TEACHING RESOURCES
JEKYLL & HYDE AT THE OLD VIC
COMPANY

ASHER ANDREWS
STEVEN

JOAO CAROLINO
ROBERT

DANIEL COLLINS
DR JEKYLL

TIM HODGES
MR HYDE

CARRIE TAYLOR
JOHNSON
ROSE

ANABEL KUTAY
IRIS

EBONY MOLINA
IVY / ASSOCIATE
CHOREOGRAPHER

RACHEL
MULDOON
DAHLIA

FREYA ROWLEY
LILLY

ALEXZANDRA
SARMIENTO
DAISY

BARNABY
THOMPSON
LOUIS

JASON WINTER
CHARLIE
ASHLEY ANDREWS
STEVEN
Theatre: Wicked, Billy Elliott the Musical, Chicago (West End), Monty Python Live (O2 Arena), Drunk (Leicester Curve, Bridewell), Mack and Mabel (Chichester/UK tour), 9 to 5: The Musical, Bare (Greenwich Theatre), Shoes (Sadler's Wells), Fame the Musical, High School Musical, Never Forget (UK tours), The Sound of Music, Oliver! (Leicester Haymarket), Night of 1000 Voices (Royal Albert Hall), Film: Avengers: Age of Ultron. TV: Bruce’s Hall of Fame, Galavant, Tom Vek Aroused, The Clothes Show Live, Grease is the Word, Disney’s You’re the Star.

JOAO CAROLINO
ROBERT
Theatre: The Sound of Music (Leicester Curve), Bugsy Malone (Lyric Hammersmith workshop), Waterbabies (Shaftesbury Theatre workshop). Joao recently graduated from Arts Educational, Tring.

DANIEL COLLINS
DR JEKYLL
Theatre: Show Boat (West End/Sheffield Crucible), Kiss Me Kate (Royal Albert Hall), Drunk (Bridewell), Dance:Radio (Roundhouse/Latitude Festival), Be Mine (Resolution at the Place), On the Town (ENO/Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris), Sinatra (UK tour), The Wizard of Oz (Southampton Mayflower), La Traviata (Birmingham Opera Company) and Matthew Bourne’s productions of The Car Man (Ravenna Festival/Sadler’s Wells), Edward Scissorhands (Sadler’s Wells/UK tour), Sleeping Beauty (Sadler’s Wells/UK & US tours), Play Without Words (Sadler’s Wells), Nutcracker! (Sadler’s Wells/UK tour/Trieste), Cinderella (Sadler’s Wells/UK & European tours), Swan Lake (Sadler’s Wells/UK & world tours). Film: Search for John Gissing.

TIM HODGES
MR HYDE
Theatre: Matthew Bourne’s productions of The Car Man (Sadler’s Wells/UK tour/Ravenna), Edward Scissorhands (Sadler’s Wells/UK & international tours), Swan Lake (Sadler’s Wells/UK tour/Tel Aviv); Singin’ in the Rain, Chicago, We Will Rock You, Murderous Instincts (West End), Oliver! (Leicester Curve), Making Midnight (Latitude Festival), Dirty Dancing (UK tour/Dublin), Chicago (UK tour/Trieste/Marrakech), Cats (UK & Portugal tours).

CARRIE TAYLOR JOHNSON
ROSE
Theatre: Phantom of the Opera (West End), Good Morning Midnight (Jermyn Street Theatre/Latitude Festival), Shine (Sadler’s Wells). Carrie has also performed with Birmingham Royal Ballet, Ballett am Rhein, Deutsche Oper am Rhein and Matthew Bourne’s New Adventures. TV: 100th Royal Variety Performance, Coronation Festival. As a student, Carrie danced with the National Youth Ballet, winning bronze at the Genee and Young British Dancer of the Year competitions.

ANABEL KUTAY
IRIS
Theatre: The Lorax (The Old Vic), Dirty Dancing, Phantom of the Opera, Sinatra (West End), Pippin (Menier Chocolate Factory), Chess (Royal Albert Hall), Matthew Bourne’s Play Without Words (Sadler’s Wells), Matthew Bourne’s Dorian Gray and Swan Lake (Sadler’s Wells/ international tour), Flashdance (UK tour), Guys and Dolls (Chichester Festival Theatre), Macbeth (Bridgehouse Theatre), McOnie Company’s Drunk (Bridewell Theatre), Chicago (Curve Theatre), Kama Sutra (BalletBoy). Film: Youth, High Strung.

EBONY MOLINA
IVY / ASSOCIATE CHOREOGRAPHER

RACHEL MULDOON
DAHLIA
Theatre: Wicked, Chicago, Grease, The Hurly Burly Show, Revolution (West End), Shall We Dance (Sadler’s Wells), Notre Dame de Paris (international tour), The Genius of Ray Charles (US tour), Cats, Joseph (Channel Islands), Making Midnight (Latitude Festival), British Style (Buckingham Palace), Night of a 1000 Voices (Royal Albert Hall), Beatriz Potter (Royal Ballet). Film: Avengers: Age of Ultron. TV: X Factor, Children in Need, Grease is the Word, Discomania II, Madonna Mania, Ant and Dec’s Saturday Night Takeaway, So You Think You Can Dance.
FREYA ROWLEY
LILLY
Theatre: Disney’s Tarzan the Musical (Hamburg/Stuttgart), Best of Musicals (German tour), Cats (UK tour), Jack and the Beanstalk (Birmingham Hippodrome), Dirty Rotten Scoundrels (UK tour). Freya graduated from Laine Theatre Arts in 2009.

ALEXZANDRA SARMIENTO
DAISY
Theatre: Dance Captain for In the Heights (West End), A Chorus Line (West End/Japan/USA), Cabaret, Fame the Musical (UK tours). Dance: unTitled Dance Company, UK Stand Up, Body Politic, Dance Adventures’ Best of British, British Summer Time Festival in Hyde Park. Alexzandra has worked with choreographers Bill T. Jones, Dwight Rhoden and Desmond Richardson among others. She is a USA National Young Arts Foundation Level 1 Winner in Modern Dance.

BARNABY THOMPSON
LOUIS
Theatre: Elf the Musical, Chicago, Mary Poppins, Anything Goes, We Will Rock You, Bugsy Malone, Oliver! (West End), Oklahoma!, Legally Blonde, Gotta Sing Gotta Dance, Grease (UK tours), Cats (European tour), Mamma Mia! (international tour), The Wizard of Oz (Dubai), Me and My Girl (Sheffield Crucible), Candide (Japan), The Band Wagon (Sadler’s Wells), Coco (Sadler’s Wells – Choreographer), The Music Man (Chichester Festival Theatre), Peter Pan (Birmingham Rep). Film: Beyond the Sea. TV: The IT Crowd, The Slammer.

JASON WINTER
CHARLIE
Theatre: Matilda the Musical, Wicked, Chicago (West End), Happy Days, Top Hat, Flashdance the Musical (UK tours), White Christmas (Pitlochry Festival Theatre), West Side Story (Sage, Gateshead), Gypsy (Leicester Curve), Night of 1000 Voices (Royal Albert Hall), 42nd Street (Chichester Festival Theatre), Cats (German tour). TV: Let’s Dance, Sport Relief, The Alan Titchmarsh Show, The Paul O’Grady Show, CBeebies Third & Bird.
CREATIVE TEAM

**DREW McOnIE**
DIRECTOR/CHOREOGRAPHER

**GRANT OLDING**
MUSIC

**SOUTRA GILMOUR**
DESIGNER

**RICHARD HOWELL**
LIGHTING

**SEBASTIAN FROST**
SOUND
Theatre: Drew McOnie’s *Drunk* (Leicester Curve, Bridewell), *Calamity Jane* (UK tour), *Sunday in the Park with George* (West End/Studio 54), *Kat and the Kings* (West End/Cort), *An Inspector Calls* (West End/UK tour). Other work includes Secret Cinema’s *The Empire Strikes Back*, immersive experiences for Star Trek, Sony, Disney, Harry Potter and Lumiere. Sebastian is the designer for the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo.

