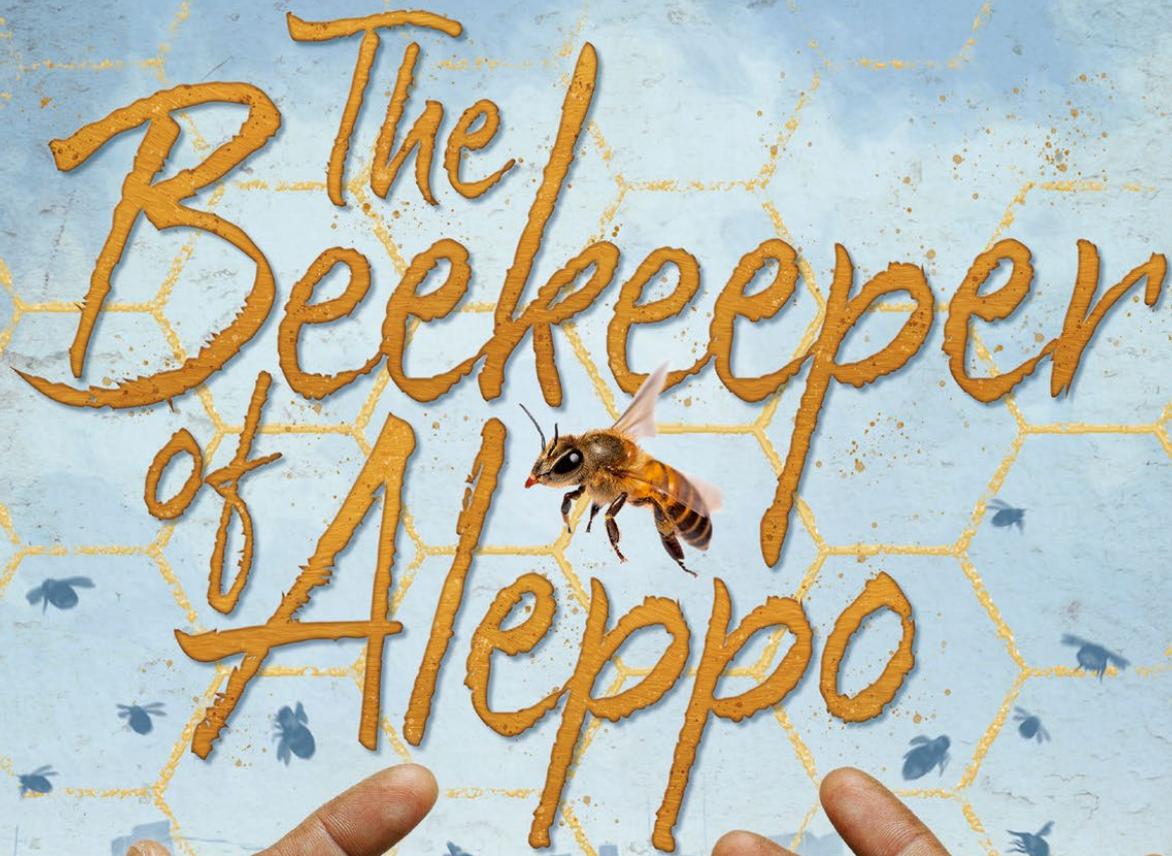


Nottingham Playhouse in association with
Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse and
UK Productions Ltd presents

**The
Beekeeper
of Aleppo**



Adapted
for the stage by
Nesrin Alrefaai and Matthew Spangler
from the International No.1 Bestseller by
Christy Lefteri

Directed by **Miranda Cromwell**

Sponsored by

UNISON
East Midlands

Introduction

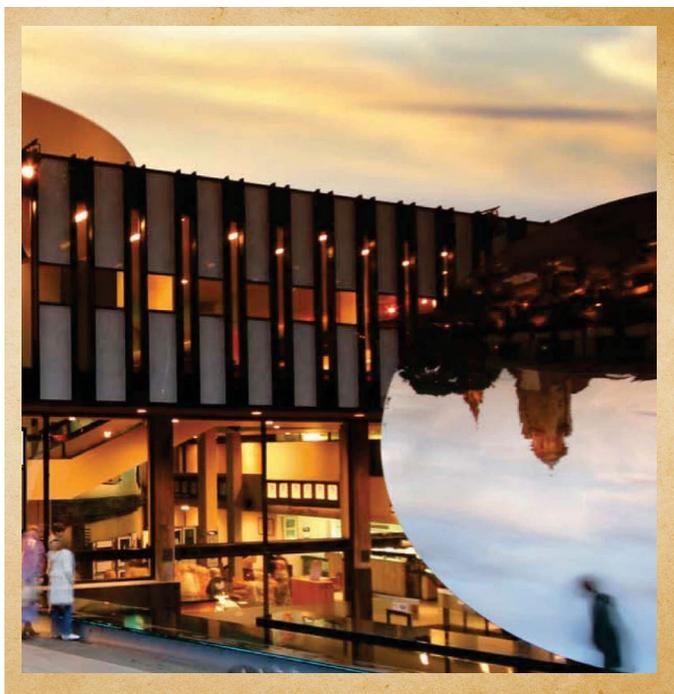


Photo: Drew Baumohl

We create theatre that's bold, thrilling and proudly made in Nottingham.

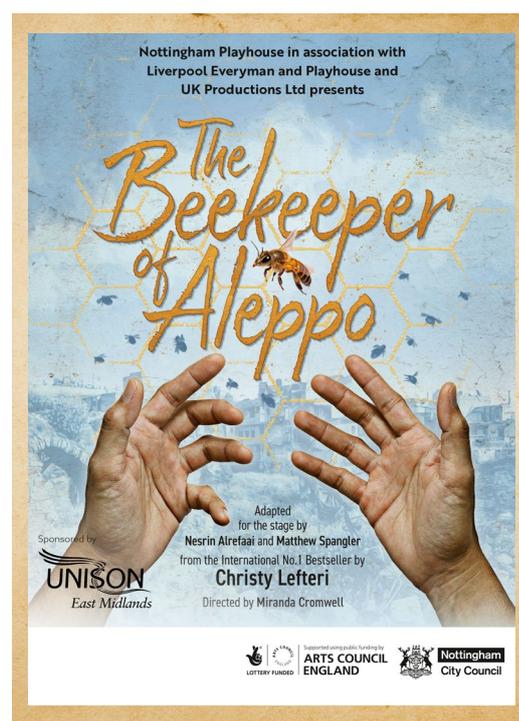
Awarded Regional Theatre of the Year 2019 by The Stage, Nottingham Playhouse is one of the country's leading producing theatres and creates a range of productions throughout the year, from timeless classics to innovative family shows and adventurous new commissions.

We want our theatre to be a space where everyone feels they belong, and we use our stage to tell diverse stories that reflect our city. Our wide-reaching participation programmes create life-changing experiences for our community and we also support the next generation of theatre-makers in the East Midlands through our extensive Amplify programme.

Nottingham Playhouse is also a registered charity (no. 1109342). All of the funds we raise help to ensure we're reaching as many people as possible to give them new opportunities and create lasting memories.

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Producing Partners



UK Productions was formed in 1995 to produce musicals, pantomimes, and plays for which they are now one of the country's most prolific producers.

Recent producing credits include *The Kite Runner*, which following two hit runs in London's West End (Wyndhams Theatre, & Playhouse Theatre) and three tours, opened on Broadway at the Helen Hayes Theatre in 2022 and played to packed houses and rave reviews. Other West End producing credits include *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* (Theatre Royal, Haymarket).

Alongside numerous musicals, named TV children's shows and concert productions touring nationally and internationally over the last 28 years they have produced hundreds of pantomimes, including 11 for the 2022/23 season.

UK Productions also operate a busy production hire business utilising their extensive stores of Musicals, Pantomimes and Play sets and costumes as well as designing and making sets, props and costumes to order.

www.ukproductions.co.uk

Managing Director/Producer – **Martin Dodd**
Artistic Producer/General Manager – **Damian Sandys**
Production Director – **Andy Batty**
Head of Wardrobe – **Elizabeth Dennis**
Head of Marketing – **Andrew Howard**
Finance Director – **Sandra Dodd**
Accountant – **Cathy Nutter**

LIVERPOOL
**everyman
& PLAYHOUSE**

Liverpool Everyman & Playhouse are two brilliant theatres, there for artists and audiences and the magic that happens when they come together.

A local artistic force with national significance and an international reputation, they use the power of theatre to inspire, entertain and nurture positive social change.

Whether you visit them at the Everyman or the Playhouse, see their work online or out in the community, a warm welcome awaits you.

