



shared*experience*

A detailed illustration in a painterly style. The central figure is a woman with dark, curly hair, looking upwards with a contemplative expression. Her hands are raised to her head. To her left is a tree with white flowers and red fruit. The background is a mix of dark and light tones, suggesting a night or twilight setting. The overall mood is surreal and evocative.

**ANGELA CARTER'S
THE MAGIC
TOYSHOP**

DRAMATISATION BY BRYONY LAVERY



THE MAGIC TOYSHOP

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THE MAGIC TOYSHOP

ANGELA CARTER

Angela Carter was born in 1940 in Eastbourne. She began her writing career as a journalist on a South London Weekly, the Croydon Advertiser. Later she studied English Literature at the University of Bristol, and then began to write cultural criticism for New Society, The New Statesmen and other publications.

Angela Carter's work was widely praised. She was the author of more than a half dozen novels and a polemical study of the Marquis de Sade, "The Sadeian Woman." Her novels included "The Magic Toyshop", "Several Perceptions", "Nights of the Circus" and "Wise Children".

British critics often describe Angela Carter's writing style as "magic realism", but she believed the label was not quite accurate. In a 1986 interview with The New York Times, she said: "It's more realism than not. I can't define it until after it's done except that it is definitely fiction. It's more in the genre of Latin American writers like Garcia Marquez and Borges.

She died of cancer in February 1992 at her home in London. She was 51 years old. She is survived by her husband, Mark Pearce, and a son, Alexander.





Angela Carter, 1942 - 92:

A Very Good Wizard, a Very Dear Friend

by Salmon Rushdie

I first met Angela Carter at a dinner in honour of the Chilean writer Jose Donoso at the home of Liz Calder, who then published all of us. My first novel was soon to be published; it was the time of Angela's darkest novel, "The Passion of New Eve". And I was a great fan. Mr Donoso arrived looking like a Hispanic Buffalo Bill, complete with silver goatee, fringed jacket and cowboy boots, and proceeded, as I saw it, to patronise Angela terribly. His apparent ignorance of her work provoked me into long expostulation in which I informed him that the woman he was talking to was the most brilliant writer in England. Angela liked that. By the end of the evening, we liked each other, too. That was almost eighteen years ago. She was the first great writer I ever met, and she was one of the best, most loyal, most inspiring friends anyone could ever have. I cannot bear it that she is dead.

After we heard about the cancer, I rang her up and we talked about it. I said, "Angela, there's only one thing for it. You've just got to beat it, that's all" "yeah" she said in a long, black drawl, "but what about my strong streak of Oriental fatalism?" I said: "No, listen. I'm the Oriental in this family. Would you please leave the fatalism to me, and just bloody well win?" "Oh" she said, as if someone had just surprised her with a good suggestion, "O.K.". And then she fought like the very devil, fought death with all her strength and all her courage, but also with her wit, her humour, her sense of ridiculousness, her anger. Death snarled at her she gave it the finger. Death tore at her and she stuck out her tongue. And in the end she lost. But she also won, because in her furious laughter, in her blazing satirizing of her own dying, her deflation of what Henry James so pompously entitled the "Distinguished Thing", she cut death down to size: no distinguished thing, but a grubby little murderous clown. After showing us how to write, after helping us see how to live, she showed us how to die.

I repeat: Angela Carter was a great writer. I repeat this because in spite of her worldwide reputation, here in Britain she somehow never quite had her due. Of

course, many writers knew that she was that rare thing, a real one-off, nothing like her on the planet; and so did many bewitched readers. But for some reason she was not placed where she belonged - at the centre of literature of her time, at the heart. Now that she's dead, I have no doubt that the size of her achievement will rapidly become plain. How sad that writers must die before we grant them their place in the pantheon. Of course, Angela Carter knew who she was. But we could have told her, more loudly and more often than we did, that we knew too.

Too many of the world's finest writers have been dying young lately. Italo Calvino, Bruce Chatwin, Raymond Carver and now Angela have been silenced when their voices were in the middle of their songs.

