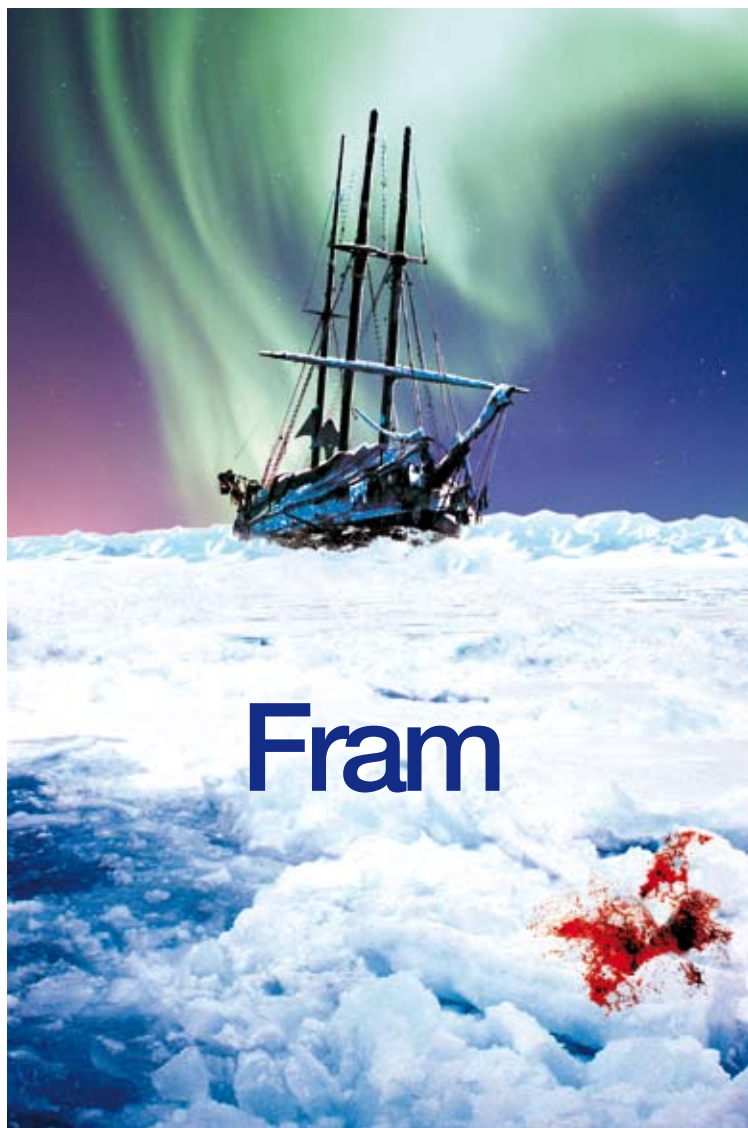


**Fram**

by Tony Harrison

**Workpack**

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# The National's production

Tony Harrison's new play, *Fram* had its world premiere in the National's Olivier Theatre on 17 April 2008

## CAST

Gilbert Murray **JEFF RAWLE**  
Sybil Thorndike **SIAN THOMAS**  
Fridtjof Nansen **JASPER BRITTON**  
Hjalmar Johansen **MARK ADDY**  
Ballerina **VIVIANA DURANTE**  
Stuart Shaw, *ARA\* Man* **JIM CREIGHTON**  
James Callaghan, *ARA\* Man*  
**STEVEN HELLIWELL**  
William H Rutland, *ARA\* Man*  
**JOSEPH THOMPSON**  
Sheldon, *ARA boss* **PATRICK DRURY**  
Eglantyne Jebb **CAROLYN PICKLES**  
Ruth Fry **CLARE LAWRENCE**  
Kurdish Poet **AYKUT HILMI**  
African Stowaways  
**RONALD CHABVUKA/JOEL DAVIS**  
**VERELLE ROBERTS/KEANU TAYLOR**  
U/S Eglantyne Jebb/Ruth Fry **ANNA LOWE**  
U/S Ballerina **LORRAINE STEWART**

\* American Relief Administration

Music played live by  
**MARY McADAM** (Music Director),  
**DAVID SHRUBSOLE** (keyboards),  
**GARETH HANSON** (flutes),  
**MAGNUS MEHTA** (percussion)  
Ballet music recorded by the  
**BRNO PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA**  
conducted by **RICHARD BLACKFORD**  
Organist **JAKUB JANSTA**

Photo (Jeff Rawle in rehearsal for *Fram*) by  
Jim Creighton

Directors **TONY HARRISON** and  
**BOB CROWLEY**

Set Designer **BOB CROWLEY**  
Costume Designer **FOTINI DIMOU**  
Lighting Designer **MARK HENDERSON**  
Music **RICHARD BLACKFORD**  
Choreographer **WAYNE MCGREGOR**  
Projection Designer **JON DRISCOLL**  
Sound Designer **GARETH FRY**  
Company Voice Work **KATE GODFREY** and  
**JEANNETTE NELSON**  
Dialect Coach **KATE GODFREY**

Production Manager **DIANE WILLMOTT**  
Staff Director **MAX KEY**  
Stage Manager **MAGGIE TULLY**  
Deputy Stage Manager **JANICE HEYES**  
Assistant Stage Managers **PETER GREGORY,**  
**JULIA WICKHAM**  
Costume Supervisor **IRENE BOHAN**  
Prop Supervisor **CHRIS LAKE**  
Assistant to the Designer **ROSALIND**  
**COOMBES**  
Assistant to the Lighting Designer **BEKY**  
**STODDART**  
Assistant Production Manager **JO HORNSBY**  
Design Associate **BEN AUSTIN**  
Production Assistant **ANNA ANDERSON**  
Projection Design Animators **GEMMA**  
**CARRINGTON, GORDON CURTIS**  
Production Photographer **NOBBY CLARK**



# Synopsis

The drama *Fram* takes its name from the ship of the Norwegian polar adventurer, Fridtjof Nansen. Nansen is the central character of this play, and the narrative follows his journey through a storm of moral and physical hardships, ranging from his attempt to trek to the North Pole, to raising funds for Russian famine victims, through his work at the League of Nations. To some extent this is a play about failure: failure on the level of the individual and the failure of a self-absorbed, post-WW1 western society to deal with the horrors on their doorstep.

Written in rhyme, *Fram* is introduced to the audience by poet Gilbert Murray. The champion of Nansen's history is resurrected from Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey, along with his friend and contemporary, actor Sybil Thorndike, to lead the audience back through the events of Nansen's life with the premise of performing a play of his achievements. Nansen is a forgotten hero of the twentieth century. His wisdom and self-belief are initially demonstrated through his courage and determination to be the first person, along with his fellow explorer Hjalmar Johansen, to reach the North Pole in 1893. His notoriety is later employed by the newly-formed League of Nations to raise funds for the starving people of Russia in the Volga region, following the First World War. Nansen undertakes a world lecture tour demonstrating an educational but shocking photographic slide-show of the plight of the Russian people in this region, to help stir the conscience of his unenlightened audiences.

