

Such Stuff podcast
Season 2, Episode 6: Who is Shakespeare for?

[Music plays]

Imogen Greenberg: Hello, and welcome to another episode of Such Stuff, the podcast from Shakespeare's Globe.

This week, we're talking about the elephant in the Shakespearean room. There's an aura around Shakespeare and a whole host of preconceptions, that it is inaccessible, that it's too hard, that it's irrelevant or that it's too elitist. There is often an unspoken idea about ownership when it comes to Shakespeare.

So this week on the podcast, we'll be asking: who is Shakespeare for? And how do we go about breaking down some of the aura of inaccessibility around Shakespeare?

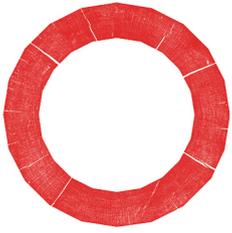
We chat to Darren Raymond, artistic director of Intermission Theatre, whose own experiences around Shakespeare persuaded him to use Shakespeare in the Intermission Youth Theatre programme to get kids to devise work around both the plays and the issues affecting their own lives.

We talk to a group of school kids who came to see Romeo and Juliet at the Globe about what they can and can't relate to in the play.

And actor Lewis Bray talks about approaching Shakespeare with dyslexia, and how hip hop helped him to unlock the text.

Stick with us to hear how Romeo and Juliet actually all comes back to Love Island...

[Group Discussion]



I don't believe in love at first sight. You can't just like see someone, fall in love and then marry someone.

But it's interesting.

You don't know them.

That's an interesting story.

Shakespearean... like the text as a whole is just so... I don't think it's realistic, it's just like...

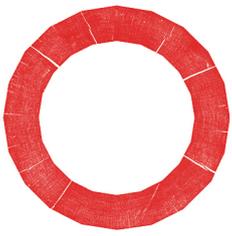
No, but that's like, I like that one.

[Music plays]

IG: First up... Darren Raymond was not a fan of Shakespeare in school... but coming to Othello later in life, he now uses Shakespeare as part of the work he does at Intermission Youth Theatre. Here's Darren...

IG: Can you tell me a little bit about your first experiences with Shakespeare?

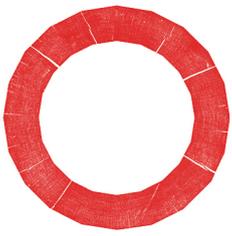
Darren Raymond: So, my first experience with Shakespeare would have been in school. I vaguely remember studying Macbeth but to be honest with you, I don't remember much about that experience at all. Mainly because in education, I kind of wasn't really that engaged, and particularly around kind of classical work because I just didn't feel that it had any significance to my life, so when we were introduced to the text, I was probably at that point probably bolted out of school and went somewhere else that was more fun. And then the next time I was introduced to Shakespeare was when I was 21, and this time it kind of connected with me and that was because of where I was. I was in a kind of quite solemn place mentally and kind of got myself into a downward spiral as a



youngster, growing up in east London, where there was a lot of kind of negative influences and it was easy for you to lose your way, which I did. And I suppose at that moment when the teacher at the time brought Shakespeare into this space, I suppose I was looking for something, I was looking for some kind of escape anyway so I think I was a bit more open and receptive to different things at that time subconsciously. And it was Shakespeare's Othello that we were looking at and for the first time I was like 'Oh my god, this is quite interesting'. And maybe because it was about a black character, which I'd never thought Shakespeare had or even knew about. And as we delved deeper into the work, I understood it was about a black man who was searching for or just wanted to be loved and was an outcast and at that time I felt in a similar place so it was something I could relate to so it really connected with me. I definitely felt at that point that I had a story to tell, and if I really think about it, it was Shakespeare that inspired me to tell stories and it was from that moment that I really kind of fell in love with storytelling.

IG: What was it that you sort of hooked on to?

