

**Black Theatre Live -  
Three-day Outreach Workers Training  
Programme  
January 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> 2015**

**BLACK  
THEATRE  
LIVE**



## Notes

### Reflection Wall - (Post it exercise)

- Audiences you might work with -
- Your thoughts and questions -
- What are you getting out of it?
- What could be better?

### Post its

- How do outreach workers ensure that the learning work is fully supported in their venue
- Nothing is what it seems - the challenge of BTL and Macbeth
- Iambic rhythm deed um conversation - adding words
- Themes, politics
- Talks with older people (U3a/W1 etc.) with someone from the cast
- Accessing young people (& parents) via schools (or youth theatre) - practical workshops on family ambition, aspirations, rivalry etc.
- Visceral language
- Images video clips of Hijras
- Families -sibling rivalries

### Games Wall

- Gecko clap game
- 20 second objects
- Shakespearean insults
- Jungle game
- My name is Joe, Bungalow, Physician, Warm-up songs
- Look down, look up (Scream)
- Engage with words (Pick out one word from a line)
- Werewolves
- Freeze-frame, sculpting, tableaux
- Clapping games as a starting point (Non-verbal)
- Shakespeare - zip zap boing
- Diddly dum
- Sorry I'm late for work
- Shakespeare - 3 lines devise a scene
- Ba ba ba ma ma
- Apple pie, custard

## Jatinder Verma's artistic vision for Macbeth

### MACBETH - SHAKESPEARE, MIGRANTS & THE THIRD SEX

Families are the seat of rivalries, jealousy, ambition as much as love.

I have taken one of the stereotypical perceived virtues of Asians in Britain - family - as the setting for my production, to explore how ambition tips over into evil, where murder - however frightening its prospect - is seen as legitimate.

Setting the play in a British-Asian extended family also allows me to envisage the two worlds of Shakespeare's play in a different way. The play's dynamic is created by the interplay between the supernatural world of the Witches and "natural" world of Macbeth.

I echo these two worlds by having a group of Indian hijras interplay with my British-Asian family. The hijras are a Third Sex - legally recognised only in India & Germany at present. Thousands of years old, this provocative community of transsexuals, transgender & castrati, is ubiquitous in India, Pakistan & Bangladesh - blessing ceremonies of birth and marriage, threatening dire outcomes if their wishes are not met, mischievously prophesying fame & fortune. Being outside the norms of gender, they see themselves as part of a spirit world that traces back to the half-man half-woman god, Ardh-narishwar.

All migrants carry two worlds with them - the world they inhabit & the (often faint memory of) the world they or their forbears left behind. And it is that world - of memory, of superstition, of faith, of "identity" - that, for Asians at least, I think exerts as strong a pull as the world they have migrated to.

So, what happens when an Scottish Asian businessman suddenly comes across hijras from Bombay who claim he will don the clan's turban - its crown? Does he dismiss this prophecy from the distant homeland that promises life reminiscent of a Mughal Emperor? Or see in it the confirmation of his own deepest desires?

Using Shakespeare's text, with 8 actors doubling the various roles and 1 musician to drive the play with his drums, this Macbeth can be characterised as modern Britain colliding with ancient India...

## Matthew Xia - Workshop on Alternative Hooks for New Audiences.

Introduction of my work to date including my time spent at Theatre Royal Stratford East, Liverpool Everyman & Playhouse, Young Vic, Manchester Royal Exchange and BBC 1Xtra.

This also went into the hooks, marketing and imagery with various productions.

- Da Boyz (sticker campaign, release of singles, form of the show - a concert)
- The Blacks (Controversial and Provocative image)
- Blackta (Mysterious and provocative imagery)
- Mad Blut (Timely, exploring Knife Crime)
- I Was Looking at the Ceiling and the I Saw the Sky (Imagery, Viral Video)
- Aladdin (Diverse casting)
- Cinderella (Diverse casting)
- Sizwe Banzi Is Dead (Strong mysterious imagery)
- The Sound of Yellow

There was a discussion about what the imagery suggested to potential audience and outreach groups. In some cases we looked at video excerpts of the work. This can of course be used with groups - “what does this image suggest to you” “why is she hiding her face” “what is he holding in his hand, why” etc.

Then we explored some Ice Breakers intended build trust and group cohesion.