As well as this rich historical content, the play also revolves around the central scene, which takes place at the house of Eglantyne Jebb (founder of Save the Children), in which the main characters (Nansen, Thorndike, Murray, Jebb, Ruth Fry and American Relief Administration boss, Sheldon) debate the power of the written word, over the medium of visual image, to move an audience to response.

The relationship between Eastern and Western Europe is played out in a scene at the Bolshoi during which the American Relief Administration reveal an all-too-familiar selfish attitude towards international responsibility.

The scene climaxes with a coup-de-théâtre,

the arts when Sybil Thorndike performs the dramatic monologue of a starving woman from the Volga, thereby defeating Sheldon's theory that cannot be a serious vehicle to drive political or social change.

As the drama progresses, Nansen returns to the site of his personal defeat aboard the *Fram*, which appears as a ghost from the past. Its message, delivered by Nansen, warns a complacent world of the dangers of their neglect and ignorance of interconnecting global issues.

The play brings together the spectre of the disempowered lingering beneath the surface of all of our activity. This is personified in the story of two modern-day African boys, stowing away on an aircraft and being frozen to death in their quest to reach a 'better life'. This idea runs alongside a warning that ignoring our behaviour is by no means an excuse to save us from the consequences of our own selfishness.

Nansen's story demonstrates both the best in human qualities and the most hopeless of human endeavours. His efforts were not rewarded with great change; neither was he remembered – outside his native Norway – as a great statesman of his time. Indeed, although the play reveals him to be a good man and dares the audience to judge him otherwise, the transience of his achievements is one of the more sobering legacies of *Fram*.

Photo (Steven Helliwell) by Jim Creighton



# Tony Harrison Biography

Born in Leeds in 1937, Harrison is one of the country's foremost poets, librettists, translators and one of the very few verse dramatists. He now lives in Newcastle upon Tyne. He believes that poetry should address the great issues of the day and that it should strive for a mass audience.

Tony Harrison is known for his controversial work, such as the poem *V*, as well as his verse plays, like *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus*, and his versions of Ancient Greek tragedies such as *The Oresteia* (which won him the first European Poetry Prize in 1983) and *Hecuba*.

Harrison's first collection of poems, *The Loiners* (1970), was awarded the Geoffrey Chaucer Memorial Prize in 1972 and *The Gaze of the Gorgon* (1992) won the Whitbread Poetry Award.

Harrison's adaptation of the English medieval mystery plays, *The Mysteries*, was staged at the National in three parts, beginning in 1977 and last revived in 1999, in a promenade production. His other NT work includes adaptations of Molière's *The Misanthrope*, Racine's *Phèdre* (as *Phaedra Britannica*) and a translation of Victor Hugo's *The Prince's Play*.

Many of Tony Harrison's plays have been staged away from conventional auditoriums: *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus* was premiered at the ancient stadium at Delphi in 1988; *Poetry or Bust* was first performed at Salts Mill, Saltaire in Yorkshire in 1993; *The Kaisers of Carnuntum* premiered at the ancient Roman amphitheatre at Carnuntum in Austria; and *The Labours of Herakles* was performed on the site of the new theatre at Delphi in Greece in 1995.

Harrison became the first Northern Arts literary fellow in 1967-68, a post he held again from 1976-77; and he was a resident dramatist at the National Theatre from 1977-78.

He adapted two of his most famous poems, *V* and *Prometheus* to the screen. *V* was broadcast by Channel 4 and won a Royal Television Society award in 1987; written during the miner's strike of 1984-85, it describes a trip to see his parents' grave in a Leeds cemetery, lamenting that it is 'now littered with beer cans

and vandalised by obscene graffiti'. *Prometheus* which he wrote and directed in 1998, was his first feature film. Based on his poem of the same name, it links the myth of Prometheus with the enchainment of workers in the Promethian industries. Other acclaimed screen adaptations include an extraordinary and moving piece about Alzheimers called *Black Daisies for the Bride*, and *Blasphemers' Banquet*, screened by the BBC in 1989, an attack on censorship inspired by the Salman Rushdie affair.

In 1995 Tony Harrison was commissioned by the *Guardian* newspaper to visit Bosnia and write poems about the war. His most recent collection of poetry is *Under the Clock* (2005). His *Collected Poems* and *Collected Film Poetry* were published by Viking and Faber in 2007.

Photo (Tony Harrison in rehearsal for *Fram*) by Jim Creighton



# Characters: Fridtjof Nansen

1861-1930

Nansen trained as a neuroscientist but first came to fame when in 1888 – to prove that skis were a better method than man-hauled sledge – he made the first crossing of Greenland's ice cap. He had a scheme for reaching the North Pole by letting his ship get frozen into the ice and drift north with the current, and in June 1893 he set out in the *Fram*, built for the purpose. In March 1895, he left the ship and, with Hjalmar Johansen, skied towards the Pole with dog-drawn sledges and kayaks. By luck, the following summer, they met a British expedition on Franz-Josef Land and were taken back to Norway. By then they had travelled farther north than any human being before and survived 15 months in the Arctic. The *Fram* also reached home safely, its entire crew unharmed.

Nansen's wife, Eva Sars, a singer whom he had married in 1889, died in 1908, leaving him with five children.

As well as becoming a Professor of Zoology and of Oceanography, Nansen furthered the cause of Norway's independence from Sweden, and was the country's first ambassador to Great Britain. He negotiated help for thousands of prisoners after the first World War, and, after travelling to the USSR to see the effects of the famine there, campaigned for private aid. The League of Nations appointed him its first High Commissioner for Refugees, and the Nansen Passport was issued to thousands of stateless Russians fleeing to the West, including Stravinsky, Rachmaninov, Chagall and Anna Pavlova. In 1922 he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for this work. Nansen could draw and paint, enjoyed poetry, and was fluent in several languages.

# Characters: Fridtjof Nansen

## FRIDTJOF NANSEN: His Life and Work Berit Tolleshaug

Fridtjof Nansen (1861-1930) was born in Oslo with a silver spoon in his mouth and famous ancestors in his family tree. His mother, Adelaide Johanne Thekla Isidore, Baroness Wedel Jarlsberg, was the daughter of Baron Christian Fredrik Vilhelm of Fornebo, and the niece of Count Herman Wedel Jarlsberg. Born into the exclusive Norwegian aristocracy, Fridtjof Nansen benefitted from a privileged social background by Norwegian standards. His upbringing, however, was strict and with a considerable number of humble elements in accordance with his father, the lawyer Baldur Fridtjof Nansen's, ideals. His father's ancestors lacked aristocratic titles, but had solid roots in the Norwegian and Danish bourgeoisie. Fridtjof Nansen descended directly from the mayor of Copenhagen who played a prominent role in the anti-aristocratic revolution in Denmark in 1660.

Growing up, Nansen developed a close relationship with nature and different outdoor activities. Going on to study zoology at university, including fieldwork studies of arctic animals during a season aboard the sealing boat "Viking", he finished his doctoral thesis in neurobiology in 1887. His first post doctoral project was not, however, in neurobiology, but a three-month expedition cross-country skiing from the east coast to the west coast of Greenland in 1888. Even though scientific results were limited, Nansen won heroic fame and fortune, and in addition the heart of Eva Sars, the daughter of an acknowledged Norwegian zoologist. Eva was a talented soprano, and introduced Nansen to a network of famous artists and influential intellectuals in Oslo.

Nansen's arctic experiences gave rise to the idea for another expedition. Having observed driftwood near the coast of Greenland, he launched a hypothesis on oceanic currents around the North Pole. To confirm his

hypothesis he planned to have a specially constructed ship, Fram [Forward], frozen into pack ice and let it drift across the pole. In combination with the scientific objectives he also wanted to make a bid for the North Pole. Great scepticism on the part of the Royal Geographic Society in London did not stop Nansen from realizing his plans – he simply concluded that "since he had not heard any objections of importance the discussion could be closed".

Fram left Oslo in June 1893. Two years later Nansen, with his companion Hjalmar Johansen, left the ship for another arctic cross-country skiing trip, reaching as far as 86°14'. They overwintered in Franz Josef's land, hunting for food and sharing a sleeping bag to keep warm. Accidentally running into a British expedition led by Fredrick George Jackson, they were able to arrive in the North of Norway in July 1896. A week later, Fram arrived too and Nansen and Johansen joined her in Tromsø, starting a triumphant expedition along the Norwegian coast, and ending in Oslo. Arriving at an all-time low moment in Norwegian national pride, due to her politically inferior role in the union with Sweden, Nansen was received as a national hero and a modern Viking king.

The University of Oslo awarded him a professorship in zoology, and he also engaged in oceanographic and geological research. His experiences as a polar explorer supported his role as a scientist and vice versa. All through his life he regarded his scientific work as his main role, but this work was to be interrupted by frequent appearances in other guises over the next decades: the politician, the diplomat, the humanitarian aid worker. In addition, Fridtjof Nansen was a very talented painter, and wrote novels along with his academic publications. He also had a reputation for being an excellent dancing partner, and even designed his own collection of clothes. Nansen was without question a universal genius, and well aware of it too.

Nansen played an essential part as a politician and diplomat in the political developments which led to the dissolution of the Union of Norway and Sweden in 1905. He wrote articles in a leading national newspaper demanding political action. He used his name

and reputation in Britain to lobby for support for Norwegian independence. The Swedish representative in London, Captain Wallenberg, whose task it was to influence the British press in favour of a continued Union, is said to have complained that “the name of Nansen in London was more powerful than all of Sweden”. Finally Nansen was strongly involved in having the Danish Prince Carl elected as first king of the independent Norway, King Haakon. King Haakon and Queen Maud, the daughter of the British King Edward VII, became close friends of Nansen’s. King Haakon appointed him the first Norwegian ambassador to London, and Nansen was responsible for negotiating a security treaty for Norway.

Losing his wife to pneumonia in December 1907, and left with five small children, Nansen resigned as ambassador. He returned to his scientific work at the University of Oslo, especially oceanographic research. In 1913 his youngest son, who was born with cerebral palsy, died of meningitis. The loss of his wife and his son had a deep effect on Nansen both emotionally and intellectually, and was probably the main reason he withdrew from the public and political scene until World War I.

The outbreak of WWI and its horrors made Nansen change his focus, and he made a come-back as a vigorous diplomat on the public stage. He led the Norwegian trade negotiations in Washington during the war and, in typically arbitrary spirit, signed the agreement without awaiting formal authorisation from the Norwegian government. This offended the Norwegian foreign minister who denied Nansen a part in the official Norwegian delegation at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. Nansen had, however, been elected as leader of the Norwegian society of the League of Nations, and he was to be chairman of the Norwegian delegation to the League of Nations for the rest of his life. In the League of Nations Nansen found yet another role – as humanitarian aid worker. He filled this role too with his typical personality traits – arbitrariness and action-orientated impatience – and earned a reputation as the *enfant terrible* of the League.

Nansen was assigned four mandates as high commissioner in the League of Nations. His

first was repatriating prisoners of war, working closely with the Red Cross. In 1921 he became responsible for Russian refugees who had fled the revolution and the civil war. The dramatic end of the Greek-Turkish war in 1922, causing nearly a million people to flee from Asia Minor to Greece, gave Nansen another mandate as high commissioner for Greek refugees. Working with the Asia Minor situation, he was also introduced to the Armenian refugees, and this became his last mandate. The Armenian question became a concern for him for the rest of his life, both as high commissioner and personally. In addition to his League of Nations mandates, he also engaged in relief work with the famine in Russia, but this was outside the League of Nations due to the opposition in the League against the communist regime in Russia. In 1922, Nansen was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his work for victims of the Russian famine and Greek refugees.

Fridtjof Nansen’s different roles up till WWI can be viewed in a national context and were to a large extent motivated by securing Norwegian independence and national pride. His focus gradually shifted during and after the war and became more and more international as he engaged with the League of Nations and additional humanitarian projects. In parallel with the shift from a national to an international focus, a change can be found in Nansen’s personal ideals – a development from egocentrism to altruism. Though his polar expeditions had scientific, as well as patriotic motivations, there was a substantial element of egocentrism, and at a time when heroic achievements had high value, there were plenty of opportunities for Nansen to nurse his ego and celebrity status. His world views changed, partly because of the loss of his wife and son, and partly because of WWI. Although he regarded himself primarily as a scientist and would have preferred to return to his scientific work after the war, due to a strong sense of moral duty and responsibility he felt obliged to continue his humanitarian aid work. Nansen was never compensated economically for his work in the League of Nations, he chose to travel in economy class and stayed in inexpensive hotels. It is tempting to conclude that his horizons were expanded geographically, politically and mentally.

Fridtjof Nansen died on 13 May 1930, and was given a state funeral on 17 May – the day Norway celebrates the signing of its first constitution. Norwegian National Day that year became a frame around the national hero's funeral. The Day is celebrated with a children's parade in the capital, and in 1930 the parade honoured Nansen with lowered flags when passing his coffin at the University Square. So the myth of Fridtjof Nansen was consolidated, and associated to Norway and Norwegian nationalism. His reputation was not inferior to that of his famous ancestors; Nansen succeeded in becoming a myth and a legend in his own country while he was still alive.

© **Berit Tolleshaug**, March 2008

Berit Tolleshaug, the author of *Fridtjof Nansen: En norsk helt i en gresk tragedie? [A Norwegian Hero in a Greek Tragedy?]* (Pax 2001), was born in 1972. She is a historian, and has worked at The International Peace Research Institute, The Institute for Defence Studies, the University of Oslo, History Department, as research assistant, researcher and lecturer.