With Angela Carter's death English Literature has lost its high sorceress, its benevolent witch-queen, a burlesque artist of genius and antic grace. Those of us who have lost a friend can scarcely believe that there will be no more two - hour telephone chats with that voice that could soar to heights of scatological passion or swoop, at her most lethal moments, down into a sort of little girl coo. Deprived of the Fairy Queen, we cannot find the magic that would heal us. Nor do we wish to be healed, just yet. We sit gazing into the huge hole her death has left, and, as we gaze into the crater of our loss, we remember.

She died on February 16th. Three weeks before that I gave Angela a long essay I'd written about one of her favourite films, "The Wizard of Oz" and asked her if I might dedicate it to her. She agreed. I never found out if she was ever able to read it, which is sad. But at least in that dedication I was able to say a little of what I felt. When Dorothy asks the good witch Glinda if the Wizard of Oz is good or bad, Glinda replies that he is "a very good Wizard...but very mysterious". The Wizard of Oz turns out to be a fraud. But Angela Carter was, indeed, a very good Wizard, perhaps even the First Wizard Deluxe. A very good Wizard, and a very dear friend.



REBECCA GATWARD THE DIRECTOR

I first read *The Magic Toyshop* as a teenager when the book grabbed my imagination, and it has held on ever since. Fifteen years old and on the brink of physical womanhood, 'The Journey of Melanie', through upheavals, isolation, and new relationships, is a journey most of us recognise and connect with. They are delicate years where we search for meaning, structure and a sense of self. It is hard work. Just like Melanie, I can remember thinking, "Oh, I wish I was forty and it was all over and I knew what was going to happen to me!"

Add to the teenage mix the death of her parents, and the responsibility of being the eldest of three siblings, and you have a cocktail of confusing emotions. Melanie, her brother, and sister are forced to leave their idyllic home in the country and go and live with their uncle in London. Melanie's uncle is a toy maker and she is transported to a world which should be magical and childlike - surrounded by objects which fire the imagination. However her uncle is a tyrant, who rules the roost with a grip of iron. She has been sent to a world of harsh rules where self expression is forbidden, where children and even adults, but particularly women, can be seen but not heard. Uncle Philip's Irish wife stopped talking on the day of their wedding and has not uttered a word since.

Surrounded by this strangeness, and restriction, the grieving Melanie retreats inside herself. It is almost as though Melanie is forced back in time in order to progress into the future. It is as if she has to start again. The happy, expressive and blossoming girl of the first chapter all but gone.

But this is all part of her growing up, as she is thrown, for the first time, into the world of Men. Men in their various guises. The tyrannical patriarch, the strong gentle man and the wily, shape shifting and strangely attractive Finn. This is a rite of passage story, a sexual awakening, a move towards independence but away from isolation.

The domestic story of *The Magic Toyshop* is echoed on a mythic level. The novel plays with images from the Old Testament book of Genesis. Here, however, we start with Eve's temptation in the garden. By wearing the wedding dress Melanie is tasting The Tree of Knowledge too soon. Her punishment is to be thrust onto the ark as the whole of the known world is washed away. As the waters recede the tension inside the ark builds, giving way to its final violent destruction. We are left with the moment of creation, as Adam and Eve stand ready to meet the new world in the garden.

© Rebecca Gatward





SHARED EXPERIENCE **EXPRESSIONISM**

Shared Experience are committed to creating theatre which goes beyond our everyday lives, giving form to the hidden world of emotion and imagination. We see the rehearsal process as a genuinely open forum for asking questions and taking risks that redefine the possibilities of performance. At the heart of our work is the power and excitement of the performer's physical presence and the unique collaboration between actor and audience - a shared experience.

In our everyday lives we hide much of what we think and feel, for fear we would be considered foolish or even mad. I believe we have a longing to see expressed in the theatre that which we conceal in life; to share our 'madness' and understand that we are not alone.

