murder, but you don't know of whom or how, the hope is that the audience are unsure as to whether they're following the eventual victim or the killer himself. Don't worry – all is revealed...

Are there any major character changes?

As alluded to above, when breaking a novel up in order to adapt it for a cast of five there have had to be compromises and changes, and probably the most noticeable change from the novel is the limited amount of time we spend with Inspector McDonald, the Scotland Yard detective that brings Holmes and Watson into the case. As the actor playing that role also has to play both Ames (the butler at Birlstone House) and Cecil Barker – key witness and suspect – it was difficult to juggle quick costume changes in order to serve the novel absolutely faithfully in this regard so I had a decision to make.

I looked at the function of McDonald within the narrative – essentially to posit theories that are either taken on board or, more often the case, refuted and/or disproved by Holmes. Fortunately, the local detective (White-Mason) could serve that purpose just as effectively and so I made the decision to, "Take McDonald back to London" on an unspecified matter and have White-Mason play Devil's Advocate. Had I another actor to play with I'm sure McDonald would have remained... although even then an argument could be made for cutting down the role.

A less significant character – with a very significant change – was my choice to make the character of Officer Marvin (the Policeman in Vermissa Valley who plays a role in McMurdo's journey through that half of the novel) into a female detective. This wasn't a completely wilful decision on my part; having female detectives in the United States at that time was not without historical precedent, and it serves a number of functions both within the story and in the telling of it.

Within the story, the world Officer Marvin inhabits (Vermissa Valley in the 1870s) is, from a societal viewpoint, male dominated, with the nefarious activities of the organised crime syndicate known as the Scowrers being planned and executed by men on men. At the same time, women throughout the 19th Century, were broadly speaking still treated with respect so I thought it might be interesting to explore the dynamic a strong woman occupying a role traditionally seen as male might create among the Scowrer organisation. In truth there were more scenes written for Officer Marvin that time and focus on the main thrust of the story dictated had to be cut, though she does play a vital role in the story.

Outside of the tale, I felt it was important to give the female actor in the company something with more agency. Novels of this era, with a few notable exceptions, tend to cast women as victims, witnesses or servants and I was keen to challenge that perception. This is going to read as horribly obvious but while we can appreciate the story's Victorian origins we cannot watch the play with Victorian eyes, and for young female audience members, be they students or not, I struggle with the idea that they are not represented.

What were your thoughts and ideas behind Holmes and Watson?

With Holmes and Watson – as with any iconic character or characters – everyone has their own individual thoughts and ideas. What you want to do – or at least what I've tried to do – is present a clear, personal version that will hopefully resonate with the audience's concept of them both. My personal connection to the character of Sherlock Holmes is through watching the old black and white 1940s films with my nana as a kid – in my head for the longest time (and outside the classic illustrations) I saw only Basil Rathbone. He was my Holmes (and Nigel Bruce my Watson, incidentally). Now, others might think of the characters and it's Benedict Cumberbatch and Martin Freeman that come to mind. Robert Downey, Jr. and Jude Law for others, perhaps. For a certain generation it might be Jeremy Brett and Edward Hardwicke. There have been plenty of different Sherlocks and an equal number of Watsons besides these; lots of different ways to play the characters. What's clear is you have to find a way to show Holmes' genius for detection, how that genius separates him from the characters around him, and how he and Watson relate to each other.

*I should say at this point, this being my second Holmes adaptation, that I now see Luke Barton as Holmes and Joe Derrington as Watson – sorry, Basil and Nigel! And that's to do with a lot of things. Their ability as actors is key of course, as is their connection with the material (they just get Holmes and Watson), but a lot of it is down to their onstage, 'double-act' type chemistry. It helps that they became great friends after the first adaptation... and I think it's that first run at the roles (with "*The Sign of Four"*), that has helped the effortlessness of their performances.*

What I wanted to find for the two characters within the story was a journey of their own to go on. A crossroads in their professional relationship if you like. Holmes is fiercely intelligent as everyone knows, and some adaptations

of the character imply that that intellect comes at the absolute expense of emotional engagement. What I wanted to convey with this adaptation was the idea that that's not the whole story of Holmes – that there is a side of him that is attuned to the emotional needs of others. Watson's misunderstanding of that – as a more naturally warm and empathetic character – and their struggle to understand one another in the light of what danger association with Holmes puts Watson in – adds another layer to their characters.

Did you want to include any slight variations to the book to keep it slightly fresh?

Part of the challenge of any adaptation, as I've already mentioned, is to keep it fresh for any audience members that might know the story. Naturally it would go against everything I've already said if I was to totally subvert the course of either mystery in the name of surprise, and I was never going to do that. I did, however, allow myself a couple of changes that might add to the existing world/narrative and hopefully aid in the ramping up of tension.

Firstly, to enforce and enrich the world of 221B Baker Street, wherein the novel begins, I've added Mrs. Hudson. I enjoy the rapport I've created between herself, Holmes and Watson and wanted to allow us to feel that familiarity for the characters before taking them off to solve a murder. She is a significant part of the world so we see her at the beginning and return to her (and Baker Street) at the end.

The other major addition to the story is the physical presence of Professor Moriarty. Keeping the pulse of his presence alive is of course part of the jeopardy in this part of the novel but I thought, what would a casual meeting between two men such as these be like? It's a scene that could be argued is fan service but I would disagree. I wrote the adaptation for everyone – including those that have neither seen, read nor heard anything to do with Sherlock Holmes – and having an 'eminence grise' revealed, especially after we've heard of how wide and terrible his reach is, felt like a worthy addition to the adventure.

DIRECTING SHERLOCK HOMLES – "THE VALLEY OF FEAR"

An Interview with Nick Lane

How do you make the play relatable for younger/modern audiences?

It would be churlish to deny that Sherlock has, for a fair number of younger people, had new life breathed into it by the modern-day adaptation starring Benedict Cumberbatch, Martin Freeman et al. I'd say this has done a fair amount of the work for me! In addition to that, however, removing the obstructions between Conan-Doyle's mysteries and a contemporary audience is a process that covers writing, casting and the physical language of the adaptation itself.

For those who have not seen the BBC's Sherlock*, the prevailing image of the great detective is of a tall, angular and studious older gentleman with a heavily moustachioed companion of similar vintage forever at his side. There are deerstalker hats and calabash pipes, tweedy cloak things and long, esoteric conversations, lacking in pace and focus, about diverse subjects that may or may not pertain to the mystery at hand.*

This really reads like I don't like the books, doesn't it? Sorry about that. But this is the first hurdle – perception of the character as old, out of touch; a fuddy-duddy. Conan-Doyle's first Holmes novel, A Study in Scarlet, *was published in the late 1880s, and the final collection of shorter mysteries over forty years later meaning there is a fair age range from which to choose your Holmes and Watson. With my other hat on – my writer hat (far more likely to be a bobble hat than a deerstalker, I hasten to add), the thing I enjoyed about writing first* The Sign of Four *and now* The Valley of Fear *is to play with the idea of creating a Holmes and a Watson at a younger age than the typical perception of the characters. It offers me with my director hat on (probably a tatty old cap) the opportunity to explore the physical side of our heroes; to explore their talents for the first time, find their vulnerabilities; make them human.*

Casting actors invested in that character and approach leaps another hurdle – we're still seeing the intellect of Holmes, the empathy of Watson, but we're getting a fresh look at them. I don't mean to suggest that younger audiences can't relate to older characters; it's more to do with breaking perceptions so that this Holmes, this Watson can be their *duo.*

Are there comic moments that you want to come through?

Crime fiction adaptations can be quite arid. For a start, the crime has generally already happened so a lot of the drama or plot is delivered as reported action – events that have already happened and an audience is just hearing about them. And as interesting as that is – especially for those keen to try and piece together the mystery themselves – it can become rhythmically static and lacking in humour.

There are a number of Holmes adaptations that parody the work, sending up his investigative powers (and Watson's befuddlement) for comedic effect – and some of them are rather good. I think (with my other hat on again temporarily) that there's a way to inject humour within the mystery without lampooning the characters however, and as a director – there we go; proper hat back on – I'm far more interested in that. It's fun to draw the humour from the natural character interactions within the course of the mystery, retaining the seriousness of the case and their respect for it. The relationship between the two central characters is key here – Holmes' process, his method of deduction (and occasionally his personality itself) frustrates and at times confuses Watson and there's amusement to be had watching how that plays out. As a director I'm not looking to build a comedy – I want the characters to be true to their intentions and to the situation... and yet, within that truth, there are moments of levity to lift the darker truths of the mystery.

How much script/table work do you do before getting it on its feet?

My background is in acting – I was an actor for a number of years before I started writing and directing, and my experience of rehearsals were largely the same. I should preface this by adding that I don't mean to suggest that all

actors are the same (or worse, that they are all like I was); it just so happens that the rehearsal processes I was involved with followed a similar pattern and therefore shaped my methods once I came to directing. And so, with that, it's on with the generalisation:

Actors get bored.

Yes, they'll sit around a table if you ask them to, and they'll ask questions and scribble little notes in their scripts and some of them might doodle a rabbit or spend their time highlighting their scripts in different colours, and you can get interesting conversations going about period or status or themes but my experience says that at least two thirds of the actors around that table are thinking, "Yeah, this is all very well but can't we get up and start putting it together? I've drawn my rabbit now, dammit! Let's go!"

So - It's always been my practice to spend no more than the first couple of days around the table and then get the thing up on its feet; try and map it.

Oh, I should say – as a young person I didn't understand what 'blocking' meant. I imagine the people in receipt of this education pack will know that it is the term given to the process of finding an early, physical route through the play (where people enter, exit, roughly where they stand &c).

Yeah, I didn't get that. What you're doing early on in the rehearsal process – after whatever table work you do, after all the highlighting and the doodled rabbits – is mapping out. Blocking? What's blocking? It'll always be the map for me. The first week, possibly into the second week of any rehearsal process, is the map. And during that time, actors can ask the questions that they might have asked around a table, which we can solve while mapping. It's a kinaesthetic learning approach and I've always found it the most useful way of getting words and actions married up quickly. I appreciate that certain theatre companies offer extended rehearsal processes (I think it's eight weeks at the National Theatre), so maybe the table work has become a standard tool for a director to create a unit among the cast and creatives... but I guarantee there'll be a hell of a lot of doodling, a tonne of highlighters being used and plenty of actors champing at the bit. So yes, for me, it's two days. Two days around the table. Couple of read-throughs, bit of a chat about characters, anything the company aren't clear about or might want to look at/change, then we're onto the map.

Incidentally, after the map comes the feel (where you start to explore the detail of each moment, the emotional journey through each scene and so on) and after that, when you're looking at the finer details of each moment, that's the bits.

There you go. The map, the feel and the bits. And you wonder why people aren't asking me for a book on theatre.

How do you bring out and highlight the relationship between Holmes and Watson?

Considering I'm both the writer and director of this production this is going to sound terribly self-aggrandising, but I believe bringing out the relationship between Holmes and Watson is about letting the words do the work. Fortunately, I'll follow up swiftly with, "They're mostly Conan-Doyle's words." Onstage chemistry between the leads has a fair amount to do with it too (and I'm lucky in this production that Luke and Joe work so well with one another), but it really is about giving the characters space to express themselves and play. You can direct them to be closer together physically within a scene if you want to establish them as a unit. Another element for the actors to focus on (though not to over-egg) is the old maxim that 'acting is reacting.' Holmes and Watson are, for want of a better expression, a double act, so how the actors playing them react to what the other is saying can indicate status within the relationship, it can offer hints at pride, displeasure, brotherly love, infuriation... it is how they react to one another that is key.

How did you come to cast the roles within the adaptation?

*It's always useful when you approach any directing project if you know one or more of the cast members beforehand. Such as it was here. Luke and Joe, who play Holmes and Watson respectively, we had cast in the previous adaptation (*The Sign of Four*) – they were keen to return to their characters and that's so useful.*

I should add about them that when they were first cast (separately; they didn't come as a package deal – in fact they didn't know each other) they both read exceptionally well and had a wonderful understanding of the characters and the style we were going for.

*A third member of the company, Blake, I had just worked with on another production for Blackeyed Theatre ("*The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde"*). Blake is from the United States – and is a fine actor, like Luke and Joe – so with at least fifty percent of the adaptation taking place in the US it worked perfectly to cast him as what we'll call our "America lead."*

The final two actors in the company, Alice and Gavin, I have never worked with before. They came through auditions – a casting breakdown was advertised (featuring the name of the production, the dates and what we were looking for – age range, gender, skills &c.) and actors submitted their CVs and photographs. Before the internet this meant boxes of paper CVs and loads of pictures; now they're compiled on a casting website. Adrian McDougall, the Artistic Director of Blackeyed Theatre, collated the best of them and I looked through them all. What you're looking for – and it varies from job to job obviously – is an appropriate set of skills. Here, for instance, an ability to play multiple roles within the same piece was important, so you look at the CVs to see if the performers have anything like that on there.

I should add that you do see people who don't *have those things on their CV too – you've got to be open to all levels of experience; it's simply a useful starting point for the casting process.*

Once the day for auditions is decided upon, you reduce the number of actors and pick the ones you think most suitable for the job (and as I say, that's in any of the criteria – we did see people for both roles who had limited multi-roleplaying credits on their CVs, who hadn't toured before and so on). They're booked into slots and they come in and do their stuff and they're all excellent but only two of them can get the job, so there's a discussion which covers a range of criteria and pick the best people. Luckily for me, Alice and Gavin are both excellent and I'm excited to work with them.

You have actors who are multi-roleplaying. What's the most important thing an actor can do to convey different characters well?

Multi-role playing is a fun part of acting – the chance to play lots of different characters within the same piece and make them all different? Done well it's a terrific showcase. Done brilliantly the audience forgets that it's the same actor (unless that's the point, in which case that would be an example of doing it badly).

A change of voice or accent between roles when playing more than one part can work well. Physicality is another option – the way a character stands, moves, interacts with other characters. Both of these can work, used alone or in combination with one another. I'd add to those the internal truth of the character being played. Now I'm not talking about someone having to throw in one line as a coach driver or a passer-by – I mean any character with a significant contribution to the narrative. What truth are they wanting to convey? Are they attempting to help or hinder the active character within each scene?