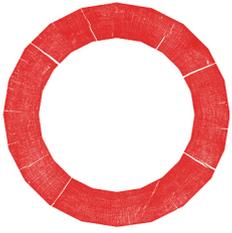
DR: On reflection, when I ask myself 'Well, why didn't it connect at school?' I believe it's because I didn't have a reason to even engage or give any kind of time to something like that, that didn't feel a part of me. This drama teacher, he was very good in terms of making the text meet you half way so... And what I mean by that is he was very clever I suppose in knowing who he was working with, knowing the room, and there was about 15 of us in the room and you know, he got to know each of us individually and had this ability to kind of understand maybe a little bit about what we might be going through and what text would be able to respond to that or connect to those feelings, those emotions, and those journeys. For me, now, being able to break that down and understand how that helped to connect me to the text, I realised that I'm interested very much, yeah, in his characters, yeah, his themes, absolutely, and his stories and how he tells stories. And I suppose the



language, even though its hard to say it better than Shakespeare, I think it's about breaking down the barrier which I believe for a lot of people, especially people who don't connect with this work, is the language and then bringing that in once we find out way into it.

IG: Can I ask a bit about the work that Intermission Youth Theatre does?

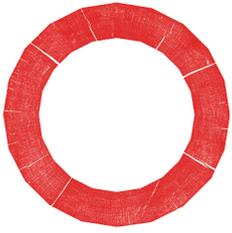
DR: Yeah. So Intermission Youth Theatre is a 10 month programme for young people, 16-25 year olds who come from disadvantaged backgrounds or who are at risk, and ex-offenders we work with and young aspiring actors as well, and we use Shakespeare in this programme to raise self-esteem, self-awareness, to build confidence. It's not just Shakespeare, its conversations as well and a mentoring scheme that we follow in order to just help young people be the best versions of themselves. But because Shakespeare worked for me and really kind of unlocked so many different things in my life, in terms of literature, you know different class of people its introduced me to and cultures and different parts of this country that you know, I was born in and learning a bit more about that history and how I fit in, you know how as a person, and my heritage fits into this story of Britain. So, because it's so rich and so many different facets it just felt the obvious thing to do when I set up a youth theatre was to do Shakespeare. Because I knew it was possible to get young people to enjoy this work and to feel that they have some ownership over it, because I went through that same experience. And I'm not precious... we spoke about the language earlier, I'm not very precious about the language. Language continuously evolves. If you showed Chaucer a Shakespeare script, he would probably gone mad at the bastardisation of the English language. So I don't know why we have this feeling as a nation that Shakespeare can't be tampered with, it's one way... I mean, half of the stuff I'm sure he made up, do you know what I mean? And I always say that art is... it's down to interpretation. So you're



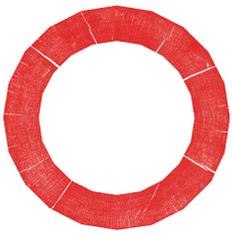
gonna understand it different to another person, and it doesn't mean that your way is wrong and the other person is right. So all this analytical garbage around Shakespeare... and it has its place, but I'm gonna call it garbage because I have my opinion to do that. You know, I think if we just kind of push that aside for a moment and get to the essence of what we feel this is for us, then I think you have a lot more people feeling a part of this culture which ultimately can enrich your life.

IG: How do you approach the Shakespeare with your kids, like when they first come in...

DR: So I don't mention Shakespeare. We don't use that word, because Shakespeare comes with so many different connotations for young people so his name gets thrown out of the window, and you know, I kind of look at the group that comes in. So we work with approximately 40 young people a year. For the first kind of half an hour before the workshop begins, we sit in like a living room space and we just talk about our lives and what's happening, talk about current affairs, current issues that are happening. And I just kind of gauge what the feeling is amongst young people and particularly the young people I'm working with. And then that kind of throws up Shakespeare plays in my head, and I think 'Oh they'll be good for this play, this play would really be good for them'. And then in the workshop I'll just start throwing in themes around those things. So if I think Julius Caesar's a good play, I might just start throwing stuff around knife crime, ambition, conspiracy, or whatever and just start playing with those themes, creating characters, improvisations and letting them respond to this work. And then after about six weeks I'll say to them, guys listen, I think we should do a play called Julius Caesar, does anybody know or have heard of that play? Some may say 'Oh yeah, isn't that Shakespeare?' and I say 'Yeah'. And they say 'Ah do we have to do Shakespeare?' or whatever and I say 'Well, you've been doing it for the last six weeks'. You know, 'What do you mean?' and then you know, so already they're asking the question, so 'What do you