# Characters:

## Gilbert Murray, Sybil Thorndike and Hjalmar Johansen

### Gilbert Murray

At the age of 23 Murray was Professor of Greek at Glasgow University; and later Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford. He was best known for his verse translations of Greek drama, having worked on almost the entire canon of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes. His translations of *Hippolytus*, *The Trojan Women* and *Electra* were staged at the Court Theatre during the famous seasons run there by Harley Granville Barker and JE Vedrenne from 1904-07. Murray was the inspiration for the character of Adolphus Cusins in Bernard Shaw's *Major Barbara*.

Murray was a lifelong supporter of the Liberal Party, which influenced his humanitarian attitude towards international affairs. He toyed with the idea of entering parliamentary politics. The effect of the Boer War drove him back into academia.

Murray was a Vice President of the League of Nations Society from 1916, and at the invitation of Jan Smuts he acted in 1921-22 as a League delegate for South Africa. Later he was a major influence in the setting-up of Oxfam. His temperance values and humanist approach lent themselves well to a life-long involvement in improving the quality of life of the world's disenfranchised.

### Sybil Thorndike

Sybil Thorndike was born in Gainsborough Lincolnshire in 1882 and died in 1976. Her father was the canon of Rochester Cathedral. She made her first stage appearance in Ben Greet's 1904 production of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. She joined the Old Vic Company in London (1914-18), playing leading roles in Shakespeare and in other classics. After World War I, she played Hecuba in Euripides' *The Trojan Women*, and the title role in *Medea*. In 1924, Bernard Shaw's *Saint Joan*, written for her, was a huge success, and was revived repeatedly until 1941. Both she and her husband Lewis Casson were active members of the Labour Party, and held strong left-wing views. When asked if she'd ever considered leaving her husband she said: 'divorce... never, murder.... often.' She was made a DBE in 1931.

During World War II, she toured in Shakespeare



Photo (Sian Thomas as Sybil Thorndike in *Fram*) by Nobby Clark

for the Council for the Encouragement of the Arts, before joining Laurence Olivier and Ralph Richardson in the Old Vic season at the New in 1944. She continued to have success in such plays as *Waters of the Moon*, and also undertook tours of Australia and South Africa, before playing again with Olivier in *Uncle Vanya* at Chichester in 1962. She made her farewell appearance in a London revival of *Arsenic and Old Lace* at the Vaudeville in 1966. Dame Sybil's ashes are buried in Westminster Abbey.

### Hjalmar Johansen

Hjalmar Johansen joined Fridtjof Nansen's polar expedition with Fram in 1893 and skied with him to the furthest north in 1895-96. The two men were forced to spend the winter on Franz Josef Land on their way home because of severe damage to their kayaks when crossing open channels in the ice. On their return to Norway they were celebrated as heroes. Johansen was promoted to captain in the infantry, a role he didn't succeed in. He drank heavily and left the army.

In 1910 he was part of Roald Amundsen's Antarctic expedition. Amundsen started out for the pole too early in the season because of his race with Robert Falcon Scott and had to return to base camp. Johansen had disagreed

with the early start and was later forced to rescue a less experienced member of the party, Kristian Prestrud, from freezing to death on the return journey. Without Johansen's help, Prestrud would certainly have perished. However, humiliated at being shown up in front of his men by Johansen, Amundsen dismissed him from the party heading for the South Pole and refused to credit him for his contribution. This led to a vicious circle that ended in Johansen's suicide in 1913. Hjalmar Johansen helped his comrades with his physical strength, extraordinary endurance and skill. Without him, Nansen would have died near the North Pole and Amundsen would have had to face devastating criticism on his return with one or more men dead under his watch. Today, Hjalmar Johansen is recognized as one of the three greatest polar explorers in Norwegian history.

# Fram: the production

by **Max Key, staff director**

My involvement with *Fram* began in March 2006 when we workshopped an early version of the script over a week at the National Theatre Studio. This included some terrific actors, notably David Bradley, Peter Wight and Sian Thomas.

Tony Harrison, who once wanted to be an archaeologist, arrived like his dramatic hero Nansen, an explorer carrying bags of his research and his trademark blue notebooks, full of notes, newspaper images and information gleaned from the media to aid his creative work. The week's workshop culminated in a read-through of the play which I recorded. This allowed Tony to go away and re-work the initial script.

A short two years later I received a call from the National Theatre asking if I would once again like to be a part of the production team as Nicholas Hytner, the Director of the National Theatre, had programmed *Fram* into the Olivier Theatre. Accepting the position without hesitation I was thrilled to discover the team included some of the most exciting theatre practitioners in the world today. The collaboration between Tony Harrison and Bob Crowley formed a unique relationship that resulted in an organic process producing a fresh, original piece of theatre.

Harrison's captivating use of language, and Crowley's strong metaphors in an ingenious design, were a delight to see unfold during the six-week rehearsal period.

## The Rehearsal Period

Day one of rehearsal consisted of the entire cast, including Jasper Britton, (playing Nansen), Mark Addy, Jeff Rawle, Sian Thomas, Patrick Drury, Carolyn Pickles and Claire Lawrence. The day began with Tony and Bob presenting the model box of the set. It ranged from the blackest, bleakest stage to the most ambitious, icy vistas imaginable. This was followed by the cast watching two documentary films of Nansen's expedition to the North Pole, a film of Nansen in Russia during the famine in 1922, and some shocking footage of the effects of

famine. These left the cast stunned but thrilled to be part of this important piece of story-telling. Few of us had known the importance of Nansen's achievements as both explorer and humanitarian, as had – we suspected – few in the world outside of the theatre.

Inspired by the films and the impressive research presented by Bob and Tony, which included original pictures of Nansen, Johansen's clothing from their trip to the Arctic and images of the *Fram* (now preserved in a museum in Oslo), the cast passionately enjoyed their first read-through of the play that afternoon.

Rehearsals were soon to become a metaphor for the play, as every day we embarked on the *Fram* and moved forward on a voyage of discovery led by our leaders, Captains Harrison and Crowley. Each day the play continued to throw up new questions about theatre, its purpose, its functions. Equally it raised questions about our understanding and expectations of theatre as a medium. *Fram* continually broke our preconceptions of the conventions of theatre: an example of this lies in what we believed to be the bleak icy terrain of the Arctic Pole, which became an almost crude set – framed by a fake proscenium arch to exemplify the Bolshoi Ballet – under which Viviana Durante dances a ballet on ice, choreographed by Wayne McGregor.

Including a range of artistic disciplines – from ballet to music, video and film, to song and spoken verse – was always integral to Tony Harrison's vision. This collaboration of different artistic disciplines made the piece dynamic and unique in its form.