Is it harder to work with a smaller cast who have to play multiple characters?

The majority of my work as a writer and director (and before as an actor), has been with plays that require the actors to play multiple roles. It's a style that I've been comfortable with for as long as I've enjoyed theatre. A fair number of my favourite plays tell a large-scale story in a way that is purely theatrical using only a handful of actors. Television and cinema are naturalistic medium for the most part, and theatre can be that of course, but to be able to take an audience on a journey they aren't expecting, based on the size of the company, and for that to be created by that company is a real joy.

Obviously when directing a multi-role piece there's more to think about besides intention, entrances, exits and costume changes. How to mark character changes quickly and clearly, thereby keeping the audience in the world you're sharing with them is one. Ensuring the characterisations are consistent and in keeping with a shared

performance style. The upside for the actors tends to be that the less of them there are, the more they themselves have to do – it gives everyone something to get their teeth into.

What was your vision for the piece?

Directing adaptations, you are looking to create, within your own framework, a world recognisable to the people that know the source material. All but one of Conan-Doyle's Sherlock Holmes mysteries are narrated by Watson, and so to some extent what I want to explore is that 'remove;' the audience are seeing Watson's account of the case, so we can admit to the theatricality of the storytelling to an extent.

How do you direct your actors in order to create intrigue in an audience?

Creating intrigue is no different to any other aspect of direction – and for me that means it's a collaborative process. I believe that in order to get the best out of your cast, you have to give them ownership of their character's journey, and the way I do that is to give the actors a voice in the process. It sounds obvious but there are so many different ways to create a wonderful piece of work, and they don't always include rehearsal room democracy!

What you're hoping when you have a scene with intrigue is that the actors, through their characters, invest in the moment. Focus is life for things like intrigue. Pace is useful of course, and you can ask your actors to pick up cues, drive the scene through – or you can ask them to find space where space would be natural within the dialogue – but without focus, without investment in the scene and in that intrigue, it's just speeding up and slowing down. So, getting an actor or actors to draw their audience into intriguing situations or scenes is as much about what the actors themselves want to offer as it is the director on the outside telling them what to say and when. Moment to moment, just as in timing, actors have to feel it. I'd always make sure the cast were comfortable with that, I think.

How do you create suspense on stage?

With suspense, as with tension, we can find it within the performances, but suspense can be created in other ways so as to give the characters something to react to (or against). Sound and lighting can create or support mood, as well as focusing the attention of the audience on a particular moment or thing. Suspense, like intrigue, is about focus, and part of what sound and lighting can help a director to do is direct the audience's eye to what the director wants to show them. I appreciate that I'm repeating myself here but pace too plays a part in suspense. There's a moment in The Valley of Fear *where a bunch of killers are lying in wait for someone they intend to gun down. Music will add atmosphere and enrich the experience, lighting will draw the audience's focus on a particular part of the stage but if the pace is off, then whole thing can be dispelled. Too quick and you blow the suspense. Too slow and you lose the audience.*

Do you work with actors on pace, tone of voice, pitch, accents, timing of responses, pauses, volume etc?

The choices actors make within the rehearsal process tend to be their own, and a director's job is to help those actors choose which of their tools to use in each moment. As mentioned above, the process of putting a play together, mapping, feeling it and so on, over a period of weeks will give the actors a better sense of the needs of each character and how best to get that character across to an audience. Obviously if an actor wants to talk about anything – pace, tone of voice, pitch, the choice of accents and so on – then I'll always do that because ultimately on a long tour (or really any job, no matter the length), once rehearsals are over and the audience are in, the play is theirs. Yes, it's still the director's to an extent, and the writer's as well, but in practical terms it belongs to the company putting the show on (actors and Stage Management) and the audience. So, it's important to support the actors and give them ownership of their role, that way they'll be more invested in the piece as a whole.

Do you work with the actors on movement, body language, gestures, postures, gait, energy, facial expressions?

These choices extend beyond the verbal of course – the physical journey of each actor – the way they move, their body language, any choices they might have made with regard to gesture, posture, gait, energy... all of these things,

during the rehearsal process, are up for grabs. While mapping, I'll give the company a rough sense of the movements within a scene, but during this part of the process – as early as it might seem – if an actor wants to throw in ideas or make offers, that's great. The more invested a company of actors are in what they're doing, the more that investment will pay off with an audience.

Put simply, imagine a rehearsal process like a Viking longboat. No, honestly; stay with me here.

Everyone involved in the production is a Viking. All are equal. Each member of the company is rowing the longboat. Actors, stage managers, designers, composers... all pulling in the same direction, and all wanting to know where they're going. And all opinions on that boat are valid and fair, since everyone is on the voyage and we can't get to where we need to get to without every one of us.

And to complete this analogy, the director is at the rudder. Their voice is no more or less important than anyone else's but they get to look at everything from a distance. They plan the journey... but everyone's on it. And once that longboat reaches the shore (the audience, to flog this tired analogy just a little longer), it's the Vikings on the oars that are going to leap from the boat and head into adventure, so it's vitally important that every one of those Vikings feels like the journey is theirs. I do hope that makes sense. I should have typed it while wearing a horned helmet and holding an axe.

Do you work with actors on specific moments in more detail e.g. moments where there is physical contact, spatial relationships, use of the space?

What does tend to need more specific work is choreography, and that term is quite broad, covering as it does anything from synchronised movement and fight sequences to moments of intimacy. The more intricate the choreography, the more likely a director is to bring in an outside practitioner to help facilitate those moments within the script.

COMPOSING THE MUSIC – TRISTAN PARKES

An Interview with Tristan Parkes

What is the start of your process when it comes to music?

I heard playwright Roy Williams say that before he writes a play 'he closes his eyes and imagines what the play looks like on stage'. I concur with Roy's thought in terms of music. Before I set about writing music alone or devising music with a group of musicians I imagine a sound-picture in my mind, and I listen to that. For the parts of Sherlock Holmes: Valley of Fear set in England I imagined hearing a grand piano playing in the downstairs room of a large house as if I was a few rooms away, or somewhere upstairs... For the for parts set in America I imagined a group of late nineteenth century emigrant folk musicians playing instruments that could be found at the time the play is set. A pump organ, guitar, violin, banjo, tack piano; maybe in a saloon or a small wooden roadside church. So, with these thoughts in mind, I began playing a grand piano sample that has a muffled ghostly reverb and physically playing a banjo and tenor guitar that I own and play in my band Walkhome Jackson.

Do you read the original novel or just the adaptation?

I did read the novel. I confess, on occasion I just leap into working on the adaptation. Though in this case I did read the novel quite deeply. I'm glad I did as it truly surprised me and broke many of the preconceived ideas I had about both Arthur Conan Doyle, and his Sherlock Holmes books. Obviously, it's easier to accept stark differences to the novel if you haven't read the original work and sometimes not reading the original work can be a conscious creative decision.

Are you told where music will be, or do you have input into where you feel music would add to the piece?

I've worked with Nick Lane for many years, and he does mark in the script where he feels music should occur. Nick and I have worked on many shows remotely, many before the ease of email with the capability of sending large attachments (sound files). So, to work quickly we have developed a 'shopping list' approach to sound and music, though this isn't a rule set in stone – it's very helpful for me in terms of getting music and sound into rehearsal and we retain an openness and honesty if things aren't right on my first attempt. We always reserve a certain amount of creative freedom to find musical and sound design moments in rehearsal, as often the actors themselves bring their own ideas into the room as well as individual skills that would in my opinion, be foolish not to explore and/or include.

Do you research into the time period?

I do research the period, but I don't feel the time the piece is set should define the music entirely – more cite the period as if one was writing an academic essay to justify one's wild imaginings. I do enjoy research when it comes to music. Digital platforms like Spotify have made researching music effortless, though also endless... But I love the rabbit-holes that musical research on the web can take you down. I should emphasise that I am in no way attempting to make a true historical representation of music from the period, but I do feel it's important to be informed and inspired by the date the work is set. Computers in music creation now have awesome power, but they still can't write the music for you – so it is always best to sit down with research and ideas in the age-old traditional way rather than expect the music to magically appear by dialling up some authentic sounds from your software...

Do you research and take inspiration from composers of the time?

I am personally more musically inspired by the cultural, social, and economic factors of people living at the time rather than the prominent European composers of the time, as these composers are often from the minority of highly privileged society and can mask so much music that was also occurring at the time we seldom hear about (or study). I am ever more inspired by ethnomusicology and the migration of people and their music around the globe, and in terms of America this is complex. In Pennsylvania where much of Sherlock Holmes: Valley of Fear is set

there was a significant influx of Dutch, German, Swedish (Finnish descent) people as well as black people moving up from the southern states post the abolishment of slavery, bringing rich artistic and musical work and influence with them. Certainly, for the classical music of Europe I have looked at Romantic and Neo Romantic European composers. For the American music I was greatly inspired by Henry Ossawa Tanner's painting 'The Banjo Lesson' and hymns of European migrants. Visual art has always inspired me in equal measure to sound and music.

How can music be used to create suspense?

In Sherlock Holme's there are a lot of moments of suspense. There are obvious composer clichés like swelling orchestral tremolo string crescendos and timpani... I've limited myself to one moment of tremolo violins and tried to be more adventurous. Often though it can be more subtle and at sound levels hardly audible to the audience. As a composer and sound designer in theatre it's not all about your own artistic ego. Your duty is to the text and the actors – so music shouldn't be doing the work of the text and acting when it comes to suspense – it should be embellishing and punctuating it. I have listened to a fair bit of the film composer Bernard Herman as his experimental ideas towards melodrama are music deeper than what people immediately think when they hear his name, usually the shower scene in Alfred Hitchcock's film Psycho.

Was there a plan to have live music or will it all be pre-recorded?

The initial plan was for an entirely pre-recorded score but as there are some fine musicians and singers in the cast. Since Gavin Molloy joined the company, who is also a professional guitarist we have utilised his skills of having some moments played live on stage. Also, it is a Blackeyed Theatre style to have some element of live music. I feel it would be great to include a live element.

How do you record all the different parts to the music?

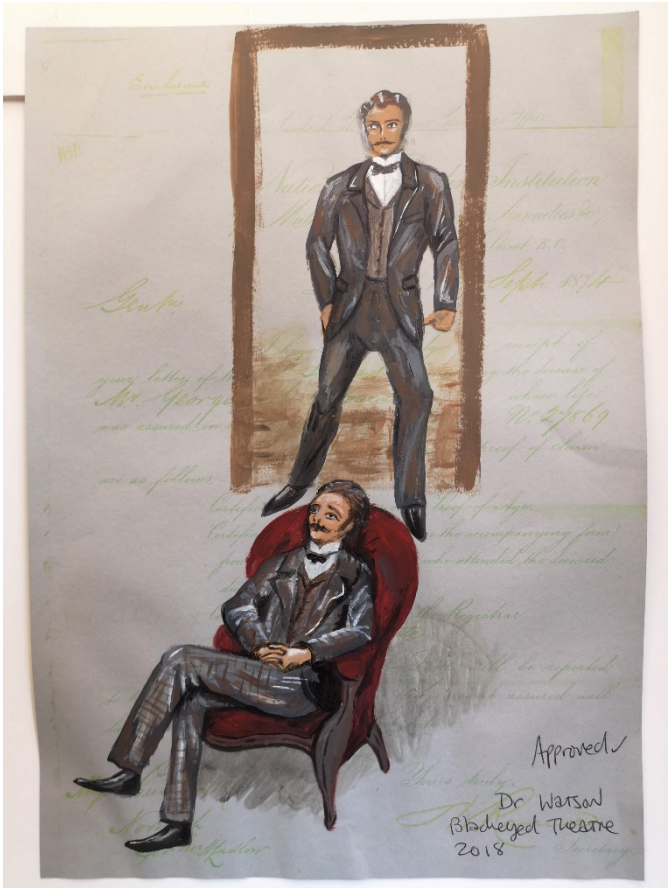
I use an equal amount of music technology and live playing. For the orchestral parts I am using several virtual orchestras from Spitfire Audio which are created for cinematic effect in the film and TV industry. For the folklore American music in the show, I am playing the instruments myself and recording them with microphones in my studio, with very little processing so that they sound raw and real as they were on stage.

Music can enhance the feelings of characters and aid emotions felt, how important do you think music is to a play to help the audience get the best experience?

For me I want a theatre audience to have an enjoyable and cathartic experience and possibly and hopefully to have learned something. And I attempt to achieve this through collaboration with all the creative people involved in the making of the show and with the actors who weave all these creative threads together into something unique for each live performance. I don't see music and sound as something that 'helps an audience understand the play'. Over time I've learned to respect the audience as if it is a wild Bengal Tiger. The audience is a very intelligent beast and will soon display adverse reactions if it is being told how to feel and respond.

DESIGNING AND CREATING THE COSTUMES – NAOMI GIBBS

An Interview with Naomi Gibbs



How do you start your process of designing costumes for a play?

The first step for me always comes from the script. I'll read through once 'for pleasure' as though I'm enjoying it as a book, so that I can absorb the feel if the piece and react to it emotionally-that will stand me in good stead when I come to make an analytical breakdown. At this point I'm trying not to be bogged down with the 'How?' of achieving technical elements or aiding narrative.

On second sweep, I'll annotate my hard copy, making notes where I see that actors are switching character on or off stage, or specific costume needs are referenced. This stage is called a breakdown or 'costume plot' and can be satisfyingly spread sheeted to help identify the production's requirements.

From this document, I get a great overview of the scope of what I need to deliver and a detailed list of costume 'builds' and purchases.

Do you immediately consider the costumes for actors who have to multi-role?

For Blackeyed Theatre, yes, I do. Because that tends to be our 'modus operandi'! I'm always trying to think of ways in which one simple article can transform a costume to make another character. Or how quickly we can add or remove a signature character layer.

Do you make notes when reading the script on a character's journey and what they might be wearing at each moment?

Absolutely. On the second read-through I make notes to pick up and compile whilst designing. I love to think about a character's journey through the experience of the story, and how the events might change them. Clothing can be very significant sometimes.