mean?', that is an invitation to talk about Shakespeare. So then I'll talk about Shakespeare's Caesar, you know, in a language they all understand, I wouldn't just kind of delve straight into the text and go into kind of all history, so I'll just talk about Caesar as being the ultimate knife crime play. You know, it's about this geezer, who people think is becoming a bit too ambitious so they conspire against him and stab him to death. And they all connect with that straight away. I mean, especially now, Caesar's a good play to do because of what's happening on our streets. Then they all start asking questions and then we'll be doing some more work and they'll say 'Oh what did Shakespeare, so what did he do in his play?' and I say well, let's look at it. You know and then because there's two parallel worlds now which... the world just goes round on an axis anyway and things come back full circle. So they quickly discover that actually Shakespeare was a genius about writing about human condition and what we all go through. So that's the way in and then they just learn to love it. And then they realise they can't say it better than Shakespeare, so we end up putting Shakespeare's text into our play which we devise over the ten months and is fused with contemporary language and so you have Shakespeare sitting alongside modern language which creates this whole new kind of feeling, a whole new kind of rhythm, a whole new kind of way of communicating and I think Shakespeare, he would give that the stamp of approval because I imagine that's what he did with his company of actors, you know, devising, coming up with new stuff, making up new words which we know he did, you know playing with language. So to tell young people, which we like to do, actually the way they speak nowadays... 'Oh you shouldn't speak like that' or 'You can't... don't say that' or 'You're dumbing down the English language'... you're effectively stifling their creativity. Imagine somebody telling Shakespeare when he came up with some of these brilliant words that we use today, 'What are you doing? Don't speak like that, you can't do that, don't say that'. We wouldn't have this great playwright who now they all hold on a pedestal. So there's gonna be a young person whose changing the way we communicate now



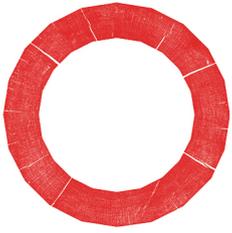
and in 400 years' time, who we're gonna be talking about in the same breath we do as Shakespeare. So I think we should allow these young people to be creative and to understand and use Shakespeare and own Shakespeare in a way that really resonates with the lives that they're living now.

IG: Why do you think we still attach so many connotations of elitism and that kind of thing to Shakespeare? Why does it feel so difficult and why do your young kids come in with all this sort of baggage around it?

DR: Ah, that's a really tough question. I think... Shakespeare has this kind of... I think cos Shakespeare pays a lot of people's bills! [Laughs] If I'm gonna be completely honest with you, right? There's a lot of kind of organisations, livelihoods, are built on this work. And when that happens, unfortunately, we as human beings, there's this thing that we have which is about kind of ownership, protection, you know and if we kind of hand it over, we lose the essence of what it is and perhaps lose our livelihoods. And as people as well, change is something that is hard to kind of deal with. And because it's been like that for a certain period of time and there are a lot of years Shakespeare has been in the hands of the elite, predominantly white, male dominated. Shakespeare doesn't belong to anybody, but people convince themselves that it does. They've somehow convinced themselves that it's theirs. I've never seen any kind of writing where or documentation where Shakespeare said my plays belong to a certain class and type of people. So they need to kind of ask themselves why they believe it's just for them. I mean I don't, I can't, I don't have the answer. But it's clearly a piece of literature that is for everybody.

[Music plays]

IG: Next up... we sat down with a group of teenagers to talk about Romeo and Juliet. They had recently seen the Playing



Shakespeare with Deutsche Bank production of the play here at the Globe. So what are their first impressions of Shakespeare? And can they relate to the themes in the play?

[Group discussion]

I feel like Shakespeare is so, so boring.

I don't like reading it, I don't understand it.