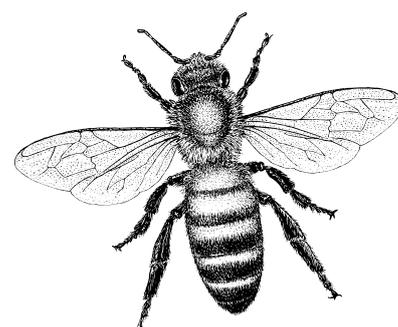
They're grateful for the continued support of Arts Council England, Liverpool City Council, their donors, patrons, partners, and our audiences.

everymanplayhouse.com

Chief Executive – **Mark Da Vanzo**

Creative Director – **Suba Das**

Director of Finance and Operations – **Natalie Gilmore**



Cast and Creatives

Cast

Nuri – **Alfred Clay**
NGO Worker and Cast – **Lily Demir**
Afra – **Roxy Faridany**
Dr Faruk, Dahab and Cast – **Daphne Kouma**
Mustafa and Cast – **Joseph Long**
Mohammed and Sami – **Elham Mahyoub**
Nadim, Fotakis, Ali and Cast – **Aram Mardourian**
Angeliki, Lucy Fisher and Cast – **Nadia Williams**
NGO Worker, Immigration
Officer and Cast – **Fanos Xenofós**



Alfred Clay



Roxy Faridany

Understudies

Nuri – **Aram Mardourian**
Afra – **Daphne Kouma**
Dr Faruk, Angeliki, Lucy Fisher, Mohammed/Sami –
Lily Demir
Mustafa, Moroccan Man, Nadim, Fota –
Fanos Xenofós

Special thanks to:
Jida Akil, Ryad Alsous

Creatives

Author – **Christy Lefteri**
Writer and Cultural Consultant – **Nesrin Alrefaai**
Writer – **Matthew Spangler**
Director – **Miranda Cromwell**
Designer – **Ruby Pugh**
Lighting Designer – **Ben Ormerod**
Sound Designer – **Tingying Dong**
Film Designer – **Ravi Deepres**
Composer – **Elaha Soroor**
Casting Director – **Christopher Worrall**
Voice and Dialect Coach – **Khaled Abunaama**
Voice Coach – **Marianne Samuels**
Dramatherapist – **Nikki Disney**
Props Supervisor – **Alex Hatton**
Associate Director – **Nadia Emam**
Associate Film Designer – **Luke Unsworth**
Video Programmer – **Edward Freeman**
Production Electrician – **Alex Rolfe**
Video Engineer – **Dan Crews**
Company Stage Manager – **Ben Gray**
Deputy Stage Manager – **Charlotte Jones**
Assistant Stage Manager – **Dan McVey**
Musical Arrangement – **Giuliano Modarelli**
Lyrics – **Mohammad Sharif Saiidi**
Vocal – **Elaha Soroor**
Kamancheh – **Nilofar Shiri**
Guitar – **Kaveh Bahrami**
Percussion – **Joost Hendrickx**
Head of Costume for Nottingham Playhouse and
Costume Supervisor – **Emilie Carter**
Head of Scenic Art for Nottingham Playhouse –
Lucy Hollinshaw
Head of Production for Nottingham Playhouse –
Andrew Quick
Executive Producer for Nottingham Playhouse –
Tess Ellison



The cast in rehearsal. Photo: Manuel Harlan

TRIGGERS AND ADVISORIES

This production contains strong language, some scenes of violence, war and death and themes of sexual assault and rape. Please be aware this Insight Pack will also cover these themes.



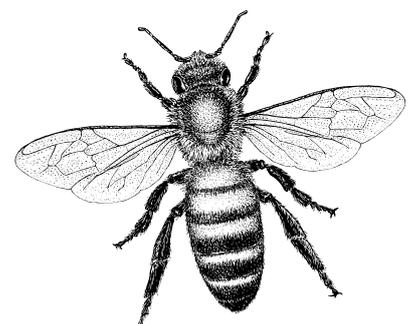
Nottingham Playhouse Artistic Director **Adam Penford** says:

The Beekeeper of Aleppo is a moving and timely testament to the resilience of the human spirit and above all, love. Based on the stunning novel, the award-winning team behind our hit production, *The Kite Runner*, bring this new adaptation to the stage. At the helm is one of theatre's most exciting directors, Miranda Cromwell, and I'm thrilled to welcome her to the Playhouse for the first time.

TIME

'We tend to hear refugee stories in the abstract: millions of people fleeing war, poverty and persecution—words that carry no specifics. However in *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*, Lefteri gives us a deeply researched, intimate look at the lives of one couple. Narrated by Nuri, the novel weaves together two timelines: one starting in Aleppo in 2015 as the couple decides to leave Syria and make the dangerous journey through Turkey and Greece, and the other from a seaside town in England the following year, where they are applying for asylum. Lefteri's slow-building narrative rarely veers into sentimentality or overwhelming bleakness. Nuri's love of beekeeping and Afra's gift for art, interspersed with happier recollections of Syria, offer a glimpse of the beauty still within their reach. By creating characters with such rich, complex inner lives, Lefteri shows that in order to stretch compassion to millions of people, it helps to begin with one.'

Naina Bajekal, September 2019, TIME





Photos of the model box design for the set



Synopsis

Nuri, a beekeeper, finds the act of looking after his bees rewarding; his wife, Afra, an artist, lives with him in the beautiful city of Aleppo. They have a simple life, rich in family and friends, until everything they care for is destroyed by the brutal war in Syria. They are forced to flee from their broken home and travel through a broken world. Nuri's cousin Mustafa has already made it to England and encourages

them to follow in his footsteps. Left traumatised by the tragic death of their son, the couple witness more tragedy and violence.

Throughout their journey, encountering dangers that would overwhelm the bravest of souls, Nuri is horrified at the things people are capable of but will he find beauty in the world too? In the midst of darkness, can he and Afra find kind comfort in people, and

perhaps harder still, journey to find each other again? And what will they find when they make it to the place which will supposedly provide their safety? A world premiere of urgent poignancy, Christy Lefteri's best-selling novel is adapted for stage by Nesrin Alrefaai and Matthew Spangler; *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* is a formidable and heartfelt production presenting the lives of refugees fleeing from war.

Author's Inspiration - What inspired The Beekeeper of Aleppo?

"Two things. The volunteer work I did in Athens and my own family background. So my parents were refugees from Cyprus and they came to the UK in 1974 after the war there. And my dad was a commanding officer of that war. My mum had lost her home, friends, family, you know, everything that they knew and they had to find safety and they came to the UK. My dad fought in the war then came and then they both met here and I was born here (UK). So I feel like I was brought up in the shadow of that war. And even though my parents didn't talk about it that much. Like they wouldn't go into elaborate stories about the war or my dad wouldn't say anything about what it was like to be an officer in that war, it was there, it was very much a part of our life. So what I saw was their striving to integrate. I also saw how frightened they were of this country, this community, it was foreign to them. I guess my dad was quite traumatised from that war so there were reactions that I couldn't understand as a child. And back then it was harder for people to get help when they were

traumatised. So I think it was just there and it became part of who I was. And it wasn't just my mum and dad it was my aunts, my uncles, my grandfather, my grandmother. Everyone that I knew had been affected, as far as my family were concerned in one way or another. They either became refugees by coming to the UK or another country or they went to the south of Cyprus. All of my parents' family were from the north so everyone from the north had to leave after the war. I guess that really affected me even more than I realised when I was a child and then I went into therapy when I got older and then started to put the pieces of the puzzle together and realised that certain fears I had and certain ideas that I had about my parents had been affected by their traumas which had kind of been passed through to me without me realising and it was quite emotional for me. I remember in 2016, after my mum died in 2008, my dad decided to move back to Cyprus. He'd wanted to for a long time. So I decided to go and visit him in 2016. The war obviously was going on



The cast in rehearsal. Photo: Manuel Harlan



The cast in rehearsal. Photo: Manuel Harlan

in Syria then. He lives on the far east side of Cyprus which faces Syria. That directly faces Syria. If you got on a little boat and just travelled straight for about an hour you'd get to Syria. That's how close it is. I remember I was sitting out on that shore and looking across the water and I will never forget that moment because it was that moment I thought "Oh my God! I'm safe and just across the water there's this horrible horrendous catastrophe going on!" And then I start thinking about my own parents. I thought I'm sitting here I'm safe and they're over there. And I'm looking out across the water. Maybe years ago in 1974 people might have been there looking out across the water wondering what was going on with my family, with my mum and dad and grandparents and aunts and uncles and things. And I was so close to where the line divides the island the green line. And it kind of got me thinking about all these things and war and the world and why do we do this to each other. You know where you just have these moments. I really had this feeling that I wanted to help. But obviously I couldn't go to Syria because it was too dangerous. So I decided because I had these long summers from the University where I worked I thought why don't I go to Greece seeing as I speak Greek. I thought

they must need help there. Why don't I make use of my summer? So I decided to go to Athens. And I ended up in a women and children's centre in central Athens. It was chaos. It was a drop-in centre where women and children would come in from the camps. There was tea and coffee, warm showers because in the camp there wasn't warm showers, a play area for children a sofa for mothers that had just given birth. So they would feed their babies, change their babies sometimes we would hold their babies whilst they had a shower or had a rest. That kind of thing whatever they needed help with. And we'd rotate different duties. The men would drop off their wives, sisters, daughters. The women developed friendships with each other. I wasn't meant to talk to the women at the centre because it was a safe space for them so I wouldn't ask them questions about their stories. But I became so overwhelmed with what I was feeling and you become attached to people that you meet and the children and you really get to care about people. The more I cared about people I met on a day-to-day basis the more overwhelmed I felt. And since I was a little girl I would respond to that overwhelming feeling by writing."