What is your first step when it comes to research?

If its a period piece, I'll diligently consult all of my books and the internet for period details and try to get an overview of the political and social landscape of the time (also pertinent to observe where the story is set). Sometimes I like to look at how other designers have approached the same story in film, television or art previously. Either to avoid meeting certain tropes or augment the existing shorthand for classic characters.

Do you take inspiration from other performances or plays set in the same time period?

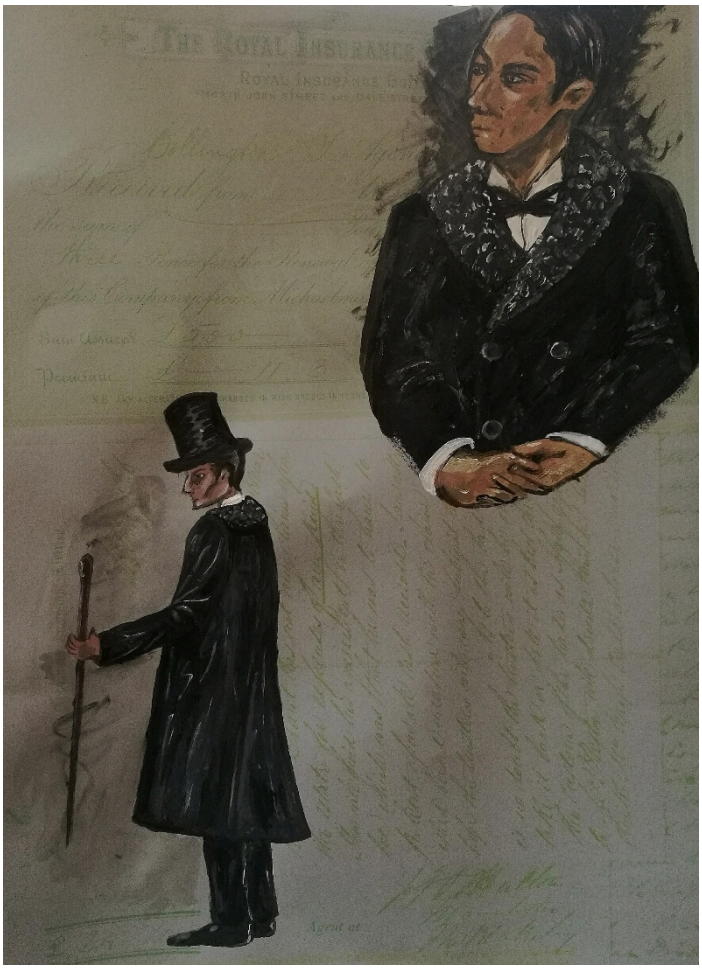
Yes, very much, though not directly. We all of us in creative fields, osmose and filter the creativity of our peers. This is why it's so important not to live inside a little bubble and to see as much broad work as possible.

Do you do historical research into what people wore during the time period?

That is very much a core part of my research, yes. Even if we decide to turn convention on its head and go off-the-wall unexpected or abstract with the design elements, it's important to know from which position you are coming from.

Do you read the original novel to see if there are hints to a character's appearance or garments?

I often do. Though I try not to be too influenced by it. Because we are rebuilding anew and taking some ownership of the classic through Nick's adaptation-and I have complete trust in his retelling. I do happen to be a Sherlock Holmes fan anyhow, so had already read the book many years ago.



Do you completely stick to time period or are you also thinking about the practicality of costumes?

Actually, I am very much a believer in artistic licence. So long as you know what would be correct and know why you are flouting it, I say fill your boots! It's about knowing the rules but breaking them anyway-with discernment. Some changes are so quick that you simply cannot ever use period accurate fastenings, nor send fine, delicate fabrics on a 9-month multi-continent tour.

How do you cater for quick changes?

Experience has gradually taught me to try to keep things as simple as possible. Earlier in my career I'd try to find a lot of unorthodox, interesting methods for navigating quick-change issues, because the magpie in me had a tenancy to over-design. I wanted characters to have all the bells and whistles! But sometimes the solution is to eliminate a change and give the actor a different hat or scarf. Certainly, cuts down the labour for performers on a long tour without compromising too much on the aesthetic.

What is the time period for this adaptation and what were your general findings during your research into clothing?

The time period is set between 1880s London and 1870s America. Neither should look wealthy and I am hoping to get a worn rather than sharp look into their garments.

Was there anything you particularly wanted to include from the time period into your designs?

I love the images of the unusually androgynous Pinkerton Detective ensemble. This, I am particularly keen to pay tribute to.

What colours did you feel worked best? Do you give different characters different colour schemes?

Colour has psychological impact and can be a great shorthand when you have to understand a character really quickly. Colours were generally more sober for gentlemen due to desire of practicality, economy and general good taste and longevity of wear. For Sherlock, he'll cut a fine figure in black, whereas Watson will don the more relaxed hues of brown, hopefully in a tasteful city tweed, because he's more accessible as a character we can

perhaps relate more to on a personal level. The way I see it, he is our mediator, translating the action between the incredible genius of Holmes and the rest of the waking world.

Do you choose colours or fabrics to identify wealthier characters or reflect the personality of a character?

Very much so. Texture and pattern are just as important for character and period as colour. Also, in a production in which many muted tones are present (for impressions of period) texture is an absolute must. Sometimes you need to add flavour to 5 different dark tones in one costume!

How believable do you feel your costumes need to be, even for smaller roles, to help tell the story?

I believe that the stylised nature of our productions immediately guides the audience to revel in creativity and story telling along with us, and so the smaller roles can be more impressionistic.

Do you look at society at the time and a character's place in society to determine their clothing?



Absolutely yes, this is one of the main pillars of reference for research.

What are your costumes ideas for the main characters?

For Sherlock and Watson, I took great joy in referring back to the artists who illustrated Conan Doyle's printed short stories. Most notably Sidney Paget, who created hundreds of illustrations for the Sherlock stories and Frederick Dorr Steele who is attributed to nailing the iconic accessories of the calabash pipe and deerstalker hat to Holmes' image forever (though not the first to include them in Sherlock illustrations). There are many artists who contributed illustrations for various publications to accompany the Sherlock stories, some of which are uncredited. Such a wealth of imagery contemporary with the original story is really such a jewel of a resource for someone tasked with designing clothes for actors to emulate the duo. The pair will be outfitted with attire including a starched collar shirt, tie or cravat, formal trousers, waistcoat and jacket.

How did you come to decide upon colours, fabrics, layers and accessories for these characters?

My research, not just for this show, but for our last Sherlock offering 'Sign of Four' has built in my head to give me a feeling of instinct for dressing these characters. As I wrote this, I am about to shop fabrics, but will be largely inspired by what I discover when sourcing.

How do you start to make these costumes? Do you wait for the play to be cast before you start making any item? Or do you start with simple things that you know will fit most people?

Yes, I do need to wait for casting, and for cast to submit measurements before builds. Though if anything generic can be made in advance, I do like to get some headway.

Do you recycle any materials you previously have used to try and keep waste to a minimum?

Sustainability is very much paramount when designing and building productions. I have numerous methods of achieving a relatively 'green' costume delivery. Within reason of course. Base layers and daily launderettes must always be replaced for fresh actors.

Do you make all the pieces yourself or do you source costume pieces from different shops?

Many things are so design-specific or period that they must be built. But there are some things that can easily be purchased and adapted, from sustainable sources.

Was there anything you wanted to hand make yourself rather than trying to purchase from elsewhere?

A huge amount of what you see is made by the costume team, especially very niche pieces. Each actor has bespoke pieces made especially for them. There are reasons to buy in some staples though, such as shoes, base-layers and shirts.

SET DESIGN – VICTORIA SPEARING

An Interview with Victoria Spearing

What is the first thing you do?

This first thing we do is have a read of the script, then have an initial production meeting to get a feel for any requirements we have from an artist (themes, locations etc..) and practical side (van size, venue needs)

When reading the play, do you make a chronological list of all the different locations?

I do make a list the locations, but with the style of productions we do at Blackeyed we are never too literal with having to exactly suggest every location in detail.

How do you work with both setting inside scenes and outside scenes?

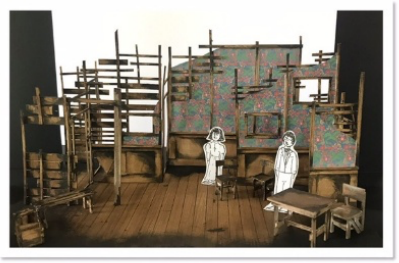
I think that will be done mostly with the lighting and positioning of the actors within the space. The set is suggestive of spaces the actors can occupy rather than being a naturalistic location. Sometimes sound can also enhance the difference between inside and outside.

What was the most important theme you wanted to convey with your set?

I'm not sure I had a theme I wanted to convey. I have tried to incorporate a feel of the panelled wallpaper rooms of England bleeding into the rustic wooden cabins in the American scenes. By breaking the walls down revealing the lath and plaster wooded structure behind the wall paper it naturally mixed into the wooden slats of the American side.

How much did your initial idea for a set change to your final design?

I presented 3 slight variations of the same set at our production meeting, with a variety of different coloured wallpaper options. The team then picked one version which was the one we have built. So less of a development and more of a pick from a selection. We have decided on option B the wallpaper walls are less faded 'cut aways' as on option A. Option C was very stripped down a flat panel not a detailed wood panel. The wallpaper sections in Option C more abstract shapes rather than parts of walls. I think all 3 would have worked but happy we went for the 'middle' option.



Option A



Option B



Option C

When do you consider this is a touring production and can't have as big or intricate a set as other productions?

From the very start you have to consider it as a touring set. As a request from the team touring and their restrictions for a number of the access routes to stages we have had to make the set break into much smaller sections than you would for a fixed production. So many of the things you think about for touring are practical solutions rather than artistic.

When you design, do you have different theatre layouts in mind to try and make a set work for most stages?

We talk about different venues and how the team touring the show can adapt the set for different size stages. You might not put up all the flats in a smaller space, or have to have a shallower playing space in some venues than others.

We tour a printed floor which helps set a general sized acting space for as many venues as possible, but if things need to change the cast and crew are brilliant at adapting as needed. This might include set, lighting used or the positions/space the actors use. They are amazingly adaptable.

What things on the set do you feel really add depth to the piece and help create the correct atmosphere for the actors to tell the story?

I'm not sure how the cast will use the space yet, but hopefully all the doorways and windows within the set will help allow intimate moments in a corner. You might get a glimpse of someone in a window?

Do you aim to use multiple textures and colours within the set?

Yes, here there is a mix of the wood mixed with the period patterned fabric/ wallpaper. Hopefully the set being skeletal will also add texture once they are lit creating interesting shadows or shafts of light streaming onto the floor and actors.

What type of materials came to mind when designing the set?

On this occasion all that was needed was the wood and fabric to suggest wallpaper. It is not a full naturalistic period set but lots of metal or plastic would not have sat correctly for this script/time period.

Do you prefer realism or abstract? Do you combine both things to aid the telling of the story?

I do not prefer either, each script, director and production team will discuss a production and the right solution will come, be that realistic or abstract or a bit of both.

Do you use levels within your design to allow actors to use more space?

Not on this occasion. The set does not have levels but hopefully the use of the furniture, crates etc will allow small levels of elevation where appropriate.

How much will the characters interact with the set on stage? Do actors come through doors etc?

Hopefully they will move throughout the various doorways on the set, suggesting entrances into different locations, change of time etc. There are a number of windows that might allow intimate moments or small vignettes to be seen. By arranging chairs around the central upstage entrance, a train carriage might be suggested.

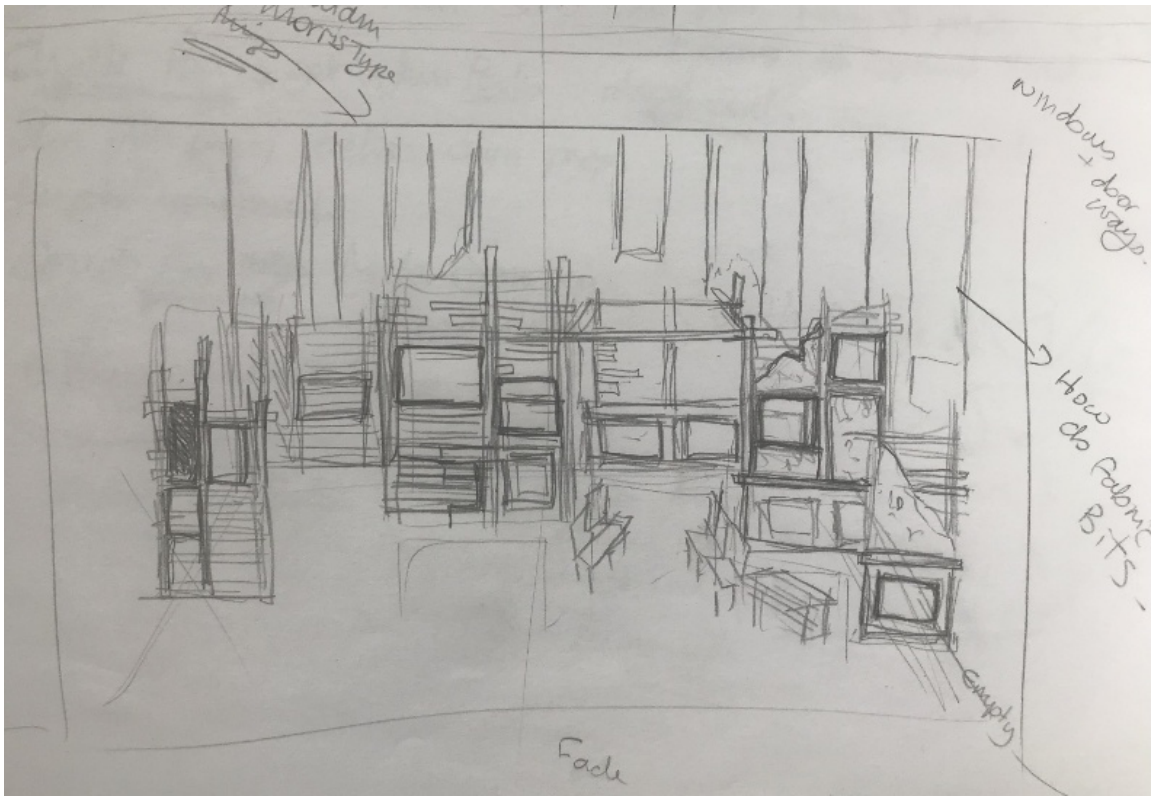
Do the actors move the set to signal they are in a different location?

