



Interview Transcript

Hermione Gulliford

Rona Kelly: We're with Hermione in the rehearsal room. How are you doing?

Hermione Gulliford: I'm very well, thank you.

RK: We are here to talk about Playing Shakespeare [with Deutsche Bank] and we've got some wonderful questions sent in from our schools. So we're going to put some of those to you.

HG: Great. Okay, I hope I can answer them!

RK: First of all, they want to know did you study Romeo and Juliet at school? And what did you think of it?

HG: Do you know, that's a really good questions. I've never studied it. I've seen it a few times, but it wasn't on the syllabus when I was at school and I've never been in it before. So I've seen it a number of times because obviously I've gone to see friends being in it and nobody ever asked me to play Juliet! Which came as not a big surprise to me, but anyway. I don't have any kind of academic approach to it, though I think probably at drama school, you know there are speeches that we may have looked at.

RK: And with Shakespeare, did you do any Shakespeare other than that? And what was your relationship like to Shakespeare growing up.

HG: To be honest, I only kind of got interested in stuff when we read plays at school. I don't think we did very much, I think we did A Midsummer Night's Dream, Much Ado About Nothing, and when I did A-Levels, I did Hamlet, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. I don't think I had that much sort of academic experience of it, but I wasn't very good at most things at school, but for some reason I liked reading out loud. So any opportunity, that didn't feel like work for me. So that felt like we weren't really in a class, and so I really liked it. It didn't feel like I understood it particularly well, but it didn't totally scare me off.

RK: And is this your first time at the Globe performing?

HG: It is!

RK: Brilliant!

HG: Yes, it's very exciting. I've done a few readings and things like that here, but no I've never been asked to work here before.

RK: We heard you got to step out on stage on Monday for the first time. What was that like?

HG: Yes, it was great. Because I've seen a lot of plays here, but it feels much more intimate the space. You feel like the audience is much closer to you than I think you do (or I have) as an audience member. So that's really interesting. And acoustically, I thought it would be much more of a challenge and I'm sure it is when there's noise.

RK: 1500 school kids!



Playing Shakespeare with Deutsche Bank

HG: 1500 school kids! We're looking forward to it.

RK: And when you came before, did you sit or did you stand?

HG: I've done both. Quite a few of my friends did very early seasons here when it first opened, so I saw a lot early on at the Globe. And I only ever had the money to buy standing tickets. And then as I've got older, I've bought tickets. I did come and see Emilia, that was last summer wasn't it? And I got very heavily rained on and had a standing ticket for that. And that was really quite unpleasant I have to say, because I'd forgotten what being rained on at the Globe is like.

RK: It's an experience though, isn't it?

HG: It was and it was such an amazing play and production. But it was quite heavy rain too.

RK: Just make sure you bring your layers, top tips for kids!

HG: Yes, I noticed a lot of people around me had all the gear which I didn't have because I'm too stupid to remember to bring it.

RK: And how have you felt starting to get to know your character this week?

HG: So Michael [Oakley, director] did a bit of discussing her beforehand. And then it's really interesting, he's been doing this exercise with us yesterday. He gets everybody else to think of the first word that comes into your head about somebody else's character. So it's really interesting, so obviously people are throwing ideas at you essentially. "Matriarch", "powerful", "scheming" was one, "nurturer" was another. So quite often, quite polar opposites of what you might expect and also what you might have thought of yourself. You know, at this point I think she's probably quite detached from her daughter. But I've got a 13 year old myself and I sometimes feel quite detached from him.

RK: There you go!

HG: So I think I understand about being frustrated with teenagers. But I also remember very much what it was like to be a teenager. You know, I don't think you ever forget how frustrating your parents can be. So I have in my mind constantly how annoying I am as a parent! Which I'm sure my son will vouch for. Though I try really hard not to be, but equally I know that there are sometimes things that I just have to be annoying about.

RK: That's great inspiration for the character there.

HG: Yes, you know there are some lines that come up that you think, "I have said that, I have almost said that!" You know, maybe not quite as eloquently as she puts it. Because Lady Capulet, she always speaks in verse.

RK: That's brilliant, thank you very much.