**SIMON HARDWICK**
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

**WILL BURTON CDG FOR DAVID GRINDROD ASSOCIATES**
CASTING

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Dr Jekyll, a botanical scientist and the owner of a flower shop. He is quite poor and very focused on developing a botanical elixir, a potion that will help him create the perfect flower. He's gentle, slightly awkward and not very confident unless he's with his flowers or in his greenhouse laboratory.

Mr Hyde is Jekyll's alter ego created by Jekyll's potion. He is very attractive, confident and aggressive. He's magnetic, sexy and dangerous. He seems to have no moral compass or empathy and thrives on sensations.

Dahlia works as a receptionist in Charlie's gym, she is radiant, kind and, like Jekyll, not very well off. Dahlia meets Jekyll when she comes to the shop to buy some flowers and they slowly begin a relationship. Charlie likes her and does not like Jekyll so he does what he can to separate them.

Charlie is a wrestler who runs The Globe Gym where Dahlia works. Physically very dominant, he is a shallow bully and a cheat. He wants to be the centre of attention and doesn’t like the blossoming relationship between Dahlia and Jekyll.

Daisy is Jekyll's shop assistant. A bit scruffy and tomboyish, she is practical, warm and friendly and very good at gardening. She likes Jekyll like an older brother and tries to help him out.

Ivy is an extraordinarily beautiful and charismatic woman who is married to Louis but is deeply attracted to Hyde.

Louis is kind and gentle and a bit awkward. He is very much in love with his wife of two years, Ivy, who wants to meet a dominant man. He is distressed but agrees to support her.

Iris is a grieving customer at Jekyll's flower shop, we think she has suffered a terrible loss but realise she has come for flowers for her dead rabbit. She is very disapproving.

Robert is a nervous man at the gym who takes on Charlie in a wrestling match, he loses because Charlie cheats.

Lilly is a very beautiful woman who accompanies Charlie to the party at the Gallery as his date.

Steven is a young man who trains at Charlie's gym.

Rose a customer of Jekyll's flower shop.
ACT BREAKDOWN

ACT ONE

Scene One
A greenhouse laboratory, behind a florist shop in London in the late 1950s around sunrise. Jekyll is mixing a potion that he sprays onto a pot plant; he is trying to create the perfect flowers. Nothing happens and he is very disappointed and he begins to get ready for a days work in his florist shop.

Scene Two
Jekyll's shop is well looked after but there are not many customers. His first customer of the day is Dahlia, who he is captivated by. He creates a beautiful bouquet for her that she pays for by counting out pennies, she is also quite poor. She goes, accidentally leaving her bag on the counter and when Jekyll realizes he closes the shop and chases after her.

Scene Three
Jekyll chases Dahlia through the streets of London to The Globe Gym, where there are lots of people working out aggressively. Jekyll watches Dahlia place her flowers on the reception desk, then Charlie put them in the bin while she is not looking. Charlie wrestles with some of the gym-goers, often cheating. When the gym is empty Jekyll plucks up the courage to enter and returns Dahlia's bag to her. She is grateful and hugs him, they are both a little embarrassed and try to speak at the same time. Dahlia gives Jekyll her phone number, who is delighted and gives Dahlia his card and he leaves, extremely happy. Charlie has witnessed this and glares at Dahlia while she retrieves her flowers from the bin.

Scene Four
Back at the flower shop Jekyll takes Dahlia’s number from his pocket and practices trying to call her, ending up wrapped up in the phone cable and falling over. The phone rings and it is Dahlia who has snuck away at the gym to call him. Dahlia asks Jekyll out on a date, he is delighted and accepts. Jekyll closes the shop and heads back into his accommodation behind the shop.
Scene Five
Delighted, Jekyll springs around his room getting ready for his date, selecting the perfect outfit and doing his hair. At the very last moment we see him become insecure and nervous. We travel to a swanky London art gallery, it's a glamorous opening party for a new exhibition of pictures of Charlie Globe, the gym owner.

Scene Six
Dahlia is at the party in a bright floral dress, all the other guests are cool and glamorous and she sticks out. Charlie is trying to make his way through the party to get close to her, she's excitedly waiting for Jekyll to arrive but Charlie manages to corner her away from the other guests. At just that moment Jekyll arrives and without realizing it pushes the door open onto Charlie just as he tries to kiss Dahlia. He's bought a bouquet of flowers and Dahlia, delighted to have been saved from Charlie, leaps into his arms. Dahlia and Jekyll join the party and start drinking champagne, something Jekyll has never done before. Charlie spots them getting closer and swoops in. Pretending to play the perfect host he starts introducing Jekyll to the other guests, each introduction starts with him hitting Jekyll on the back a little bit too hard, showing off how manly he is. Each guest shoves a business card in Jekyll's face. The paintings start to be sold and the guests throw around huge amounts of cash. Jekyll is joining in with toasts and getting drunk on champagne when Charlie gets everyone's attention and introduces Jekyll, who tries to impress but fails, and everyone laughs at him. Clutching his stomach he runs to the bathroom to be sick. Charlie pounces on Dahlia and kisses her neck against her will, Jekyll emerges from the bathroom to see Charlie kissing Dahlia and devastated, runs away. He doesn’t see Dahlia push Charlie off and kick him hard, making him fall to the floor.

Scene Seven
Jekyll, consumed by jealousy and humiliation, has raced back to his greenhouse laboratory behind the shop and thrown himself into work. He's determined to make something of himself and prove the judgmental party guests wrong. He starts to make a special potion, haunted by the idea of Charlie and Dahlia being together he crushes a glass test tube in his unhappiness and anger.

Scene Eight
A drop of Jekyll's blood falls into his potion and the liquid begins to glow. He pours the liquid into a spray, and just like in the very first scene, sprays a pot plant with it. At first nothing happens then the plant starts to transform into a dangerous and beautiful new flower. He is overwhelmed by possibility and unwraps his cut hand letting more of his blood fall into the potion until it glows even more. Jekyll sprays all the plants in the greenhouse laboratory and amazing flowers grow, he is caught up in the scent and wonder of the flowers and ends up being drenched in the potion himself. He realizes he is covered with blood and soil and decides to clean up before returning to the party to show off his amazing new creation. He goes into his bedroom and begins to shower, we see his body convulsing and lights flicker. It looks as if two men are fighting in the shower and it is not Jekyll who emerges but the handsome, sharp and very masculine Hyde.

Scene Nine
We are back at Charlie's party, Dahlia has left long ago and the party has become very dull. At this moment Hyde arrives and his presence electrifies the room. Hyde introduces himself to Charlie, drinking his champagne and hitting him slightly too hard on the back as he had done to Jekyll a few hours earlier. Hyde introduces himself to all the guests and gives everyone a beautiful flower, they smell it and become intoxicated, their faces covered with pollen, which is like a drug. The guests ignore Charlie who angrily leaves. Hyde gives all the guests, who are now addicted to his flowers, a business card for Jekyll's flower shop and then leaves.