There will be furniture that might get moved to suggest different locations but the rest of the set is static.

What so you feel your final design brings to the piece? Does it fit with the time period and allow the actors to tell a believable story?

Hopefully it will, but until they start their rehearsals it is all yet for me to discover how they interact with the set and how the lighting will help transform it to the many locations and moments in the script.

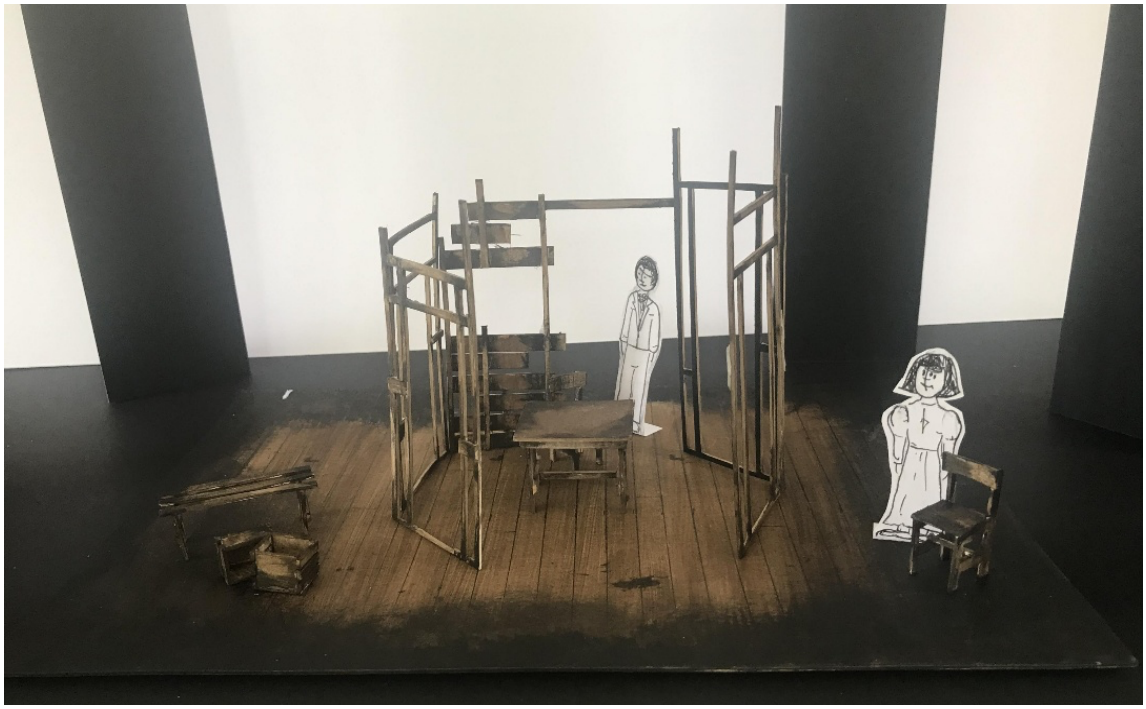
The initial sketch before I started to model



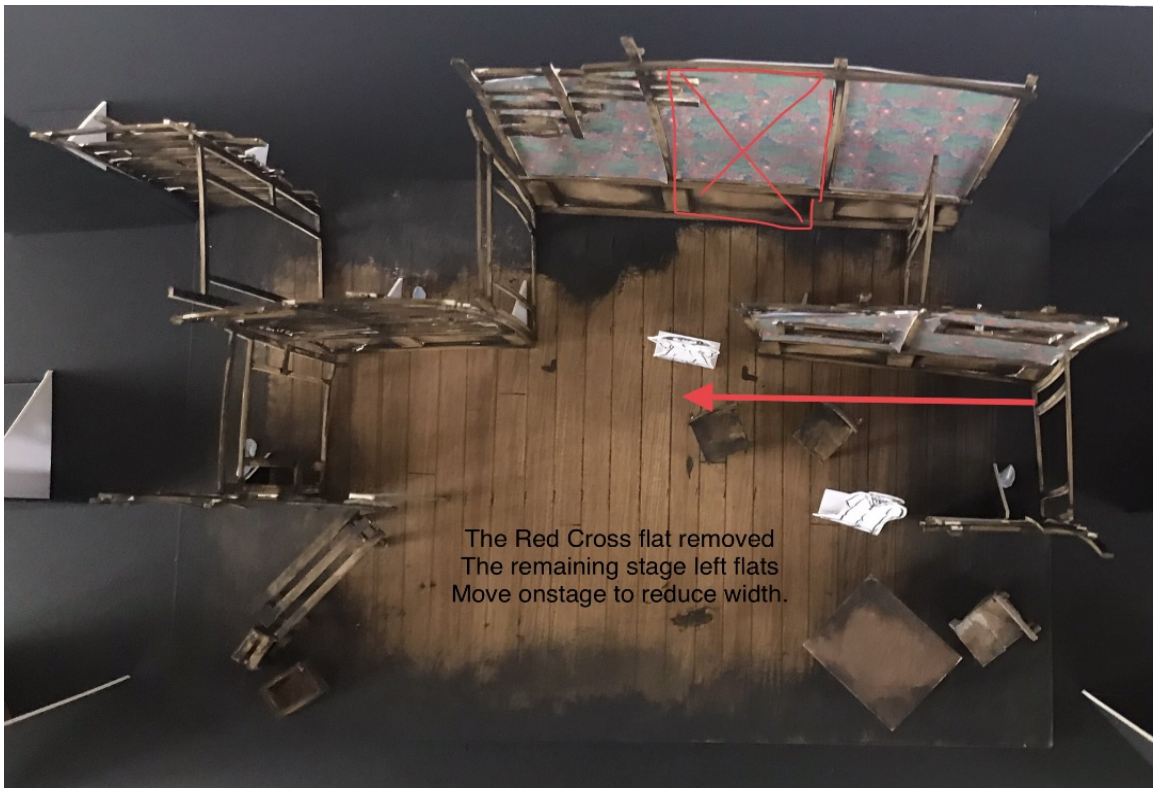
This is the arrangement we have decided upon, with the black background fabric.



Below: This is a possible solution for spaces in the round, by using the supporting doorway flats a skeletal structure could be used in the round to allow for some set without obstructing the audiences view. I'm not sure if this will ever be used but it was a suggestion for a way to use the existing set in a different way for a variety of Venue arrangements.



Here you can see how a piece could be removed to make the set narrower for smaller stages. Trying to keep the overall look as similar to the whole set as possible with a small change to accommodate touring to a variety of sized stages.



ACTION DESIGN – ROBERT MYLES

An Interview with Robert Myles

What does being an action director involve?

Being an action designer involves visual and physical storytelling, collaboration, good partnership and above all, safety. In a real fight, people compete to dominate or obliterate one another. In staged violence, we collaborate to keep one another safe and tell a story, through the creation of illusions that act on multiple senses at once. The combination of movement, sound, distance, position and intention allows performers to trick the minds of the audience into believing real violence is happening. Above and beyond these fundamentals, a good action designer should attempt to understand the psychology of the characters, the vision for the overall story, and the transformation taking place in the moment violence breaks out. After violence takes place, nothing should be the same. I work with the director to understand their vision and with the actors to understand what they're capable of and comfortable with, before exploring how we can arrange a series of illusions that create the effect of the characters coming into conflict. I work closely with the actors on everything from body position, intention, vocal energy, timing, rhythm and posture to maximise the cause/effect relationship between, for instance, a punch being thrown, it landing, and what happens to each person in that moment. We then compose these individual moments into a little story of their own, which serves the wider piece, taking input from the director, actors, and sometimes even lighting and sound.

What can action bring to a piece of theatre?

Violence occurs when words fail. Words fail often because the stakes are at their highest – the characters' needs are the greatest, and the situations they find themselves in are the most urgent. These are often the most important moments in stories, so there is a real responsibility to make these moments both thrilling and compelling to the audience – the climax of the act or scene – while also serving the change the characters are undertaking by crossing that line. By designing action responsibly, we keep the actors safe and healthy, the audience entertained, and the story delivering real affect. Remember – the actors in theatre have to do everything, live, every night. With action design, the expectation is set high by film, where each moment only has to look good once to make the final cut. In film, the actors have stuntmen that take on much of the action. The actors you're seeing in theatre have to give their full performances, convince you they have been injured, wounded or even killed, and still be fit to do it again tomorrow.

How do you make fight scenes or physical contact look believable on stage?

The main ingredients are distance, timing, and position. Imagine that there is a line – a golden thread – between the actor's nose and your eyeball. By positioning the actor punching closer to the audience, and the actor punched behind, we can allow the fist to pass safely *in front of* the nose of the victim (as much as 30cm in front of it), keeping them safe. However, if the victim times the turn of their head to simulate impact, at the *exact time* the fist crosses that golden thread between his nose and your eyes, you'll believe the two connected, because you'll see cause (the punch) and effect (the reaction). But the main illusion is sound. Timed exactly right, if the actor can clap their cupped hand against their body somewhere far from the intended point of impact, such as their thigh, your brain will connect this loud cracking noise with the fist travelling in front of the nose and the subsequent reaction. This recipe: action, reaction, and noise, all at a safe distance, is what creates the illusion of contact. After that, it's down to the actors to *sell* the impact through their physicality, facial expression, vocal exclamations, and so on.

Why is it important to have action moments in this Sherlock piece?

This story could not be told without action. The characters include criminals and murderers who use violence to assert their will on the world around them. Sherlock Holmes himself is no stranger to violence, and trained in Bartitsu, a martial art combining French Savate kickboxing, bareknuckle boxing and ju jutsu (an art also practiced by the Suffragettes). Though Holmes does not get entangled this time, the story could not be told without relating

the events that required his intervention. Most of all, this is a thrilling adventure story, and as conflict is the engine of drama, and conflict is at its most exciting when visually dynamic and high stakes, there is no better way to express this than through action design in key moments of the story.

In The Valley of Fear, there are moments of violence intended to dominate, and moments of violence intended to obliterate. Something as apparently simple as the gun pull in McMurdo's first meeting with Boss McGinty is still an act of violence, and requires precision, fast-twitch speed, muscle memory, footwork and timing to physically get the guns into the right place at the opportune moment. The reversal of dominance in the scene, and the discovery of a new equilibrium between the characters, helps the characters feel one another out – a crucial moment for the undercover agent. Here we must imply that the danger is real, to force each character to act and react as they would.

By contrast, the assault on the journalist, Eldon Stanger, heavily implies that the violence is to obliterate. If Baldwin is indulging a delight in cruelty, he oversteps a mark that requires McMurdo to risk revealing himself too soon to save a life. For that reason, the violence must make the impending doom of Stanger feel immediate and real. At the same time, the director's vision to stage this moment a poetry in motion creates a juxtaposition that invites us to ask questions of how we might thrill at the grotesque. Violence in this moment is used as a tool to turn us resolutely against the central antagonist – we understand him not as the Robin Hood of his own styling, but as the oppressor.

CAST BIOGRAPHIES



Luke Barton

Luke trained at the Oxford School of Drama.

His recent credits include Understudy Victor Frankenstein in ***Frankenstein*** (UK Tour/Blackeyed Theatre), Alternate Sherlock Holmes/Dr Watson in ***The Hound of the Baskervilles*** (The Lost Estate), Stanley Stubbers in ***One Man, Two Guvnors*** (New Wolsey, Ipswich/Nuffield Theatres, Southampton), Sherlock Holmes in ***The Sign of Four*** (UK and International Tour/Blackeyed Theatre), *The Unexpected Guest* and ***Spider's Web*** (The Mill at Sonning, directed by Brian Blessed), *Twelfth Night*, ***Romeo & Juliet***, ***A Midsummer Night's Dream*** and ***Henry V*** (UK Tour for Merely Theatre), ***Reunion***, ***Echoes***, ***Absent*** and ***After Three Sisters*** for Living Record Productions (Edinburgh Festivals and Brockley Jack Theatre), ***Misterman*** and ***L'Etranger*** (Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse).

From April to June, he will be appearing in ***Busman's Honeymoon*** at the Mill at Sonning, directed by Brian Blessed.

Luke is delighted to be working with Blackeyed Theatre again.



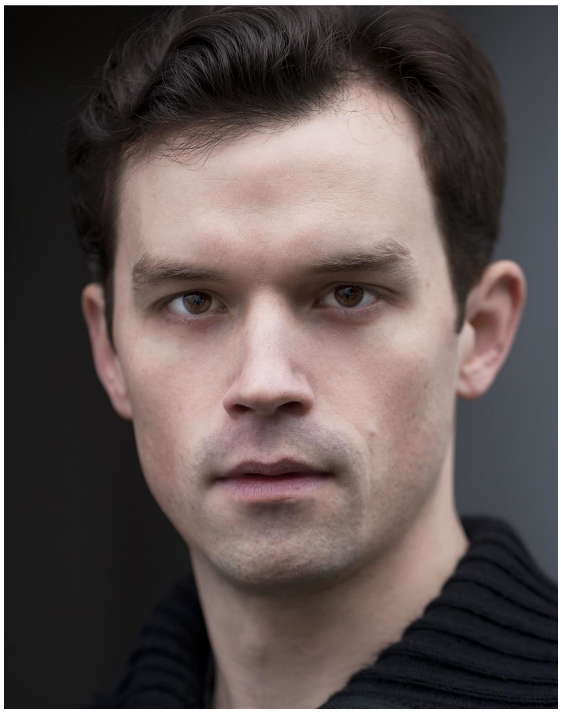
Joseph Derrington

Joseph trained at The School of the Arts (University of Northampton). For the past two years he has been a clinician working for the NHS and the London Ambulance Service.