## The Verse Form

Tony Harrison specifically wrote *Fram* for the Olivier theatre. The Olivier was patterned on the ancient Greek theatre of Epidaurus. In Ancient Greek theatre the performers were masked and addressed their audience directly. This particular relationship with the audience is something on which Tony Harrison places emphasis in his own work. The musicality and rhythm of the verse is designed to reach and move an audience as no other language form

# Fram: the production

allows. In the performance of *Fram*, Harrison encourages the actors to “find their thoughts” in the upper levels of the auditorium rather than from the ground. Examples of this are Murray and Thorndike speaking up towards the stained glass window and Nansen commenting on the aurora borealis. The implication of this angle of delivery is that a higher level of thought is being achieved.

A unique aspect of *Fram*'s form is the presentation of the dialogue in, not only verse, but rhyming couplets. From the outset Tony Harrison made it a prerequisite that the actors learn the text as an opera singer would learn a libretto. He believes that by learning the words, all else will follow naturally. He advised us to remember the thrill of reading poetry as a child, how we taste the verse, learn the tune, and how to avoid getting caught up in the academic side of understanding. He advises actors, or readers, to learn how to say the words so that they can begin to understand how the character feels. He speaks of how talking in verse is closer to opera than naturalistic drama. Harrison has written verse that is accessible and simple in poetic terms, but recognizes that blocks of verse on a page can seem intimidating, especially to young people encountering the text for the first time. He says: “by learning the words each individual will discover the hidden tempo of the characters,” which in turn will ensure the role is performed with integrity, colour and clarity. He encourages us to enjoy the verse, its richness and rhythm and explains that by doing so an understanding of meaning and character will follow.

## Video and Film

The use of film, and projected video imagery, is something this production uses to a great extent. The video designer, Jon Driscoll, collaborated with Tony and Bob (Crowley, the designer and co-director) from day one of rehearsals to ensure that the video design and the action on stage worked in harmony. Video design has become an increasingly popular medium in theatre, as it is able to transport the audience from Westminster Abbey to the Russian Volga in an instant, without the practical difficulties of a physical set. Notably the use of video design in *Fram* has numerous



distinct functions: to create instant scenery or background images for the set, as an active narrative tool, and also to reinforce certain key elements of the play – for example, the original photographs of the Russian famine that appear as a slide-show. Video design was fundamental to the play's dramatic impact and added to one of the central arguments of the play: what is the value of visual images in an image-saturated century?

## Music and Sound

Music and sound design were of major importance and were invaluable in creating the mood and atmosphere of certain moments of the piece. Importantly, music and sound contributed to the establishment of historical context. Richard Blackford, who had collaborated previously with Harrison, wrote the music and created an original sound. This is most evident in the ballet, for which he composed an original score, influenced by the music of Stravinsky and Debussy, composers who were beneficiaries of the ‘Nansen Passport’\*, enabling them to escape Russia along with other great artists including Marc Chagall and Anna Pavlova (the ballerina). A later dramatic musical element is the arrival on stage of a nameless Kurdish poet – eyes and mouth sewn together with surgical thread – seeking his own artistic asylum in a modern

Photo (Bob Crowley) by Jim Creighton

context. The sewn-up mouth and eyes are the antithesis of the open classical Greek mask of tragedy. Blackford's intention is to demonstrate the beauty of an aria, not unlike *The Queen of the Night*, as a simple, sombre hum; a further musical motif on freedom and the necessity of artistic expression.

\* **Nansen passports** were internationally recognized identity cards first issued by the League of Nations to stateless refugees. Designed in 1922 by Fridtjof Nansen, in 1942 they were honoured by governments in 52 countries and were the first refugee travel documents. Approximately 450,000 Nansen passports were issued, helping hundreds of thousands of stateless people to immigrate to a country that would have them. The Nansen International Office for Refugees was awarded the 1938 Nobel Peace Prize for its efforts to establish the Nansen passports.

# Tony Harrison: interview

Photo (Tony Harrison in rehearsal for *Fram*) by Jim Creighton



## Max Key interviews Tony Harrison:

**MK: When did you first have the idea of writing *Fram*?**

**TH:** I must have had the germ of the idea, I think, in 1998-1999, about 10 years ago. I knew the name of Nansen because I became interested in arctic explorers when I was a kid. The film *Scott of the Antarctic* came out when I was about 11. I knew the name of Nansen, that's all.

I was giving a reading in Rome in about '98 or '99, and I was staying with the ambassador in his residence. He was working on polar exploration and his wife had bought him a book on Nansen. I read this book. I am always looking for people to write about who are outside the world of the arts but who love poetry, as this gives me an excuse to write in verse. I was interested in Nansen's love of poetry, and then became intrigued by the fact that he had to spend this dark polar night with this totally incompatible person, Johansen. What a wonderful image! I like to find ways of dramatising two halves of myself, like Faust and Mephistopheles, or Sancho Panza and Don Quixote.

Once I started reading more about Nansen I found the book published in 1930, the year he died. It was a book of memorial essays and one of the writers was Gilbert Murray. I found

that he and Nansen were friends and I thought, Ooh, his poetry ... Faust ... Mephistopheles. Gilbert Murray was a great translator of Greek dramas and a great believer in the League of Nations and I thought there's something in this...

I started researching and got the idea of how the United Nations were going to link with the miserable North Pole and the Greek themes. Then I went to Westminster Abbey to look at Gilbert Murray's memorial and saw this red light going down the wall. I looked up and started studying the window above. I always carry a monocular with me so that I can make out all the details. I looked up and there was Aeschylus, in the window. Hah! I thought, this is happening! The red light going down the wall from Aeschylus touched on Gilbert Murray, and that marked the beginning. I found that Sybil Thorndike played all the great Greek roles in Gilbert Murray's translations so I thought they could start from there, go down the river to the National, and into the Olivier, where I did *Trackers of Oxyrhynchus*\*. That's when I started to get seriously into it. I always keep notebooks. As soon as I get an idea I open a notebook and start a collection of facts and drawings.

**MK: You were writing it throughout this time?**

**TH:** Over about 10 years on and off, yes.

**MK: What kind of research would you recommend to someone who was going to work on the play? What did you find really useful?**

**TH:** Roland Huntford's book on Nansen especially. I found a copy of Nansen's own *Farthest North* and I read all his other publications. What I was drawn to was his belief that the world would end in ice. All this began to create a platform.

I'm an obsessive collector. I don't quite know how all the parts are going to be linked but finding the links is part of the process. I know they're linked somewhere, but how?

**MK: When you were writing it did you already envisage most of the visual ideas?**

\* *Trackers of Oxyrhynchus* is Harrison's 1988 play about the archaeological excavation that found fragments of a satyr play entitled *Ichneutae* by Sophocles. In it, the discovery brings to life a group of satyrs who enact the play.