Central to Shared Experience's approach is the desire to go beyond naturalism and to see into the character's private worlds. There will be moments on stage when we literally enact whatever a character is secretly feeling or imagining. In more realistic scenes the social façade is a thin layer beneath which bubbles a river of barely suppressed emotion. During rehearsals we encourage actors to allow this bubbling emotional energy to explode and take over. In a scene where someone is secretly feeling very angry, when we allow the inner to erupt onto the surface they may viciously attack the other person; if the other character is feeling afraid they might crawl under the table. Having allowed the inner to erupt, the actor must return to the scene and struggle to conceal it. Although we may see two people drinking tea, we sense that underneath the social ritual it is as if murder is taking place.

This emphasis on subjective experience runs through all areas of the production. For example, the setting of the play will be more expressive of what a place **feels** like than what it realistically **looks** like. In *Jane Eyre* everything on stage was grey or black to express the loneliness of Jane's inner world. In *War and Peace* the set was a hall of mirrors to suggest the vanity and narcissism of the aristocracy in Tolstoy's Russia. In *The House of Bernarda Alba* the house feels like a prison. We decided to make the door colossally large and encrusted it with locks and bolts. It is this emphasis on the 'inner' or the subjective experience which characterises expressionism and it is at the heart of Shared Experience's approach.

Polly Teale



ADAPTING THE NOVEL

- adapter:*
1. *i. one who fits, makes suitable*
ii. one who alters, so as to fit for a new use
 2. *a connecting part.[in Chem. a tube joining two pieces of apparatus]*

Shorter Oxford Dictionary

To adapt a book for the stage: first... fall in love with it. With your critical faculties intact [and how easy is that when you're in love?]. No point just liking it. Your relationship is going to be severely tested... you'll need that strong abiding emotion because, Tough Guys, The Going is going to get Tough. Chose wisely. A novel both robust and passionate... Stage work is very physically and emotionally demanding. For example... Angela Carter's *The Magic Toyshop*... first line... The summer she was fifteen, Melanie discovered she was made of flesh and blood.

...within twenty-odd pages, Melanie loses both parents, her home, her security and is hurled into an atmosphere of danger, grief, panic, fear, lust... now here's a novel just panting to get physical...

Then read it over and over again. Enjoy the honeymoon phase... where you want to be in your chosen one's presence every moment, where you think about her when she's not there... when you run to meet her every morning.

Listen. These novel types use a lot of words. They're much more chatty than you playwright types (you silent, but physically expressive devils you!) So listen. Finally, you're going to give her just two hours to say her piece. You'll need to know when she's just going on. Be vigilant. These novel types are sneaky. They reveal some adorable bits of themselves one day, their dark side just when you think they are going to be a breeze. You may be called upon to sack, dump and even murder. You are not going to be always in harmony. Dress for lively fights.

Okay, the honeymoon is over. You are at the stage of a love affair when you want to change her. Not You. You're Perfect. But remember, Lover or Not, you are just the junior partner. The plot and characters and themes were hers before all this and will be hers after the divorce. They are Not Yours. Be Gentle but Firm with Them. You don't want to come out of this as The Wicked Stepmother.

Take her out on stage. She may never have been there before, so she may resist. She may be awkward at first. She may need to know when to enter a scene, when to exit. She may need to be shown how to speak to an audience. Help her, but as little as possible. She is a Great Writer. Trust her.

**The
summer
she was
fifteen,
Melanie
discovered
she was
made of
flesh and
blood**



THE MAGIC TOYSHOP

Remember, in affairs like these, Be Quiet. In your case... Silence is Golden. Don't draw attention to yourself. Only speak if you really have to. The audience has come to hear and see her. She is capable of images like these "Flocks of brown-feathered perhaps flapped ragged, witless wings against the windows. She could hear their clucking and squawking"... Stay off stage, Junior.

If however You need help, Remember, You Are Not Alone. She just had some paper and a typewriter... You have some wonderful, physically-adept, smart, bright actors... a clever director, an imaginative designer... music, lights... The Magic Of Theatre! Boldly Go.

And if, at the end, after the trip to London, living in the toyshop, surviving the flood the fight the fire...she goes back between the covers of her book, and you are left alone, Be Of Good Cheer,. Remember, there are many more pebbles on the beach... many more books on the shelf... and, for a few months, you and A Great Novelist have, in her words... once...

“At night, in the garden..faced each other in a wild surmise.”