His theatre credits include *The Sign of Four* (Blackeyed Theatre)*, **T**he Canterville Ghost (Erasmus Theatre touring Italy), **T**he Importance Of Being Earnest (MAC Belfast), **S**tinksville (Arletty Theatre UK Tour)*, ***The Odd Couple*** and ***T**he Dumb Waiter* (Holly Road Productions), ***Songs From Beyond the Sea*** (UAL Theatre), ***Tyke*** (Arts Theatre, Leicester Square), ***Sell-By-Date (***Marbleglass Theatre), ***T**he Bacchae* (Royal & Derngate) and ***T**he Crucible* (Looking Glass Theatre).

His Film/TV credits include ***Yonderland*** (Sky One), ***Crimewatch***, (BBC), ***William and Mary*** (ITV), ***Drove*** (Cape London).

Voiceover work includes ***The Gun*** (Pinewood Studios), ***Birdsong*** (Working Title), ***Shudan*** (Hulu Media/Ex Cantibus Gaudium) and ***Treeline*** (13 Media Arts).



Blake Kubena

Blake trained at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama and previously at the College-Conservatory of Music in Cincinnati. He is an American actor and voice over artist, currently based in London, and he is returning to Blackeyed Theatre after playing the title role in their 2021/22 tour of *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*.

On screen, he can be seen playing Askold in Season 6 of the popular History channel series Vikings.

Blake is a member of the Factory Theatre Company and an Associate Artist with Heady Conduct Theatre Company, and he has performed extensively throughout the UK with both.

Internationally, Blake has performed with New Zealand's Pop-up Globe Theatre Company, appearing as Malcolm in *Macbeth* and Dromio of Syracuse in *The Comedy of Errors,* both shows enjoying critically acclaimed runs in Auckland and Sydney. He has also appeared in the Midsummer Scene Festival in Dubrovnik playing Horatio.

In the US, Blake has performed with the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, appearing as Antipholus of Syracuse in *The Comedy of Errors*, Cassio in *Othello*, and Buckingham in *The Three Musketeers*. Other theatre credits in the US include *Mary's Wedding* (Hudson Stage Company), *Madison* (Premiere Stages), *The Rivals, Coriolanus, London Assurance* (Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey) and *The Immie Queen* (Ensemble Theatre of Cincinnati).



Gavin Molloy

Gavin trained at LAMDA. His theatre credits include *Hamlet* and *The Merchant Of Venice* (Creation Theatre Company), *The Canterbury Tales* (Royal Centre Nottingham), *Macbeth* (Lyric Studio), *The Alchemist* (Riverside Studios), *Everything Must Go* (Lyric Theatre Hammersmith), *Crave* (Goldsmiths) and *The Kebab Shop Owner's Beautiful Daughter* (Soho Theatre).

Gavin's television credits include *Conspiracy* (5Production), *Crimewatch* (BBC), *Eastenders* (BBC), *Breaking The Band*(ITV/Potato), *Gimme 6* (Common Ground), *Longitude* (Granada) and *Grange Hill* (BBC).

His film credits include *The Wedding Video* (Timeless Films), *Pulp* (Dare Productions), *The Fallen Word* (Celestial Pictures),*The Power Of Three* (Po3), *Touch* (Westminster Films) *20hz* (Met), *Strange Days* (Ruskin Films) and *Kol Nidrei* (RedHead).

His music video work includes *Yusuf Islam* (Propeller Media), *Ashley Wallbridge* (Reels In Motion), *Dolly Rockers*(Pulse), *Towers Of London* (LadyRay) and *Goldfrapp* (BlackDog).



Alice Osmanski

Alice trained at East 15.

Her previous stage credits include *Some Mothers Do Ave Em* (UK tour), *The Entertainer* (Curve Theatre/ Simon Friend UK tour), Vault Festival's Origins Award winning *Paper Straws* (Pearshaped Theatre), *A Christmas Carol* (Apollo Theatre Company), *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Macbeth* (Merely Theatre), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (The Sirrah Sisters), *The Secret Garden* (Spinning Wheel Theatre), *The Adventures of Isaac Saddlesore* (Micawber Theatre), *The Velveteen Rabbit* (Spinning WheelTheatre), *The Chainsaw Manicure* (Idle Discourse), *Breydon Crowther* (Eastern Angles) and *Jane Eyre* (Rosemary Branch Theatre).

Alice has also appeared in award winning Podcast *Wooden Overcoats* and plays the titular role in Wireless Theatre's audio comedy *Drayton Trench*.

EXPLORING THE TEXT – DRAMA ACTIVITIES

Hot seating

This exercise will allow each performer to deepen their understanding of the characters in the adaptation. It aids the actor in becoming more familiar with their role.

Step 1 – an actor takes a seat in the 'hot-seat' as their character.

Step 2 – other class members create questions they want to ask the character in the hot-seat.

Step 3 – the actor spontaneously answers the questions asked, drawing on what they already know about their character from the adaptation. These questions may not have been considered by the actor before.

Step 4 – the actor should write down any revelations they feel were useful and could help their performance of the role. Write down any mannerisms that come up that could be used within a performance of the text, things like: playing with fingers out of anxiety, twisting a ring on the finger to show restlessness, lack of eye contact with the questioners. Write down and physicality traits of your character, things like: slouching, sitting up right, crossed legs, open stance, facing the audience head on or closed off body to those the character speaks too. Consider the vocals – tempo of speech, pitch, tone etc.

Although this exercise places a lot of emphasis on the actor in the hot seat, the questioners should also act as observers and their feedback could be useful.

Questions should be asked that force the actor to consider in detail the life of their character and to look beyond the world of the play for their answers. If the actors character is grown up, maybe ask about the childhood, home life, family relationships. You could also focus on questions about the characters hopes and dreams, what they are scared of, what are their interests and hobbies. One of the most important questions to consider asking is – how does the character feel about other character? – knowing this can help with how you play out a scene and make the scene even more interesting.

EXERCISE –

1. Set up one chair in the middle of your rehearsal room for the actor ready to hot-seat.
2. Set the other chairs opposite the hot-seat chair in an arc shape for the questioners.
3. Each questioner should have one question planned to ask the actor in the hot-seat. If the group is small, get each questioner to have two or three questions prepped.
4. The actor in the hot-seat can choose any of the characters from the list to embody. Obviously, the more prominent characters might be slightly easier as the performance/script will have given you a good starting point. Think about the things you already know about your character and try to portray those things before you get started. Then be open to finding out new things about your character that deepens your understanding.

TIPS FOR TEACHERS –

1. Encourage your students to really think about their answers and try and push further beyond the play itself. We want to find out things about these characters that we don't already know. If you feel an answer was rushed or has no relevance to what we know about the character already, step in and ask the actor to elaborate on their answer. Push them to find a true meaning in their answers, as they should be able to link it to something we pick up in the play.

EXTENSION EXERCISE –

Have the student write down their findings and from those, write a diary entry as their character. If a student found out a lot about a character's childhood, maybe the diary entry could be a monologue about their favourite time/memory as a child. If an actor found out a lot about their relationship with another character, maybe they could write their diary entry on a time when they had fallen out with that other character or had an amazing adventure with that other character. If an actor found our their character had a hidden skill, write their diary monologue about the time they first discovered an interest in that skill.

Encourage students to then perform these entries to the class; as if the audience is the diary listening to the characters inner thoughts. The can use direct address and actually make eye contact with the rest of the class, breaking the fourth wall. Remember to use physicality and vocals to communicate their character truthfully.

Status – Where does your character lead from? How much eye contact do they make?

Take a character from the play and think about everything we know about them. Think about –

- Are they liked?
- Do they have friends?
- Do they have confidence in themselves?
- Are they arrogant?
- What do they think about themselves?
- Are they good at their job?
- Are they funny?
- What do they fear?

Now, thinking about all these things, where do you think your character leads from? Are they like a dog and lead from their noses like they're trying to sniff something out? Do they consider themselves so proud they lead from their chest? Do they think the lead with the their forehead as they consider themselves so important and stately? Do they lead with their stomachs and they like to lean back and observe others around them?

EXERCISE –

Pick a character and choose what part of their body they lead from. Now walk around the room in character exaggerating which part of the body you are leading from. Consider as well how much eye contact your character makes with other characters. If your character is confident and leading from the head or chest, they may be comfortable in holding eye contact with others for sustained periods of time. If your character is a little more reserved and leads with the top of their head looking down, they will barely make eye contact with any other character.

Note your findings. Note how it affected how you held yourself and what it did to your physicality.

Now focus on a scene where your character is interacting with another. Keep in mind where your character leads from, but when you play out the scene, do not exaggerate anymore. Let the rest of the class who are watching your scene see whether it still came across where your character leads from. Ask your class how they feel your physicality helps portray the character and discuss how important it is to know where your character leads from.

EXTENSION –

Now you know where your character leads from, have a think about what animal your character would be if it were one. Are you the king of the room and are therefore a lion? Do you like to hide away and just poke up to hear bits of information, so maybe you're a meerkat.

Try walking around the room as this animal and interact with other animals. Remember this is about the status of your character and if you hold a higher status, portray it.

Actioning the Script – Performing with Intention

Everything we do in life is to get a reaction from someone else. So, when we are on stage, this should be no different. When we say things, we always want to affect the person we are talking to. We may want to hurt them, upset them, persuade them, love them, lift them etc.

If we action all of our lines, it makes the script more active and we fully understand why we are saying those lines; it gives the actor a purpose, reason to speak and gives the actor an intention.

EXERCISE –

Pick a scene from the script; I would encourage you to pick a scene where the stakes are higher and of any gender (all the roles could be played by any gender.

Look at your lines on the page and decide what your character is trying to do to the other person. When you've decided, write this action down before your line. All actions must be three words – **I "ACTION" YOU.** FOR EXAMPLE – if you are trying to engage someone with what your saying you may say "I PULL YOU" or if you're trying to annoy the other person you may say "I POKE YOU". Think about what you physically would want to do to the other person, that is your action.

Once you have your actions written down, play out the scene; but before you say your line, say your action out loud. This will force you to deliver your line with the intention of your action.

Now, try and play out the scene without saying your actions, but remember them in your head before you say your line. This will help to keep the scene alive and for you to have the correct intention.

EXTENSION –

PICK A NEW SCENE – try selecting a scene where there is an argument or lots of tension. Repeat the task where you action all of your lines. However, in the scene you are only allowed to raise your voice or shout once. See how you can keep the scene fizzing with tension without shouting. Therefore, you need to decide at what point your character peaks and use your vocal volume to portray this.

Devising a Scene – proxemics, physicality and vocal skills.

Take your imagination outside of what is written on the page.

EXERCISE -

Have a go at devising a new scene based on what we know about the characters and maybe unearth deeper feelings that we don't see within the play.

Below are some options as to what kind of scenes the students might want to create –

1. Scene between Watson and Holmes where they discuss Moriarty. Maybe the talk about their ideas on bringing him down once and for all. Perhaps they discuss what things they admire about Moriarty.
2. Ivy Douglas and John Douglas discuss their choices after Holmes tells them to leave Europe. Why did the stay for so long? Did they want to keep running and hiding? Are they both worried about what will happen next? Do they agree on their next steps or was there an argument until they reached their decision?
3. The conversation between the agency and Edwards about taking down McGinty. What was their plan? What did they know about the Scowrers and their plans for the Valley? What did they fear most about the society? How did Edwards become the one to go undercover as McMurdo?
4. Write a monologue as either Ettie or McMurdo after their first meeting. Think about what they would tell someone about how they feel, what they like about the other person and what they want their future to be with the other person. Note that McMurdo is not telling Ettie the truth about why he is there, so perhaps you can include the guilt he feels in having to be dishonest and what he hopes she will never find out.

EVALUATING THE LIVE PERFORMANCE

KEY TERMINOLOGY -

STAGING –

Proscenium arch – End-on staging on only one side of the stage, but in an older style theatre with a decorative arch framing the whole stage. This type of staging helps to create a fourth wall, which is particularly appropriate for naturalistic productions. The stage is often raised and the audience will sit in raked seating. The blocking of the production will usually be easier as the audience are in one fixed position. The disadvantage of this staging is that the audience can be quite far away from the stage, making it difficult for them to see and hear everything the performers do.

End-on – When the audience sit on one side of the stage only, facing it in the same direction. Similar to proscenium arch, but without the frame around the stage space. Blocking again is simple as the audience are in one fixed position.

In the Round – When the audience are placed all around the outside of the performers' playing space. The stage area may be circular or square, with entrances and exits through the audience. In the round staging can offer a more intimate atmosphere and truly immerse the audience in the play. For performers, they need to move more frequently so that all audience member remain engaged and don't look at a performer's back for too long. Set design can be slightly trickier as they can't be too tall or wide as they may obstruct sightlines. Lighting can also be slightly harder and lanterns would need to be positioned carefully so they don't blind any audience members.

Traverse – When the audience is placed on wither side of the actors'' playing space or stage, facing each other. This form of staging is also called corridor. It is a long and narrow playing space similar to a catwalk. The audience can truly immerse themselves in the show being close to the actors and having the audience in front of them helps to remind that you're at the theatre. The set must be low or minimal so that is doesn't obstruct and backdrops can't really be used unless only at the ends of the stage.

Thrust - When the audience surrounded the stage on three sides, and the other side connects to the backstage area or back wall. The actors may make entrances and exits through the audience (Park Theatre or The Donmar Warehouse). The back wall of the space can be used to hang backdrops and large pieces of scenery. Blocking for the actors' movements is slightly easier than in the round and traverse staging, so performers don't always have to worry about having their back to the audience.

Promenade – When the audience can move around and follow the action during a performance. Types of performances that use promenade are often site-specific in interesting and unusual locations. Some performances may happen outdoors rather than purpose-built theatre spaces. As the audience are sharing the space with the performers, they are fully immersed in the action that unfolds. These performances can often be unpredictable and blocking needs to be open to change. Health and safety considerations need to be made to ensure there are no hazards for the audience members and to try and prevent any accidents.