Christy Lefteri

Interview with the writers

If you had to sum up this adaptation in 3 words what would they be?

Life-changing, Poignant, Powerful

What changes and artistic decisions did you make when adapting the book for the stage?

We wanted to explore how Nuri and Afra's relationship is impacted by the devastating losses they have to endure. Beyond that, we also wanted to dramatize the effect of certain immigration policies on those subjected to them. And of course, we are writing a play, which has a very different storytelling shape and rhythm than a novel. So, with all this in mind, we have re-ordered some of the novel's plot, combined characters, removed others, and in a few cases, added additional scenes to the play. The purpose of some of these additional scenes is to show the characters' ordinary, everyday lives before leaving Syria. But we want to be really clear here: in making these changes, we are in no way trying to improve upon Christy's beautiful novel; rather, we are just trying to turn it into a respectful piece of theatre.

What are the most important issues for you in *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*?

It becomes gradually clear through the story that Nuri suffers from PTSD, though he is unaware of it until the very end. Some of the symptoms of Nuri's PTSD are memory gaps, flashbacks, and imagining events that didn't happen, or if they did happen, he thinks maybe they didn't. For Nuri, storytelling becomes a way of controlling and making sense of his

suffering, though at times, he loses control of the story and his memories become distorted. Other things that were important to us were the ideas of loss, endurance, survival, and experience of refugee displacement. Engaging in a conversation about PTSD and mental health is a very important issue for us.

Why did you choose to adapt *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*?

The novel raises a number of important issues, such as the effects of losing one's country, family, and sense of identity and belonging, and how one creates a new life after those losses. We believe that theatre is a powerful platform for empathy construction, social justice, challenging stereotypes, humanizing stories behind statistics, and for exploring the many facets of this book.

Which scene in *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* presented you with the most challenges? Why?

The ending. We tried to find a balance between how the book ends, and how we thought this play should end, all the while showing authenticity and respect to the characters on stage. We wrote, rewrote, and revised many drafts of the final three or four scenes. Ultimately, we hope our play leaves the audience with a message of tempered hope and personal responsibility.

What is your favourite part of the story?

Christy has written such a beautiful book that weaves together many stories, so it is difficult for us to isolate one part of this story as our

favourite. But if pressed, Nesrin says, "When Nuri asks Afra why she didn't tell him that Mohammed was not real, and Afra says, 'because you needed him.' We realize in that moment that Afra, who appears up to that point in the story as the more vulnerable, is actually holding the strings and allowing her husband to create his own coping mechanism, which makes her the stronger one." Matthew says, "All the scenes between Nuri and Mohammed. As the father of a twelve-year-old boy, myself, these scenes break my heart."

How did you find working together on this adaptation? What was the process like?

We worked together mostly on Zoom, separated by eight hours – the time difference between United Kingdom and California, where we both live – and for a period of nearly three years. Honestly, every time we met, we spent a good deal of time chatting, before we got down to the real work of adapting a novel into a play. But despite our different lived experiences, we share so much in common around this story and how it speaks to each of our spirits and hearts. Maybe it's testament to the power of Christy's novel as well as the still ongoing real-world events it represents that these things touch readers from around the world. In short: We loved working together. It has been a life changing experience for each of us.

Nesrin Alrefaai and Matthew Spangler – Playwrights *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*



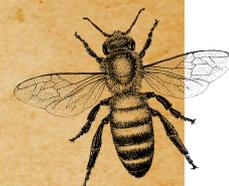
About Aleppo

Aleppo, Arabic Halab, Turkish Halep, is the principal city of northern Syria. It is situated in the north-western part of the country, about 30 miles (50 km) south of the Turkish border. Aleppo is located at the crossroads of great commercial routes and lies some 60 miles (100 km) from both the Mediterranean Sea (west) and the Euphrates River (east). Aleppo was once Syria's largest city and the country's industrial and financial centre. For the first year of the uprising against President Bashar al-Assad, Aleppo saw neither the large-scale protests nor the deadly

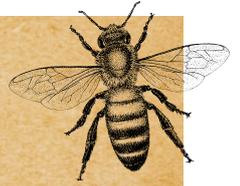
violence that shook other towns and cities. However, it suddenly became a key battleground in July 2012, when rebel fighters launched an offensive to oust government forces and gain control over northern Syria. But the rebel advance was not decisive and Aleppo ended up divided roughly in half, with the opposition controlling the east and the government the west. Neither side was able to break the deadlock until mid-2016, when government troops backed by Russian air strikes severed the rebels' last route into the east and placed 250,000 people under siege.

The Significance Of The Bees

The story of Nuri includes more than just the difficulties of fleeing a perilous homeland. Additionally, it discusses the terrors of war and the tranquillity of beekeeping. At one point in describing the latter, he blends utilitarian realities of doing good work with philosophy. For Nuri, becoming a beekeeper is more than just a job; it becomes a greater calling. Mustafa could never grasp that Nuri had the sensitivity required to perform the work as more than just a job. In the end, he even makes a subtle implication about how important bees are to not just his story but to the history of humanity as a whole: "bees work together." Even when it means sacrificing oneself for the benefit of the hive, a drone is willing to be murdered by worker bees so that the colony would have enough food to survive.



The Beekeeper of Aleppo key themes



GRIEF

Death becomes commonplace after the battle starts. Many people are slain, and many more suffer from trauma and are overcome by unending sorrow and anguish. Those who flee the carnage have seen their family members and friends slain in front of them.



SURVIVAL

Nuri and his family are compelled to leave Syria as violence breaks out in order to protect themselves. The tragedy of the conflict leaves Afra so traumatised that she goes blind. Nuri is committed to getting his family to safety as they go to look for asylum in a foreign country. They will encounter difficult circumstances and cross dangerous terrain, but they won't give up.

HOPE

The only thing keeping them together on their voyage is the belief that their cousin Mustafa will be waiting for them when they get to the foreign country. Not as fortunate are many other refugees. They have no relatives abroad who could support them during this shift. Some of them have a glimmer of hope that someone will assist them, but many of them are helpless.

LOVE

Life in Aleppo before the war was fertile, passionate, and full of love. Families and friends of Nuri coexisted peacefully. He is utterly heartbroken when his beehives are destroyed, which shows how much he loves beekeeping. Nuri must select his family even if he loves his native country very much. Nuri and Afra can endure a lifetime's worth of travel thanks to their unbreakable love.

Central Characters

Nuri

Nuri is the protagonist of this powerful story. He lives in Aleppo with his wife and son and works there as a beekeeper. His parents ran a tailoring shop for several years. Once civil war breaks out in Syria his happy life begins to crumble before him. After disaster strikes Nuri begins his journey to the United Kingdom with his wife to seek asylum there.

Afra

Afra is the wife of Nuri. She is a talented landscape painter. After the loss of her child the trauma and grief cause her to lose her vision. Afra reluctantly agrees to travel with her husband to the United Kingdom, leaving her country behind, after losing everything.

Mustafa

Mustafa is the cousin of Nuri. He owns the beekeeping business and is the one who introduces beekeeping to Nuri, and so they begin to work together. He is also a professor at the Damascus University. He sends his wife and daughter to England for their safety. He loses his son to the violence in Syria. Heartbroken, he also leaves Syria for good.

Mohammed

This character is a young child whom Nuri meets in an immigrant camp in Turkey and befriends. The interactions between Nuri and Mohammed make Nuri happy because Sami, his late son, and Mohammed look alike.



Alfred Clay (Nuri) & Roxy Faridany (Afra) in rehearsal. Photo: Manuel Harlan

Constantinos Fotakis

Fotakis is an exploitative smuggler. He demands fourteen thousand dollars to get Nuri and Afra to England, and makes Nuri deliver suspicious packages to earn the money.

Angeliki

Angeliki is a Somali refugee whom Nuri and Afra befriend whilst living in a park in Athens. She provides Afra with comfort and tells of how she lost her baby. When the couple leave to continue their journey, she explains that being a Somali refugee, she has little chance of progressing on her own.

Nadim

Nadim is an exploiter of children. When Nuri is in Athens, he witnesses two young boys being led away by Nadim. In horror of what he witnessed, Nuri and other men in the park beat Nadim with baseball bats.