Scene Ten
The party guests, desperate for more flowers are banging on the flower shop door in the early morning and Jekyll rushes to open the shop while getting dressed. People pour in desperate for the new flowers and waving wads of money. We watch as Jekyll's flower business booms, he can barely keep up with demand. We meet his new shop girl, Daisy who is slightly scruffy but with a magic gardening touch. They work together to serve all the customers, Jekyll welcoming them and Daisy selling the flowers. We notice that Jekyll's skin is beginning to itch. Dahlia arrives at the shop, surprised to see that business is flourishing. Jekyll trips over at the sight of her and she catches him, they blush and jump apart. Jekyll selects flowers for her again, and they flirt, which distracts Jekyll from his itching body. Charlie is watching jealously thorough the window, and Daisy leans on the desk and watches them romantically. Jekyll refuses payment for the flowers and Dahlia leaves. Daisy and Jekyll close the shop, and as Daisy leaves we see that they are good friends. Jekyll begins to scratch his skin. After Daisy has gone Jekyll returns to his greenhouse laboratory and we see him cut his own skin to add more blood to the potion that makes the amazing flowers. We see him suddenly drink the glowing liquid. We see Jekyll's body convulsing and he transforms into Hyde.
Scene Eleven
Hyde goes to a nightclub where he seems to be well known, he downs a drink and throws the glass over his shoulder. He is able to attract whomever he wants and dances with people before discarding them until he notices a very beautiful woman, Ivy, has entered the club. She is with her husband Louis who is kind and gentle and very much in love with her, he is physically awkward compared to everyone else. They have come to the club together, to find a man bring into their relationship, Louis is very nervous about this idea. Ivy leaves Louis to get the barman's attention and begins to dance passionately with Hyde.

Scene Twelve
The trio return to Jekyll's bedroom and Ivy and Hyde begin to undress one another. Louis is distressed and tries to join in and kiss his wife but is pushed away. Hyde becomes violent and starts to choke Ivy, Louis leaps into save his wife but is thrown off. The doorbell rings and Hyde realizes it is morning and the shop must be opened. He leaves the bedroom drinking a small bottle of the glowing potion and wearing a silk dressing gown.

Scene Thirteen
By the time he has reached the shop Hyde has transformed into Jekyll. Iris is ringing the shop doorbell, dressed in black and crying. Jekyll opens the door apologizing for how late it is. Jekyll gets her flower arrangement, ‘Flopsy’, from the backroom and Ivy and Louis emerge arguing and semi-dressed. They leave and Iris is horrified and storms out past Dahlia who is just arriving. Jekyll creates another beautiful bouquet for Dahlia and we see that they are getting closer. He rolls up his sleeves and Dahlia sees all the cuts he has made from weeks of potion making. He is embarrassed and Dahlia wants to know if he is ok. She gently rolls down his sleeves and kisses him. She takes the flowers and leaves, all the time watched by the jealous Charlie.

Scene Fourteen
Delighted by his kiss Jekyll rushes to get dressed properly. Charlie enters the shop but Jekyll assumes its Daisy come to start work and carries on changing. Charlie locks the door and turns the shop sign to closed. Jekyll comes into the shop and sees Charlie high on the pollen from the flowers, Charlie puts a knuckleduster on and refuses to leave when Jekyll asks. Charlie beats Jekyll up, and is much stronger, silencing his cries for help when a customer, Rose, tries to come into the shop. Jekyll bites Charlie's hand. The fight moves into the greenhouse laboratory and Jekyll is getting quite hurt. Jekyll grabs one of the glowing potions and swallows it, transforming into Hyde. Charlie is amazed and soon Hyde begins to beat Charlie, finally breaking his neck. Hyde is joyous and stands over Charlie's dead body.
ACT TWO

Scene One
Jekyll is exhausted and having a nightmare about the amazing flowers he has created, and Dahlia and Charlie and the fight. He wakes and is upset and we hear Daisy enter the shop and begin to open up.

Scene Two
Daisy puts a flower in her hair and pretends to be an upper-class lady; Jekyll has been watching her, he is dressed in more expensive clothes now, and we can tell that he is sleep deprived and that the nightmares are a regular occurrence. Daisy is embarrassed when she realises Jekyll has been watching her and puts the flower back but Jekyll picks another flower and puts it in her hair giving her a fatherly kiss on the forehead. Jekyll leaves the shop, a little nervous but supported by Daisy. Jekyll is off to the Chelsea Flower show.

Scene Three
Jekyll is guest of honour and a judge at the Chelsea Flower Show, he’s quite nervous. He selects third, second and first places and begins to sweat and clutch his stomach in pain. He transforms into Hyde – this time it’s involuntary and Hyde is confused and frustrated and runs back to the flower shop.

Scene Four
Daisy is looking after some plants and Hyde sneaks into the greenhouse laboratory before she can see him. He’s looking for the potion to return him to Jekyll before a violent outburst. He can’t find any and is about to destroy the laboratory when Daisy enters and starts doing jobs. Hyde takes off his tie and uses it to strangle Daisy, there is an intense struggle and Daisy dies. Hyde begins to hit himself and then transforms back into Jekyll who throws up and Daisy’s body and goes into the shop where Dahlia, all dressed up for her date with Jekyll is waiting. Jekyll’s clothes are ripped and he’s covered in soil and sweat. Jekyll swiftly shows Dahlia out of the shop.

Scene Five
We return to the club and Ivy is there, she is broken but beautiful. Louis, her husband sits sadly at the bar drinking. Jekyll and Dahlia are out of place in the club, Dahlia is worried about Jekyll who is trying to pretend that everything is ok. The stomach cramps return to Jekyll and he begins to transform, he rushes onto the dance floor and Hyde emerges, he is frustrated, trapped in the wrong body. Ivy is delighted that Hyde has returned and rushes to him, kissing him. He throws her off into Louis arms but she wriggles free and returns to him. Hyde drags her out of the club, followed by Louis who struggles to keep up.

Scene Six
In an alley behind the club Hyde and Ivy begin to have sex but Hyde begins to beat Ivy. Louis tries to intervene but Hyde beats them both to death. Hyde runs away from the two bodies and Dahlia, leaving the club spots Jekyll’s coat (which Hyde is wearing) and chases after him back to the shop.

Scene Seven
Hyde has transformed back into Jekyll who locks himself in the shop and washes his blood stained hands and removes his blood stained coat. The doorbell rings and it is Dahlia, looking more beautiful than ever. She tires to soothe Jekyll who is terrified of being left alone with her. She kisses him and he feels peaceful, he isn’t going to change into Hyde. He locks the shop door and they move to the greenhouse laboratory, kissing and undressing. Suddenly Dahlia sees Daisy’s body and screams, Jekyll tries to explain and deny involvement but Dahlia knows. Jekyll tries to stop her but Dahlia grabs a spade and hits Jekyll around the head, he falls to the floor.
Scene Eight
In the shop Dahlia realises that the door is locked, she tries to break the glass but can’t then runs behind the counter and begins to phone for help. Jekyll staggers in, his head is bleeding. He see’s Dahlia on the phone and becomes calm, picking up Daisy’s potting fork he stabs Dahlia in the back, she falls back into his arms and he weeps. He embraces Dahlia’s body and begins to dance with it before slumping to the floor in tears.

