



Such Stuff podcast

Season 8, