MY PERFECT MIND

A Told by an Idiot, Young Vic and Theatre Royal Plymouth co-production

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MY PERFECT MIND a comic tale of a man not doing King Lear

“I fear I am not in my perfect mind”
King Lear, Act IV, Scene VII

Following its 2013 tour and sell-out London run, My Perfect Mind returns in 2014 and celebrates Told by an Idiot’s 21st anniversary as one of the UK’s leading and most inventive touring companies, coming to Young Vic, Tobacco Factory Bristol, West Yorkshire Playhouse, Unity Theatre Liverpool, Birmingham Rep and Stephen Joseph Theatre, Scarborough this Autumn.

Hailed by the Times as “Joyously, riotously inventive” and by The Independent as “Vigorously imaginative” Told by an Idiot has built up a reputation for its startlingly original productions, reveling in a style of performance that is bigger than life. My Perfect Mind encapsulates what drives the company. It is epic, whilst also being deeply personal. It is extremely funny, yet utterly tragic and ultimately human.

It is a story based around real-life events of acclaimed classical actor Edward Petherbridge. Edward was cast as King Lear, when on the second day of rehearsals he suffered a stroke that left him barely able to move. As he struggled to recover Edward made a discovery: the entire role of Lear still existed word for word in his mind. From being on the brink of playing one of Shakespeare’s most revered roles, to lying in a hospital bed surrounded by doctors, Edward had never imagined what tragedies and comedies lay in store for him.

“..the entire show gurgles with merriment”
Guardian ***

“Wild and funny with a serious core”
Times ** *

“a gently hilarious...and understatedly haunting double-act piece ... superbly directed by Kathryn Hunter”
Independent ****

MY PERFECT MIND is suitable for GCSE, A/S and A2 level students. Recommended age 12+.
COMPANY HISTORY

Told by an Idiot was founded by Hayley Carmichael, Paul Hunter and John Wright in 1993 and is well known for producing work that is moving, comic and utterly theatrical. The company sets out to discover the epic in the most personal of stories, whilst treading a fine line between comedy and tragedy. Through devising and play, the company aims to tell stories using a wealth of imagery and a rich theatrical language, which is accessible to all.

Since Told by an Idiot’s first production, *On the Verge of Exploding*, at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, the company has built up an enviable reputation. It has collaborated with celebrated artists and organisations of national and international standing, including Carol Ann Duffy, West Yorkshire Playhouse and the Lyric Hammersmith (*Casanova*); Zoe Rahmen; Philip Pullman (*The Firework-Maker's Daughter*); Richard Wilson and the Royal Court (*Playing The Victim*), The Market Theatre Johannesburg and a highly-praised production of *The Comedy of Errors* in association with the RSC in Stratford-upon-Avon which transferred to New York in 2011. The company collaborated with National Theatre Wales on *The Dark Philosophers* as part of their inaugural season, transferring to the Traverse, Edinburgh for the festival and in 2012 the company also worked with Manchester Royal Exchange for their hugely successful take on 1930's classic *You Can't Take It With You*. The company have just finished working internationally with Svenska Theatre, Finland with their bi-lingual production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. 
# MY PERFECT MIND

Created by Told by an Idiot  
Written by Kathryn Hunter, Paul Hunter and Edward Petherbridge  

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TOUR DATES

**My Perfect Mind**

**Told by an Idiot**

**Young Vic, London**
2-25 September
**Box Office** 020 7922 2922 / youngvic.org

**Tobacco Factory, Bristol**
30 September – 4 October
**Box Office** 0117 902 0344

**West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds**
15-18 October
**Box Office** 0113 213 7700

**Birmingham Repertory Theatre**
4-8 November
**Box office** 0121 245 2000 / birmingham-rep.co.uk

**Unity Theatre, Liverpool**
21-25 October
**Box office** 0844 8732888 / unitytheatreliverpool.co.uk

**Stephen Joseph Theatre, Scarborough**
11-15 Nov
**Box office** 01723 370 541
The driving idea of MY PERFECT MIND is to examine the fragility of life both through a direct personal experience and through Shakespeare’s extraordinary play, KING LEAR, illustrating how the two are intrinsically linked and inform one another.

Acclaimed classical actor, Edward Petherbridge was once due to play King Lear in New Zealand. He had learnt the part at his kitchen table in West Hampstead and left for the other side of the world. On the first day of rehearsal he suffered a massive stroke. He was asked by a doctor “Can you do that?” meaning could he touch his thumb with his forefinger. He couldn’t. In the space of 24 hours, he had gone from knowing one of the greatest parts in Western drama, to not even being able to move his two fingers.

MY PERFECT MIND examines this extraordinary experience through the prism of Shakespeare, with Edward Petherbridge playing himself and King Lear and Paul Hunter playing a range of roles both from Shakespeare and from real life - including Cordelia, Edward’s own daughter, the Duke of Kent and the New Zealand doctor, with a particular focus, of course, on the unique relationship between Lear and the Fool.

CLASSROOM EXERCISE: Edward Petherbridge’s real life experiences formed the basis for My Perfect Mind. In small groups:
   a) pick a personal event from someone’s life
   b) try and find parallels between that story and a famous fictional story (for example King Lear, any other play you’ve seen or read, or even a fairy tale)
   c) devise a scene that combines the elements of the real-life story and fictional story you have chosen
AN ACTOR REPAIRS

By Edward Petherbridge

I turned up at the small gym
At the Royal Free
Around three
(Hence this Hymn)
And not a ‘him’
But a ‘her’, one Clare was there.
In need of repair
Not her, but me!

NHS Care
Was the fare on offer
Proffered for my wear and tear
One must not despair
When at a stroke one’s flare is fatally impaired.

So Clare was there
To help me make redress
To assess me, address me

A strange affair that Clare should be taking time
Teasing back gesture to this stricken mime
Youth training an old hand, that once drew lines so fine

Clare, youthful fleet and nifty
Me – well, one score years and fifty
Exposing parts that now are frail
To this athlete with her ponytail
She coaxes uplift of expression
From down in the mouth
Downright depression
For this erstwhile master of the fleeting impression.
Wringing dishcloths, pegging out
Grasping knobs and turning keys
Performing turns now such as these
Exercise my sluggish fingers.
Faintly though, the notion lingers –
Cosmic motion is my business
Not pegs and keys and wringing out
My turn was Lear’s redemptive rout
Hanging out with Fool in storm
*Extremis* was to be my norm
Eight performances a week
Everest my peal
Small gym at the Royal Free
Hence this hymn to Clare and me
However high I set my hopes
I practise now on nursery slopes

**CLASSROOM EXERCISE:** Poetry can be a great provocation for creating theatre and vice versa.

Then in small groups, find a piece of poetry that interests and inspires you and devise a scene in response to it.

Alternatively, you can write your own piece of poetry and work from that.
**Context: King Lear**

*King Lear* is a tragedy by William Shakespeare, written between 1603 and 1606.

The play’s action centres on an aging king who decides to step down from the throne to divide his kingdom between his three daughters, Cordelia, Regan and Goneril, offering the largest share to the daughter who loves him the most. Goneril and Regan, Lear’s older daughters, give their father flattering answers. But Cordelia, Lear’s youngest and favorite daughter, remains silent, saying that she has no words to describe how much she loves her father. Lear flies into a rage and disowns Cordelia. When Lear’s friend, the Earl of Kent, tries to speak on Cordelia’s behalf, Lear banishes him from the Kingdom. The King of France asks for Cordelia’s hand in marriage, saying that he still wants to marry her even without her land, and she accompanies him to France without her father’s blessing. Kent, although banished by Lear, remains to try and protect the King, and so disguises himself and takes a job as Lear’s servant.

Having given all his wealth and land to Regan and Goneril, their true natures emerge at once and they conspire together against their father, plotting to murder him. Unable to believe that his beloved daughters are betraying him, Lear slowly goes insane. He flees his daughters’ houses to wander on a heath during a great thunderstorm, accompanied by his Fool and by Kent (still in disguise). Gloucester, a loyal friend of Lear’s, finds out about the plot to murder the King and rushes off immediately to warn him. Lear, the Fool and Kent leave at once. Regan and her husband, Cornwall, discover Gloucester helping Lear, accuse him of treason and gouge out his eyes.

News arrives that Cordelia has raised an army of French troops who have landed in Dover in an effort to save her father. Regan and Goneril get their own troops ready to fight and head to Dover, where Cordelia and her army are defeated. Both Lear and Cordelia are captured, and Cordelia is sentenced to death.

Goneril and Regan, both in love with Gloucester’s conniving son Edmund (who gave the order to Cordelia to be executed) turn against each other and Goneril poisons her sister. When she discovers that Edmund has been killed by Gloucester’s son Edgar, she kills herself.

Cordelia is hanged and Lear appears, carrying her body in his arms. Mad with grief, the trials he has been through finally overcome him and he dies.
Justice

*King Lear* is a play filled with human cruelty and seemingly meaningless disasters, raising the question if there is any possibility of justice in the world, or whether the world is fundamentally indifferent or even hostile to humankind. In the end, we are left with only a terrifying uncertainty—although the wicked die, the good die along with them. There is goodness, but there is also cruelty and madness, and it is difficult to tell which triumphs in the end.

Authority versus Chaos

*King Lear* is about political authority as much as it is about family dynamics. Lear is not only a father but also a king, and when he gives away his authority to the evil Goneril and Regan, he delivers not only himself and his family but all of Britain into chaos and cruelty. As the two wicked sisters indulge their appetite for power the kingdom descends into civil strife, and we realize that Lear has destroyed not only his own authority but all authority in Britain. The stable, hierarchal order that Lear initially represents falls apart and disorder engulfs the realm.

Reconciliation

Darkness and unhappiness pervade *King Lear*. Nevertheless, the play presents the central relationship between Lear and Cordelia as a dramatic embodiment of true, self-sacrificing love. Rather than despising Lear for banishing her, Cordelia remains devoted and eventually brings an army from a foreign country to rescue him from his tormentors. Lear's recognition of the error of his ways and reconciliation with Cordelia is a testament to love's ability to flourish, even if only fleetingly, amid the horror and chaos that engulf the rest of the play.

Madness

Insanity occupies a central place in the play and is associated with both disorder and hidden wisdom. When Lear goes mad, the turmoil in his mind mirrors the chaos that has descended upon his kingdom. At the same time, however, it also provides him with important wisdom by reducing him to his bare humanity, teaching him humility.

Betrayal

Betrayals play a critical role in the play — here, brothers betray brothers and children betray fathers. However, the play suggests that betrayers inevitably turn on one another, showing how Goneril and Regan fall out when they both become attracted to Edmund, and how their jealousies of one another ultimately lead to mutual destruction.

The Storm

As Lear wanders about the heath, a terrible storm rages overhead. The storm echoes Lear's inner turmoil and mounting madness: it is a physical, turbulent reflection of Lear's internal confusion. At the same time, the storm embodies the awesome power of nature, which forces the powerless king to recognize his own mortality and human frailty.

Blindness

Gloucester's physical blindness symbolizes the metaphorical blindness that grips both Gloucester and the play's other father figure, Lear. The parallels between the two men are clear: both have loyal children and disloyal children, both are blind to the truth, and both end up banishing the loyal children and making the wicked one(s) their heir(s).

**CLASSROOM EXERCISE:** Try to perform *King Lear* in one minute – what main themes would you focus on to help you do this?
KATHRYN HUNTER - Director
Kathryn Hunter is an award-winning actor and director. Past roles at the Young Vic include Peter Brook’s *Fragments* and the astonishing physical performance *Kafka’s Monkey* which played for two seasons and continues to tour internationally. Other recent acting credits include *Antony & Cleopatra*, *King Lear* and *The Grain Store* (RSC), *The Diver* (Soho Theatre), *Yerma* (Arcola) and *The Visit* (National Theatre) for which she won an Olivier Award. Kathryn is also a founding member of Complicité. As a director her credits include *Othello* (RSC), *The Birds* (NT) and *Pericles* (Shakespeare’s Globe). Film audiences will recall her appearances in Mike Leigh’s *All or Nothing* and *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*.

PAUL HUNTER - Performer
Paul is co-founder and co-Artistic Director of Told by an Idiot with Hayley Carmichael. He has been involved as director/devisor/performer in all their work to date, including *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (Svenska Theatre Finland), *You Can’t Take It With You* (Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester) and *The Comedy of Errors* (RSC). Other directing credits include: *The Venetian Twins*, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* (winner of MEN Award - Best Production), and *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* (Octagon Theatre, Bolton); *Low Pay, Don’t Pay* (Salisbury Playhouse); *Senora Carrar’s Rifles* (Young Vic). Other acting credits include: *Troilus and Cressida* and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (Shakespeare’s Globe), *Rapunzel* (Kneehigh) and *Les Enfants du Paradis* (RSC). Film/TV credits include: *Pirates of the Caribbean* (On Stranger Tides), *Snow White and the Huntsman*, *Black Books*, *Trinity*, *The Only Boy For Me*, *Tunnel of Love*.

EDWARD PETHERBRIDGE - Performer
Edward Petherbridge is a renowned actor who created the iconic role of Guildenstern in Tom Stoppard’s *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. Other credits at the National Theatre include *The Rivals*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *The Duchess of Malfi*, *The Misanthrope*, *The Seagull* and *The Relapse*. He was a founding member of the Actors’ Company, for whom he directed his own adaptation of R. D. Laing’s *Knots*, and with Ian McKellen established the McKellen-Petherbridge Group at the NT. Credits for the RSC include *Three Sisters*, *Twelfth Night*, *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Hamlet*, *Cymbeline* and *Krapp’s Last Tape*. He has been awarded a Sony Award for Best Actor in a Radio Drama, an Olivier Award, a London Critics’ Drama Award, New York Drama Desk Award and been nominated for Tony Awards twice. In 2011, he published an autobiographical anthology of essays, poems and artwork under the title *Slim Chances and Unscheduled Appearances*. 
MICHAEL VALE – Designer
Michael has designed the sets and costumes for over 170 theatre and opera productions both in the UK and abroad including those he has directed. Companies he has worked with include: The Royal Shakespeare Company; The National Theatre; The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; English National Opera; Glyndebourne Festival Opera; Opera North; English Touring Opera: De Vlaamse Opera, Antwerp; Los Angeles Opera; New Zealand International Art’s Festival; Galaxy Theatre, Tokyo; Warsaw Globe Theatre Company; Munich Biennalle: Lyric Hammersmith; Almeida Theatre; Manchester Royal Exchange and West Yorkshire Playhouse. His work has been nominated for two Olivier Awards; a Charrington Fringe First Award; an Irish Times Theatre Award and a Manchester Evening News Theatre Award.

ALEX WARDLE – Lighting Designer
Alex studied German and Electronics at Keele University, then Theatre Arts at the Freie Universität Berlin and at Goldsmiths’ College, University of London. He spent five years as production manager for Kneehigh Theatre, including site-specific productions in Cornwall and tours around the world. Following six years as a theatre consultant for Arup, he recently joined Charcoalblue as head of project management. Lighting designs for Kneehigh include Rapunzel (London and New York), Tristan & Yseult outdoors (Restormel Castle and the National Theatre), The Wooden Frock, The Red Shoes and The Riot. Other lighting designs include Birdsong (UK tour), Uncle Vanya (Belgrade Coventry & Arcola), Tell Them That I Am Young and Beautiful, The Cradle will Rock and Innocence (Arcola); Bay and The Shift (Young Vic).

GREGORY CLARKE – Sound Designer
Gregory received the New York Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Sound Design for Journey’s End (2007) and he won the Tony Award for his Sound Design in Equus (2009). He has been nominated for a New York Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Sound Design for his work on Misterman. Sound designs include All’s Well That Ends Well (RSC), The Silence of the Sea (Donmar Warehouse Trafalgar Studios), The Wind in the Willows (Birmingham Rep), Goodnight Mr Tom (West End), Lot and his God (The Print Room), Blue/orange (Ambassador Theatre Group), The Doctor’s Dilemma (National Theatre).
INTERVIEW: PAUL HUNTER
Actor and Co-artistic director of Told by an Idiot

*My Perfect Mind* is based on a difficult experience in Edward’s life. Why did you decide to create a piece around such a topic?

The starting point for *My Perfect Mind* in some respects is quite a traumatic event in Edward’s life and we decided to try and make a show from that trigger because at the time Edward and I were talking about doing something together and Edward said I think we should do a pocket version of King Lear, where he plays Lear and I played the Fool. When he told me the story of going to New Zealand having learnt the whole of King Lear and then after two days of rehearsal, going into his hotel room and having a massive stroke and not being able to do it, I thought there was something rather extraordinary about that and potentially a show - where someone goes on this extraordinary journey from knowing one of the largest parts in Western drama to not being able to put his thumb and fore-finger together.

We hope that there’s something in there about the human spirit, resilience and the fragility of life, but it’s not about that event, we touch on that event; sometimes quite surprisingly, sometimes lightly, sometimes comically, but that’s not what the show is about, it’s about a trigger to explore this notion of human fragility via Shakespeare’s King Lear.

All Told by an Idiot’s work is steeped in play: with My Perfect Mind being such a personal story, did your approach have to change when starting to work on it?

As a company that revels in the notion of play, in the best sense, to play seriously, it’s always the starting point for all our work and it’s no difference for something like *My Perfect Mind*, however all the work differs because of the personalities involved; the different people in the room and the combination. So I think play is very much at the heart of *My Perfect Mind* but it’s playing in a slightly different way, the way we are improvising is different just because of Edward which is fantastic. There’s a sense of the playfulness and improvising becoming quite pure at times so there’s the possibility that in the show there are sections that remain fairly improvised.
throughout which is something that we’ve touched on before in our work but it may go a bit further this time.

Where does the title, My Perfect Mind come from?

The title My Perfect Mind is part of a quote from King Lear, it’s from the moment in the play when Cordelia sees King Lear again, they’re re-united and Lear can’t quite believe what he’s seeing. He’s cast her out and made this awful choice and then descended into this type of madness, he can’t believe what he’s seeing and when he has this moment of disbelief he talks about himself ‘I fear I am not in my perfect mind’ and rather than the whole quote we liked the ending for a show which is about the mind.

What questions do you want to arise from the piece?

The only reason we make anything is to have an effect on the audience, which is our over-riding consideration when we make anything. I hope the show does provoke questions in the audience but we don’t set out to provoke any specific questions. We don’t have a specific thing we want the audience to go away feeling or thinking. There are things in it that will provoke the audience at the time of seeing it and hopefully stay with them when they leave but we’re not after anything in particular.

Suffering from a stroke could be thought of as quite a grown-up experience. Do you think there is relevance in this issue for a younger audience?

I think the show will work for an audience of older teenagers and above. There’s something about the playfulness and anarchy of the show which is obviously very particular to Told by an Idiot and which works brilliantly for a younger audience. The show is not about a stroke, there’s a wonderful playfulness, anarchy, surreal feel to it which almost has the quality of some strange sketch show at times - we play with reality, what’s real and what isn’t real, so there’s definitely something there for a younger audience.
INTERVIEW: EDWARD PETHERBRIDGE
Actor

What originally attracted you to the project?

Well, I have just this minute noticed that the latest description of the show reads, ‘A comic tale of a man not doing King Lear’, but I was attracted to do this project as a ‘back door’ route to doing Lear, (having fallen ill when I had the last chance). In fact I have just spent the afternoon alone with my Penguin paperback of the play, trying to get as close to Lear and Shakespeare as if I were re studying and spouting the lines from his own handwritten manuscript. We will do as much of the huge tragedy as it’s humanly possible for two people to do, bearing in mind that we are billed as a comedy!

How do you prepare for a rehearsal period?

Preparing to rehearse for the first run of the play I did after the stroke that robbed me of Lear, I vowed to jog from the Tube station to the rehearsal room every morning. Slowly my jogging has improved since then. Even to play Shakespeare’s abdicating old king, ‘four score years and upwards’ as he describes himself, one needs to be as nimble and as fit as possible: I still do exercises I used to do as a young actor at the National Theatre in the 1960s. For this rehearsal period it seems as if all roads lead to Lear and the ‘comic’ riffs that tell our story, so that even seeing a film or listening to the news, or observing an elderly man on a bus (even if it turns out to be my own reflection in the window) is part of the preparation period.

Describe an average day in the rehearsal room

Working with Paul and our director Kathryn, ‘average’ seems to be the wrong word, but for years now there have been directors and companies who use methods of working on a show that would have seemed like average drama therapy had they been used when I first began. Some still seem like that to me, and either wrong headed, time-wasting or
pretentious, whilst other methods are liberating. I’m not keen on tossing beanbags or ‘trust exercises’ – one learns whom one can trust.

**How do you work with Kathryn and Paul?**

We don’t decide anything in cold blood – devising the show is done through the heat of improvisation. Usefully we have had Michael Vale’s set to work on almost from the beginning. Kathryn might suggest an idea and Paul and I go at it and end up in some odd, sometimes exciting places, whether in Lear’s Britain (and we have sat and read scenes together of course) or we are simply on or under the steep white slope of the stage. Sometimes it is as if we are taking part in an exhilarating magic master class.

**What do you enjoy most about your job?**

Well it’s not answering questionnaires like this. It’s a privilege to be asked, but one is afraid of sounding pompous or worse.

I have enjoyed working with so many talented people, I am tempted to ask ‘what’s not to like?’ but the job can be frustrating or even dull. At its best there is something special about reaching a kind of truth through pretending ... having an inkling about what it is like to be someone else, somewhere else, perhaps some when else. We start our pretending games when we are tiny children. I play pretending games with our terrier dog every day; there is something elemental about it, it’s in our DNA.
INTERVIEW: MIA THEIL HAVE
Assistant Director

**What originally attracted you to the project?**

I was keen to continue my collaboration with Kathryn Hunter and being very appreciative of her work as a performer, thinker and maker. I found the idea of the piece compelling; it left me curious to explore King Lear and Shakespeare from this very personal outset and with an inventive approach. My background is in physical music and avant-garde theatre, and I was keen to see how a more classical actor would realise Lear in what is essentially a devised and collaborative piece of theatre.

**Describe the role of an assistant director?**

The role of an assistant director varies from production to production and depends on the director you are assisting. I find it most important to try and understand the vision and methodology of the director, then to support the process in every possible way, then ensure that the standard of the production and artistic level is held.

**How do you prepare to enter a rehearsal period?**

I prepare by doing lots of research and reading the relevant play and other sources of inspiration. I also find music, exercises and visuals that might come in handy in the process. I think about the use of the space and various versions of what the performance might be. I think about where it is touring and gain an overview of venues and kind of audiences.

**Describe an average day in the rehearsal room**

I arrive in the morning half an hour early to check all is ready for the day. We start with a cup of coffee, then get on our feet, do a brief warm up, set up for the improvisation and get going. Tea break mid morning, more improvisations. More scene work and work on structure in the afternoon. I go through ideas with the director, we try out some playful ideas with props or design or find relevant text sources or make cuts.

**What do you enjoy most about your job?**

I enjoy being in the middle of a creative process where you have to be responsive and ready to give up your ego, and listen to a better idea than your own! I enjoy collaborating with the director to shape the performance and to ensure the best possible conditions for the actors to give their best, to discover new ideas, to unlock and to shine. I look forward to the moment we have an audience and feel the real communication between the actors, the piece and the spectators.

*My Perfect Mind - Education Pack*
INTERVIEW: MICHAEL VALE
Designer

What originally attracted you to the project?

I have worked with Paul Hunter and Told by an Idiot before as a designer and have always been interested in the way in which they devise productions and produce scripts from an initial idea which appears to have many possibilities, none of which you are precisely aware of when you begin.

Your concept is very interesting, where did you get your ideas from?

Paul Hunter and Edward Petherbridge did not begin with a script. The design was simply a way of provoking certain dynamics based on some of the ideas and intentions which the two actors and Kathryn were beginning from.

How did you work with Kathryn Hunter, director, to come up with the design?

We both felt that the environment for Paul and Edward had to be challenging in some way. The steep rake at an angle to the audience meant that the simplest of actions, even walking, was uncomfortable and in some ways a struggle.

Describe the role of a set designer

The set designer's role is to engage, aesthetically, with each and every practical and sensual demand of the production as expressed in the script and elaborated upon by the director, actors and other craftsmen and women involved in whatever capacity.

What do you enjoy about your job?

Collaborating.
MY PERFECT MIND: THE DESIGN PROCESS

1) Michael’s ‘white card’ model of the set that he proposed to the creative team

2) The first rostrum used in rehearsals

3) The final set used in the production

CLASSROOM EXERCISE: Note down the key elements of this set – what is distinctive about it? Are there any differences between this set and the initial model? What do you think the designer had to bear in mind when putting the rostrum together?

CLASSROOM EXERCISE: Design your own set for My Perfect Mind, the more imaginative the better! Take the main themes of the production and King Lear and decide which of these you would want to bring out in your set design.
The following are examples of drama games and exercises that Told By An Idiot often use in workshops and rehearsals. They help warm up the body, improve co-ordination, team building and physical precision and perception, encourage creativity and play among the group, and most of all are fun!

**GAME ONE – number game**
1. Stand in a circle
2. As a group, try and count to 20. No-one is allowed to speak at the same time, and no-one can say two numbers consecutively. This one is harder than it looks!

**GAME TWO – name, movement and ball game**
1. Stand in a circle
2. The first person must call out another person’s name in the circle. Then that person must call out the name of someone else in the circle until everyone has been included. No name should be called twice. Remember whose name you have said and who called your name.
3. Repeat calling out the names in the order they were called until you remember the sequence.
4. Now begin a movement sequence: the first person must look at someone, make eye contact and walk towards them. That second person must do that same – look at someone, make eye contact and walk towards them. As before, continue until everyone has been included - no one must be included twice. Remember who you walked to and who walked to you.
5. Repeat this sequence until you all remember it.
6. Now perform the name sequence and the movement sequence together.
7. This game can be repeated with more and more layers to make it more difficult – throwing round a ball for example, or adding another movement sequence – see how far your group can go!
GAME THREE – wink murder

1. The group lines up against the wall making lots of noise. The group leader taps the ‘murderer’ on the back.
2. Everyone walk around the room, keeping eye contact with everyone they pass. If the murderer winks at you, you must die a horrible death after 5 seconds.
3. At the point, everyone in the group must stop and look at the dying one, then at each other – then carry on walking.
4. If you guess who is murderer, whisper to leader. If you are wrong, you die.
5. Play again, with the instruction that murderer is to get as many out as quickly as

GAME FOUR – partner exercise

1. In pairs, take a tennis ball and place it between your foreheads.
2. Move around the space, being careful not to drop the ball. No one should be leading the movement; you should each decide together, silently, where to move next.
3. Find a moment of stillness, then see if you can move again without anyone leading.
4. See if you can sit on the floor and come up again.
5. Add some conversation - talk about what you did last night or earlier today (something not too taxing!)

This part is good for others to watch as an audience

GAME FIVE – grandma’s footsteps

1. One person is on one side of the room facing away from the rest of the group who are standing in a line.
2. The large group then try to creep up on the ‘grandma’, who turns occasionally to try and catch them moving. If anyone is spotted moving then they have to start again.
3. The first person to touch ‘grandma’ on her shoulder is the next ‘grandma.’
4. This activity can be extended to ask the group to perform certain movements before they are allowed to touch ‘grandma’ (e.g. sitting down and standing up)
5. Another extension is to not actually have a ‘grandma’ but a imaginary one, and the line/group have to be focused and really work together as a group and freeze all together when the ‘imaginary grandma’ turns.
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