Scene Nine
As Jekyll is sobbing on the floor the flowerbeds in the greenhouse laboratory begin to tremble and a hand bursts out, it is Charlie’s body. Then a second body emerges, it is Ivy. Jekyll tries to escape the horror but there are bodies emerging everywhere; Louis, Daisy and of course Dahlia. Blue police lights are flashing through the windows of the shop and Jekyll transforms into Hyde and then back again. When the blue lights return Jekyll has a knife to his chest, we see Jekyll and Hyde fighting together as the blue lights flash – Jekyll wants to kill himself and Hyde does not. In the final moments of the flashing light we see that Jekyll has stabbed himself.
THE DUALITY OF HUMAN NATURE

_Jekyll and Hyde_ can be seen as an allegory about the positive and negative impulses that exist in people, and our struggle with these different elements. It is interesting to note that while Hyde represents pure evil, Jekyll is not pure good, is evil a stronger force? There is also the suggestion, both in the original novel and in this production, that there is a difference between our civilized and uncivilized human natures. That our instinctive human desires for sex, violence and sensory pleasures are kept in check by civilizing forces. Hyde emerges when Jekyll drinks a potion made of plant essences and blood, all natural forces. It is not as straightforward to suggest that civilization is a positive force as we note that Hyde emerges because of Jekyll's ambitions. His desire to be financially successful, to win over Dahlia and gain respect drives him to create the potion. There is a strong suggestion that that civilization has its dark side. Hyde exists in a slick world of clubs, he's a city creature who seems to delight in his crimes. This contrasts with Dahlia and Daisy who are both more natural, compassionate, balanced and moral characters. There is a big question about whether or not good can be separated from evil, or whether the two are forever intertwined.

APPEARANCES AND REPRESSION

In the original novel Dr Jekyll is a model Victorian gentleman, not able to talk about his emotions, express love or anger. In this production Jekyll is a little more able to express himself but faces ridicule when he does so at Charlie's party. He is gentle and socially awkward and ashamed of his shabby appearance. In contrast Hyde is extremely attractive and idolized by everyone at the party and the club, despite his cruel and violent nature. In this production we see how societies concern with success, and valuing people based on appearances and ideals of masculinity, create the conditions in which Hyde is celebrated and Jekyll's more gentle qualities are not valued.

SCIENCE AND NATURE

Jekyll's scientific experiments create a potion that creates amazingly beautiful but destructive flowers, whose pollen seems to act like a drug. It also transforms him into the violent and amoral Hyde. Just as in the original novel, this production explores the ethics of science and human intervention in the natural world. As our scientific and technological capabilities increase and enable us to change the world around us more, from genetically modified crops to geo-engineering to create rainfall over drier areas, we maybe need to ask should we? We can see that Jekyll's motivation to create the potion is not altruistic, and he is so enthralled by his glowing potion that he doesn’t consider the consequences of what might follow. The destruction that is unleashed in _Jekyll and Hyde_ might serve as a warning for us to pause, and consider the impact of our scientific and technological capacity and not blindly ‘drink the potion’.

**Conversation starter**

What is the relationship between _Jekyll and Hyde_?

Does Jekyll enjoy getting to live as Hyde?

What is the impact of ‘keeping up appearances’ on your life?

What impact does social media have on people's behaviour?

Is Jekyll a good scientist?

Who should regulate scientific experiments that impact on the natural world?

How do we balance innovation with caution – or should we?
How did you become a choreographer?

I've always wanted to be a choreographer since I was little kid. I was always making up dances. I was famously very unpopular at school because I used the football goalposts as the proscenium arch of a theatre for my own production of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat*. I had been to see a touring production of Joseph and I wanted to put on my own version of it, and I realised that the football goalposts were the right shape for my show, which didn't make me very popular at all.

I started going to professional dance classes to learn more steps to put in my shows. I went to ballet when I was 5 or 6 and I hated it, it was awful and it hurt and it was all for girls. And then I went to disco freestyle with my cousin when I was about 7 or 8 and I fell in love with it. I got to dance in lots of great shows. I used to pretend to forget my routines all the time so I could make up my own steps and try them out on stage. Which of course my teacher would never let me do, so I had to do it guerrilla style. It's a strange thing, I never made the decision to be one I was always going to be one. I was in a production of *The Snowman* as a kid and the choreographer Robert North watched me making up my own dances at break times and would help me out. I remember really clearly saying to him, 'What do you do when I'm at school? What's your normal job?' And he said 'this is my normal job' and I realised then that it's something that you can make money out of, that you can have a family. I asked him what it's called and he said a ‘Choreographer’. I asked him to write it down because I didn't know how to spell it and I took the piece of paper that he wrote it down on and I said to my Mum, that's what I'm going to be. Before that I'd always said I'm going to make up dances but that doesn't mean anything. As soon as I realised it was a job and a life and that's what I could do, I wanted to do it.

I wasn’t very popular at school and there was this TV programme called *The Biz*, like a British version of *Fame* I guess. I remember realising I could go to a school where there's lots of people who like dancing and acting and I remember saying to my Mum, can I go somewhere like that? I remember having a run in with some boys in the school hall, and I was really upset and just wanted to be with other kids like me. So I auditioned for Tring Park Arts Educational School, which is a boarding school. It's where I trained and I just fell in love with the place. It was magic. I remember going from being the most hated boy in school to suddenly being popular because I'd collected all these old dance books and old dance movies. So you know, you turned up to boarding school with a whole suitcase full of dance videos.
and all of a sudden you were the coolest kid in class because of all this stuff you had been collecting for years. Going from being the kind of thing that I’d never share with anybody to everyone loving the same things as me. It was life changing really.

There’s not a single theatrical person in my family so goodness knows where I came from. My Mum and Dad had varied taste in music and they had lots of CDs that I used to put on all the time. I used dance to Meatloaf and my mum’s Diana Ross, they couldn’t be more opposite in taste. I used to shove the sofa against the door in the lounge so no-one could get in and turn the music up really loud and then just run riot. My mum would go mad, banging on the door and I’d just turn the music up so I couldn’t hear her banging and keep on making up my own routines. I’m so lucky with my parents, they are so passionate about what I do. I can call up my Dad and tell him the tiniest detail of what I’m doing and he understands exactly what I’m talking about, it’s fascinating because it’s all self taught, he was in the Navy and my Mum was a nurse.

Why did you choose to create Jekyll and Hyde?

It’s funny because I was looking for a title I wanted to explore choreographically and the initial idea came from a feeling that it’s such a real shame that you should never do Jekyll and Hyde on stage, because it’s such a great title and such a great story about physical transformation. You can’t do it because this and then you’d have to…and then of course you’d have to do this…and well actually you could probably do that…and I kind of weirdly talked myself into it by talking myself out of it!

I feel like with the book, when you re-read the book the only thing you know about Jekyll and Hyde is that they are the same person. Everyone knows that. And of course that’s the one thing that you can’t know when you read the book. Because that is the twist. It’s a fascinating book to read when you don’t know that it’s the same person, because all of these extraordinary things are happening to two separate men and then you realise at the end that it’s the same person, and that’s why you can never do it on stage. Anyway I’ve had a lot fun in untying that knot and I’ve used the basis of that transformation as the starting point. I’ve used the notion of a man turning into another man as the basis for a whole new story.

I think this production of Jekyll and Hyde is one that is very much a case study of taking inspiration from something, using it as a metaphor and exploding it into a different story, a different world and a different setting. At its heart I chose Jekyll and Hyde because it’s a brilliant story about physical transformation that lends itself so well to dance. There’s so much potential for visual storytelling, which is what dance is.

How did you start the process? How did you get from the original novella to what we’ll see on stage?

Err, gosh, what did come first? It’s kind of odd because it happened very quickly. Once I decided to do it I wrote the new synopsis, the new version of the show in about three weeks. I really got committed to breaking down the story and making up the new characters. It started off with the story, as I think everything should when it come’s to theatre. Because it’s all storytelling. So I started off wanting to get to the heart of the story first, and I wanted to work out what was visually exiting and how that might fit together in a story. I was also taking into consideration things I mentioned previously, what you can’t know about the characters and what you already know about the characters, which is that they are the same person. I very much wanted to deal with that. The fact that Jekyll and Hyde are the same person is a given. So what has to become interesting is actually why he’s doing it and how it ends up happening. Then what the knock on effects are, of a man who has the ability to transform, and then what happens when he loses the ability to control his transformations.

There was a long time when there were certain parts of the story I found really funny when I was writing. I was like ‘No Drew, it’s not a comedy. Let’s create a thriller.’ It just kept coming back to me so I played for a long time with the idea of whether you could do both. Could you do comedy where the horror, or the thriller element is not pastiche or parodied? I feel really excited about the tonal balance that we’ve found in that. We did our first run through yesterday and one of the producers said that the thing that they found exciting about the show was that the humour and the horror wouldn’t exist without the other. Which is really exciting because I was at a point where I was like; ‘hmm, does one devalue the other?’ I think we’ve found a tone where, because you’ve just been laughing at something it makes the horror more horrible. Only time will tell.
What preparation did you do before starting rehearsals?

We had two weeks of workshops because with a dance piece the content is really, really dense. It's not like you can have an entire scene and two people can be sitting at a table and you just let the words paint so much of the picture. You can't say in dance, 'oh, look over there look at the beautiful garden'. If the garden is important to the narrative, you have to see the garden. With that in mind, and because of the density of the visual aspect, it takes a long time to make it.

I knew that I had to have the story 80% cracked by the time we started the workshops. In the first workshop we explored themes and tone, in terms of comedy and horror. The second workshop was essentially the opportunity to have a fifth week of rehearsals. We made a lot of material. A good chunk of that is still in the show. A good chunk of it is not in the show anymore. It was great to be able to make some material and then have three weeks to go, right, what was rubbish, what was good and to let it settle. You’re refining it and getting the tone right and then using that tone to launch into a formal rehearsal process.

Two weeks of workshops explored a lot of things about physical transformation, a lot of things about how you communicate through your body. How do you act in a physical manner when you can’t rely on words? So it's all gesture, it's all body language. It's exploration of body language and how that translates into movement. I know how all these people dance but how do we tell stories that aren’t about kicks and pirouettes? How do you come in and put a handbag down in a way that tells someone that you’re angry with them? How do you come in and put a handbag down in a way that tells them that actually, you’re trying not to laugh at them? How do you put a handbag down and let us, in that moment, get the fact that you've just come in from the rain? It's taking that simple action and being able to act through your body. That's a very commonly explored thing with words. How many different ways can you say the word yes, and have it mean different things? It's the same with how many different ways can you pull a chair out from behind a table and do the same thing. It’s all useful stuff for developing physical languages.

There was also a bit about trying to find out what our tone is. As a company we are quite new. What is our storytelling device? What makes our way a different way of telling a story to some of the other narrative dance companies? What is our tone?
It keeps coming back to tone but as a company in its early development I think it's an important thing to work out – what is your tone?

So, we did a lot of that and then we keep coming back to the story. I have two brilliant associates. One associate director and one associate choreographer and you know, they are hard to please. And so they should be. Sometimes I'm just really, really tired and you need someone to go 'no, come on, answer that question better'. When you're thinking, I'm tired, all I want is a cup of tea. But it's great. And sometimes they're tired and I'm like 'no, come on.' Essentially we've had a great time because we are all a group of mates and we push each other on and we know when to do that.

Launching into the rehearsal process, it's been about constantly having a vision. You close your eyes and you see this perfect version of the story, and always going back to that place. So you do two weeks rehearsals and you've done this whole section, so go back to that place, close you eyes. Is it what you originally saw? If it's not, is it better? And if it's not as good as what you originally saw, then it's not good enough. It doesn't matter if you're tired or on a sugar crash or you have to go and pick up the dog or whatever. You just have to get to work.

Did you do any other research?

Yes and no! In a way, we did. Probably quite obscure things. Our tone is what makes us a bit different. A lot of our influences, and in fact our casting, is very musical theatre inspired. There are huge heavy swathes of MGM that run through our show. There's a lot visual references to Gene Kelly, Fred Astaire, Cyd Charisse and Shirley MacLaine. Those kinds of starlets and stars inherently run through the inspiration of the dancers anyway. It's about trying to celebrate it, rather than trying to squash it. This room's full of people who think that's cool. It's a bit me going back to school and turning up with all my old dance videos and me being cool. This room's full of people who love Gene Kelly but I think in a normal dance company they'd be like, 'who?' Or it's seen as cheesy or jazz handsy, whereas we love it. I think that's the thing. When people have similar passions and get excited by similar things and it's delivered in a loving way.

So we have a lot of visual references from the MGM era, the designer took references from that era for the colour palette of the show and that's the kind of Jekyll world. And the Hyde world operates in a very kind of scary, visceral punky, broken glass kind of way. The music for that world is very sort of Arctic Monkeys and White Stripes inspired. And the visual references for that world are very urban, underground. So those two worlds really collide in the show.

A lot of our visual references came from this brilliant photographer, Gregory Crewdson. He did all the artwork for the TV series, Six Feet Under. I wanted to create these two worlds, think West Side Story and Singing in the Rain meets Six Feet Under. It's intense loneliness bashing into this big band, Strictly Come Dancing kind of wonderful. That's the kind of the clash of the Jekyll and Hyde worlds essentially.

What are your creative ambitions?

I've got so many. Loads. Hundreds. That's the problem with me. I achieve a dream and then you kind of go, great, fine. Next!

I want a TV series that's like a sit-com but all through dance, filmed on location, telling stories all through dance. Actually, to be able to make dancers TV personalities, to raise the profile of these incredible creatures that work tirelessly.

One day I want to run a building that's essentially a theatre-making dance house. With the focus on narrative dance pieces that are dealing with current social and economic issues but in a fun, accessible way so that people come in and get involved. With dance classes. Social dance classes as well as important narrative dance, properly supported. I want to become a person who champions young choreographers.

What advice would you give to someone who is just starting out?

Just do it. That sounds like such an overused phrase but too many people wait to be told that they are allowed to do it, by which time it's too late. If you've got a creative urge – do it. The way I started, it was with my friends. To be honest there's a few of them behind you in this rehearsal room. I went to school with them. I went to school with Carrie, with Tim, I went to school with Joao.

Carrie is one of my best friends from school. She and I used to sneak out from prep, which is like homework time at boarding school, and make up dances together. And those same people who were there when I was making up all my rubbish, were there tirelessly having fun, are still the people I work with now. Tim's playing Hyde in Jekyll and Hyde at The Old Vic, that's amazing. Those people that are with you now, cherish them. Make all your mistakes with them now, and then when you're professional you've done that together.
Any young artist has a time when their artistic voice is a replica. Because you’re inspired by the great people ahead of you. I want to be a great singer just like Beyoncé. I want to be a choreographer just like Matthew Bourne. Because they inspire you and you want to be like them, you spend a lot of time imitating them. What you realise is that they are only as famous as they are, only as big as they are, because they have found a unique quality. And that unique quality, of course, is their individuality. So any young choreographer needs to get through the period of imitation before they start to realise what makes them different. And also where they feel confident enough in their technique to celebrate the thing that makes them different. So the earlier you can start, the better. It doesn’t matter if someone’s reading this and they’re like, ‘Oh, I’m 42 and I want to be a choreographer’. It’s not like you can only do it if you are 18. If you want to do it, just start. There’s nothing to wait for.

I was making up dances in my school break. I was impatient. Any opportunity, school assembly, anything. I was doing it, doing it, doing it, until it became second nature. Recently, I was in a meeting and somebody said something and I went off on a rant, a positive one, like ‘it’s got to be…’ and all this stuff was coming out. And I was like – when did I learn this? I had no idea. No one’s ever going to teach you. You’ve got to be inspired and just start. And start now. And never quit. Just don’t quit. There’s a huge need for choreographers. It’s a really valid and exciting career and it’s really rewarding. I love it.

Drew McOnie is also an Associate Artist of The Old Vic and the Artistic Director of The McOnie Company.
When most people think about The Old Vic they think about extraordinary theatrical performances and some of the incredible actors who have performed on its stage including Laurence Olivier, Maggie Smith, John Gielgud, Judi Dench, Kevin Spacey and many, many others. Some people may even know that the National Theatre has its roots here but very few people know about the pivotal role that The Old Vic played in the development of dance in the UK. Sadlers Wells, The Royal Ballet, The Royal Ballet School and Birmingham Royal Ballet can all trace their roots back to The Old Vic and the extraordinary vision and passion of Lilian Baylis.

In 1879 the building had been a theatre for about 60 years, albeit with a troubled existence. The social reformer Emma Cons re-opened the building as The Royal Victoria Hall and Coffee Tavern. Emma dropped the word theatre because of its unsavoury associations and hosted concerts, films, lectures and variety shows with the intention of educating and improving the lives of the local, predominantly impoverished, community. She created a ‘cheap and decent place of amusement on strict temperance lines’, no alcohol could be bought or consumed in the building. In 1898 her niece, Lilian Baylis, began working for her as a manager and when Emma died in 1912, Lilian was named as the lessee for the building. She obtained a theatre licence and set about turning the building into The Old Vic we know and love today. Lilian was passionate about theatre, opera and dance and became one of the greatest theatre managers in Britain, striving to make the performing arts accessible to all.

As The Old Vic flourished Lilian acquired a rather run down and disreputable theatre in North London, called Sadlers Wells. In 1925 she began fundraising to rebuild the theatre to create a sister theatre to The Old Vic.

In 1928 Lilian interviewed, Ninette de Valois, an English dancer who had trained and danced in Europe with the celebrated Ballets Russes. After the interview Baylis’ secretary, recorded her as saying: ‘Miss de Valois is going to run her school with the Vic and when we have Sadler’s Wells she’ll run a wholetime ballet company for us.’ Not only did Lilian and Ninette achieve this, they went on to do so much more.

Ninette wanted to create a repertory ballet company of the calibre she had worked with in Europe but dancing in a new, uniquely English style. Starting with a small company of just six dancers and acting as the lead dancer and choreographer, their first
performance was at The Old Vic on 5 May 1931. Sadlers Wells had reopened under Lilian's leadership in January of 1931 and for a time the 'Vic-Wells Ballet' company, the predecessor of the Royal Ballet and Birmingham Royal Ballet, worked between both theatres. Ninette opened the Sadlers Wells Ballet School in the newly opened theatre and this became the forerunner to the Royal Ballet School.

One of Ninette's most famous ballets and the oldest ballet in the Royal Ballet repertoire, Job, had its first public performance on 22 September 1931 at The Old Vic. As the first ballet to be produced by an entirely British creative team Job is considered to be a crucial work in the development of British ballet.

From 1935 Lilian focused the dance performances at Sadlers Wells and in 1939 The Old Vic lost its formal connection to the dance school and companies as it focused almost exclusively on theatrical productions for the next 70 years.

On 4 September 2000 groundbreaking British dance returned to The Old Vic with the London premiere of Matthew Bourne's company, Adventures in Motion Pictures' The Car Man: An Auto-Erotic Thriller. It's interesting to note that here again we see a very British remake of a Russian classic ballet, and, just to keep the great Lilian Bayliss happy a reference to her beloved opera. The music for The Car Man is based on the Russian composer Rodion Shchedrin's Bolshoi Ballet version of Georges Bizet's opera Carmen. The story is loosely based on James M Cain's novel The Postman Always Rings Twice, completely different from the story of the opera but with the same themes of lust, passion, murder and revenge. The production has gone on to tour internationally and been turned into an exciting film.

Dance did feature in productions during Kevin Spacey's tenure as Artistic Director, including a joyous production of High Society with a tap duet on piano's rising from the stage, but the focus remained on theatre. However, the first season with Matthew Warchus as Artistic Director sees dance establish itself back on the programme of The Old Vic. Inspired by Lilian Bayliss eclectic programming of dance, opera, theatre and variety – and by a sign she kept above her desk saying 'Dare, always dare!', Matthew has invited Drew McOnie to become an associate artist at the theatre.

An inspiring and award winning young choreographer, who was mentored by Matthew Bourne, Drew was invited to create an entirely new dance work for The Old Vic, the first one in over 70 years. Drew is passionate about creating accessible and exciting dance that everyone can enjoy – much like Lilian Bayliss was. So, when Jekyll and Hyde opens at The Old Vic on 20 May 2016 it won't be an exciting new departure, instead it will simply be reviving a grand old tradition of the very best of British dance premiering in this wonderful theatre in Waterloo.
PRACTICAL EXERCISES

The following exercises encourage participants to experiment with movement as a way of telling a story.

What are you doing? (5 mins)

This warm up game encourages participants to start using their bodies. All the participants stand in a circle and the leader selects the first participant who goes into the centre and begins to mime a big, clear physical action, sweeping for example. The leader selects the second participant who goes in and asks the first participant ‘What are you doing’. The first participant says they are doing something entirely different to the action they are completing, for example ‘I’m flying a kite’. The second participant then begins to mime flying a kite, the first participant leaves the circle, tagging the third participant who enters and asks the second participant what they are doing. As before the second participant says they are doing something entirely different to the action that they are miming and the third participant starts to mime that action. The second participant leaves and tags the fourth in and so on. Encourage participants to play quickly and make their mimes big and bold.

Creating gesture phrases (25 mins)

You will need: instrumental music and sound system (optional), Act breakdowns for participants.

Discuss with the participants what is meant by the word gesture so that you agree a definition. The dictionary definition is ‘a movement of part of the body, especially a hand or the head, to express an idea or meaning’. In theatrical terms we want gestures to be clear, repeatable, and have a distinct beginning and end. You can introduce a simple piece of sign language as a demonstration, the BSL sign for forget is a good example. Ask the participants to work alone and come up with a gesture that, for them communicates the idea of ‘transformation’. Allow the participants up to two minutes to develop the gesture, encouraging them to try out a number of options. It can help to have some gentle, ambient background music playing. Repeat the task three times with the following three words: rage, love and grow. Encourage the participants to have as much variation between their gestures as possible.

Put the participants into groups of four or five and ask them to teach each other their gestures. Once they have taught each other their gestures you can ask the groups to select 8–12 gestures in a phrase, using at least one from every participant and find a way to link them together. Encourage them to connect them in interesting and challenging ways. You can then share them back, setting new challenges after they have presented their gestures or give them a short amount of time to work on developing their gesture phrases with a specific direction from the list below. Encourage participants to play with tempo and not get stuck in an abstract neutral speed.
Options for participants to work on their gesture phrases:

- Working in canon for timings, for size of gesture, for precision of gesture
- Playing with levels of precision and economy
- Playing with spatial relationships
- Playing with being as realistic as possible
- Playing with working in unison
- Playing with tempo
- Playing with repetition and layering of repetition (participants performing the gestures at different times)
- Playing with intention (to flirt, to threaten etc)
- Playing with different music (or text) overlaid

After sharing back discuss how these abstract gestures can become part of the physical language of the piece. They could be used in transitions, as motifs for character etc.