# Tony Harrison: interview

## Did you think of it theatrically?

**TH:** Yes, I thought of it in the Olivier Theatre. I've worked a lot in the Olivier and I love it. Verse turns plays outwards. You need that kind of energy in the Olivier – that kind of style.

## **MK: What were your ideas behind incorporating different theatrical devices like video, dance, music, sound and poetry?**

**TH:** One of the major themes of the piece is how we express ourselves most truthfully. What is interesting about Nansen is that he was forced to use those shocking devices to raise awareness and make people contribute to aid. He is one of the earliest campaigners in that respect. But it is also about how Gilbert Murray carries the weight of being a man of peace, who does Greek dramas and is also involved with the League of Nations. I'm playing with all of these ideas all the way through, with sound, dance and poetry. At the end of the play, I thought it would be effective to have the Ancient Greek device of the Messenger speech again: just a direct address in seductive, poetic language.

It is Sybil who has one of the most important Messenger speeches, about the starving woman who turns cannibal, and Nansen has his own about the little black boys. We tried to clear the space so that these [speeches] could happen again.

## **MK: How do you encourage any young actor to work with your play and with the verse in particular?**

**TH:** The first thing you have to do is not to be afraid of it as verse. Remember, if you can, the thrill and the enjoyment you had when you first read nursery rhymes with your mother. Go back to loving the rhythm, tasting the words and relishing the rhymes. Just go for it! Learn the tune first and you'll learn what it means later. Don't go the other way around, ie: I won't know how to say it until I know what I feel. Learn how to say it and then you'll find what you feel. It's nearer to opera than it is to naturalistic drama. In opera, you arrive knowing your music and then you rehearse. You can't get anywhere in rehearsal until the people know the lines – then they can become free.

## **MK: How did you find working with Bob (Crowley – the designer and co-director)?**

**TH:** Very good. We had a good time in his studio reading all the parts ourselves, thinking about it. The important thing is that he loves the Olivier; a lot of designers don't. They want to turn it into a proscenium, whereas it should be opened up and used for what it is, and he knows that. He loves it, and I love it in the same way, and that's why we clear the entire space. There's nothing there except a working light at some points.

## **MK: How was it working with Jon Driscoll?**

**TH:** He was great. He's wonderful. I must say he's a discovery. I'd worked with Bob before on my translation of Victor Hugo's *The Prince's Play* in '96 in the Olivier, but not with Jon. He has a total enthusiasm, incredibly hard-working, cheerful, brilliant and obsessive, like me! I recognise that and because I've worked on a lot of films, it was an easy rapport.

## **MK: What was your memorable moment of rehearsals and what did you really enjoy?**

**TH:** I even like it when things are falling apart in chaos because chaos is just a clue to what the form should be. I remember a time when the meeting at Eglantyne's house wasn't working so we sent all the actors home. Bob and I just sat in the rehearsal room and looked at it and the chairs and how the revolve could work. We got this idea that all the chairs should be set as though they were going to watch a film and then, in the next scene, pulled back to face the audience, as though they were going to watch another. This enabled the audience to see what the characters were watching. That was a brilliant moment. It was both of us working together with no egos.

## **MK: That was fantastic. It ended up being a brilliant metaphor for the ice melting away, as though it were sliding ... like the effects of global warming.**

## **What do you think the main message or metaphor of the story is? What do you think it's about?**

# Tony Harrison: interview

Photo (ballerina Viviana Durante in rehearsal for *Fram*) by Jim Creighton

**TH:** It's about my preoccupations with the value of art, for example. Is it worth anything? What does it contribute? I mean I believe – because I'm totally non-religious and have been non-religious or atheist since I was about six – that the deepest expressions of our relationship to the world come through art, music and poetry. I'm trying to show that, but also putting it under as much pressure as possible: how do the poems in Nansen's head get him through the cold darkness of the arctic night? In the end it's that that gives people some measure of consolation, some measure of focus on what they've experienced.

**MK: What was it like working with all the actors?**

**TH:** It was the best company I've ever had; the most hard-working and cheerful; a really wonderful bunch. I have been really blessed.

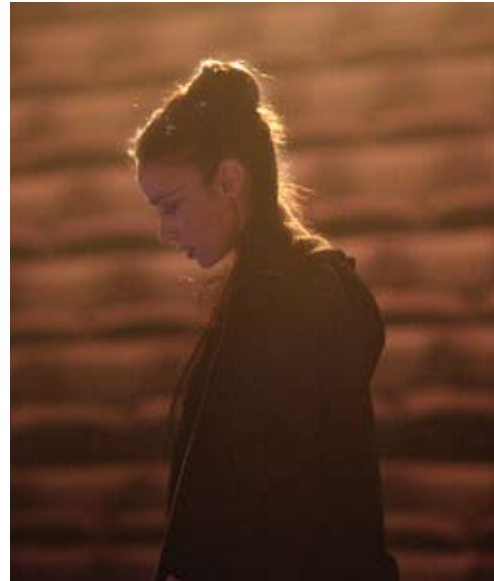
**MK: They were so open to change.**

**TH:** That has not been my experience before. I had a bad experience on a play I did here in 1992 in the Olivier called *Square Rounds*. I recently did a production of it in Russia and it worked much better there because the actors weren't worried about singing, dancing, speaking in verse and addressing the audience. Whereas here, we don't do that. Actors here think, I can't come on and address the audience – they'll just laugh! But that's the essence of theatre! I mean even Hamlet's soliloquy is a debate with the audience – 'To be or not to be?' It's not inward, like in film. It's asking 'what shall I do folks?'

I hate the kind of theatre that pretends the audience isn't there, I can't sit through it. I don't see the point in it at all. You might as well go see a movie.

**MK: What was the idea behind having a ballet in the middle of the play?**

**TH:** It's partly because we know that Nansen created an ID for stateless refugees: the 'Nansen passport'. Most of the beneficiaries were originally from Russia, from the revolution, and amongst them were people like Chagall, the great painter, Stravinsky, Rachmaninov, and the ballerina Anna Pavlova.



In everything I've done I bring in people from the world akin to theatre. In *Square Rounds* I had the transformation artist Arturo Brachetti. I like to bring in people who are used to performance as they bring a different kind of concentration and energy, and it puts people on the alert.

**MK: The ballet gives you a chance to reflect.**

**TH:** It is slightly too long, but it doesn't matter because it means that you start thinking about what you've seen, so you're ready for another part of it afterwards. I've always done that. I said to Bob: I'm about long speeches and coups de théâtre, that's my style. In *Trackers* in early 1990 all these packing crates opened and guys playing satyrs, with goat phalluses, jumped out and started dancing. The boxes flew open and formed a fragmentary dance floor! People went absolutely mad... it was minutes before the show settled down. It was wonderful! I timed it right, a bit like when the starving figures sit up on the screen in *Fram* – a similar move.