Unless it comes to life, when it comes to life...

When it comes to live theatre, it might be better.

Its the language, I don't like the language.

Its difficult, if you don't understand it then it's boring.

Thou...

Yeah.

Can I put something in? You watched today the director, and how he was talking about the time span of it, and I tried to emphasise the fact that it starts on a Sunday night at a party and it...

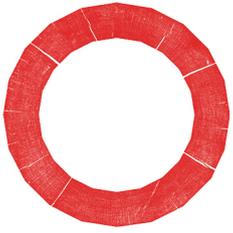
It finishes on Thursday!

It finishes on Thursday with them being...

That's so quick, like...

It's so quick.

And in that time they've got married. Do you think you can relate to that?



No.

No!

Are you crazy? Me marrying someone in those days... that's too quick.

That's too quick.

48 hours.

Yeah and we're dead.

I don't believe in love in first sight. You can't just like see someone, fall in love and then marry someone.

But it's interesting!

You don't know that.

It's an interesting story.

Like Shakespearean... like the text as a whole, it's just so... I don't think it's realistic... It's just like...

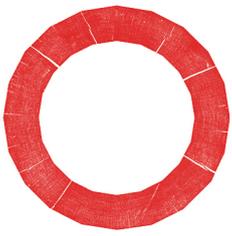
No, but that's like... I like that one.

OK, so let's now put it in like... Did you watch Love Island last year?

No.

Yeah.

Of course.



And so are you fans of Danny Dyer?

Oh yeah, yeah.

But they were with each other 24/7 so it's different.

OK. Alright. So being with someone 24/7 is totally different.

Hmmm no.

Cos you connect more, you know what I mean?

You do connect more.

So you think if Romeo and Juliet had been together more...?

Yeah they only met like... one encounter.

No but Danny Dyer and...

They didn't get married!

They didn't get married in two days... but in those days marriage was like, do you know what I mean?

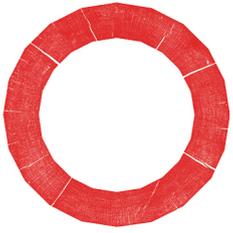
Like standard.

Cos if you marry someone in like 2 days, you might grow to know them more and you might just end up like...

That's interesting, that's sort of interesting, that's like...

In those days, marriage was something common...

It was expected, you just had to marry young.



... But now like marriage is something more deeper, do you know what I mean?

Yeah like important.

It's like less important, whereas education is more.

Stories like that make Shakespeare less boring.

Nah, like now it's more important than then.

Do you think so?

Yeah.

They all just got married like 24, 48 hours. You have to... it takes like a year, when you're engaged before you get married.

That's what makes Shakespeare interesting, like stories like that make Shakespeare interesting for me.

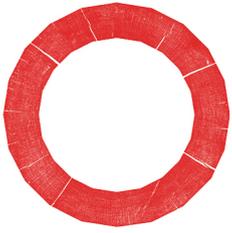
Because?

Because like that's crazy to make anyone think of that.

So do you think if Juliet had got the options you've got... education, one of you mentioned, or marriage, what do you think she'd have chosen?

Marriage, she still would have chosen marriage because of the time she was in but...

What, during that time?



Yeah. If she had a choice of leaving the family home... because in those days you couldn't leave the family home unless you were getting married.

She didn't like her parents.

Now would you rather have an arranged marriage, which is to Paris, or this love at first sight as you're saying?

Oh, love at first sight.

Love at first sight.

Oh that makes sense.

In those conditions, love at first sight.

Oh that's the only way she could have left the house.

I'd rather love someone that have it being arranged.

Yeah but in 2 days.

Imagine marrying someone for what your parents like.

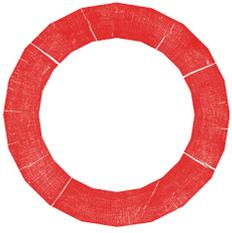
It's true. But she only meet him for 2 days.

So with Love Island, when did they realise that they're in love with that person?

At least 3 weeks.

3 weeks tops.

So really, Shakespeare to do it justice should have given them at least a 3 week time span.