Having explored the mechanics of gesture and physical language you can develop this exercise by giving a realistic setting and asking each group to create a gesture phrase for characters in a particular world. Aim for 8–12 gestures used in each phrase.

- Gallery party goers
- Globe gym goers
- Gardeners at the flower show
- Clubbers at the underground club
- A London street
- Customers in the flower shop

Give the participants 5 minutes to develop their gestures and sequences, encouraging them to think about all the elements that have been played with. Present them asking the participants who are watching to give feedback about what they liked and what they might like to work on if they were the Director and had more time. As part of the plenary you can also discuss the differences between the abstract gesture phrases and the located phrases.

**Movement improvisation**

**Creating movement scenes** (25 mins)

You will need: Copies of the character breakdown's for each group, and possibly scene breakdowns if the group hasn’t seen the production.

Split the participants into groups of 4–6 and give each group a list of the character breakdown. Each group then have one scene to work on, you may wish to model this process with one group at each stage.
Tableaux scenes:

- At the gym we see Charlie cheat and wrestle with Robert. Other characters: Jekyll, Dahlia and Steven. (Act One: Scene Three)

- At the gallery party we see Charlie humiliate Jekyll. Other characters: Dahlia, Lilly, other posh party guests. (Act One: Scene Six)

- At the gallery party we see Hyde intoxicate the other party goers with flowers and humiliate Charlie. Other characters: Lilly, other posh party guests. (Act One: Scene Nine)

- Dahlia comes into Jekyll's flowershop for the third time, they are in falling for each other and Jekyll makes her a bouquet. Other characters: Daisy and other shoppers.

- Hyde sees Ivy for the first time in a club. Other characters Louis and the other club goers. (Act One Scene Thirteen)

- Iris arrives at Jekyll's shop to collect flowers. Jekyll is opening the shop late because he's only just transformed back from Hyde. Other characters: Ivy, Louis and Daisy. (Act One: Scene Thirteen)

- Jekyll is a judge at Chelsea Flower Show but he's on the edge of involuntarily transforming into Hyde. Other characters: gardeners and fans at the flower show. (Act Two: Scene Three)

The group create a single tableaux that introduces the characters, their relationships and tells the story of the moment, encourage them to think about the following elements: body, facial expression and spatial relationships. You can use a rule that participants may not touch if that helps with behaviour management. Give the participants a short amount of time, 2–5 minutes depending on how much they need to read. At this point you may want to show back and reflect on each scene.

The next phase is participants developing 3–4 new tableaux, to add to their existing one, that tell the story of the scene they are looking at.

Finally ask the participants to find exciting ways to move between the tableaux, considering the following:

- What speed are you travelling at?

- Where is your focus, are you looking straight ahead or are you glancing around you or down?

- What status is your character?

- Can you introduce levels and tempo?

- How much detail can you add – what are your hands, face or feet doing?

You can extend this exercise by selecting, or allowing participants to select music or sound to work with. You could also allow participants to add their own sound (but not words) to their performance.

Share the pieces back and give feedback. Focusing on how much detail the audience can ‘read’ in the performances and what they would ask the group to work on if they were going to direct the piece.
A DAY IN THE LIFE OF ALEXZANDRA SARMIENTO
DANCER AND DANCE CAPTAIN

What does your job involve?

Rehearsals, performing and lots and lots of auditions! I’ve never really approached dance on an emotional level, I’ve always loved the physicality of it. It’s just so much fun and I love being on stage and having people appreciate what you do and be giving them your soul, in an emotional sense or in a physical way – look at my sweat and my muscles and how hard I’m working to tell you this story. I just love doing it.

What do you do on an average day when you are in rehearsals or a show?

I’ll give you an example from a couple of weeks ago when I was doing both. I’m still the resident choreographer for In the Heights, which Drew McOnie also choreographed and won his Olivier for. While I was still doubling up with In the Heights and Jekyll and Hyde in the morning I’d get up about 8am pack all my rehearsal clothes and anything else I’d need for the day and get the train. I’d make my way to The Old Vic for class in the morning. In theatre you might do a warm up before starting rehearsals but as a dancer we do a one-hour class at 10am, to really hone your physicality. Drew would bring in different teachers that fit the profile of the company but are eclectic enough to challenge us in different ways, as opposed to just having the same thing every single day. If you have the same class every day you’ll grow but at some point you’ll plateau. Constantly having these different classes to challenge you and develop your physicality is great. Drew has said that class is the time when we get to figure out how we move as a company, rather than 12 individuals. The rest of the day is spent in rehearsals, working on new material. We take a short morning and afternoon break, a lunch break and work until about 6pm. If you aren’t actually rehearsing something at any point you’ll be on the side, going over things with other dancers, ‘cleaning’ - making sure everything is correct and the details are precise, this might be alone or with other dancers.

Then after a day of rehearsal I’d have one hour to get to Kings Cross, where In the Heights is on. I’m dance captain for that show so during the day, on lunch or tea breaks I’d be re-staging In the Heights if we had anyone sick or off that day. I get to the theatre, do a physical warm up for that company, do a vocal warm up and go over any changes for that show. I also run things on stage that need looking at, spacing or whatever. For example we have a fight sequence in In the Heights and if there was a swing (understudy) on who hadn’t done it recently I’d like to run that. Then I’d do the show; In the Heights is such an amazing show. I’d never be tired to do the show,
What do you do on an average day when you are not in rehearsals or a show?

Oh it's so boring! When I was out of work in New York I was working in a restaurant a few days a week. I had a fluid schedule so I could do auditions or dance classes. So I’d audition first thing, 3 or 4 or 5 times a week then run to my shift at the restaurant. It's expensive and requires a lot of discipline to keep yourself fit. I just go to classes. I’ve never been into exercising, I just hate it, it’s really boring. The closest thing I’ve got is Bikram yoga, I do a week of classes and then by the end I’m so bored of it I just stop. There are great dance classes everywhere, whether it’s London or New York. So that’s how I prefer to keep in shape. Just keep dancing.

Have you always worked in dance?

Yeah, I have. I was pretty academic at school but I also studied piano and did dance. I was encouraged to try out for LaGuardia – the school that Fame is based on. I got accepted in piano and dance, I’d been studying piano for 8 years at that point and was more interested in pursuing dance, which I’d started when I was about 13. When I graduated at 18 I was highlighted as being a great representative of the dance class that year, which was brilliant.

When I graduated from DeGuardia, and before going to university my friend and I auditioned for an international production of A Chorus Line, thinking it’ll be good experience. As a junior (aged 16) I had been in a production of A Chorus Line at school and when it was over I remember being so depressed. I know now that it’s post show blues – I didn’t know then but I think that’s when I got really hooked on dance. So I thought it would be a great thing to audition for, and there’s a short Asian dancer role so I was really going for that. Anyway, I rocked up at 7 o’clock in the morning and I just kept getting though the rounds and I was there all day. I got a call the next day, you got the job! I was so excited. We rehearsed for two weeks and then went to Japan to perform. I came back and was accepted to the dance programme at State University of New York, Purchase. It’s a state school with affordable tuition, less than $10,000 per year, I was accepted into Tisch but the first year fees were like $80,000. I went to Purchase for a year. It was tough, I realised I wasn’t that good, I was in a pool with all these people who were the best. So I was good but I realised how many other good people there were too. It really beat me down, I wasn’t getting onto any of the dance summer programmes I was auditioning for either. And they are almost as important as your degree.