Lucy Fisher

This character is a case worker in the United Kingdom whose job is to prepare the couple for their interview with an immigration officer. She explains the process of claiming asylum in the UK and tells them to keep their story as straightforward as possible.

Q&A with Designer Ruby Pugh

What has been your starting point for the design for *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*? Was it a conversation with the director or the script or even the novel?

I read the book when it came out and it really moved me.

During 2015-16 I had made trips to Calais, Dunkirk and Athens volunteering in refugee camps and children's centres. I had come face to face with real people – families forced into unimaginable situations, like those in the novel. I was in the safer and more comfortable position of humanitarian volunteer, with a home to return to, feeling helpless, only scratching the surface of this global crisis.

When I was approached about working on the play, I read the book again. At the end of the book there are a few pages I hadn't seen before about the author Christy Lefteri and how she was driven to tell this particular story. In the summers of 2016-17 Christy had been volunteering in Athens in a refugee centre. Her experience of meeting people who had lost everything looking for sanctuary stayed with her. She found that people wanted to tell their stories, they wanted the world to understand what was happening to them. And this is how the book came into being.

When I read this I started crying because I had been carrying with me the stories of the people I had met back in Athens. I had been there at the same time as Christy, and what she said resonated. When I left Athens I was given a card, on which was written '...go to



Ryad Alsous and Ruby Pugh

England to explain our story'. I felt this might be my chance to keep that promise.

The exciting thing about designing for new writing like this is that I get to meet and work alongside the script writers. As I was designing the show the script was still being developed, giving me the chance to collaborate on honing the visual dramaturgy. I had also had many meetings with Nesrin (co-writer and cultural advisor) working through the details and the specifics of the characters, places and narrative beats, which directly fed into the designs.

What is your favourite part of the design process?

I have two. Firstly, I love research. I love that every project I work on, I learn so much about people, places and cultures. Research is such a huge part of my process, I spend a lot of time looking through books, watching films, listening to interviews and most importantly speaking directly to people with lived experiences and when possible visiting real locations.

One of my highlights from this part of the process was meeting Ryad Alsous, who Mustafa's character is loosely based on. Miranda and I were able to go

to his house, look at his hives and taste the honey he makes in Huddersfield. Ryad now teaches beekeeping to other refugees as part of The Buzz Project that he set up. It was such a rich experience and his thoughts around what home means and the magic of bees really inspired me.

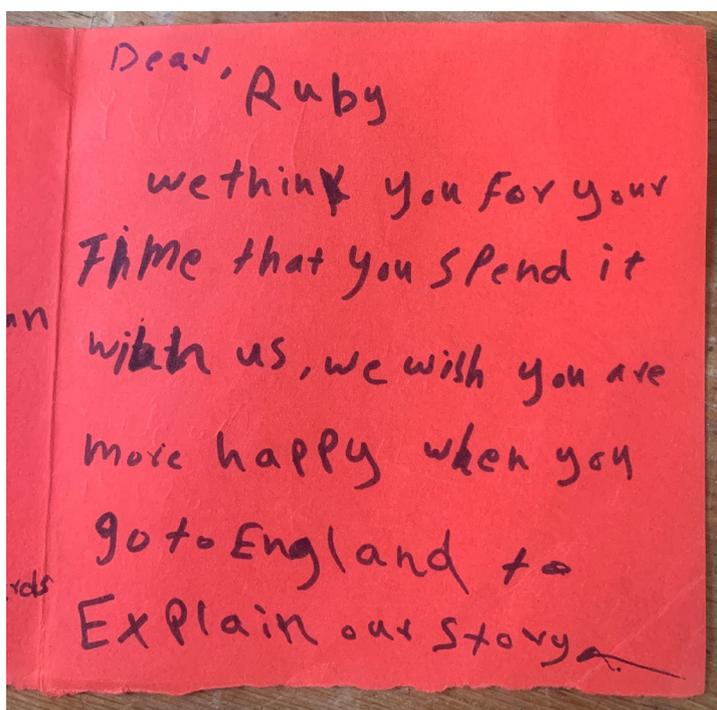
My second favourite part is when I get to see something that started as a rough sketch, turned into reality. Behind the scenes there is a brilliant team of highly skilled and experienced people who get on board with my ideas and work with me to develop them into what you see on stage. It's such an exciting experience. The teams here at Nottingham Playhouse are super talented and it is their expertise, ingenuity and creativity which have brought the ideas to life.

Did you take inspiration from anywhere for the set and costume design?

The play is set in so many different locations, and we move between them seamlessly.

When doing my research for the design I came across an article by Christy Lefteri, where she said that in an earlier draft of the book it was a linear narrative and you didn't know whether the main characters made it to England or not until the end. However she

shifted it because it felt wrong, the crux of the story wasn't whether they made it to England, it was whether they could overcome the trauma they had endured. Making it to England isn't the end of their journey in so many ways.



I was really inspired by this when designing - I felt the play was actually set inside Nuri's mind, everything we see or hear is part of Nuri working through his story in order to make sense of it. A lot of the spaces in the story are 'homes', whether makeshift or temporary. I was looking at the idea of home and mental health as concepts.

When I met Ryad Alsous, he told me about how similar his house here in the UK was to his Syrian home. Back in his flat in Syria he had always fed the birds from his window. When he left he decided to leave the window open and let the birds come and eat his food

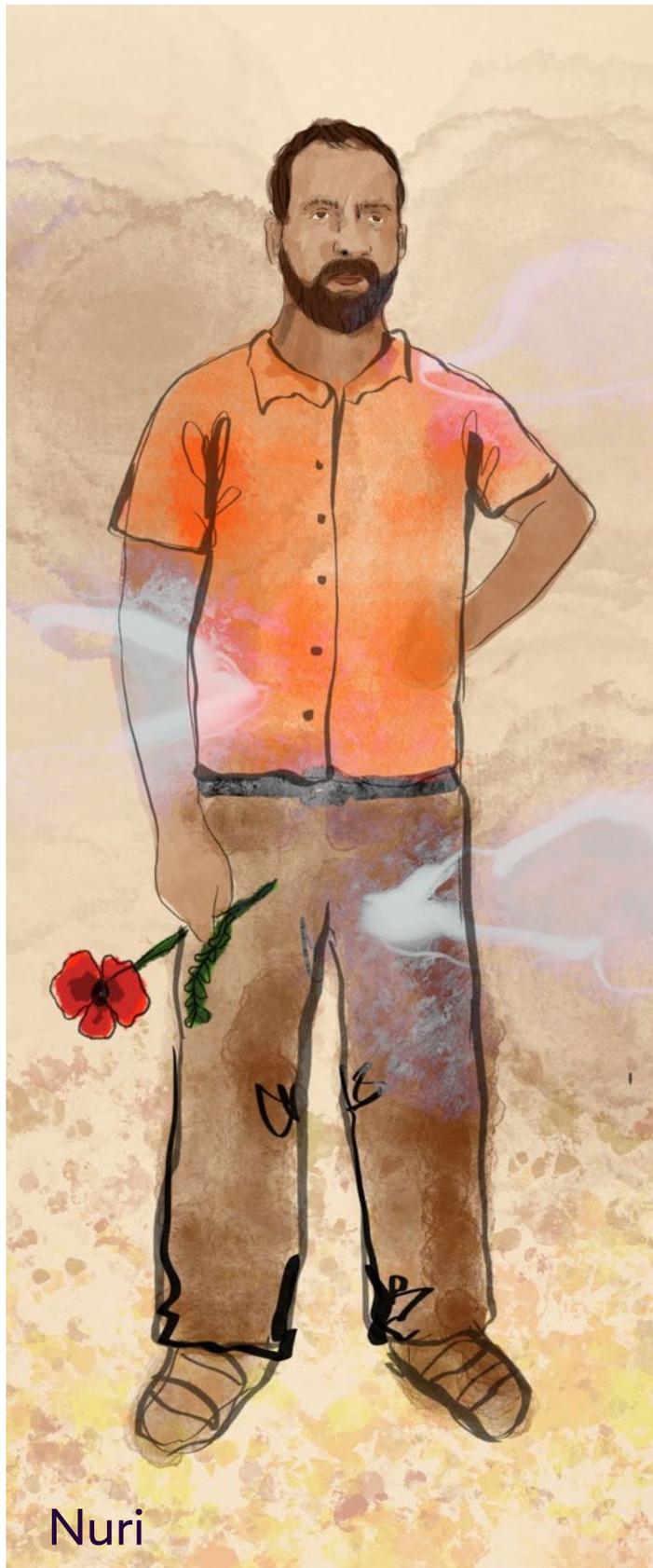
and nest in his flat. He told me that he felt he had swapped places with the birds and it was this swap that had brought him to his home in the UK. He saw a picture of his flat years later filled with nests and said it had been reclaimed by

nature. I really loved the way he spoke about the natural world, religion, spirituality, migration and fate.