[Laughs] No, no, Love Island is whole different situation.

It's a TV show!

I was reading this thing and it said if you like someone for over four months that means you love them.

Nah.

Nah, that can't be true. I mean 4 months is a long time though.

No it's not.

It is a long time.

How long do you think it would be?

It's not something, it doesn't take... it just happens naturally.

Naturally, yeah, you can't force it.

To love someone, like...

Yeah it might happen over 2 weeks or something.

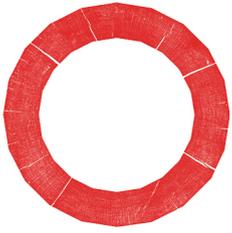
They thought they were in love, I don't think they were.

They were in love.

But they died for each other.

Yeah.

That's love.



They were young though. No, Romeo wasn't.

Actually, nothing can trump love. If they love each other that much then they can get married.

2 days!

Yeah, that's alright.

Would you say that Romeo might have been on, our usual word, rebound?

Oh yeah cos she used to like...

He used to like what's her name.

No, Juliet used to like... oh yeah!

It was Romeo who used to like Rosalind.

And then he just went straight to Juliet.

Yeah cos she didn't like him. And he was like heartbroken or something like that, then he saw her and he's like...

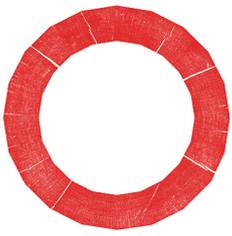
Yeah but Romeo said that he loved Rosalind, and now he just says... yeah.

So thinking of Love Island, and also just love at first sight, do you think Shakespeare is relatable? Are the themes of the play relatable today, do you think they're relevant? Can you get them?

Kind of relatable.

A little bit.

Kind of.



It's not relatable but it makes sense if that makes sense.

It is relatable because everything in this generation happens quick.

Oh it does.

Very quick.

What about the fact they take their lives? Suicide rates in this country is the highest it's ever been.

Yeah it is really high.

But taking... I don't think it's relatable when you take your own life for life, like I don't think that's relatable.

So what do children take their lives for then?

Stress. Depression.

Life.

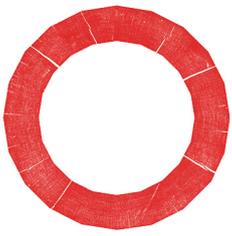
Maybe family issues.

You could be in a really bad situation.

Ah family issues...

Is this not linked to love? Because if you're lonely, you don't have anyone loving you.

Oh!



Miss, stop doing that, making my head hurt, because it's confusing me.

Oh!

How is that different?

It's different!

Cos you're linking stuff that's not supposed to be linked.

Cos Romeo was a bit depressed after Rosalind like declined him.

Do you think it was pretty dramatic for Romeo to kill himself...

Yes.

Very.

... when he found out Juliet's dead.

100%

100%

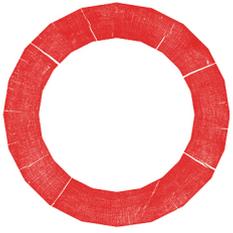
... is it OTT?

Over the top.

I swear she faked her death for some reason then he thought she was actually dead. So he killed himself then she woke up and saw him and then killed herself. That is so complicated.

That's what I mean, it's not realistic!

#OTT.



It doesn't happen!

Yeah.

So kind of last question... we spoke a bit about how you can think about it with love at first sight, and that's a little bit relatable. Who do you think Shakespeare is aimed at? What kind of people do you think enjoy Shakespeare?

Old people!

Old people, definitely.

Let's give an age on this. How old?

60-70.

Nah that's a stretch.

60 onwards.

50.

50 not old, but I'm just saying 50 and over.

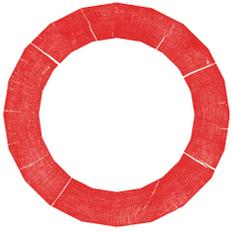
55 or over.

54.

No.

53.

A lot of people enjoy Shakespeare you know, it's only our generation.



54, babe.

I say 53.

50.

51 onwards.

53 [laughs]

Why do you think that it's only old people who enjoy it?

Because...

They have more knowledge, they understand, they understand Shakespearean language, like the language that he used, they understand it. Also they can relate.

It wasn't that long ago!

But they can still like understand the actual language.

Yes they do!

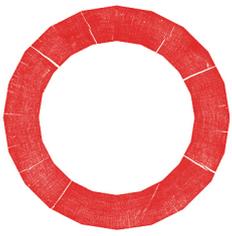
If old people can understand the language, is it old people that marry at first sight and then kill each other after 3 days?

No!

Some people marry at love at first sight.

We haven't fallen in love so we don't know how it feels like.

Yeah true.



And they know about the arranged marriage, we don't do no arranged marriage but in those days...

I swear in like some religions they still do it.

Yeah but it's not as common as it was back then. So they can relate more to why she thought she was in love.

To get out of this arranged marriage?

Wow, sad things.

She could have just fought it.

Definitely.

So if you knew you were up for an arranged marriage, what would you do to not have this arranged marriage?

Run away.

No that's a stretch.

Yeah cos I'm not gonna marry anyone on the road!

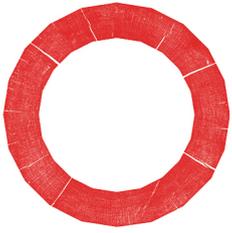
It's gonna have... if I fall in love then I'm not... urgh, I can't, I'm just not having an arranged marriage, that's so unfair.

Yeah, definitely not.

But that...

You can emphasise with Juliet then that her family has set her up for an arranged marriage?

Yeah we can but we can't relate the way old people can relate if that makes sense.



Not even old people, yeah. Cos we're so young, we haven't fallen in love so we don't know how love feels.

So people who have fallen in love.

So you've never had a boyfriend?

Yeah but I'm not in love with him. Nay...

Ohhh.

So what's the difference then?

Boyfriend is just like ha ha ha, but love is like serious like deep love and when I find that deep love then I can relate.

And marriage is or eternity like forever.

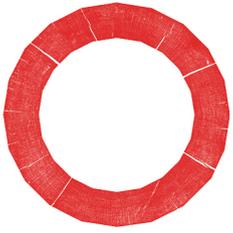
Not ever. You can divorce.

If I've experienced love then I can understand where Juliet's coming from when she loves Romeo.

So she's already married to Romeo, there's a wedding for her to marry Paris, but obviously that's a bit complicated because she can't marry Paris cos she's already married. What would you have done in her situation then?

Run away.

I'm telling my family, 'Sorry I have a man. I like this boy. I love this boy. You're gonna have to leave Paris alone'. But they're only want... they only want me to marry Paris because he's rich.



Of the wealth.

Yeah wealth.

So you run away together.

But we're not gonna kill each other, that's the last, last resort...

Or killing ourselves.

That's crazy!

Did you not think it was a clever plan to fake her death so then she doesn't have to marry Paris?

Clever!

It was clever but...

Clever...

The thing is it's wrong place, wrong time.

So Juliet writes him a letter and the letter just doesn't get there.

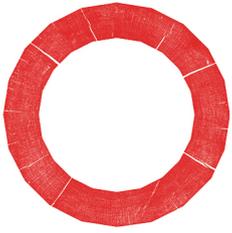
Oh man!

That's what I mean like, Shakespeare just takes it too much, why is he doing all this...?

Yeah but that's smart, that's what gets people to watch it.

Like today, you can send a text.

True.



It wouldn't have got to him.

That's what I mean, old people didn't have phones in those days so they know what it's like.

[laughs]

If she'd Whatsapped him... you know when you get the tick? The blue ticks, don't you?

Yeah two ticks.

If Romeo didn't do the two blue ticks, then what?

Exactly. That's what we're trying to say. So they need to get better Wifi...

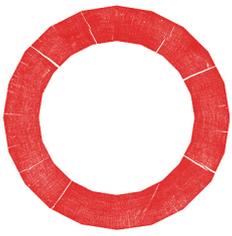
[Laughs]

[Music plays].