- Names (learn the name of the person to your left; introduce yourself and then them as you move around the circle. Then repeat for those on your right and go the other way round the circle. The Facilitator is attempting to learn the names of the entire group during this and then welcomes everyone by name at the end).
- Check-In (explaining how you feel at the end or start of a session using themed metaphorical imagery - a mode of transport, an animal, a geographical feature, a celestial object etc.)
- Sign Name (working out your own individual Sign Language name that represent some aspect of your personality or physicality - then communicating this to the group with out using physicality - just language)
- Face2Face (Sitting in pairs, opposite your partner with a sheet of paper each you have 4 minutes to draw your partners face in as much detail as possible but **without** looking down at the sheet of the paper - spend the 1<sup>st</sup> minute just observing. Then at the end sign your artwork, swap with your partner and allow room for the conversation and reflection)

Then we had a discussion about the aims of working with new audience in an outreach setting and what the hooks are for them:

## Aims:

- **Demystify the content**
- **Demystify the theatrical experience**
- Encourage
- Question
- Provoke
- Engage

## Hooks:

- Story
- Themes
- Content
- Style
- Actors / Creative Team
- Music
- Concept
- Marketing

Then we explored a number of exercises I've used with the aforementioned productions.

- A PROpocation - If you can access a prop or costume item that acts as a provocation or stimulus for conversation. I gave the example of the Passbook from Sizwe Banzi and incredibly painful and evocative item. The idea isn't to explain what it is but to allow others to investigate it's use and then later in the conversation to clarify its usage.
- Object Manipulation - An object with connections to the show is passed from participant to participant and each has to demonstrate some way of using it that isn't its usual use. I presented the example of a Union Jack flag and we played the game. Some of the images which stood out included using it as a noose, a prayer mat, a hijab, a dress ala Ginger Spice, it was vomited up, it was cradled like a baby etc - following this is a conversation about the images that stood out and why.
- Creative Writing Exercises from The Sound Of Yellow - And The... Having written 'And The...' a number of times in list form down the left hand side of a sheet of paper each participant goes into a particular memory with connection to the themes of the show and relying only on their senses observe their environment and then spend some time filling in the list... an example: And the...sun bright on the right, And the...mechanical pencil rocking back and forth on the table, And the...girl fingering her hair for split ends, And the...smell of burnt coffee strong in the air etc.
- We read a scene from a play with very contemporary themes (as all good plays contain) and looked for ways to connect them to the here and now. With Sizwe Banzi this may lead to a conversation about

Immigration or the Home Office, with the play we read from Blues For Mr Charlie this related to the spate of police brutality on unarmed black men in America of recent.

- The final exercise in groups involved creating an exercise that would demystify a play that the group knew well for a group who had never encountered it. Some of the suggestions were around playlists (Romeo and Juliet), exploration of theme with contemporary angles - Macbeth and The House of Cards.

**Also covered briefly:**

- Alecky Blythe's Recorded Delivery Technique, Ensemble work (text and movement).

## Mel Larsen - Reaching New Audiences

See separate pdf reports

1. Free download of my book on Arts Ambassadors:

[http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication\\_archive/a-practical-guide-to-working-with-arts-ambassadors/](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication_archive/a-practical-guide-to-working-with-arts-ambassadors/)

2. Data on general BAME markets in UK (from 2010 so stats are still relevant - see attached doc). There is a link to the doc on this page and a video and interesting case studies too:

<http://www.getmemedia.com/DB/audience-insight/ethnic-and-diversity-marketing.html>

3. Arts Marketing Association doc (over 10 years old now but much of it still relevant - attached):

<http://culturehive.co.uk/resources/opening-doors-developing-black-and-asian-audiences>

Ola Animashawun - 7<sup>th</sup> January 2015

**Ways in - How to get started and how to keep going**

- Warm Up
- Intro - who I am and what I've done and what I do - try to inspire and empower people to write and to tell their stories
- Projects I've worked on - different groups I've worked with
- Looked after children
- Prisoners
- Ex - offenders
- Young Offenders
- Muslim writers
- SE Asian and Chinese writers
- Somali writers
- For the Belgrade Theatre - Polish immigrants; Black Youth theatre - using the groups experiences as the starting point for a play - devised and written
- Over 50's - Watford (Asian Elders) and Pimlico
- Current interest is the family - so many great dramas based on the family - the basic unit for theatre and dramatic action - a great source and everyone can relate to it no matter what
- What is a family is deliciously open to a million and one interpretations.
- What I want to focus on today is tools for getting people started and keeping going with their writing
- Name Pointing
- Warm up - one minute one sentence - don't think too hard and don't worry

if it doesn't make sense - write about:

- An animal
- An inanimate object
- How are you feeling right now
- How were you feeling on new year's eve
- A dull sentence - could be harder than you think
- Sex
- Beginning with a name
- About the weather
- A silly sentence
- A place
- A habit
- Yourself
- Beginning with an expletive
- About water
- About love
- Beginning with the word 'how'
- About a season

- About death
- About birth
- A sentence starting with the words, “so in the end...”
- Anything you want to write about at all

Choose your favourite three sentences and share them with a partner.  
Share them with the group.