Bryony Lavery

Exercise

Read from the novel of 'The Magic Toyshop', the section where Melanie takes her Mothers' wedding dress, tries it on and gets caught locked out in the garden.

Compare this to Bryony Lavery's scene of the same in our production of The Magic Toyshop. What are the key images and themes explored in this scene?





AN INTERVIEW WITH LIZ COOKE THE DESIGNER

1. What were your initial thoughts on reading the play?

That the play describes an extremely rich visual world, that it will be a challenge to evoke it in a non filmic and suggestive way.

That it deals with the dark and cruel side of childhood to adulthood, that the way we portray the toys and the toyshop has to have an entertaining and frightening side...

That it is extremely fluid, moves like a kind of dream, so we could not have large scene changes although the play moves from place to place.

That the play charts the passage from loss of innocence to knowledge, and questions identity. At the beginning Melanie climbs the apple tree and transgresses by wearing her mother's wedding dress. The play seems to begin and end in a kind of 'Garden of Eden'.

2. What scene was the hardest to design?

The whole toyshop location was hard because it immediately strikes one as a kind of doll's house -many floors, bedrooms, basement workshops. However this would be too complicated and too structured for a play which moves around very quickly. So the design process was about making a space of different heights and areas -a dynamic fluid space supporting the actors not restricting them.

The hardest specific thing to design was the style of the puppet theatre and the way the scale of the puppet show grows to the point where Melanie is forced to play a puppet. We have used actors' improvisations to help with this.





3. Do you plan to watch many rehearsals?

Yes, as often as I can. It's very helpful to watch the actor's work, especially when thinking about the clothes they're wearing.

The company are very inventive in their use of the stage and hopefully sometimes I can suggest ideas or let them know what's possible or not in design. It's also very helpful to watch scenes put together because it makes me clarify and sometimes simplify ideas.

4. Do you have a favourite image or scene?

A) The image of an adolescent girl in a garden at night, wearing her Mother's wedding dress and climbing an apple tree is brilliant. I hope I can do it justice!

B) I love the big picture of everyone 'at sea' in the toyshop, as if all were aboard Uncle Philips' ark. I hope the imagery of ships and arks will be clear to the audience.

C) The image of the abandoned pleasure gardens, full of graffiti'd statues.

Question:

What were the strongest images that stood out for you after ;

A) Seeing the play B) Reading the book

Liz Cooke was influenced by the paintings of French artist Balthus, can you see this influence in the final production?



AN INTERVIEW WITH **SUE NASH** MOVEMENT DIRECTOR

1. What are the main challenges physically in this production?

To create the world of the toyshop and the pleasure garden and to discover how to bring to life the important imagery from the novel. That would be things like Jonathan's ship and sea fantasies and the fiery nature of the 'red' people, their music and their dancing.

2. What section do you think will be the most difficult to stage and why?

I think there are two or three really challenging sections and at this point (week 2 of rehearsals) it's hard to pinpoint one in particular. For now I'll choose the first puppet show which brings some good challenges because the story telling is complex and layered. We have to stage the story of Finn and Uncle Philip operating the puppets together, their fight and Finn's fall. We also have to simultaneously make the shipwreck story of the puppets that are playing Sebastian and Viola and the story of Melanie watching the puppet show. No matter how layered and interesting the narrative we always need to prioritise Melanie's experience. We have to create strong layers of narrative but centre on the story of Melanie and we need to use the skills of the performers to create this wonderful complication rather than technical effects.

3. Do you do much research around the themes or do you just work instinctively in the rehearsal room?

I do research especially around sound and visual images so that I have clear ideas about how I will approach specific themes in the rehearsal room. I for example found it useful to do some research about puppets and went to see work that mixed puppets and humans. I read about Angela Carter and looked at some literary criticism of her work. Rebecca (the director) and I also went on a field trip to Crystal Palace and discovered film and photographic evidence of the pleasure gardens as they were in the time frame of the novel and when Angela Carter would have known them. I prepare as much as I can and bring concrete starting points for the work that will be developed with the actors. I really enjoy linking up the big themes tracing them through the details of the piece. In the Magic Toyshop we have, for example, recurring images of fire and water. We were lucky to have almost a week of workshops on the first draft of the script so I could also do practical research with performers finding out how we might achieve staging some of the themes.