I then came across an Iranian photographer Gohar Dashti who did a series called Home, looking at the displacement of people and our relationship with nature. The images she creates are heightened reality, photographing buildings which have been abandoned due to socio-economic reasons, and taken back by nature.

I also saw photographs of a mining town in Africa which had been abandoned and the houses were being swallowed up by the desert. I loved the idea of sand as a way of showing time passing, shifting and consuming the space. It is from these images that I created the design for the set, giving us a dreamlike liminal space to perform a story that blurs reality and memory. Although the sand-filled room is based on a real place it's not a place we go to in the play, it's a visual representation of the conflict of leaving a physical home, in order to find a new one - to find sanctuary.

Costume designs





Colour palette inspiration



Context of the story

The Syrian Civil War

The Syrian Civil War is a violent and multi-sided conflict in Syria between pro-democratic insurgents (the Syrian Arab Republic) and Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's long-standing regime, and also includes various factions and foreign forces. Before the war started in 2011, many people were unhappy about the high levels of unemployment, widespread corruption and lack of political freedom in Syria. Inspired by the Arab Springs uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt, peaceful protests started on the 15th March 2011 out of discontent with the Assad regime,

calling for Assad's removal. However, government forces responded with deadly force and a brutal crackdown to crush the dissent. The violence rapidly escalated, with the number of deaths and wounded rising, the uprising progressed, and the war began. Many groups joined in with the fighting, with many fighting each other. The Syrian conflict has now turned into a complex three-part war.

It involves Turkish-backed forces in the northwest who are fighting Syrian government forces but are also opposed to US-backed Syrian

Kurdish control in the northeast; there is still no clear path to peace. The Syrian conflict has been ongoing for 11 years and counting, which is longer than the two World Wars combined.

As of March 2022, estimates of the total number of deaths in the Syrian Civil War, by opposition activist groups, vary between 499,657 and about 610,000. Around 17.5% of the country's housing has been destroyed and widespread damage to the health and education infrastructure has impacted many of the country's regions.





The Global Refugee Crisis

At the end of 2021, the UNHCR stated that the total number of people worldwide who were forced to flee their homes due to conflict, violence, fear of persecution and human rights violation was 89.3 million. This is more than double the 42.7 million people who remained forcibly displaced a decade ago and the most since World War II. The global refugee crisis is larger than it has been at any time in modern history. The Syrian Civil War created what remains the world's largest refugee crisis, with nearly 7 million Syrians internally displaced and 6.6 million having been forced to seek safety in neighbouring countries such

as Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and beyond; this civilian displacement and refugee exodus has created one of the worst humanitarian crises in modern history. However, the global refugee crisis extends much beyond this. The second largest current refugee crisis is now Ukraine. Since Russia launched a full-scale military invasion into Ukraine in February of 2022, more than 7 million people have been internally displaced and 6 million are now refugees in neighbouring countries like Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Hungary and Belarus. Approximately one-quarter of the country's total population had left their homes in Ukraine by

20th March 2022. The current crisis in Ukraine has created the greatest refugee surge to OECD countries since World War II, making it the fastest-growing refugee crisis in modern history. In Afghanistan, the world's third largest crisis, more than 6 million people have been forcibly displaced from their homes; 3.5 million are internally displaced and 2.6 externally, the majority having fled to Pakistan and Iran. A further 6 million have been displaced from Venezuela, 4 million from South Sudan, 2.7 million from the Central African Republic (CAR) and 1 million from Myanmar. 68% of the world's refugees come from just 5 countries.

Life for Syrian Refugees

"Before war, Syrian people had stable lives, nobody needed something. I am not saying Syria were a developed country, but we were all living in harmony despite the diversity of the population. Our only problem used to be political direction, which does not allow anyone to express or promote anti-regime ideas.....We were fed up with being imprisoned at home, horrified with the idea that we may die in any minute, even worse get arrested. For instance, I went to accompany my girlfriend back to her home, half an hour later, the building was destroyed and the whole family passed out at the same time. What I mean is, many people say "Yeah! You can stay in Syria as long as you are not fighting, you will be fine". Well, that is not true, as I mentioned before, all the groups want youth to join them in. In the meanwhile, if you stay home all the time, besides the fact that, that is no life... one cannot be safe in his own house. Currently, no region in Syria is safe, all the groups are attacking each other, and we civilians are the victims."

Adnan Albash,
NeuLand-Zeitung

Read More...



"Being scared was a permanent state of mind. I was always scared," said Achmed. "When I went to bed, I always wondered if I would wake up the next morning." Eventually the violence became too much for Yaser and his wife, and they made the decision to uproot their family from their home in Syria in search of a better life in Germany. They were only able to make their long and difficult journey from sunset to sunrise so they would not be spotted. Young Hala lost her glasses during their trek. "Everything is already strange, but now it is also blurry," she said. "It is very scary not to be able to see clearly."

Achmed,
Save the Children

Read More...



When violence first exploded in Syria, this family decided to leave their home in Aleppo to keep their five young children safe. They eventually fled to the Syrian city of Afrin, living off their small savings. One day when living in Afrin, Amina decided to travel back to Aleppo to see her home. She also hoped to bring back some belongings the family had left behind. "There were two buses going to Aleppo that day. I boarded the second one," Amina said. "The first bus got bombed and all the people on it died. Our driver managed to swerve and avoid the other bus, but because of the sudden movement the bus ended up crashing. I was petrified." Since the crash, Amina has been living with chronic back pain.

Amina,
Red Cross

Read More...



Glossary

This play is about Nuri, Afra and Mustafa's forcible displacement as refugees in the Syrian Civil War and refugee crisis. However, it involves characters from other war-torn countries, such as Nadim from Afghanistan and Angeliki from Somalia. The characters in the play represent the scope of this global refugee crisis. Here is a breakdown of terminology often associated with this subject.

Refugee: The United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) defines a refugee as: any person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.

Asylum-seeker: An asylum-seeker is someone seeking refugee status. Under the terms of the convention, asylum-seekers have the legal right to seek refugee status in the signatory nations. To date, the U.N.'s Refugee Convention has been ratified by 147 nations, including the United Kingdom, the United States, and much of Western Europe. This definition of a refugee was created in response to a post-WWII and Cold War world, and as many commentators have noted, is vastly out of step with today's migration reality. To begin with, of the five reasons listed for refugee status – race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion – notably absent is migration due to economic reasons, criminally unsafe neighbourhoods, or climate change

Habibt (f) Habibi (m): Arabic term of endearment meaning my dear/ darling/ love

Papers: Identification documents. Needed at borders or checkpoints

Case worker or community support officer: Employed by council or home

office who liaises with different services such as doctors, accommodation, schools, home office.

Immigration Officer: A law enforcement official working for the Home Office whose job is to ensure that immigration legislation is enforced. Their roles are to check passports/ identification documents at borders and checkpoints. They provide vital intelligence to support our enforcement operations on the ground, investigate organised immigration crime, and stop people from selling smuggled goods or employing illegal workers. They also prevent people from entering the country illegally and people overstaying their visas. They deal swiftly with immigration offences and support the safe removal of illegal migrants from the UK. (from gov.co.uk)

Legal Aid: In England and Wales, legal aid is only available for asylum cases and certain types of immigration cases. This means that many people who are on a low income and who need to make an immigration application will not be able to get free legal advice.

Home Office: The lead government department for immigration and passports, drugs policy, crime, fire, counter-terrorism and police.

Wallah(i): Arabic term for 'I swear (to God)' or 'Oh really' depending on the context.

Yallah: Arabic term for 'Come on/ let's go/ hurry up/ chop-chop!' Depending on the context.

Ya allah: Arabic term similar to 'of for god's sake.'

Kibbeh: In Levantine cuisine, kibbeh is usually made by pounding bulgur wheat together with meat into a fine paste and forming it into with toasted pine nuts and spices.

Mualem: Arabic term for 'teacher' or master.

Um: Mother of (eg. Um Nuri= Mother of Nuri)

Kabab Banjan: Aubergine kebabs. An Alleppan speciality often alternated on the skewer with slices of meat.

Dolma: Vine leaves stuffed with rice, herbs, spices and sometimes meat

Inshallah: Arabic term for 'God willing' used in future tense/ in preparation for something you will or hope to do.

Kher inshallah: Arabic term translating to, 'It is good, as God wills it.'

Friday: A day of significance as it is the 'holy' day in Islam, so the main weekend day

Bustan Al Qasr (The Tunnel of Death): Bustan al-Qasr was the last area of Aleppo with a direct link between government and opposition-held neighbourhoods. City residents called it the "Crossing of Death", as people were often killed by government snipers while crossing from one side to the other.

Umayyad Mosque: The Great Mosque of Aleppo is the largest and one of the oldest mosques in the city of Aleppo, Syria. It is located in al-Jalloum district of the Ancient City of Aleppo, a World Heritage Site, near the entrance to Al-Madina Souq.