**MK: Can you tell me about the poet and the African boys? How did they come about**

**TH:** One of the principle metaphors is the mask. I used the Greek mask a lot, not only when I did the production of *Oresteia* with Peter Hall



# Tony Harrison: interview

and Jocelyn Herbert in '81. I've always had this idea that Greek tragedy is an enormously more interesting spiritual invention than Christianity and one of its devices was the mask – partly to command an audience of 20,000. I like the idea that its eyes and its mouth can never close so that it sees and expresses everything. That for me is the ideal of art. I also read about this guy who was a refugee poet and had sewn up his eyes and his mouth as a protest, which is the exact opposite.

Photo (Greek mask on rehearsal set of *Fram*) by Jim Creighton

**MK: It was in the newspaper wasn't it?**

**TH:** Yes it was. I had collected many stories of refugee people who had stowed away in aeroplanes in my notebooks. I had a long speech – which I cut – about people dropping out of the sky into B&Q car parks, all of which happened, and I collected bits on some Chinese who were found in the back of a container truck. This is the problem with the refugee that Nansen tries to address, ie: people who want to change countries but can't find the legal way of doing it, so it's an extension of Nansen's work essentially. I mean I'm making an imaginative leap.

I read the description of the boys – how the temperature in an aeoplane's hold at 30,000 feet is exactly the same as that in the Arctic – and how their bodies froze and were carried back and forth to Africa, freezing and heating up, till they were found covered with flies, and I thought, well, this is another kind of heroism. A more frequent kind than Nansen's, maybe, but you need someone like Nansen to identify with it.

**MK: Although Nansen in many ways was a hero, you wrote him to be three-dimensional and flawed.**

**TH:** All his flaws are in his companion Johansen and they almost become like one. They are one person split into two. They all are in a way. When you find characters like that, in Gilbert and Sybil and all the others, you're splitting up bits of yourself.

**MK: Is it how you envisaged it to begin with?**

**TH:** You can only imagine how it is going to be so far until you start collaborating with the



actors and designers and start looking at it take its own shape. I don't believe in giving precise stage directions to the actors – I'm more interested in moving on the energy that people give you in collaboration.

**MK: It was very freely directed.**

**TH:** Sometimes if you can't find a way of doing it it's because I haven't written it properly and I'm aware of that, so I have no inhibitions about saying, right, get rid of it, and let's change it. Don't try and do it yourself, let me show you how – leave the poetry to me.

I like the process, I always have. It's a bit nerve-racking for actors when you're changing things quite late, especially for older actors who have to re-learn things. I remember opening *Trackers* in Delphi and I was giving out 20 new lines half an hour before the opening night!

**MK: It was important not to pre-empt the rhyming couplets wasn't it?**

**TH:** You could see in the first reading that there is a comfort in sharing the same metres. Everybody almost does it at the same tempo. The discovery is to find what your own tempi are – your character's tempo – where you can slow down.

**MK: What would you say to young people who get caught up in verse and worry about it?**

**TH:** There is no need to. The trouble is that because it's in a block on the page it looks like Shakespeare. Shakespeare is the great dramatist and poet, but because there are so many old-fashioned words you think, I'm not going to understand it. I've made it my life's work to make my verse completely accessible so that anybody can understand it. It isn't difficult or full of obscure things. Forget all your prejudices about poetry and drama and start again.

**MK: And finally, what advice would you give to a group of actors who were doing their own production of your play?**

**TH:** The first thing is to be absolutely open. Don't come with all the prejudgments of what you think theatre or drama is, because you're more used to watching television than going to the theatre. Just come with a totally open mind and a free spirit. There are enough formal rules to learn! You can't take on a work like this without an absolutely free and generous heart.

# Interview: Jasper Britton

**Max Key talks to Jasper Britton about becoming an actor, working with Tony Harrison and his experiences on *Fram***

**MK: How did you start your career as an actor?**

**JB:** With great difficulty. It took me six years to get my first job but I kept struggling on and banging my head against all the doors that might possibly open! I found my way through the back door really. I started off as a stage manager.

**MK: Where was that?**

**JB:** At the Prince's Hall in Aldershot. I stage-managed a pantomime and I think I got paid £2.36 an hour. That's how I got my Equity card.

**MK: So you went to drama school?**

**JB:** No, I didn't want to go to drama school really. I did three years of stage management. I worked as a despatch rider around London for three years and, by chance, met a woman who gave me my first job. Six months later, I was working in Aldershot as a stage manager. I ended up working for Jonathan Miller at the Old Vic, when he was running it in the late 80s, and I became his Sound Designer. He gave me my first job as an actor.

**MK: How old were you when that happened?**

**JB:** I was about 27 by then, very late really. I very cheekily phoned him up and managed to get round the stage door-keeper. I said "Please, I can't get an audition, you're my only chance". She wanted to be an actress too so she said OK!

**MK: Did you always want to be an actor? Were you always thinking about how to get in?**

**JB:** I wanted to be an actor because my dad is an actor. I used to read his old scripts and one day it just clicked with me that what you read on the page you do on the stage. It seemed like a brilliant way of living life – to be sent a script, to then read it, find out what your part is and then go somewhere and learn it. I didn't quite understand what the process was, I was only seven!



I used to always go to my dad's first nights which were amazing. I remember being driven down Constitution Hill, past the Palace and along the Mall towards the West End. You'd get to the theatre and be surrounded by glamorous women who smelt of expensive perfume, and it was exciting! I think I probably had it instinctively in me in a way.

**MK: Did you have other inspirations or influences?**

**JB:** It never occurred to me to do anything else. I never thought about it until one day when I literally picked up the script of a show I'd seen. I was reading the lyrics on the page; they were typed up in block capitals. There were no stage directions and no music, but as I read the lyrics I could see in my mind's eye, and hear in my mind's ear, the woman – Annie Rogers – singing the song and dancing with Teddy Green on the stage at Drury Lane. It was a revelation to me really.

I always loved words. I learnt to read and write very quickly – I had a brilliant teacher and so I was always ahead. When school plays came along I could take words off a script quite un-selfconsciously.

**MK: So you met Tony and Bob and they offered you the part of Nansen. How did you feel when they offered it to you? What were**

Photo (Jasper Britton in rehearsal as Fridtjof Nansen) by Jim Creighton

# Interview: Jasper Britton

## **your feelings about the script?**

**JB:** I knew about Tony a little bit. I read the play and I was astonished by it. I actually auditioned for Gilbert Murray so my first love was Murray, but in the middle of the audition Tony said, I want you to read for Nansen. I read the last speech and he said, do you mind? And I said, no, not at all, it's fun, and we clicked.

## **MK: So you had never met Tony before?**

**JB:** No, never. I'd been here when they were doing *Trackers of Oxyrhynchus* years and years ago at the NT. I'd seen him on the telly doing *Night Mail* and thought that was interesting. I knew he was this maverick poet.