Exercise:

The actors and Sue created puppets using each others' bodies, sculpting and practising 'controlling' each other physically.

** In pairs, person A is the sculptor, person B is the raw material! A must create a toy to be sold in the Toyshop by moulding B's body. Sculpt it as a frozen statue, then bring the toy to life.*

How does it move?

What is it made of?

What sounds can it make?

Give it a price tag.

...see page 19 for some ideas.



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AN INTERVIEW WITH **GARY YERSHON** THE COMPOSER

1. Are you using live or recorded music?

Mainly recorded -some live.

2. What instruments will you mainly employ?

The only live instrument is a small harmonium -everything else will be on samplers.

3. What images/scenes in the play inspired you most?

The plane crash, puppet show and the hair combing scene.

4. Is there an 'overall' feeling you wanted to create for the show?

A tense and sinister feel.

5. Are there any specific challenges to overcome?

Budget and time!





THE MAGIC TOYSHOP

ADAM SILVERMAN LIGHTING DESIGNER

1. What images/scenes from the play inspired you the most? And what is the overall feeling you wish to create for 'The Magic Toyshop'?

One of the most inspiring parts of The Magic Toyshop is the journey we take through Melanie's imagination. Melanie carries us along as she discovers herself. This is the challenge to all of us in the creative team.

The lighting must help to tell the story just like the play, the set, the costumes and the music. The lighting is only one element that must reinforce this journey.

The lighting has to speak clearly the joy and happiness, and the fear and loss that Melanie experiences. The lighting must help the audience know where the action takes place. The lighting must help convey the emotional feeling the characters are experiencing or the contrasting feeling the audience should be having.

The lighting can help to tell this story with the combination of several elements: with brightness and shadow, with colour or the lack of colour, and with the movement of light from clarity to obscurity or by growing dazzlingly bright or plunging all into darkness.

All the while the lighting must make the environment of the play and the action taking place before us interesting to look at. Equally importantly is for the lighting to support wholly the aesthetic of the production Gary, Liz, Rebecca and I have chosen to convey.





EXCERPTS FROM THE FIRST WEEK IN REHEARSALS BY ASSISTANT DIRECTOR KATINKA RYDIN BERGE

Tuesday Week One

Shared Experience staff gathered around 'The Magic Toyshop' model-box. The designer Liz Cooke was trying to capture the mythical aspects of Angela Carter's world, symbolised in a vertical arch and a rainbow ladder.

In the afternoon we went on an excursion to Crystal Palace, where the majority of the novel is set. We explored in pairs and took photos of anything we felt fitted the world of the play, for example; the triangle boat-like houses on the top of a hill, the Pleasure Garden itself and the old fashioned shop fronts we felt could have housed our toyshop.

Wednesday Week One

The Choreographer, Sue Nash, and Rebecca Gatward began the day with a physical exploration of the daily routines of all the characters who live above the toyshop. The actors improvised a morning routine for their characters. Then we played with how this sequence could move from having a sleepy quality (i.e. slow motion) into a toylike quality. Each character chose a toy and attempted to bring the 'feel' of their toy into their morning routine. Working like this we discovered just how important Uncle Philip's actions were to the rest of the household. He was like a puppet master controlling them all.

Thursday Week One

We explored physically the relationship between a puppet-actor and a puppeteer. We found various ways of exploring this: in pairs, person A would blow on person B in order to make them move. Communicating A's intentions only through breath not touch. We then tried touch but with the 'puppet' having their eyes shut. Rebecca asked the actors to individually create puppets with simple objects. Exploring these puppets physicality helped feed our imagination about the puppets in the play. When sound was added, we discovered the puppeteer became much more visible and was therefore a third person in the spectators' relationship to the puppet. Liz Cooke (the designer) led us through a workshop on creating puppets out of paper, which produced a fantastic swan puppet manoeuvred by the whole company.

We created a puppet show of Sebastian and Violas' parting scene. Two or three actors controlled the two leather middle-sized puppets. Over the puppets, Philip and Finn pulled imaginary strings.