STAGE POSITIONS –

It is important to understand the various positions on stage. During rehearsals, a director and cast will work together to decide on an overall shape for each scene (blocking) and will refer to nine separate positions on stage. The stage management team need to know where to set items that are positioned on stage and the lighting designer needs to know where an actor will stand to ensure they are lit

correctly and the audience can see them. The use of space practically will always be considered to ensure the audience get the most out of the production. Space will always help to convey meaning and the distance between actors can say a lot to an audience member watching. Stage positions are more commonly used in end-on, proscenium arch and thrust stages.

Rehearsals – The process of preparing a production and getting it ready for performance.

Blocking – The process of placing a performer or performers in a specific place on the stage.

Proxemics – The distance between performers on stage that shows the relationship between those characters.

Centre Stage – Performer stands in the middle of the stage or perhaps a piece of set is positioned here.

Stage Right – As a performer looks out to the audience, this is the area on their right-hand side.

Stage Left – As s performer looks out to the audience, this is the area on their left-hand side.

Downstage – If a performer walks towards the audience and front of the stage, this area is known as downstage.

Upstage – If a performer walks towards away from the audience and towards the back wall, this area is known as upstage.

Raked – This is where the stage is sloped at a downwards angle towards the audience.

Sightlines – This is the view of the performers on stage or the view from the audience seats.

***PERFORMANCE GLOSSARY* –**

Acting style – a particular manner of acting that reflects cultural and historical influences.

Articulation – the clarity or distinction of speech.

Characterisation – how a performer uses body, voice, and thought to develop and portray a character.

Dialogue – spoken conversation used by two or more characters to express thoughts, feelings, and actions.

Gesture – any movement of the performer's head, shoulder, arm, hand, leg, or foot to convey meaning.

Inflection – change in pitch or loudness of the voice.

Interaction – the action or relationship among two or more characters.

Mirroring – copying the movement and/or expression or look of another performer exactly.

Intension – having a purpose with the way an actor says their line.

Movement – stage blocking or the movements of the performers onstage during performance.

Pace – the speed of voice or movement are or rate of action.

Performance Skills – skills used by performers including voice/vocal skills, movement/physical skills, use of space/proxemics and facial expression/ posture/ non-verbal skills.

Pitch – the particular level of a voice, instrument or tune

Posture – physical alignment of a performer's body or a physical stance taken by a performer which conveys information about a character.

Rhythm – measured flow of words or phrases in verse forming patterns of sound. Regularity in time or space of an action, process or feature.

Vocal Expression – how a performer uses his or her voice to convey character

Voice – the combination of vocal qualities a performer uses such as articulation, phrasing, and pronunciation.

***COSTUME GLOSSARY* –**

Basic Block – a pattern which is the starting block for a more detailed pattern based on a particular performer's measurements, and reflecting specifics like historical period.

Breaking Down – artistic process of aging or distressing a costume. Paint, glue, dye, ripping and tearing can be used in this process.

Colour – can be used symbolically to suggest character, emotion, theme.

Costumes – what a performer wears to evoke the appearance of a particular character. Costumes maybe realistic or stylised. They may be 'period' – appropriate to the historical setting of the play – or deliberately modern in look, even when the play is set in a past era, depending on the performance style of the production.

Costume plot – a list or chart made by the costume designer showing the characters appearing in each scene, and what they are wearing. This helps track each character's whereabouts throughout the performance.

Dresser – crew member who aids with dressing.

Dress Rehearsal – dress full costume/lighting/effects/sound/action rehearsal.

Fabric – the material from which the costume is constructed.

Quick Change – a change of costume that needs to happen very quickly, takes place close to the side of the stage. Costume for quick changes may be made using Velcro and zips rather than buttons.

Wardrobe – the general name for the costume department, its staff and the accommodation they occupy.

***LIGHTING GLOSSARY* –**

Backlight – light coming from upstage, behind scenery or performers, to sculpt and separate them from the background.

Back Projection – a method of projecting images onto a translucent screen from behind. Often used for projected scenery or special effects.

Blackout – a lighting cue where all stage lights go off simultaneously.

Colour Filter – a sheet of plastic usually composed of a coloured resin which creates coloured light on stage. A colour filter is sometimes known as a Gel, after the animal material Gelatine, from which filters were originally made.

Colour Mixing – combining the effects of two or more lighting gels.

Cross-fade – bringing another lighting state up to completely replace the current

lighting state. Sometimes abbreviated to Xfade or XF.

Cue Lights – system of lights used to give 'Cues'.

Cue Sheet – list of effects.

Cyclorama – large white drop or screen that is positioned upstage and can be lit using floodlights to create a block of colour or to create a shadow effect.

Diffusion Gel – also called frost – softens light.

Downlight – a light from directly above the acting area.

Fader – means of controlling lights

Flash – when lights are flashed for effect.

Floodlight – a lantern with a wide beam that can cover a large area on stage, an effect called a wash.

Focus – The adjustment of lighting/projection equipment and/or the direction in which it is aimed.

Follow spot – a tight beam of light that can be used to highlight a particular area on stage, often used to highlight and follow one actor.

Fresnel – a lantern that created a soft beam of light.

FX – abb. for effects.

Gel – a coloured filter that can be places on a lantern in front of a beam of light to change the colour.

Gobo – a metal template positioned in front of a beam of light to create shapes of light on stage, e.g. a window frame or tree.

Halogen – gas contained in lamps.

House lights – the lights that illuminate the auditorium before and after the performance and during intermission, used in some performances e.g. Brechtian 'shared light'.

Lantern – stage light.

LED – LED stage lighting instruments are stage lighting instruments that use light-emitting diodes (LEDs) as a light source. LED instruments are an alternative to traditional stage lighting instruments which use halogen lamp or high-intensity discharge lamps.

Level – intensity of light.

Lighting Plot – lighting cue description.

Parcan – a type of lantern that produces an intense beam of light.

Profile Spot – a tight beam of light that can be used to highlight an area on stage.

Shutter – device in lantern used to shape beam.

Spot – abbreviation of spotlight; a bright beam of light projected onto a performance space.

Strobe – a light that flashes quickly on and off to create the effect of slow motion on stage; can't be used if any actors have a disability such as epilepsy.

UV – when use with fluorescent costumes or set pieces, it created a wonderful glowing image on stage.

Wash – a general 'fill' of light and colour across the stage.

Working Lights – lights used by stage crew to aid work.

***SET GLOSSARY* –**

Back Projection – a method of projecting images onto a translucent screen from behind. Often used for projected scenery or special effects.

Colour – can be used symbolically to suggest mood, emotion, theme or to create a sense of location.

Cloth - a piece of scenic canvas, painted or plain, which is flown or fixed to hang in a vertical position:

- a backcloth (or backdrop) hangs at the rear of a scene

- a floor cloth is a painted canvas sheet placed on the stage floor to mark out the acting area, or to achieve a particular effect

- a front cloth hangs downstage, often to mask a scene change.

Flat – a wooden frame, usually covered with painted cloth, used to create walls or separations on stage.

Curtains – at front of stage – called tabs.

Materials – that the set items are or appear to be composed from e.g. window panes may be made of Perspex to represent glass, from health and safety considerations.

Mask – to hide from audience's sight.

Masking – flats/cloths used to mask parts of the set/stage from the audience.

Platform – also referred to as a rostrum it is a stationary, flat walking surface for performers, used to provide varying levels, to make a show more visually interesting, to separate areas on stage, and as seating.

Practical – a working object onstage, such as a door or window.

Scenery - **the theatrical equipment, such as curtains, flats, backdrops, or platforms, used in a production to create location/environment.**

Set – the physical surroundings, visible to the audience, in which the action of the play takes place.

Tabs – Curtains.

***SOUND GLOSSARY* –**

AMP – abbreviation amplifier used to amplify sound.

Build – increase sound levels.

Cross-fade – bringing another sound state up to replace the current sound state.

Diegetic sound – sound heard by characters on stage e.g. music played on a radio on the set.

Feedback – when a mic picks up its own signal from a speaker.

FX – abb. for effects.

Levels – intensity of sound.

Non-diegetic Sound - sound NOT heard by the actors and designed to create mood/atmosphere/impact on the audience e.g. emotional underscore.

PA System – the public address system or any sound system.

Radio Mic – personal microphone without power lead.

Sound Design – the three categories of sound design, are:

1. functional (e.g. practical sounds such as a gunshot to coincide with an action on stage)

2. atmospheric (i.e. using underscoring that may include music, or a pre-recorded soundscape)

3. incidental where sound can be used to cover moments of transition (e.g. between scenes or to cover scene changes).

Sound Effects – 1) Recorded: often abbreviated to FX. May form an obvious part of the action (train arriving at station) or may be in the background throughout a scene (e.g. birds chirping).

2) Live: gunshots, door slams, and offstage voices (amongst many others) are most effective when done live.

Soundscape – sound that runs under a scene, to help establish the world of the play, to immerse the audience in that world and/or to heighten emotion. This can be created using recorded and or live sound.

Surround Sound – any sound system where sound can appear to be all around the audience is said to be surround sound. Theatre sound systems often use localised speakers near each bank of seating.

Volume – the level at which a sound effect or piece of music will be played.

***PROPS/STAGE FURNITURE* –**

Hand Props – properties such as tools, weapons, or luggage that are carried on stage by an individual performer.

Personal Props – properties belonging to a specific character and therefore handled by that actor or kept in the actor's costume.

Props – abb. for Properties. Furnishings, set dressings, and all items large and small which cannot be classified as scenery, electrics or wardrobe.

Prop box – place to store props.

Prop Table – table situated in wings on which props are placed.

Pre-set – position of scenery/ stage furniture at start of performance/scene.

Stage Furniture – elements of the production that can be used/moved but cannot be defined as personal props e.g. chair, table, block. Can also be written about to support set design.

Style - the style of stage furniture chosen to enhance the production, e.g. by replicating a specific historical period. Stage furniture design, will often relate to the performance style, e.g. 'slice of life', representational.

***ACTORS* -**

PHYSICAL SKILLS – HOW DO ACTORS USE THEIR BODY?

An actor's use of physical skills will allow them to transform into the character they are portraying.

Body Language – The non-verbal way in which a person communicates their physical and mental state through using facial expressions, gesture, stance and posture. Body language is used to convey feelings and the personality of a character. A character who has lot of confidence will perhaps dominate he space, stand up correctly, hold their head high and open up their body with a wider stance. Confident people are not afraid to be open, so the actor needs to bring this into their body language to bring the character to life. This would be the opposite body language to someone who is shy and timid. A nervous person will close off their body for a sort of protection and to become as small as possible. They will walk with their head down and potentially fold their arms to close off even more.

Eye contact – character's locking eyes and making eye contact can mean a variety of things. If character is confident, they will search for eye contact as they're not afraid to look directly into another character's eyes. This is why eye contact can show a lot about a character's status; it can also reveal a lot about a character's relationship with another. Character's who like each other, are passionate about each other, will seek eye contact for the connection. However, a character who avoids eye contact is one who may be harbouring a secret, lacks confidence, is disappointed in another character or could indicate a strained relationship.

Facial Expressions – Using the face to convey emotions or feelings. Facial expressions are an excellent way of revealing subtext (the meaning behind an action of bit of speech. These may be the real feelings of the character that they cannot express to another openly). We understand a lot about people and how they are truly feeling by reading their facial expressions. A person may tell us they're fine and yet, their face tells us they're not.

Gait – A person's manner of walking. Like body language, the way an actor walks is all a pat of creating a character. Someone who strut's on stage is clearly highly confident or potentially arrogant. If a character walks with a limp, it could suggest they were hurt previously, were born disabled or have some illness now. If two character's are in an argument, the character with the power may walk differently across the stage than the one who is in the wrong; gait can tell us a lot about how character's feel towards each other.

Gesture – A movement of the head, hand or other body parts to express meaning. Gesture's can reveal a lot about a character's personality or can be an extension of what they are feeling in that current moment. If a character is in n argument, they may point at the other person which s extremely accusatory and aggressive. If a person is extremely apologetic or is begging for forgiveness, they may put their hand to their chest more or bring their hands together as they plead. Putting a hand to the head shows a character may be feeling exasperated or fed up, hands to the mouth shows shock or surprise and arms folded suggests a character may he defensive and shut off. Some character's may use more gesture's than others; if a character is quite expressive and confident they may use gesture when telling stories while more closed off character's may use less gestures.

Pace – When a character talks, as we do in normal life, we never move at the same speed all the time. When stimulated, we will change the speed of our walk or movements. Pace within a scene can alter the mood and atmosphere drastically and can offer contrasts between higher and lower status characters.

Quality of Movement – Quality doesn't mean good or bad, it means the type of movement your characters needs to be portrayed correctly. If you were a fairy in a mystical tale, your character would need to have a light and airy quality to their movements. However, if you were a troll in the same productions your movement would need to have a heavier, bulkier quality.

Space – Space is not only used practically to make sure an audience member can see the action at all times, but it used to heighten mood, atmosphere, suspense, tension and relationships of the character. W have social space, personal space and intimate space and all can be used within a scene to create an electric atmosphere. Think about two characters who like each other and they start further apart, but as the scene goes on, they get closer together and ultimately end up in an intimate space. This scene would have built the tension up right to the very end of the scene and have the audience gripped.

Levels – These can be created through position of the body, set or staging. They show action in a different place/time and can reflect status or relationships. Whether a character stands or sits can communicate a lot of meaning to an audience. If the person in charge sits in a chair higher up than a person standing, and then decides to stand, the levels of status are created and we understand the roles clearly of those on stage. Levels make a piece more interesting visually, even just by having some people sat and some standing.

Specialist Skills – these may include mask work, mime, puppetry, physical theatre, dance, stage combat or fighting and ensemble movement work. Adding in one or more of these to a piece can really lift it and keep an audience engaged.

Physical Tension – This reflects how tight or loose a performer's muscles are. A lack of physical tension communicates that a character is relaxed, whereas more muscular tension reveals that a character is uptight. Physical tension can also mirror the level of tension being built throughout the piece and help to build suspense. An incredibly tense moment within the piece may make a performer so physically tense they are rendered motionless.