I took huge risks in the audition because I wanted to *do it* so much. I had never had any proper drama training, but I had done some workshops with people from Europe. One of the best things I was ever taught came from a woman who used to teach at the Lecoq School in Paris, she said: "You must always take the risk. If you see the risk you must take it". Those words have echoed in my ears many, many times since, and I've always sought to take the risk. You've got nothing to lose! So I took the risk with Tony.

## **MK: Tell me a bit more about what you mean about taking a risk as an actor. It means just having fun with a piece as well doesn't it? Trying out different possibilities?**

**JB:** Yes, I think it means lots of things. I think it mainly means trust your instincts. There's a thing that happens to me – and I'm sure all actors, when you're out there doing it – your subconscious is metering out the words for you, so you don't have to think about what you're saying. It gives me the chance to look at them from afar and make a choice about what I'm going to do with them on that particular night. Suddenly, in the fifth of a second, an alternative choice will come from my subconscious. Those are the risks that are good to take, even if you fall flat on your face and it doesn't work.

A play is not something that you rehearse and then it's finished – you make all the mistakes in rehearsal and then you show it to the audience

and they direct you further. As an actor, they teach you more about what you're doing and what it means to them, and so you need to be attentive – there's a lot to learn.

If you're sensitive to an audience, you'll know when they're listening or when they're fidgeting. Sometimes, the things that occur to me are quite audacious, because neither the audience or my colleagues are expecting it. It's not to say that I just completely do the first thing that comes into my head, but I trust what comes to me in that tiny split second. For example, when I raised the gun to Mark, in the scene at the North Pole, that was one of those moments – I was pointing my gun at the man I am most dependent on for my survival.

Nothing's going to happen to you if you take risks. Those little moments of inspiration are the ones that often shape a performance. Sometimes it doesn't work but other times it really does and, for me, they often tend to be the key moments of performance.

You also have to trust your subconscious; a role achieves its shape and ideas from there.

If you're only starting out, it's incredibly difficult to find the confidence, but the world will not

Photo (Jasper Britton) by Jim Creighton



# Interview: Jasper Britton

profit by any of us playing small and safe. We're only talking about an art-form. I've always said to people that the theatre is a really safe place to be dangerous in. When you get actors around you who are experienced, talented and excited about what they're doing, the show gets better and better – hopefully – if the choices are good.

I think that for me, professionally, there are different elements of me at work. There is a five-year-old me who is the one who can pick up a pen and turn it into a spaceship – he's the one with the imagination. Then there is the completely centred, calm and unemotional me – the professional adult man who takes care of all the practical difficulties on stage. Then there's the grown-up version of the five-year-old who is assimilating all that and putting it together. He hangs the words on hooks, as it were, and lets me clearly know what to do at every stage. These things are completely combined.

**MK: Sometimes Shakespeare can be terrifying for young people because of the language. Is there anything you can say about that, to a young actor approaching verse?**

**JB:** Yes. I have a theory about Shakespeare's verse. If you look at the early plays and compare them with the later ones, you will see that the structure of the way he wrote changes, line by line. For example, there are more full stops in the middle of a line in Shakespeare's later plays than there are in the earlier ones. In the earlier plays he tends to put a thought on each line, as you can see in *Romeo and Juliet*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Richard III*, to an extent. In his later plays he goes into completely blank verse and the structure changes. I think it's because he listened to the way people speak, and he realised that we do not speak in prose, starting at the beginning of a sentence and talking through to a full stop. We pause for emphasis to breathe, or think. It's fascinating to listen – not just to what people are saying – but to how they are saying it and you realise that that is what Shakespeare does with his later verse plays (I believe). His intention was to write the verse to sound more like natural speech. Verse for me is sound and sense, combined

with feeling. It's honest, open and direct. Shakespeare wrote prose when people are more concealed and they're thinking, more than just feeling. I think verse is the combination of pure thought and feeling. The genius of Shakespeare is that he chose words and put them in an order so that the sound and the sense were the same.

**MK: And the same applies to Tony?**

**JB:** Yes, completely. But Tony writes strictly in the rhyming couplet or triplet and I think that Tony writes much less character than Shakespeare. He gives you a different acting challenge. He's got these ideas and feelings, and he pours them into the characters in the play; the actor's job is to make come alive dramatically. What inspires me is that he's thinking in all those images and pictures and then Bob (Crowley) shapes them and makes them happen.

**MK: Do you think they're helpful for an actor?**

**JB:** Not remotely. I've never felt so alone on a stage in my life before! I'm sure it looks fantastic, but in my first 10 minutes I'm blinded by the spotlight, and I can't see anybody or anything. The only way I can orientate myself is by looking at the exit signs!

**MK: What was it like working with some of the actors like Mark Addy or Sian Thomas?**

**JB:** Mark Addy is a man who never, ever, makes a mistake! He makes it look incredibly easy. If I were in a plane hurtling to the ground I would feel all right if Mark Addy were sitting next to me... he's fantastic and very funny.

**MK: Finally, how are you responding and engaging with other people on stage and how does that help what you do?**

**JB:** With this play – it's quite funny – we're quite isolated. There isn't much opportunity to play with each other and it only really happens for me in the dinner-party scene. There I can see people playing off each other. It's when you all trust each other enough to challenge each other on stage that it gets really exciting.

# Interview: Jasper Britton

For the majority of the play, we're on our own, and we play out a lot to the audience. If you can't see them, it's even more lonely. It's very different with a naturalistic play because, most of the time, you're trying to do something to the other person on stage with you.

**MK: Actors sometimes talk about having to love the character that you play.**

**JB:** I firmly believe that. Then the problem comes when you're playing a psychotic homicidal maniac! What's to love? I think the best example of that for me is when I played Richard III. I realised that Shakespeare is actually saying: isn't he awful? But, in mitigation, look at his mother and his brother; look at him physically and at the things that people say to him.

**MK: Which makes him human.**

**JB:** Exactly. That's the important thing. That's what theatre is really about. Let's hold the mirror up to ourselves and say: some of us are beautiful, some of us are ugly, some dirty, some clean, some impossible, but even the most grotesque monster has moments of fear and of vulnerability, and is just as human as you or I. Even though they have killed people, they are still human beings. That's what loving the person you're playing is about. In a play, it's almost like a match, one man is up front in the middle, you are behind him, and you make sure he goes forward and scores the goal. It's what I believe real acting is about.



Top: photo (Mark Addy) by Jim Creighton

Bottom: photo (Sian Thomas) Jim Creighton



# Further discussion

## Topics for Discussion

How do we express ourselves most truthfully?

What do we do to make the world better?

What are we prepared to do to survive?

What is 'success'? Can success stand the test of time?

Should the arts tackle serious political issues?

Have we been desensitized by constant exposure to images of global tragedy?

Do words have the power to connect to our emotions in a way that images cannot?

What is the role of theatre in our society?

What are the differences between film and theatre as medium for expression?

Is rhyme a barrier to expression?

Who are our modern day heroes?

What is your definition of a hero?

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