Exercises

In pairs, experiment on how you as performers could develop a non verbal language. Try the use of breath, Katinka describes in Thursday's diary, as an instruction - A blows on an area of B's body and B moves according to the quality of the breath. Experiment with different qualities of breath. Can Person A get person B to do what movement they want simply by blowing on them in different ways rather than touching?

Try sounds or very subtle touching.

In a crowded room (Maybe 10 pairs) can you still follow and understand your partner?





INTERVIEWS WITH **THE ACTORS**

JONATHAN PLAYED BY JONATHAN BROADBENT

* **Can you choose 3 words to describe your character?**

Obsessive, particular and distracted.

* **What scene do you either as your character or as you the actor find the most challenging and why?**

The rape of Melanie: it's a very fine balance to get it right and it's not a nice thing to have to do.

* **If your character hadn't died in the fire, what do you think would have happened to him?**

He would have taken over Uncle Philip's business.

* **Is it different working for Shared Experience to other theatre companies?**

Very as it's much more creatively challenging. The actor is at the centre of the process rather than a 'design concept'. This allows (and demands!) that the actor makes bolder and more interesting choices.

UNCLE PHILIP PLAYED BY JOHN STAHL

* **Can you choose 3 words to describe you character?**

Evil, fixated and talented.

* **What scene do you either as your character or as you the actor find the most challenging and why?**

At this point in time (early on in rehearsals) I find everything challenging which is a glorious feeling. I think my character finds the discovery of his wife in her brother's arms challenging because he has had feelings for his own sister which either weren't reciprocated or were considered by him and/or her to be taboo - and he cannot come to terms with this.

* **If your character hadn't died in the fire, what do you think would have happened to him?**

He would go insane!



VICTORIA PLAYED BY HARRIETTE ASHCROFT

- * **Can you choose 3 words to describe your character?**

Happy, absorbed, easily distracted.

- * **What scene do you either as your character or as you the actor find the most challenging and why?**

The arrival of the children at the toyshop as it's when I as Victoria realize that I no longer have a home and that I want my Mummy and Daddy back.

MARGARET PLAYED BY PENNY LAYDEN

- * **Can you choose 3 words to describe your character?**

Quiet, desperate and warm.

- * **What scene do you either as your character or as you the actor find the most challenging and why?**

As an actor, I think all the scenes that Margaret is in are difficult, having to find a language without words. As actors we instinctively want to communicate, so playing someone that doesn't is very hard.

As Margaret, I think that the puppet scenes are the most difficult because there is so much at stake and she has to keep check of so many different elements, e.g keeping Philip happy, keeping Victoria quiet etc.

FRANCIE PLAYED BY SIMON WALTER

- * **Can you choose 3 words to describe your character?**

Dependable, tender and gentle.

- * **What scene do you either as your character or as you the actor find the most challenging and why?**

Dancing with Margaret and Finn, the other 'red' people, trying to create a non-literal sense of a musical language, without words between the three of them.

As actors we instinctively want to communicate, so playing someone that doesn't is very hard.



THE MAGIC TOYSHOP

MELANIE PLAYED BY HANNAH WATKINS

* **Can you choose 3 words to describe your character?**

Strong willed, passionate and imaginative.

* **What scene do you either as your character or as you the actor find the most challenging and why?**

The bits where I have to come out of the scene and narrate to the audience with no emotion from the scene - it's difficult to switch out of the high emotion etc to disengage yourself and talk to the audience.

* **What do you think happens to your character after the 'play' finishes?**

Finn and Melanie are tied to each other by the end of the play so whatever happens after the play finishes they do it together.