VOCAL INTERPRETATION - HOW DO ACTORS USE THEIR VOICE?

An actor's voice can tell us so much about their character – age, where they're from, what kind of person they are and also what emotions they are feeling. Practically, the actor needs to make sure their voice is clear and audible for all audience members. They need to have good diction (style of enunciation in speaking), articulation and projection.

Accent – a distinctive way or pronouncing language that is specific to a certain country or place within it. Accents can also be used to establish a person's social class (place within society). Regional accents that are strong are quite easy to be recognised by an audience member, places such as – Yorkshire, Birmingham, Cockney or Newcastle. Character's which are of a higher social status will usually speak in RP (received pronunciation or a neutral accent like many Londoners) or heightening RP (like the queen).

Emphasis – Stressing a particular word or phrase within a sentence to indicate importance. When a performer stresses certain words, their volume may increase or their intonation (rise and fall of the voice) will change. An actor can choose where to place their emphasis as long as the meaning of the sentence is still there. However, if the actor has a specific intention for the line, they may choose to stress a particular word to communicate this. The same line can mean so many different things by stressing different words – for example – "I didn't move your hat." Stressing the "I" means someone else must have moved the hat, but stressing the "move" can suggest that you did something else with the hat, maybe you threw it away.

Pace and Rhythm – Pace is the speed at which the lines are delivered and rhythm is related to pace, referring to the pattern of sound when speaking. Rhythm is like giving the words and more lyrical feel, as if they have a beat. If a person is exhausted, they may deliver their lines more slowly, in comparison to someone who is excited and my talk at speed. If the pace of an actors words changes throughout their speech, it is a clear indication to the audience that their thoughts are actively changing. A person who is more upper-class and speaks with a clipped accent may appear to have a very staccato rhythm, similarly to someone who is feeling erratic may also used this broke and sharp rhythm. Someone who is describing someone they love may have a more free flowing rhythm that feels more lyrical.

Pause – this is a beat or short break in a speech and is usually used for dramatic effect. An actor may pause also before responding to a character as they need time to think, or perhaps they are too shocked at what the other person has said to respond straight away. A writer may indicate that they wish for their to be a pause within a speech and other times it may be down to the actor's choice.

Pitch – How high or low the voice sounds. Pitch will change when an actor feels a certain emotion – excited people may speak at a higher pitch or someone who is angry, however someone who is trying to calm a situation may speak in a lower pitch to help with that calming intention.

Quality – The quality of a persons voice is largely down to how their sound moves through their vocal folds (folds of tissue within the larynx that vibrate in the airstream to produce a sound). If we talk with a breathy sound, it means more air is being let through the vocal folds and if they are creaky then less air is being allowed through the vocal folds. Being able to control this allows actor's to be able to create characters who are maybe of ill health or are older.

Resonance – The quality in a sound of being deep, full and reverberating. When we talk, we should be able to feel the vibration somewhere on our body. Most likely these places will be the chest, nose or

throat. If a person has a very resonant voice, it is likely they are resonating from their chest as this is where we will hear a very rich, clear sound. If we move the vibration to our nose, the character we are playing will automatically sound more nasal. Accents can be linked to resonance and you will find that a person speaking in a particular accent might sound more nasal or clear.

Tone – The emotional sound of the voice. The tone in which someone says something can tell us whether they are frightened, happy, angry or annoyed. The tone is extremely important for subtext as sometimes it is not what an actor or character is saying, it is the way they say it. We often hear this in arguments and a person may say "well, what did you mean by that? It sounds like you're unhappy but you're telling me you're fine." Tone can help to convey the truthful feelings of a character to an audience member.

Volume – How loud or quiet the voice is. While performers do need to project to be heard clearly by the audience, we don't want the actors to shout all of their lines. Changes in volume can indicate a character's feelings and express their emotions. It can allow an actor to make less obvious choices; if they are angry, instead of shouting, they can reduce their volume and all of a sudden, their anger becomes more menacing.

SET DESIGN –

Telling the audience where the scene is taking place, or where the story takes place as a whole, is very dependent on the set design. It can be minimal or more detail but clues need to be given to the audience to then be able to imagine the world that is being presented to them.

Conveying Setting and Period – conveying the setting helps to tell the audience where the action is taking place. It may be that this is a living room in a big county manor, or it could be in a park. The set helps to tell us what country we are in if it is not obvious or mentioned in the script. The nest layer to add to this is the time period in which the piece is set. If the play is set in 1895, the decor is going to be very different from a piece set in 1990. The time period will dictate what the furniture should be, technology available e.g. a telephone, colours and even the flooring.

Themes or Symbols – Parts of the set can represent certain themes within a piece. For example – if there was a theme of being trapped or isolated, you may have caged birds as part of the set. They are representatives of loneliness, isolation and being caged, unable to fly away to freedom.

Links to other Design Elements – The set needs to work with the other creative design aspect of the show. The setting needs to work with the costumes of the characters to make sure the world of the play does not clash. This is also a practical element too – if you are setting the piece in 1895, your women actor's might be wearing corsets. If this was the case, having a set with lots of levels may not work as they will find it more difficult to move and climb up and down.

Supporting the style – If the piece is intended to be naturalistic, then the set must follow this also. The set designer may make more props to create a very real wold on stage. However, if the show is a touring production – like Sherlock Holmes "The Valley of Fear" – then the set may need to be more minimalistic and slightly abstract. This requires the audience to use more of their own imagination when it comes to the world presented on stage. This may mean that you don't have an entire room on stage but maybe a few chairs, a cabinet and a frame to suggest where the window may be.

Colour – Colours are huge representatives of emotions, themes, time period, status and wealth. Dull greys would symbolize a cold atmosphere and something much more gothic. In comparison, navy blues and golds can highlight that a person is wealthy and stately.

Condition of the Set – The pieces used to create the set can be extremely clean looking or they can be broken and rundown. If the main character's mind is erratic, their room presented on stage may also be mismatched. There could be bits of furniture everywhere, all piled high on top of each other. Or a character like Sherlock may have everything meticulously placed, clean and well finished which signifies his ordered and practical mind.

Practical – Scene changes will need to be considered as well as what the actor's costumes are. There are always possibilities to move pieces of set very slightly and they then create a new setting. Just be changing a piece of set around could signal a change in location.

Staging Configuration – Depending on the type of stage, the set may change in its design. If you are in proscenium arch or end-on, the set designer may be able to cleverly hide props behind the set and also have actors behind the set ready for entrances and exits. However, if your piece is in the round or traverse, there is no where for props to be hidden or actors to hide. Therefore, the set design would drastically change for the very same production.

Safety – Hazards needs to be considered when designing a show. The set needs to be sturdy, reliable and fit for purpose. If big pieces of set need to be moved at all during the show, then this needs to be thought about carefully as to how it happens without causing injury.

Drapery – Backdrops may be used and can be helpful when setting a scene. Something called a CYCLORAMA can be used and is a plain large curtain which can be hung behind the set. This is useful if you want to have projections or change the backdrop colours during the show. For instance, if something menacing is about to happen, then you may change the colour of the cyc to red. Gauze may ne used in a similar way and can be lit from either in front or behind. Lighting a gauze from in front means we cannot see what is behind it, but lighting it from behind makes it translucent. A famous example of this is in "The Woman in Black" and they are cleverly able to hide things from the audience for dramatic effect later on. Legs are long narrow drapes that are extremely useful for hiding the wings/sides of stage. If you have actors who need to be concealed for quick changes, the legs would need to be positioned in a way as to hide away these areas. And iron is a safety curtain that can prevent the stage being damaged from any fires in the auditorium, or the other way round. Sometimes the iron can be left in if any actors need to start on stage and do not want the audience to see them getting into place. It can also come in at the interval if set changes need to happen before the second half.

Levels – Using levels within a set design is an excellent way to make the piece more interesting and engaging for an audience. If the piece is naturalistic, and we are supposed to be in a house, including stairs can be a lovely way for actors to make entrances and exits. Ramps, blocks and climbing frames are all excellent ways of creating levels that can be played with by the actors. Levels are an excellent way of portraying status and power also, which can aid actors with their intentions.

Projection – scenery can be projected so that flats and curtains don't need to be hung. They are an excellent way of showing clips also if you have a time change between acts. If the set is minimal, hang projections can be a great way to still help the audience be immersed in the piece.

Dressing the Set – This is the action of placing smaller items onto the bigger pieces of set to finish the overall look of the stage. It my include pillows for sofas, books for shelves and drinks in a cabinet.

Entrances and Exits – there are a multitude of ways that these can be done. Part of the set may include doors, so actors can come and go very naturally. You may use the wings to help actors get on and off stage or you may include hidden things like trap doors.

Haze - This is essentially smoke that is able to look like fog and create an atmosphere. If you have a late Victorian period and a scene is set on an old cobbled street, you may use fog to crate an eerie and gothic feeling.

COSTUME DESIGN –

Costumes help to capture so many aspects of the entire piece – they help to create characters, establish time periods and support the overall style of the piece.

Character – Costumes for the characters give the audience all the basic information they need to know. Things such as age, gender, job and social call and wealth. But they also help the actor to convey their characters personality. If a person is confident and very out there, they may decide to be dressed in rather bright and expressive clothes. The condition of a character's clothes can also reveal a lot about what's happened to them and their circumstances. If a character arrives looking dishevelled, they may have encountered something distressing before entering for their scene. This helps the audience to understand the journey of the piece.

Context – Conveying the time period and being true to when the play is set is so important for the costumes. If a woman has to wear a corset, it can change the entire way that they move. This helps to create the world of the time for the audience and we can recognise when something is then different to what we know to be our time. They can also be used to suggest what place the story is set. If the piece is set in Africa on a safari, then those clothes will be very different to if our story takes places at a dinner party in London.

Style – Whether a production is naturalistic, minimalistic or abstract, the costumes need to enhance this style. If you want to juxtapose the costumes to the time period, you may have something like extremely flamboyant dresses for a party in the 1800's. This would be similar to a panto in style or perhaps a "Bridgeton" feeling. There can be a nice contrast with the costumes to the time period to make it more abstract. For Naturalistic styles, the costumes may ring very true to the ordinary life at that time.

Colour – Colour is an important symbol for characters and their costumes. Someone with a fiery personality may be found to be wearing lots of red, and someone who is very dull may be found to be wearing lots of grey. Colour is also a symbol of status and wealth and can help to distinguish between a well-off family and a poorer family.

Condition – If a costume is in extremely good condition, the audience can assume that the character likes to take care of themselves. However, if the costumes are ripped and dirty, we can assume this person may not be so wealthy. It can also help to distinguish what a character has done before entering the stage. If a character is supposed to have been in a fight, the costume will need to reflect this; perhaps they enter with ripped trousers and a torn shirt. Make up can also be used to help with these factors and fake blood can represent having been in a fight or that a person is injured.

Fabric – Different types of fabric can help to signify a person's status or wealth. It can also be used to change the time period as no modern materials will be used for more period pieces.

Fit – This refers to how a person's clothes sit on them. If a woman enters wearing a tight, well-fitted dress, then maybe she is a confident character and sees herself as alluring. However, someone who is the opposite may choose to hide themselves under baggier clothing. A person's personality can come through in what fit of clothes they choose to wear and also can help to highlight a person's social status.

Accessories – Jewellery can be used to signify a person's wealth or even to show that they are engaged or married. A briefcase may be used for a businessman or woman, and an elderly character may carry a handkerchief.

Hair and Make-up – Bruises can be made as a special effect along with cuts. This can help if a character is supposed to have been in a fight a few days ago. Make-up can help to suggest how well a person looks after themselves and to pick out an actor's features. The design of someone's hair or the way they choose the ear it is extremely important for context. A male character in a piece set in the 1800's will not have the same hair style as a male in a modern piece. Practically, for women especially or males with longer hair, it is good to have it done in a way that it doesn't hide your face.

Practical – Making the costumes to be practical is very important. Quick changes may need to be done so we need to make sure the actor can get in and out of the costumes quickly. Velcro is a good way to make sure costumes can be whipped off. The actor's may also need to layer their costumes and wear some over the tope of others, so making this as comfortable as possible is also important. If the piece has lots of physical theatre, movement or dance, then the costumes need to allow the actor to feel free enough to do their movements. This means no restrictive fabrics and hard-wearing materials.

LIGHTING DESIGN –

The whole idea of using lights on stage in to illuminate the action that is unfolding. It helps to create atmosphere, support the action, create suspense and most of all, allows the audience to see the action unfold.

Setting and Time of Day – Warmer lighting states can help the audience to know it is daytime and perhaps that the play is taking place in a specific country. It can also help to suggest the time of year in which the play it set. If the piece moves through the seasons, then lighting can help to signify when there has been a change. Lower, cooler lights can suggest it is turning to night, we are in a cooler climate or that winter is drawing near. If the time of the piece is in Victorian England, you may find the lighting designer uses dimmer lighting states and put's bulbs into lanterns to create the idea of gas lamps.

Mood and Atmosphere – Darker lighting state can help to create an eerie atmosphere and make the audience feel tense. We are always afraid of the things we cannot see and the lighting can help to create a horror type mood. However, if the scene taking place is a wedding day, bright lights may be used to signify the happy moment and that all is well.

Focus – Drawing the audience's attention to specific things on stage can be done by the clever use of lighting. Not all the stage has to be lit, an when a particular area of the stage becomes visible, the audience's eye will be drawn to that art. Spotlights are very good for illuminating a particular part of the action and gives a very specific focus point for anyone watching.

Pace and Movement – In the piece, there may be a part where the characters are supposed to be on a carriage or in a car and passing lights can help to create the sense that they are moving from place to place. Lanterns can also be used to create the idea of headlights on a car, and if the rest of the stage is dark, the audience don't need to see a car to know the actors are in a moving vehicle. Dynamic light changes can help with the pace of the piece as if the lights change quickly, the audience feel the energy start to pick up. Slow fades have the opposite effect and feel much more calming for the audience.

Colours – Coloured lights can be used as symbols and also to highlight themes. If a character is supposed to be an evil and dark person, then red can be used to symbolise this.

