



Interview Transcript

Stuart Bowman

Rona Kelly: Welcome back!

Stuart Bowman: Thank you, how are you?

RK: Good thank you. How are you?

SB: Good, thank you.

RK: Good, good.

SB: We've been doing it a week now, the end of today will be a whole week.

RK: And casting your mind back, last week was tech and then you had your first batch of performances. The students would like to know...

Students: How did you feel before the first performance? And how did you feel after it?

SB: I think we were ready, we all felt ready to meet an audience actually. It was a long tech week, I think we were all quite tired and ready for it to be moved forward. And a show always comes to life when you get an audience in. But I think we all felt ready for it, ready to meet that audience. And when I came off stage afterwards, I have no idea! Relieved, mightily relieved to have got through it.

Students: What reactions have you had from the audience?

SB: Every show seems to be different with this. It's very exciting, it's very changeable; you don't know what they're responding to. They go nuts at the fighting! They go nuts when people die or kiss! And there's a lot of all of that going on in Romeo and Juliet. So it's really lovely listening to the reactions. There are huge reactions from the audience which is just lovely.

Students: What have you discovered about your character?

SB: They're quite scared of him (the younger audiences), which is what we hoped would happen. What really struck me is there was a really lovely reaction when I kind of hugged Juliet, after she comes back and says that she's sorry for all the trouble she's caused. And that got a really nice reaction, which I was pleased about, I was really pleased about.

They want this family to be family...probably most people know that it ends in six people dying and the heroes and heroine dying. But they still want it, they're in the moment. They want it to be happy.

RK: Maybe this time it will end differently!

SB: It's the magic of theatre: you're in the moment. You should be in the moment, it's what we try and put across.

RK: And it might be from that scene, but do you have a particular favourite line?



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SB: A friend of mine came to see it with his eight year old son, but he also has a four year old daughter who I know very well, because she's in my four year old's class with them. And he said his favourite line was, "How now, my headstrong. Where have you been gadding?" So he now calls his daughter my headstrong.

RK: Aww!

SB: And Shakespeare uses a noun as an adjective, and he does that quite a lot I think. And it's a lovely thing, turning an adjective into a noun.

RK: Finally, thinking of little favourite moments: what are you looking most forward to for the rest of the run? The next three weeks...

SB: I do feel we're more settled in. I've had a bit of trouble with my voice up until now and I've found sort of a place where I can pitch it better, which I'm so relieved about. So I'm just enjoying not worrying about my voice, which means I can just enjoy the play a lot more. So I'm just looking forward to just being more settled as it runs.

Each scene is really interesting and because of that, I'm now starting to feel a wee bit more of the detail of it. So just more detail, getting more detail and finding out what that detail is. Because I'm hammering, I'm using a hammer to crack a nut...is that the expression? Whereas I need a daintier nutcracker on occasion.

RK: For cracking the nut of Lord Capulet.

SB: Cracking the nut of Lord Capulet and Romeo and Juliet. It's a fabulous play, there's a lot in it. And because we've done quite big cuts, the detail can get lost a little bit. But it's still there and that's up to us to find that in the playing.

RK: You do feel like it does hurtle through so quickly.

SB: It does, I mean Shakespeare does write in certain scenes in order to give you time to breathe. And we do need it sometimes. I think it has huge advantages of going at that speed as well. So again it's down to us to kind of just do the thinking, that thinking time normally would allow.

RK: I just love the fact that we've changed the Prologue to, "Is now the 90 minutes of our stage!"

SB: Yes. And certain audiences really get that and love it!

RK: Well thanks so much for chatting to us.

SB: That's my pleasure, lovely to speak to you.