Khan al-Jumruk: A khan was a caravanserai or inn with a central courtyard often found in the desert that served travelers along the Silk Road in Asia and North Africa. This was the custom's khan situated in the old city of Aleppo, built in 1574.

Al Firdaws School: Also known as School of Paradise, is a 13th-century complex located southwest of Bab al-Maqam in Aleppo, Syria and consists of a madrasa, mausoleum and other functional spaces.

Al-Utrush Mosque: Also known as Demirdash Mosque, is a historic mosque

located in Aleppo, Syria. It was built at the end of the 14th century AD. The mosque was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1986 as part of the ancient city of Aleppo.

Bab al-Faraj Clock tower: one of the main landmarks in Aleppo.

Humata Ildyaar: Syrian National Anthem (Guardians of the Homeland).

Bashar Al Assad: Syrian president from 2000. He succeeded his father, Hafiz al-Assad, who had ruled Syria since 1971. In spite of early hopes that his presidency would usher in an era of democratic reform and economic revival, Bashar al-Assad largely continued his father's authoritarian methods. Beginning in 2011, Assad faced a major uprising in Syria that evolved into civil war.

Mukhabarat: Arabic term for intelligence. The term is colloquially used in reference to secret police agents who spy on civilians.

Queiq river: Also known as Aleppo River is a river. It is a 129 km long river that flows through the northern Syrian city of Aleppo.

ISIS/ Daesh/ So-called Islamic State: [Click here](#) for video - The rise of ISIS, explained in 6 minutes.

Khubz: pitta bread

Ya Lateef Ya Raheem Prayer: Ya Lateef is one of the 99 names of Allah. People recite this name with Ya Raheem (the most merciful) in a prayer 133 times to overcome difficulties and to be able to accomplish tasks.

Issalam Alaykum: Arabic greeting meaning, Hello/ Welcome/ Peace be upon you.

Alhamdulillah: Arabic phrase meaning 'thanks god'.

La hawla wa la quwwata illa Billah: Arabic/ quranic phrase meaning, 'there

is no power and no strength except with Allah', is a person's admission that they are unable to do anything without the help and support of Allah.

Majnoon enta?: Arabic for 'Are you crazy?'

Tamam: Arabic meaning 'good' or 'okay'. It can be a question and an answer.

Ma'arrat Misrin: Ma'arrat Misrin is a small city in northwestern Syria at an elevation of 338m. It is located 50 kilometers southwest of Aleppo.

Haranbush: Haranabush is a village in northern Syria situated off the eastern slopes of A'la Mountain.

Kafar Nubi: a village in the northwest of Syria.

Asi River/ Orontes River: flows from Lebanon, northwards through Syria, and into the Mediterranean Sea from Turkey.

Smuggler: Person who engages in the facilitation, transportation, attempted transportation or illegal entry of a person or persons across an international border, in violation of one or more countries' laws, either clandestinely or through deception, such as the use of fraudulent documents for financial benefit.

Yah Allah!: Arabic phrase that would be like saying 'Oh my god'

Biscuit Island/ Leros: [Click here](#) for 'I volunteered in a refugee camp in Leros, Greece'.

Astaghfar Allah: Arabic phrase meaning 'I seek forgiveness in God', sometimes used when seeing something wrong or shameful.

Ahmar ya Jabas: (Red) sweet ripe watermelon.

Shukran: Arabic for 'thank you'

NGO worker: Non-governmental organisations working to improve the quality of life for people in developing countries. They may provide services such as healthcare, education and economic development. An example of a development non-governmental organisation is Oxfam.

Keef halek (m): Arabic greeting 'how are you?' to a male

Exit card: A legal document used by immigration authorities to provide passenger identification and to keep a record of a person's departure from a country.

Pedion tou Areos: One of the largest public parks in Athens where people have formed a camp.

Rabab: a lute-like instrument from Afghanistan.

Odysseus: The King of Ithica in Ancient Greece. Homer wrote about his 10 year odyssey home.

Sirens: In The Odyssey, the Sirens were goddesses who once held Odysseus captive. They are winged monster women, part bird and part human. The Sirens' goal is to lure or tempt sailors off course and to their deaths with their hypnotising song.

Taliban: [Click here](#) for video 'The Taliban, explained'.

Skopje: Skopje is the capital and largest city of North Macedonia.

Victoria Square Athens: A public park in Athens which is also a common place for people to gather and set up camp.

Hope Centre: A community centre.

Maalsalama: Arabic for 'goodbye'.

Rehearsal Techniques

Physicality

Animals - This is a Stanislavskian activity and focuses on character physicality, tone of voice and speed of speech. Imagine a character is a particular animal and perform a short scene (either text-based, or improvised scenario) as that animal. Ask your teacher or workshop practitioner to shout out numbers on a scale from 1 - 10, where 10 is the most exaggerated version of that animal whilst the performance style of 1 is very subtle.

Top Tip:

Remember to think about speed of speech and movement as well as allowing your whole body to become that animal. Then discuss your thoughts afterwards and try the exercise again with different characters and animals.

Text Work

Facts and Assumptions

- Starting with your script, and working in groups if preferable, find out all the facts about a specific character. Once you've done that, assumptions can also be made based on these facts, building a set of Given Circumstances for each character in the play. This can then be shared with the group so that the Given Circumstances for the whole play can be set.

Bite Size Storytelling - In groups, take a short scene from the play. The group have to tell the story of the scene in whatever way they feel fit. They can take key lines that highlight the main events, or they can create a series of freeze frames depending on the ability of the group. The scenes need to be kept short and the stories within the scene isolated. You can then stick the whole show (or chunks of it) together so that you create the whole thing in their own way.

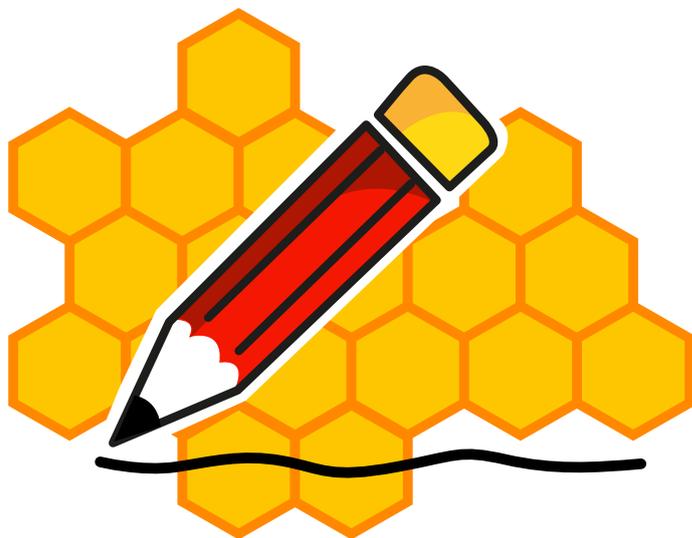
Devising

Improvisation with an Object - Each group is given an object. They have to create a short scene with the object as the central focus. You can do this in a couple of ways. First - they have to use the object as it actually is (a brush must be used as a brush), or the object cannot be used literally (the brush becomes a microphone or a spade).

Polish/Final Stages

Line, Scene, Go - The director shouts a random line to the company. They are instantly expected to get themselves into position and pick up the play at the point of the line. Run a couple of moments - then shout another line which they all then run to. Great for keeping things fun and fresh - and for highlighting points of confusion or those who are less sure of their lines.

Peer Notetaking - Whilst the director is focusing on the overall vision of the piece, peer notetaking can be a really useful tool for each actor. Pair people up with others who aren't in the scene. The actor can tell their notetaker if there is any specific thing that they'd like their notetaker to focus on (such as diction or intonation), or specifics can be stated by the director. Positive notes and room for improvement can be highlighted. You will generally find that they are really positive about each other's performance and it is a great way of developing self-reflection too.



Character/Plot Development

Acting the Objectives - Each actor plays a scene that they have rehearsed, but instead of speaking the dialogue, they state what they WANT to do to the other people in the scene, for example 'I want to make you jealous'. This is useful if you have been able to action the text first, and it also helps with the reactions of the other actors in the scene.