But then I booked another gig with A Chorus Line, which got me my Equity card in the states. It's a bit different to how Equity is run here. You have to get invited to join. So it was summer after first year of college (university) and I was in a short run of A Chorus Line at The Papermill Playhouse, a famous theatre in New Jersey. I took the semester off college and in the break between finishing the job and starting back, I got a call from choreographer Baayork Lee to find out if I wanted to come to London and do the West End production of A Chorus Line. So that’s how I got to London! I hadn’t finished training at Purchase but you were allowed to take three semesters off, which I had, but then I got offered a role in Rufus Norris’ Cabaret. So I left university and took the job, and then after that I did another UK tour. Then, because my visa was linked to work I went back to New York. That was a really tough time, I was doing lots of auditions and not getting anything interesting, just little odd jobs here and there.

I’m back in the UK on an Exceptional Talent Visa from the Arts Council England. I’m on the exceptional promise artist visa for 5 years, which is brilliant, it lets me work here and develop my international perspective and all the relationships that I’ve built.

Which part of your job do you most enjoy?

Rehearsals. Definitely rehearsals. There’s something about having a new piece of material and the all challenges it brings. How am I going to make this efficient? How am I going to deliver this story to the audience in the clearest way? And I love learning new things. I’m really fast at picking up choreography and picking up the intention. I just love new stuff. Being in rehearsal room is very different to being on stage. Don’t get me wrong, I love performing on stage but being in rehearsals you are just working with the content of the show. It’s not about the costume, the set, or technical stuff like your spacing. It’s about the pure thing you are trying to cultivate and deliver. I love waking up in the morning – I’m going to go and work on a new show that’s exciting and I love it, and everyone I’m working with loves it and it’s really great.
What is your best memory of working at The Old Vic so far?

We ran the show yesterday for the first time and I really enjoyed that. Finally seeing how the cogs fit together. It's been quite piecemeal how we've been building it and finally running the show and going, oh wow, it's here. We have something and it's going to be brilliant. I think it's an amazing show, I think Drew's fantastic. It's cool to see how it all fits together. Even pushing the set, which I do lot, I'm like this bit is brilliant, I love how it works. And the audience reactions were fantastic. Things that Drew wanted to have read in a certain way and they were – it was great.

What is the biggest misconception about working in dance?

I think people think it's very easy and fun 100% of the time. You are doing what you love to do and that must be good. It is but it's also hard and not fun a lot of the time. If you imagine you are banker and you go for an interview and you get a job for a few years on a specific salary. Now imagine if you are a banker and you have to interview every three months, and you have to change your portfolio or CV every time and your salary will change all the time. If you are lucky as a dancer you are auditioning once a year. Most of the time you are auditioning constantly and most of the time you are being told, ‘No. You’re not right for this. No we don't want you.’ It's especially hard when you are trying to be the best version of yourself. And it's hard not feel you're not worthy. I've been on the other side of the table (auditioning other dancers) a few times and it's made it easier. You realise they just aren’t right for it. It's no reflection on their talent or their personality. It's just not going to aid how we want to tell our story in our show. I've come to terms with that as I've got older. Regardless, it's still hard to hear no. It's still tough when you are cut from an audition when you feel you've done your best. I enjoy auditions but it's really hard when you get cut. Being unemployed is really hard. It something you have to learn to deal with it. When I first came to the UK I was dressing (helping performers change, especially quick changes) for Sinatra. It was actually really useful as it made me realise that performers can get really jaded. A lot of weight is on our shoulders when we perform but there are so many other things that affect whether or not the show will go on. So it reminded me to be really respectful of every single person you are working with all the time, even when you're tired and stressed.

What is the biggest misconception about working in dance?

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Did you have any dance heroes when you were growing up?

It wasn’t like that for me, I didn’t aspire to be anyone else, I just loved the physicality of dance and I loved moving. I was always trying to find ways to improve myself.

You are playing Daisy. How did you develop your character, where do you start?

I physically fit the profile of what Daisy is meant to be, there’s a part of me that is Daisy already. There’s something about bringing out the part of you that is your character and expressing that. You’re also making the character work on stage, I move very different physically when I’m Daisy, and it’s consciously theatrical. I also read an article about what a daisy is to see if that metaphorically helped with ideas about Daisy. Mainly, Drew and I created her character in the process. There are lots of things that I do now that weren't in the original story for the show. All those bits influenced her character and what she does. Drew and I developed a back-story, her story has grown as the story of the show has grown. Drew felt that if we did it right, Daisy's death should make us feel really bad. There's no reason for her to die, there's no element of Hyde in her, whereas there is in all the other characters.

If you were to offer a young person wanting to get into the industry some advice, what would you tell them?

I really enjoy the discipline of dance. To be on time, to be fully prepared and to be mentally open so that you are not slow in class. So you can receive everything that you are being given. And then turn all that discipline into some form of artistic expression. I have friends from school who weren’t disciplined and that really shows now with how their careers are going. But I suppose that’s me. I love routine and schedule. That’s why it was easy for me to be disciplined. But learning to love discipline is important. Also, keep at it because things don’t come to fruition overnight, they can take years.

Be committed. And remember after college, you are constantly learning. In fact most of your learning comes after you finish school. Constantly going to dance classes is really important, trying new styles and challenging yourself all the time. The world of dance is always changing, what we consider good dance now won’t be good dance in five years – you have to keep learning.
What are your ambitions?

To keep working. For a long time my goal was to be a dance captain of a west end show and I got that. A dance captain keeps the show true the intention of the original choreography, keeps it tight. They are also a dancer in the show. Drew says that the ensemble of the show is the camera lens, it should focus or not focus certain aspects of the storyline. So I need to keep everyone thinking like that, the minute dance is selfish you can see it. It’s my job to keep moulding the spirit of the dance, to keep everyone’s intention the same. I didn’t realise that being a dance captain means that you needed to be such a people person. I thought it would be easy to tell someone ‘you got that wrong’ or ‘you need to change this’. You actually have to take more on, what’s happening in their lives, how to get the best out of them. I’m also working on an online business management and economics degree at the moment. When I got the dance captain role I was taking an organisational behaviour module and it was so useful to bring those two things together. I’m doing that course with a view to what I might do at the end of my dance career. I don’t really enjoy teaching at the moment and I thought I might enjoy being an agent, or in casting or a production assistant. I love schedules! I was watching our company stage manager the other day, and I thought that looked great too. Who knows!
BIOGRAPHY & FURTHER READING

Books

Stevenson, Robert Louis  *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*

Coleman, Terry  *The Old Vic: The Story of a Great Theatre from Kean to Olivier to Spacey* (2011)
Faber and Faber

Websites

The Old Vic  [http://oldvictheatre.com](http://oldvictheatre.com)

The McOnie Company  [http://themconiecompany.com](http://themconiecompany.com)

Britannica  [http://britannica.com/biography/Lilian-Mary-Baylis](http://britannica.com/biography/Lilian-Mary-Baylis)


The Royal Ballet  [http://roh.org.uk/about/the-royal-ballet](http://roh.org.uk/about/the-royal-ballet)

The Royal Ballet School  [http://royalballetschool.org.uk/the-school/history](http://royalballetschool.org.uk/the-school/history)