



Interview Transcript

Ayoola Smart

Rona Kelly: We are here with Ayoola. So just getting to know you, what was your experience with in school with Shakespeare?

Ayoola Smart: Um, oh! I'm from Ireland and the schooling system is a little different. So we don't have drama on the curriculum so I only did Shakespeare through English. I think I did *The Merchant of Venice* and I loved Shakespeare but I was one of the very few within the class. But I think that's because I read him outside of school. And my teacher didn't teach it very well I think. It got stripped of some of the really fun stuff in it. But I think there are lots of wonderful teachers who bring it to life amazingly.

RK: And was it in school or afterwards that you first encountered *Romeo and Juliet*? Or maybe the film versions?

AS: Probably before, outside of school. So when I was really young, my Mum was doing a drama course. When I was sick, I used to sometimes pretend to be sick so that she would bring me. And I would sit up and watch everyone. And they were doing it in rehearsals, I remember watching it through that.

RK: And now you're at Shakespeare's Globe.

AS: Yes.

RK: This isn't your first time at Shakespeare's Globe, is it?

AS: No. I was here in 2016, *The Taming of the Shrew*. It was my first job, my first professional job. So I was in my final year of drama school and I dropped out to do this. But then my teachers came and marked me off of my performances here.

RK: Wow.

AS: So that I could graduate still. So that was fun. But it was amazing, I was understudying all of the female characters bar one in the play. So it was very manic. And between me and my friend Sean [Fox] who was doing all the males, we could do the whole play between us. So it was really fun.

RK: And now obviously *Romeo and Juliet*. Can you tell us a bit about your character you're playing and what you've maybe been doing to explore that this week?

AS: Uh, so I'm playing Tybalt. And I'm very excited because she in this play is very full of life and family driven and honour driven. And that means that I get into quite a lot of altercations. So I'm looking forward to a lot of fighting. And today actually I've got my first fight coordination. So I hope you all like the fights, because I think they're going to be pretty epic!



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AS: But yes, we've been doing table work and kind of just getting into the minds of all the characters. And we've been doing an exercise where everyone says one word about your character, and then you can accept or reject it, and they explain why they have chosen that word. That's been really interesting, just to see what everyone else thinks. And you gain so much more insight into your own character through that and the play as a whole, because there's obviously lots of discussions around it.

RK: So what were some of the words which people gave you as Tybalt?

AS: Honourable, argumentative, fighting came up a lot basically! Um, but fighting for the right reasons. Although there's never the right reason to fight and you should always find another way to resolve conflict.

RK: Exactly. But it's like you say, Tybalt is very honourable with the "stock and honour of my kin".

AS: Yes, definitely doing it because she thinks that that's right. And in that time of writing as well, that honour for your family and defending your family was like of the utmost. And in the play, she is quite young and has been taught by her family, by the Capulets to defend family and to defend honour. And then suddenly that's told to stop and she's like, "What?" When you've gone so far one way to have to switch overnight, she's just like, "No, I'm not having it!"

RK: And finally, what's been a highlight from this week for you? Or maybe a favourite moment?

AS: Uh, I think doing that one word. Yes, for everyone. And there's been some really funny things coming up! And very good discussions. But I think if you'd asked me later in the day, I might say the fight call.

RK: Yes.

AS: Because I'm very intrigued.

RK: Brilliant. Well we look forward to hearing how the fight call goes and how Tybalt is continuing to develop. But thanks so much for chatting to us today.

AS: Thanks for having me.

RK: Thanks!