Theatre Practitioners

Bertolt Brecht (1898 – 1956)

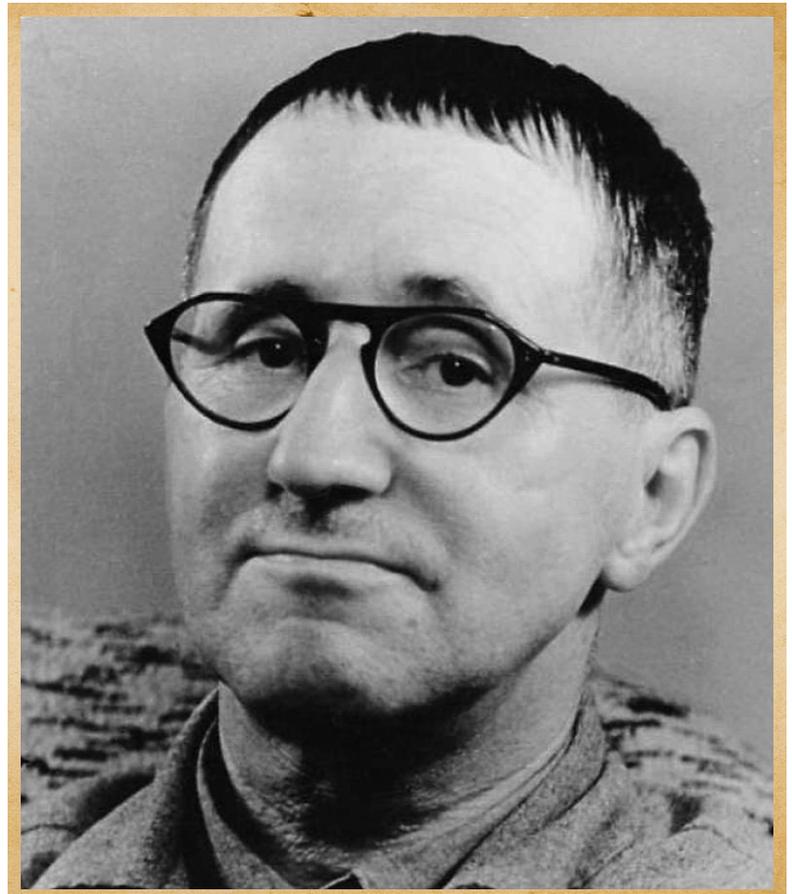
Born in 1898 in Augsburg Germany and sickened by the impact of the First World War, Bertolt Brecht began studying theatre in 1917, and wrote his first plays *Baal* and *Drums in the Night* in 1918. By 1921 he had arrived in Berlin where he soon became involved with a large number of Berlin's leading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

When discussing Brechtian theatre, we are fundamentally examining **theatre of politics**. Brecht was reacting directly against the Fascist regime and, following the teachings of Karl Marx, Brecht's writings were focused on a **Marxist ideology**.

Brecht was a playwright, director and poet who created what we now know as Epic Theatre. Epic Theatre was a reaction against Naturalism, and aimed to provoke the audience into action. This was a theatre of change. He believed that theatre should not only reflect the world, but change it. After watching one of his plays, Brecht hoped that the audience would leave the theatre determined to take action against the unfair society they were living in. He did this through the development of the *Verfremdungseffekt* – or **Making Strange**.

The v-effect is also known as the a-effect, or **alienation effect**, and is essentially a range of devices that Brecht used to prevent the audience becoming emotionally attached to the characters within the plays. He wanted them to maintain a '**distanced objectivity**' so that they could see things as they really were. An example of these techniques were: **Audience interaction (breaking the fourth wall)**, **Narration**, **Montage**, **Gestus (Gesture with attitude)**, **Spazz**, **Song**, **Mime** and **Third Person Dialogue**.

Brecht's impact was so pertinent that he had to flee from the Nazi regime in 1933, only to return to Germany in 1948 after the end of the Second World War. In 1949 Brecht created the **Berliner Ensemble** where he continued to develop his work until his death in 1956.



Notable Works

- **The Threepenny Opera**
- **Life of Galileo**
- **Mother Courage and Her Children**
- **The Good Person of Szechwan**
- **The Caucasian Chalk Circle**
- **Mr Puntilla and his Man Matti**
- **The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui**

Highlighted Information

- Fundamentally examining theatre of politics
- Writings focused on a Marxist ideology
- Created what we now know as Epic Theatre
- A reaction against Naturalism
- Aimed to provoke the audience into action
- Not only reflect the world, but change it

Theatre Practitioners

Konstantin Stanislavski (1863 – 1938)

Konstantin Stanislavski, born to one of the richest families in Russia in 1863, is widely credited with the development of the first form of formal actor training in the modern world, most commonly referred to as his System. Set out across three major books, *An Actor Prepares*, *Building a Character* and *Creating a Role*, Stanislavski was the first to document a process which trainee actors could follow in order to create the image of **truth on stage**.

Stanislavski's privilege and wealth enabled him to create an alternative theatre to the melodramatic and declamatory style which was prevalent in Russia at the time. He dedicated his life to changing outmoded practice with a desire for perfection that led to international success. With barely any training, he embarked on a quest for truth in art and devoted his whole life to this journey. In 1897, he and **Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko** created **The Moscow Art Theatre** to develop and shape his ideals.

The System that he developed aimed to be a systematic approach to lay down ground rules for approaching character, and for how an actor could use their voice and body effectively to **fully embody a character** on stage. Working closely with playwright **Anton Chekhov**, Stanislavski was able to experiment with text and actors in order to hone and develop his teachings.

Exercises that are included in The System and that are still widely used in actor training today include: **Emotion Memory**, **The Magic 'If'**, **Circles of Concentration**, **The Method of Physical Actions**, **Imagination**, **Relaxation** and **Action with a Purpose**.

These exercises still form the basis of most actor training in the western world which is a testament to how truly influential Stanislavski has been in the development of actor training.



Notable Works

- **Founder of the MAT Stanislavski's 'system'**
- **An Actor's Work**
- **An Actor's Work on a Role**
- **My Life in Art**

Highlighted Information

- The first form of formal actor training
- Create the image of truth on stage
- An alternative to the melodramatic and declamatory style
- Fully embody a character on stage
- A systematic approach

Theatre Practitioners

Steven Berkoff (1937 – present)

Steven Berkoff is a British actor, director and playwright who was born in London in 1937. Berkoff trained as a mime artist at the **Lecoq School** in Paris before he began developing his own work. Alongside the many plays that he has written, Berkoff has also had a successful career in film, often playing the sinister 'bad guy' character.

Berkoff's approach to theatre is incredibly **physical and non-naturalistic**, often focusing on **movement rather than voice**. According to him, the only purpose of a script is to help '**minimalise and physicalise**' the story; stripping it down to its most basic components.

The theory of **Total Theatre** is key to Berkoff and stemmed from Artaud's theatre style. Total Theatre maintains that every aspect of theatre must have purpose: to every movement, that is choreographed; to each line, that is learned perfectly; to each lighting effect, that is used to convey a mood or message; to each sound effect, that enhances the audience's experience; to each prop that has a use.

The aim of Total Theatre is to create extreme moods to give the audience an overwhelming experience and to shock, amuse, scare, or amaze them. Berkoff particularly embraced this in his **Kafka adaptations** such as *Metamorphosis*, *The Trial* and *In the Penal Colony*. Total Theatre performances are often stripped back and minimalist with bare stages and little language, so that the focus remains on the physical movement. This serves to detach the audience from the play and make them think about what was being said.

Berkoff likes to use **stereotype and cliché** in order to examine human behaviour. These stereotypes require the actor to demonstrate the character in a heightened manner, through **exaggerated physical movement** and often base, foul language.



Notable Works

- Sink the Belgrano!
- Shakespeare's Villains
- A Clockwork Orange
- Beverly Hills Cop
- War and Remembrance

Highlighted Information

- Physical and non-naturalistic
- Minimalise and physicalise the story
- Every aspect of Total Theatre must have purpose
- Create extreme moods
- To detach the audience from the play

Theatre Practitioners

Augusto Boal (1931-2009)

Born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1931, Boal is most renowned for creating the **Theatre of the Oppressed**, a form of interactive theatre intended to transform lives. Boal's theatre invited **spectators to become performers**, acting out solutions to their own social problems. Boal (like Brecht) believed that theatre should be a **vehicle for social change**, and his Theatre of the Oppressed aimed to show the people what was possible and give them a voice for action.