- TP - About getting people writing pretty quickly and effortlessly - without judging and becoming self-conscious
- A favourite exercise of mine - The Story of Your Name - TP - another good gentle and empowering way in for first time - nervous writers
- My passions are people and stories - so this is what I tend to focus my work around
- What are people’s passions - write about the things you are most passionate about and what’s the story behind that?
- Then how do you tell that story through dialogue - interaction between characters?
- So it makes sense to find out about the people in your group and what their stories are and \ or might be
- Lists are a great way in

#### Exercise

- 30 second lists for generating ideas - I worry that \ as I’ve got older I’ve realised that \ I care about \ I think that \ I love \ I hate \ I hope that \ the things that make me angry are.....

Get people to read their lists out  
then choose one thing to focus on from all of the lists you’ve generated and write for a further 5 minutes - free writing - don’t censor - see where it takes you....hopefully somewhere interesting and surprising  
Another Exercise - often used when meeting a group for the first time  
Moving around place to place  
Set the space up identifying NESW

Then get the group to move around and group accordingly

- where you started your journey from ‘today’
- where you were born,
- where you were when - aged 10, 20 etc. - as the participants move around ask them why they’ve moved, what motivated it - what were they doing, what are their overriding memories of that moment - a really important question - what did they want at this time?
- where you want to end your days
- from this you should see how it generates conversation, questions, interest etc.
- then get the participants to reflect and write down any - significant events; people, moments that this has thrown up for them

So we’ve started looking at how your life or the lives of people you know might provide the raw material and the backdrop for your writing.

But what about the story - how do you tell the story?

## On Storytelling

What are the key things about stories?

- 1\ Something happens
- 2\ And something changes - at least one character goes from one state to another
- 3\ It has a recognizable shape or at least a shape we can discern - hence a beginning \ middle \ end - some people we eventually end up caring about what happens to them

## Exercise

- 60 second stories - this is how it goes - Make a list of:
  - 1) 6 character types e.g. a train guard; teacher - this is list 1
  - 2) 6 themes or ideas - e.g. greed; punctuality etc. - list 2
  - 3) 6 locations - list 3
  - 4) 6 relationship types other than stranger - list 4
  - 5) Roll a 'dice' 4 times to give you a random selection of 2 characters, related to each other in some way, a theme and a setting
- You now have just 60 seconds to make up a story and write it down - it doesn't have to be good - don't censor it - just write it - they can be very silly if you want

Note and bear in mind before you start, the most effective stories are those:

- Where its clear who the protagonist is, i.e. who the story is about
- And it will be about the person who changes the most in this instance
- Where it is clear how the protagonist has changed - emotionally, physically, philosophically, geographically
- With a clear event

So when constructing your story think about and decide who the protagonist is and how they are going to change - moving from what state at the beginning to what state at the end

This will help determine your 'end' and also help you shape and find the event that shapes and precipitates the change

- Do this a couple of times
- Get them to swap, change lists and do it one more time

Hear and share some of the results in pairs and in the group  
So again, it's about building confidence in terms of simple storytelling through fun

## On Dramatic Writing

- Obviously what I'm looking for is dramatic writing, so what makes it dramatic?
- Looking for the fact that its written to be performed - probably live in the first instance
- And ideally, its storytelling through the use of dialogue - as opposed to monologue or direct address to the audience - nothing against those forms, they're highly effective in their own right, its simply a taste thing, that's what I like - a story ideally told through action and interaction - revealing a 'truth about the world and about human behaviour.

### Exercise

- So given one of the stories you've just written, can you now tell that same story through the use of dialogue?
- Hence you're starting to think in terms of scenes - action which can be witnessed on stage as its performed and spoken out loud by actors
- So you're looking at your story from the perspective of possible and/or necessary scenes or moments to convey the appropriate information
- Can you identify a scene or a moment? Now write the dialogue to tell the story
- This will throw up issues about exposition, stage directions, the need for extra scenes, sub-text, irony etc. It's all good and grist to the mill of developing a skilled writer....it takes time and needs to be taken on one step at a time
- So once a group has got used to the idea of telling a story through dialogue and events I then start to think about the people they want to write about and start talking about character....but that's a whole other workshop.