IG: Next, we sat down with Lewis Bray, whose one man show *Discovering Shakespeare* draws on his own experiences of delving into the plays. As a dyslexic actor, he approaches the text and the plays from a different perspective and using different techniques. Here's Lewis...

Lewis Bray: My name is Lewis Bray and I'm an actor. I moved to London about 9 months ago after winning the BBC Norman Beaton Fellowship Competition, and I moved here with a month's rent in my back pocket and a hope and a dream.

IG: Can you tell me a bit about your first experiences with Shakespeare?



LB: I've always been around Shakespeare but when I was younger I... basically I've got dyslexia, and I didn't read a book til I was 21 because I used to be really afraid of it, so Shakespeare was definitely a no-no for me. In school, they used to try and make us stand up and read it in class, and it was kind of not the cool thing to take it seriously, it was like why you trying? So I was kind of just like yeah I like it but I'm not gonna try with it. That was kind of my first encounter with it.

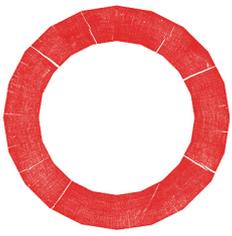
And then I saw a production of *The Tempest* and I saw an actor speak it for the first time and it just was so different and not what I was trying to stumble through on the page and loved it.

IG: And what was it that felt inaccessible to you. Was it something in the text or was it sort of the aura around it?

LB: I think for me, it was what preceded it. It was how it's taught, how it's kind of presented, I think instantly put me off. When in actual fact, as I've got older and I've worked with Shakespeare more, you realise that a lot of the directors and actors that you work with that want to make Shakespeare kind of try and strip all of that away and try and make it as accessible as possible.

IG: How did you come to work with Shakespeare?

LB: I came to work with Shakespeare through hip hop. I love hip hop music, I've grown up on it. I just think it's so similar in terms of it's storytelling, we're talking about heightened language, rhythm, rhyming schemes and things that I struggle with as a dyslexic person and that's how I learn my Shakespeare through rapping. I'm not a rapper by any stretch of the mark, but that helps me unlock Shakespeare. Yeah and for me, like, *Hamlet* for example, I feel like there are lots of songs and lots of things in sort of modern culture that mirror exactly the same things that were going on in *Hamlet's* life. For me, that's how I was able to access it?



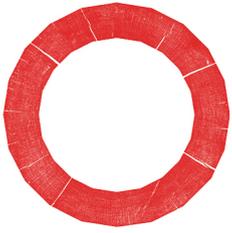
IG: Are you putting your own rhythms under the words or putting the words to sort of familiar hip hop rhythms?

LB: At first, I did, just cos I thought that was fun and daft to do [laughs]. And it would usually unlock a lot more of the meaning of what the actual text meant for me. And that just helped me learn iambic pentameter, it sort of taught me how to do that and how to break that, and how to play with that. And that's really what got me excited because when I was younger, I used to research about lyrics and 'Oh what does that mean?' And 'What did this mean?' And it's exactly the same with Shakespeare, like you spend time researching the things that you like and I just started to do that with Shakespeare, what did it mean and most importantly, what did it mean to me? Because I think that was one of the things that I found really difficult to begin with? It was because I didn't know what I would bring to Shakespeare, what were my feelings towards it. But through hip hop and understanding the storytelling of it, I just, I love it now.

IG: What were the sorts of characters and themes that drew you in and that you felt you could bring yourself to?

LB: I'm a massive fan of comedy so I obviously love lots of the comic characters. But more recently, Hamlet, I mean I know that seems like an obvious choice. But if you strip away the fact that he's a prince, to me he's just a guy who's lost his dad and he's going through lots of mental health issues and that's something that I can relate with, and I can... although I've not lost my dead, but I can start to piece together the person and understand a bit more about them without the things that go on top of it to begin with? And that's what excites me, characters like that, who really come from a real place, those are the Shakespeare plays that I enjoy most.

IG: Can you tell me a bit about the one man play that you've written?