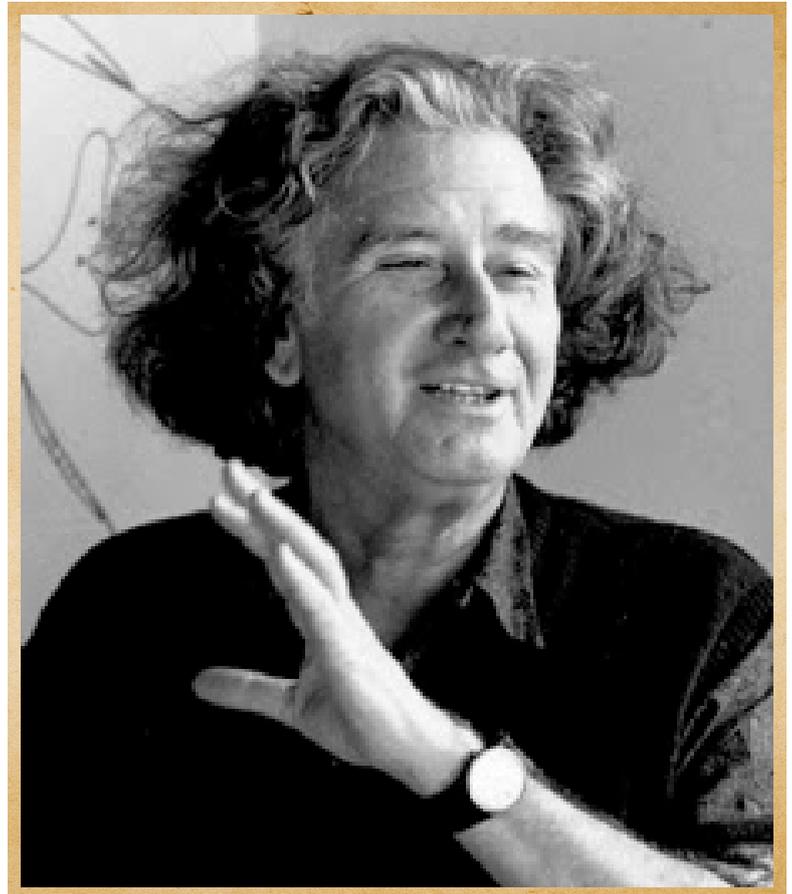
Theatre of the Oppressed begins with the idea that everyone has the capacity to act in the 'theatre' of their own lives; everybody is at once an actor and a spectator. Boal called his audience '**Spect-actors**'.

Theatre of the Oppressed encompasses three key forms:

Image Theatre invites spect-actors to form a tableau of frozen poses to capture a moment in time dramatising an oppressive situation. They are then asked to reflect critically on this situation before being asked to depict an ideal outcome, or to reshape an image to show different **perspectives**.

Forum Theatre is a short play that dramatises a situation, with an oppressive ending that spect-actors cannot be satisfied with. After an initial performance, it is shown again, however this time the spectators become spect-actors and can at any point yell 'freeze' and step on stage to replace the protagonist(s) and take the situation in different directions.

Invisible Theatre is public theatre that involves the public as participants in the action without their knowing about it. The objective is to unsettle passive social relations and spark critical dialogue among the spect-actors. Several actors rehearse a scene which they then play in an appropriate public space in order to provoke a reaction from the public who think they are watching a spontaneous event.



Notable Works

- Torquemada
- Theatre of the Oppressed
- Games For Actors and Non-Actors
- The Rainbow of Desire

Highlighted Information

- Interactive theatre intended to transform lives
- Acting out solutions to their own social problems
- Everyone has the capacity to act in the 'theatre' of their own lives
- Give people a voice for action

Theatre Practitioners

Frantic Assembly

Frantic Assembly are a **physical theatre company** who were formed in 1994 by Scott Graham, Steven Hoggett, and Vicki Middleton, who had all met whilst studying at Swansea University. They aimed to create physical theatre, using **dynamic and engaging movement** with storytelling at the heart of the work.

Scott Graham is still the Artistic Director of the company, who have developed and created a wide range of work. Notable productions include *Pool (No Water)* by Mark Ravenhill, *Beautiful Burnout* by Bryony Lavery, *Things I Know To Be True* by Andrew Bovell and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Simon Stephens.

Frantic Assembly devise most of their work in **collaboration with a playwright**. Taking the movement as the basis for action, they use a series of exercises to develop physical theatre. Speech and dialogue is then added in order to **create a narrative structure**. The movement and the dialogue go hand in hand to create

visually dynamic and engaging theatre. It is essentially **directing through movement**.

Scott Graham describes their way of working as '**The Frantic Method**'. He says: 'The Frantic Method is approaching devising as a series of tasks, each broken down into building blocks. This is designed to establish progress from the **simplest discoveries**.

'Performers are encouraged to **take a moment back to its simplest truth and build from there**. This places dancers, actors, students, teachers and all participants on the same starting point. Using these building blocks they are empowered to find and create complex work through a process that is safe, fun and constantly illuminating.'

Performers who work with Frantic Assembly have to have extremely high levels of physical fitness, as their work is very demanding. They do lots of outreach work with schools and colleges to share their methods and encourage participation in physical theatre.



Highlighted Information

- Dynamic and engaging movement with storytelling at the heart of the work
- Devise most of their work in collaboration with a playwright
- Movement as the basis for action
- Visually dynamic and engaging theatre
- Progress from the simplest discoveries

A Glimpse Into Theatre Careers

A chat with Beth Shaw

SOUND AND VIDEO TECHNICIAN

Tell us about your role as Lighting, Sound and Video Technician.

As a lighting, sound, and video technician it's my job to make sure that all the lights are pointing the right way, everyone on stage can be heard, and that pieces of video blend seamlessly into a production. It's very varied, as we work on all manner of shows, from big shows that we produce in-house, to touring dance shows, and events with some of the best comics in the country. No two days look the same; one day you're sat at a desk plotting lights for a theatre show, the next you're hanging out of the ceiling in a harness to make sure that the lighting designer gets "that shot". It's physically taxing and stressful at times, but the first time the audience clap on opening night? That somehow makes it worth it.

What does a day in the life of a Lighting, Sound and Video Technician look like?

It depends on what we're working on! If a show is up and running, or it's a simple one man and a mic event, I might not start work until 5pm, in which case, I'll spend my daytime catching up on everything people usually use their evening for - food shopping, hobbies, and batch cooking food so that I have healthy things to eat for tech weeks. In that case:

5pm: arrive at work. Read events checklist/show checklist.

Switch on LX and sound equipment and do a rig check.

5:30pm: cast/talent arrives.

If it's a one-night show, we work together to create some lighting states, run through how the show works, and do a sound check.

6:30pm: cast/talent warm up on stage. Usually I use this time to check my show file and tidy things up a bit.

6:55pm: the half an hour call for a 7:30pm show! We do a blackout check, show the iron to the duty manager, and then open the house.

7:30pm-10pm: Showtime!

10-10:30pm: shut down equipment, tidy up, and go home!

Tech week is a bit different.

Typically our week looks like so:

Sunday (10am-10pm): Fit up LX, sound, video, and set.

Monday (10am-10pm): Finish fitting up, install cue lights and working light, and focus

lighting. Quiet time for sound, and prep actors' mics.

Tuesday-Thursday (10am-10pm): Tech time! We go through the show slowly, and plot in lighting and sound cues, as well as running through actors' movements on the stage.

Friday-Tuesday (1pm-10pm): shows! Friday, Saturday, and Monday's shows are all previews, which means that we come in early before the next show to work on the show, so we can iron out any issues before Tuesday, which is press night!

How does your work interact with the shows being put on at Nottingham Playhouse?

During production week (as outlined above), my job is key to putting a show on. My job on each production varies, but it's vital that I am there, otherwise, none of the actors can be seen or heard! It's great to be so involved with our productions, I feel really connected to each show that we create! Everyone here really takes pride in their work, and I think that is reflected in the quality of the shows that we produce!

What do you enjoy most about working in theatre?

There's so many things! I love the people - not just those that I can name-drop in conversations (thanks, Sir Ian McKellen!), but also the people I work with on a day-to-day basis (the Playhouse has the best staff, and I'm biased, but also it's true). I love the combination of practical skills and creativity and artistry that my job calls for, which is something that I didn't think I'd ever find in a career. But, the thing I love most of all? The fact that sometimes, the way that a bit of light hitting a piece of set, or just the right angle of an actor's face, can make you feel something. It makes you teary-eyed, or happy, and it's literally just a light pointed in the right direction, possibly with a bit of colour to it. We make magic, good old-fashioned theatre magic.

A Glimpse Into Theatre Careers

A chat with Adam Collins

PARTICIPATION PROJECT COORDINATOR

Tell us about your role as a Participation Project Coordinator.

I work in Nottingham Playhouse's Participation Department, and we run over 30 programmes to bring drama to the community. I coordinate the work we do with schools, which includes the provision for our five 'Primary Partner' schools who we are partnered with to integrate drama at all levels of the primary school curriculum.

What does a day in the life of a Participation Project Coordinator look like?

My average day involves

speaking to a wide range of people, including school staff, freelancers, and other departments in Nottingham Playhouse, to make sure that everything comes together on our Participation projects. Our projects are varied, so on any given day I might be planning an inset day for teachers, organising filming with industry experts, or delivering drama workshops to young people.

How does your work interact with the shows being put on at Nottingham Playhouse?

As part of our 'Primary Partners' programme, I arrange backstage tours and show

tickets for our partner schools so that their students can come and see live theatre at Nottingham Playhouse. The practitioners I send into schools often deliver workshops on the themes of our shows, especially with texts such as 'Private Peaceful' which are taught in schools.

What do you enjoy most about working in theatre?

I enjoy how theatre brings people from all walks of life together, and I enjoy seeing our participants develop confidence and self-advocacy through theatre and performance.



Adam Collins