## 1623 Theatre Company

### ROMEO AND JULIET (learning workshop for PRUs, schools, colleges)

#### Meet and greet

- Find own space in the room
- Greet everyone using own words in 20-30 seconds
- Eye contact, shake hands, B repeats A's greetings
- Repeat, this time with Shakespearean greetings
- e.g. good den (day), good morrow (morning), good even (afternoon), well met

#### Montagues vs Capulets

- Split into two teams, ask them to remember who's on which team
- Invisible line down middle of room, teams cannot cross it
- One team = Montagues, other team = Capulets
- Teams choose adjective starting with 'm' and 'c' respectively
- Think about something terrible that the other team has done to you / your team
- Approach line and say, "We're the Mighty Montagues" (for example)
- Then swap over, e.g. "We're the Crazy Capulets"
- Add in rude hand gestures then ask them to put same feeling into thumb-biting
- Call and response: "Do you bite your thumb at me, sir?"
- Call and response: "I do not bite my thumb at you, sir, but I do bite my thumb"

#### Prince Escalus's Law

- Introduce Prince Escalus's new law: zero tolerance on violence, punishment is death
- Ask volunteers to be Prince and henchmen
- Do Shakespearean greetings again, this time with Prince and henchmen watching
- Law-breakers are escorted to prison cells (chairs) by Prince and henchmen
- Ask everyone what was different emotionally about meeting and greeting this time
- This is the kind of world in which Romeo and Juliet find themselves
- "My only love sprung from my only hate"

More at <http://www.1623theatre.co.uk/news/latest-news/313-kingsmead-gets-digital-with-romeo-and-juliet>

**THE GREAT SHAKESPEAREAN WORKOUT (participatory activity for festival-goers and community groups)**

Introduction - *reassuring it's not too difficult, it's fun*

- Workout is based on Troilus and Cressida, which is set in the Trojan war.
- Call and response, words to speak and movements to do
- Words are all from Shakespeare's play
- Three stages: warm-up, workout and warm-down
- Do as much or as little as you want to do

Warm-Up - *illnesses and diseases of Thersites (grumpy Greek soldier)*

- Raw eyes (rubbing face)
- Catarrh (palm to chest, circling shoulders)
- Cold palsies, *i.e. paralysis* (tapping arms, circling elbows and then wrists)
- Lime-kilns in the palm, *i.e. psoriasis* (rubbing hands, then shake off 'scabs', 8-4-2-1)
- Gravel in the back, *i.e. kidney stones* (rub your back and/or someone else's)
- Sciatica (circular hip movements, then into knee and ankle)
- Incurable bone-ache (tapping body all over, then hang head low)
- Thersites (stack up the spine into full stretch)

Workout - *phrases spoken by Greek and Trojan warriors in the play*

- You brace of war-like brothers, welcome hither (all together in one group, facing front, march forward and back)
- Good arms, strong joints, true swords and full of heart (actions: flex arm muscles with fists in the air, bend knees and elbows, lunge with imaginary sword and punch, then beat chest)

- I pray you, let us see you in the field (two groups: Greeks and Trojans facing each other doing box step)
- The venom vengeance ride upon our swords (arm movement, then lunge forward at enemy; add in shields opposite, if they're picking it up)
- I am not warm yet, let us fight again (two circles: Greeks one way, Trojans the other way)

Warm-down - *descriptions of Helen of Troy, the so-called cause of the war*

- The mortal Venus (crouch, up to full stretch)
- Heart-blood of beauty (feet flat, lean to each side)
- Love's visible soul (stretch forward)
- Sweet queen (bend knee and catch foot behind)

More at [www.1623theatre.co.uk/participation/the-great-shakespearean-workout](http://www.1623theatre.co.uk/participation/the-great-shakespearean-workout)

**TROILUS AND CRESSIDA** (production for young people, students and people interested in Japanese culture, especially manga)

Check it out at [www.1623theatre.co.uk/performance/troilus-and-cressida](http://www.1623theatre.co.uk/performance/troilus-and-cressida) and [www.unclepandarus.com](http://www.unclepandarus.com)

**LEAR/DEMENTIA R&D PROJECT** (public participatory activities for social-media followers, dementia experts, people living with dementia, their professional carers and family members)

Check out the latest on the project, including lots of links to the various strands, at <http://www.1623theatre.co.uk/news/latest-news/291-leardementia-project-update>

**MORE**

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## Planning Session

On the last afternoon, people worked together to think about different target groups and to start to sketch out some ideas on workshop or programme level:

### 18-30s

- Martial arts, hijras, photography exhibition about hijras and/or Shakespeare exhibitions, students, 3<sup>rd</sup> gender, entrepreneurial programmes/funding,

### 1 year

- schools
- young people
- 18-30s
- older people

### First project aims

- -quick wins
- -Establish a baseline
- -start process of gaining new audience and maintaining
- -an afternoon with/book club discussion group - adults, possible U3A/reading group, with a cultural element