FINN PLAYED BY DAMIAN O'HARE

* **Can you choose 3 words to describe your character?**

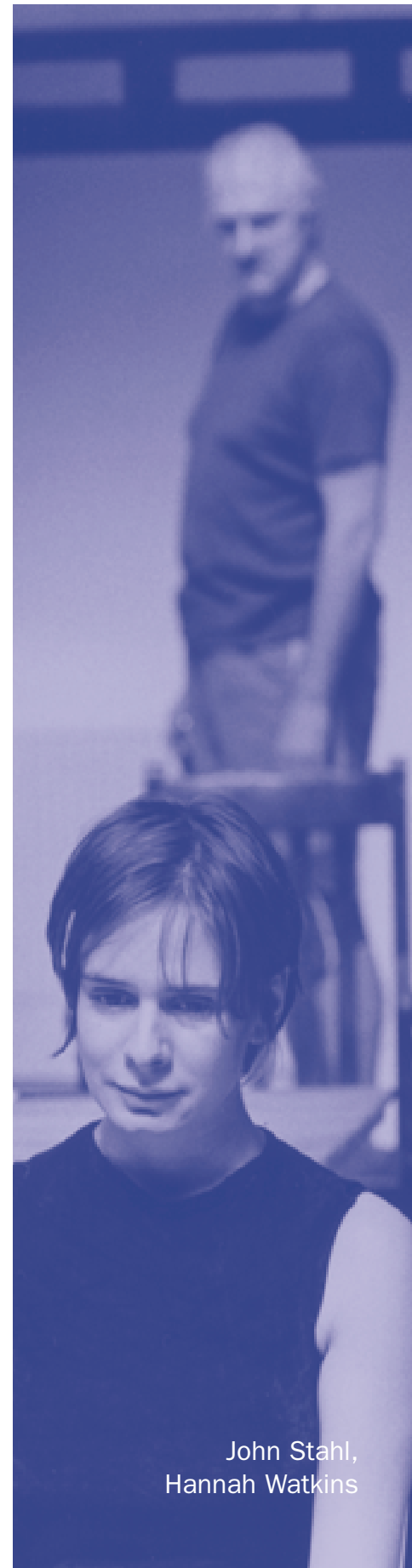
Honest, brave, adventurous.

* **What scene do you either as your character or as you the actor find the most challenging and why?**

The party scene I find difficult as an actor and as the character because there is so much going on within the scene. The party is a release for the characters- lots of hysterics and jubilation- all very tiring!

* **Is it different working for Shared Experience to other theatre companies?**

Yes. There is a great sense of play in the rehearsal room which is encouraged through various workshops and improvisations. It is completely different from other theatre companies I've worked with and a refreshing change.



John Stahl,
Hannah Watkins



TOYS

During rehearsals the actors created different ‘toys’ using their bodies. The Assistant Director went to the Museum of Childhood in Bethnal Green to find out more information on old toys that may have been found in Uncle Philip’s toyshop.

JUMPING JACKS

Jumping jacks are flat, jointed dolls made of wood or card. In eighteenth century France this doll was known as a ‘pantin’ and it became a trend among fashionable women to own one. Variations on the Jumping Jack were the ‘Jigging Puppets’ that rest on a springy board. The puppet can be made to move if the board is shaken.

JACK-IN THE BOX

In the sixteenth century the Jack -in-the Box was referred to as the Punch-Box which implies the toy may have originally been based on the character from Punch and Judy Puppet shows. Certainly the features of the Jack-in-the Box’s face are often very similar to those of Punch. The Jack-in-the-Box was very popular in the Victorian era but today the idea is still very popular with makers of contemporary toys.





DOLL'S HOUSES

The first recorded Doll's House was made in 1558 for a Bavarian Duke who commissioned it for his daughter. In seventeenth century Germany, doll's houses were made to teach girls how to manage a home.

It was not until the nineteenth century, that doll's houses moved firmly into the realm of toys for children. Accessories for the interior, such as dinner sets, glassware and food were growing in popularity and becoming more and more decorative.

TOY THEATRE

To make a Toy Theatre, children bought a printed sheet which included a decorative proscenium, characters, scenery and a shortened version of the play or pantomime. They stuck everything on to card and attached the proscenium to a wooden frame. The sheets were sold for one old penny with black and white illustrations or ready coloured for two old pennies. Toy theatres often inspired children to write their own plays and make their own characters.

NOAH'S ARK

The manufacture of wooden toys began in the forest regions of Germany. It was usual for several toymakers to be involved in making a single toy. For example one person might specialise in carving, the other in painting. Noah's Ark was very popular in Victorian Britain, where its religious associations gave it an advantage over other toys - it could be played with on a Sunday!