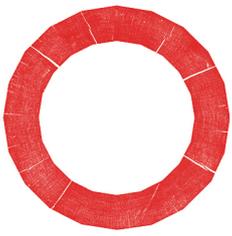
LB: I'm doing a one man play called Discovering Shakespeare and its about a security guard who works in a church and most nights he's got a few hours to kill and he decides to start reading the entire works of William Shakespeare, and he wants to explore in his life different pieces of Shakespeare text and what they mean to him and sort of start to answer the questions of his own life, where is he going, how does he deal with death, how does he use those pieces to help educate himself to move forward in life.

IG: Why do you think that there is this sort of aura around Shakespeare that it is inaccessible?

LB: I think it's inaccessible because of the pedagogy that precedes it and what's important and I think vital to help people get past that is to show them that Shakespeare is for everyone. Yeah, it is difficult to understand to begin with. I think you do have a take a little bit of extra time, but no more time than you would doing research on a documentary that you like or watching a few YouTube videos or just doing that work to help you understand what those plays could mean to you could really open up a world of fun and excitement. And I think if we are able to strip away all that 'ness' about it, I think more people would be able to enjoy it and not feel like they can't access it, like it's not theirs, because it is theirs, it was written for the people.

IG: And you've talked a bit about hip hop as your way of breaking it down. How do you think we should be breaking that down?

LB: Dyslexics work with images and they kind of think so differently and outside of the box and I think to break Shakespeare down you have to be able to do that with the Shakespeare itself and not come at it from a conventional point of view, and be willing to pull it apart in ways that you might not have thought of before. And trying to help people with dyslexia find the meanings of words in different ways, maybe using visuals instead of long explanations

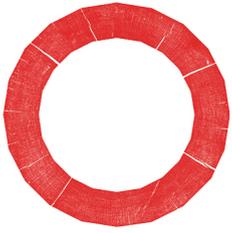


and pieces of text, I think helps a person with dyslexia get to somewhere emotionally quicker than having to read books and books and books of research. I think what dyslexia can bring to Shakespeare is that outside the box thinking, is that... I mean like I say, I've accessed Shakespeare through hip hop so... I've accessed it from different rhythms and different kind of feelings. I think the best way for dyslexics to access Shakespeare is to play with it in a non-conventional way and its important in the rehearsal room, in performance that people are open to seeing it in new ways and accessing it through different means whether it's through hip hop, whether it's through... whatever it is that helps you get into that to be able to open up that first conversation. Because actually I don't think it's about getting everyone on the same page. I think it's about accepting what people can all bring to the table creatively. I think dyslexic people are very good at recognising patterns and rhythms. For me, breaking down Shakespeare is about always coming back to the human, always making the story relatable, always... especially for young kids, to have them recognise and understand emotions in the characters that they can see in themselves. That's number one for me. It's what it means to young people. That it's not about the reputation it has, it's more about what can you bring to it, that's what I'm trying to say with the dyslexia. With dyslexia, you have a lot of empathy and to push that, to be able to empathise with these characters, I think opens that want to be able to play.

[Music plays]

IG: That's it from us, but we'll be back soon with stories from the summer season here at Shakespeare's Globe, as we return to the Globe theatre and – hopefully – some sunshine.

Darren will be directing The Shakespeare Walks... To celebrate Shakespeare's birthday, The Shakespeare Walks take you on a two-hour walk through Shakespeare's London with 22 actors. Originally conceived by Mark Rylance, who will be part of the



company, they have taken place annually for over 25 years. The two walks begin in Westminster and in Shoreditch, and both finish up here at the Globe. They run on Saturday 20 and Sunday 21 April, and for more information and tickets, please see our website.

Our Globe Education teams work with students every day to help unlock Shakespeare's themes, characters and stories, and to strip away some of the preconceptions we've been talking about. To find out more about the work we do with primary and secondary school children, international schools and higher education students, check out our website.

You've been listening to Such Stuff with me, Imogen Greenberg.

To find out more about Shakespeare's Globe and what's on, follow us on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

We'll be back with more stories from Shakespeare's Globe so subscribe, wherever you got this podcast from.