Style – The lighting needs to be used to support the style of the production. The lighting can be used to create the illusion of real life and the audience should feel that they have experienced those lights in their everyday life. If the piece is more abstract, the lighting can be used in many interesting and varying ways to create theatrical effects.

Focussing - Focussing the lights is where the lighting team can make the edge of the beam tight or soft.

Bright or Dim – The intensity of the lights will not be the same for every single scene. Intensity can indicate the seasons or time of day to the audience and need to be varied during a production to make it more interesting.

Positions - Lights/lanterns can be positioned to face all different kinds of directions. Footlights may be used on stage to point up at the performers or can be used to cast shadows onto the back wall of the set.

Special Effects – These are created by manipulating the way the lights work. A flash or light can be used to suggest that there is a lightning storm and changing from warm to cool lights can give the image of a sunset.

Gobo – A stencil that is placed in a lantern to manipulate the shapes the light can make. Using a gobo can create the image or sunlight through trees or camouflage on the ground.

Transitions – This is the movement between lighting states. Crossfades (gradually changes to another state) are very common and are a softer way of transitions from state to state. However, if you require something to change very quickly, then you can use a snap (quickly replacing the previous state) and the lighting state will transition immediately into the next.

SOUND DESIGN –

The sound design of a show can enhance the mood, atmosphere, emotions and style of the show. Sound effects can help with the naturalistic style of a show and music can help enhance emotions portrayed by the characters.

Mood and Atmosphere – in an emotional scene between two characters, the sad mood can be enhanced with the right type of music using stringed instruments. To enhance the drama, darker music can heighten the tension.

Context – Music has varied over the years, so choosing and appropriate score can help to support the time period. If a piece is set during the 70's then choosing music such as disco, funk and soulful music would help to support the historical context. Using specific sound effects can also help with portraying the time period such a noise for a horse and carriage in Victorian England.

Time of Day – Is the piece is naturalistic in style, along with lighting, sounds can also be used to show time passing throughout the day. Using the sounds of birds in the morning can help to create the full picture.

Pace – If the scene being played in front of the audience is tense, the music can help to keep the pace driving forward.

Character Personality – In English, pathetic fallacy is something where the weather can be used to enhance the mood of the scene. Similarly, music can be used the give the audience an indication as to what a character's personality is truly like. If there is a villainous, evil character in a pantomime, there could potentially be an ominous dark underscore every time they enter.

Sound Effects – sound effects are useful to help create realism – wind outside, rain, thunder, people talking.

Diegetic or non-diegetic – Diegetic is a sound that a character can actively hear within their world on stage. Non-diegetic is sound that exits beyond the world of the piece. So, the audience can hear this sound but the characters can't. This may be little bits of narration or underscoring music to add to the emotion – this means the actors on stage will not react to these sounds.

Live or Recorded – live music would require the piece to use actor-musicians who play on stag themselves, singers to provide the vocals or they could use a band/orchestra that are in the pit in front of the stage. This would require a larger budget, so most of the time music is recorded to save on costs and it is easier for the Stage Manager to cue them in, rather than working with live musicians.

Underscores – this is when music is used underneath scenes or dialogue to help convey atmosphere.

Mixing – This is when sounds can be layered over the top of each other and can be done live or wit pre-recorded sounds.

Amplifying – this is about increasing how far the sound reaches in a theatre. This can be done by using speakers.

Direction – sounds travel in numerous directions but positions amplifiers in different parts of the auditorium. By placing the speakers all around the audience, you fully submerge them in the sounds.

Transitions – music may be used to help with the scene changes within the piece. It can be used to speed up the pace or make the changes happen smoothly.

Volume – this is how loud or quiet the sound can be during the piece. The volume can be changed for dramatic effect and can make a slow increase through an intense scene or piece of movement.

UNDERSTANDING THE QUESTION –

One part of the drama written exam is to evaluate a piece of live theatre that you have seen. Usually, you will be given an option of questions which will focus on he following areas – actors, costume design, lighting design or sound design.

Important notes –

1. Read the question carefully and underline key words that tell you exactly what the examiners are looking for in your answer.
2. Make a plan for your answer.
3. Include words from the question in your answer if you can – if it is asking how a certain aspect was used to "communicate meaning" to an audience, make sure to use those words in your response.

You may be asked to – **DESCRIBE, ANALYSE OR EVALUATE**

DESCRIBE –

Lots of detail is needed here – you need to go into detail about a specific moment in the performance and remember to use formal terminology when referring to different things. Make your answer very specific and not generalised description and think about a performer's vocal/physical skills for their character, how the set impacted the moment, how costume was used successfully, what lighting helped to enhance the moment and if music was used, how it affected you.

ANALYSE –

This is where you need to look at the moment objectively and break it down to try and identify how they created something. If you're analysing a performer and they increased their vocal volume at a certain moment, you need to discuss how this supported their intention or how it helped you to understand how they were feeling. Once you have described a moment within the piece, analysing helps to understand why if happened.

EVALUATING –

This is where you are being asked to make a judgement from the analysis you have given. It is a personal judgement as to why it was successful or not and if it communicated the right meaning to the audience.

POINT – THE ACTOR USED PHYSICAL SKILLS TO SUPPORT THEIR CHARACTERISATION OF THEIR CHARACTER.

DESCRIBE – TELL ME A MOMENT WITHIN THE PIECE WHERE THEIR CHARACTER WAS VERY CLEAR, BRIEFLY GIVING ME A SUMMARY OF THE MOMENT.

ANALYSE – WHAT DID THIS MOVEMENT SHOW ABOUT THEIR CHARACTER? DID IT SHOW THAT THEY WERE DETERMINED, PROUD, NERVOUS, EXCITED, IN PAIN?

EVALUATE – THEIR MOVEMET WAS EFFECTIVE BECAUSE... THE CHARACTER WAS COMMUNICATED AS BEING ELDRLY, PHYSICALLY FIT, YOUNG, BOLD... THEIR MOVEMENT AND PHYSICLITY HELPED TO COMMUNICATE... I FOUND THIS TRULY ENGAGING AND EMOTIVE.

KEY MOMENTS –

In theatre, everything is designed or done to communicate something to an audience member. It is important to think about thing you enjoyed during the piece and moments that worked well.

Making notes during or after the performance can help to keep the piece alive in your mind and fresh.

Have a think about the following things –

Performers –

How do the audience identify the characters?

Do the actors multirole?

Do they actors share roles and how do they do this?

How would you describe the style of acting?

Are their any actors who stand out to you and why?

How do these actors use their vocal skills to communicate their emotions or intentions?

What vocal techniques are used throughout the show?

How do these actors use physicality to communicate their character, personality or emotions to the audience?

Do any of the performers use physical theatre in the scenes?

Are any of the actors' performances more stylised?

Are there any ensemble moments you felt were strong?

Are their any visual images created during the piece?

Plot –

What happens in the overall story?

Can you break the story down into scenes?

Is the story arc clear?

How are the transitions worked in to move from scene to scene?

Are there any themes or symbols present?

Can you pick out any particular moments that stood out to you? Think about tension, suspense, conflict, love, sadness and how these things have impacted you.

Sound –

Was there music used within the show?

Did the moments that had music support the action that was going on at the time?

Did the music support your understanding of the action?

What was the style of the music used?

Were there any sound effects used in the show?

What do you feel these effect had on the moments when the were used?

Set –

Was the set naturalistic in style, minimalistic or abstract in design?

What was the main setting?

How was the set used to create new environments and places?

What colours were used within the set?

Were there any levels used?

Were there any special effects as part of the set? (CYC with shadows etc)

Was the set visually pleasing?

How did the set suit the time period and themes of the production?

What pieces of furniture moved and served more than one purpose?

Lighting –

How does the lighting create different atmospheres?

How is the lighting used to show setting?

How is the lighting used to show times of day?

How was the lighting used to pull focus to a performer or certain part of the stage?

Can you identify any special effects that were used in the lighting? E.G. lighting flashes, to show cars moving down a road, gobo's etc.

Costume –

How do the costumes help to represent the characters?

Do the costumes support the time period?

What colours are used to reflect the characters?

Do the characters change their costumes at all?

Do the actors have to do any quick changes?

If actors multirole, do their costumes effectively support each character?

PICKING KEY MOMENTS –

1. Try to select 4 or 5 moments in the production where key things happen. It may be when two characters meet for the first time, or when a revelation is made, an argument or confrontation, a slow-motion fight or where special effects are used. E.G. in Frankenstein by Mary Shelley, you may focus on any of these moments – the creature being born, the creature meeting De Lacey, the lesson in the snow, the confrontation in the alps, the ending scene.

2. Within each of these moments, identify the key things that happen. For example – in the creature being born in Frankenstein, you could talk about when he stands for the first time, taking his first steps, running for the first time and playing with the umbilical chord.

3. Think about the actors' uses of physicality – facial expression, gait, posture, gesture, stillness, pace. Make notes on these things about the specific actors in your scene.

4. Think about the actors' uses of voice – volume, pitch, pace, tempo, pause, emphasis. Make notes on these things about the specific actors in your scene.

5. Now think about how these moments and the actors' skills helped to communicate meaning and intention to the audience. Try and comment on whether you feel the actors were successful in portraying this moment. E.G. The character's frustration and determination to stand up after being born was communicated well and it was evident, he struggled to take the first step. The movements wee effective because as the audience, we sympathise with him and want to be able to help him as he is essentially a baby who is all alone.

STRUCTURING A RESPONSE –

SCENE, ACTING STYLE, HOW DO THESE THINGS COMMUNICATE MEANING OR CREATE A MEMORABLE MOMENT, WHAT IS YOUR RESPONSE?

Introduction –

Play title

Venue

Director

Writer

Style of piece

Short detail on the plot

Introduce the actors or characters that you believed used their physical/vocal skills successfully.

Key scene 1 – E.G. Creature being born in Frankenstein

Micro moment 1 - E.G. Standing for the first time

Explain what happens briefly in the key moment

Analyse the physical or vocal skills used by the actor

What techniques were used

Evaluate the use of physical or vocal skills used by actor as to why they were good, your personal reaction and how you felt in the moment.

Micro moment 2 – E.G. running for the first time

Explain what happens briefly in the key moment

Analyse the physical or vocal skills used by the actor

What techniques were used

Evaluate the use of physical or vocal skills used by actor as to why they were good, your personal reaction and how you felt in the moment.

Key scene 2 – E.G. Confrontation in the Alps

Micro moment 3 - E.G. Dr Frankenstein encounters the monster

Explain what happens briefly in the key moment

Analyse the physical or vocal skills used by the actor

What techniques were used

Evaluate the use of physical or vocal skills used by actor as to why they were good, your personal reaction and how you felt in the moment.

Micro moment 4 – E.G. monster attacks Frankenstein

Explain what happens briefly in the key moment

Analyse the physical or vocal skills used by the actor

What techniques were used

Evaluate the use of physical or vocal skills used by actor as to why they were good, your personal reaction and how you felt in the moment.

Conclusion –

A brief round up of your thoughts and reaffirm whether the actor/actors were successful in portraying that specific moment through their vocal skill, physical skills or character interaction. Perhaps you could mention your overall view of the production to finish off.

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE –

1. Analyse and evaluate how vocal skills were used by on actor in two extracts to communicate meaning to the audience.
2. Analyse and evaluate how movement skills were used in key scenes to communicate meaning to the audience.
3. Describe how one or more actors used their vocal and physical skills to show how their character develops.
4. Describe how sound was used to create tension for the audience. Analyse and evaluate how successful the sound was in creating tension for the audience.
5. Describe how either the set or lighting was used to add to the overall effect of the production for the audience. Analyse and evaluate how successful either the set or lighting was in adding to the overall effect of the production.
6. Analyse and evaluate how one actor used vocal or physical skills to communicate meaning to the audience in two key moments.

BLACKEYED THEATRE

Blackeyed Theatre is one of the UK's leading mid-scale touring theatre companies. Since 2004 we have been creating exciting opportunities for artists and audiences by producing theatre that's audacious, accessible and memorable. Blackeyed Theatre has two principal objectives through the work it produces; to provide audiences and artists with fresh, challenging work; and to make that work sustainable by reaching as wide and diverse an audience as possible. Over the past few years, Blackeyed Theatre has balanced these artistic and business objectives by creating new, exciting versions of established classics in unique ways and by identifying relevance with today's audiences.



Recent examples of this include the 2015 production of The Great Gatsby, whose cast of seven doubled up as a 1920s jazz band, and the 2012 production of Brecht's Mother Courage And her Children, set in a post-apocalyptic world, designed to establish relevance with 21st century world events.

Recent new commissions include *Jane Eyre, The Sign of Four* and *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll & Mr. Hyde* (all by Nick Lane), *Frankenstein* and *Dracula* (both by John Ginman), as well as *The Great Gatsby* (by Stephen Sharkey), which was published by Methuen.

In 2014, Blackeyed's production of *Not About Heroes* by Stephen MacDonald toured to 45 UK theatres. Combining newly commissioned music and projection, this was a highly theatrical, multi-sensory production of an established classic.

Other touring productions include *Teechers* (John Godber), *The Trial* (Steven Berkoff), *Oh What A Lovely War* (Theatre Workshop), *Alfie* (Bill Naughton), *The Cherry Orchard* (Anton Chekhov), *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (Bertolt Brecht), the world premiere of *Oedipus* (Steven Berkoff) and *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* (Bertolt Brecht).

In 2009 Blackeyed Theatre became an associate company of South Hill Park Arts Centre, and in 2011 it launched its first new writing scheme, Pulse, with the intention to provide a new writer with the opportunity to see their work produced professionally on stage. The winning play, The Beekeeper, was performed initially at South Hill Park in Bracknell before transferring to Waterloo East Theatre in London for a three week run, where it received three Off West End Theatre Award nominations.

We strive to make our work sustainable by producing theatre that audiences want to see in ways that challenge their expectations, by bringing together artists with a genuine passion for the work they produce, and through an appreciation that titles of work with a wide appeal can still be performed in ways that push artistic boundaries. In short, it's about following audiences but also leading them, being affordable and responsive to demand while innovating and challenging expectations.