SCENE STUDY

SCENE 21 - THE SWAN

The theatre space...

Melanie: I'm under rehearsed

*Francie: You'll do fine
Don't shilly shally
girly*

it's nearly curtain-up time

Melanie: Oh Francie

Francie: His bark is worse than his bite

*Philip: All right
Get behind the curtains*

Three chairs are set.

Sign "Grand Xmas Novelty Show - art and nature combine with Philip Flower to bring you a Unique Phenomenon"

*Take your clodhopping shoes off
You silly bitch!*

Music!

Francie plays "Swan Lake" in the style of Grand Hotel on Sunday Night radio...

*Philip:(reads) Leda gathers shells by the shore
In the approaching dusk; little does she
Know that Almighty Jove has picked her out
To be his mate.*

Finn throws a switch. Stage filled with a brownish gloaming. Spotlight transfixes Melanie

Get started, what's yer name!

She picks up shells

Melanie: What shall I do with them all?



Hannah Watkins



**Philip beats on a metal sheet with a stick. She drops them all.
And then the swan comes on.
Huge, parodies, eccentric..
She runs away as rehearsed..
Its wings wave**

Melanie: That's clever

It waddles purposefully towards her..

*Philip:(reads) "Leda attempts to flee her
Heavenly visitant but his beauty and
Majesty bear her to the ground"*

Melanie: Well I must lie down

Swan settles its belly on her feet..

*She had last heard this music
When her father took her to the
Covent Garden Opera House
For an end of term treat..*

Looking up she could see Uncle Philip directing the swan's movements

*Philip:(reads) Almighty Jove in the form
Of the swan wrecks his will*

*Melanie: it's wings now beat strongly
stirring her hair
she could see nothing after this*

**the swan settles on her loins... she tries to get rid of it but the wings
come down like a tent... its head comes forward and settles in her
neck... she is screaming and screaming... kicking...**

Melanie: there were feathers in her mouth!

*She heard the curtains swish and
Thought it was the sound of the sea*

blackness.





THE MAGIC TOYSHOP

Discussion:

Divide into small groups of about 5 or 6. Together read and discuss this scene.

Why has Uncle Philip chosen this particular story to enact in his toy theatre?

Why has he chosen Melanie to play Leda?

What does he hope to achieve by this?

Come back together as a class group and compare your answers.

What atmosphere do you feel we created in our production with this scene?



WRITING A **REVIEW**

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING A REVIEW

Say what you saw
Say what you think
Reflect on your responses
Write freely from the heart

Don't worry about given theories
Create your own theories

Describe the tiniest moment that remains vivid
Question that moment
Find out what it says to you
Say why it spoke to you

CONSIDER

The light, the sound, the movement, the colours and textures of the play
The words, the music, the rhythms of the text
The set, the costumes, the style of the production

The Objects:
The model boat
The telescope
The aeroplane
The Wedding dress
The Ark and Figures
The puppets
The suitcases

The themes
The characters
The story
The ending...

(and try to say everything you want in just 300 words!)

SEND YOUR REVIEW TO...

Shared Experience Theatre, The Soho Laundry
9 Dufour's Place, London W1V 1FE

or e-mail: katesaxon@setheatre.co.uk





PARALLEL STUDIES

NOVELS

Any Magic Realism novel, suggested authors: Salmon Rushdie, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Isabelle Allende... and of course, Angela Carter

MUSEUMS/PLACES TO VISIT

Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood
Kew Gardens (To see a similar 'Crystal Palace')
Crystal Palace (town and park)

YOUTH, EDUCATION, TRAINING & ACCESS

The company's Youth Theatre, based at the Laundry and supported by Westminster City Council, is a hotbed of creativity. Young Performers come to stretch their physical and imaginative muscle in courses led by artists from within the company. It runs a wide variety of workshops and projects designed to put members in touch with the physical style of the main company's work.

Contact Kate Saxon, Education and Youth Director at Shared Experience on **020 7434 9248**
katesaxon@setheatre.co.uk

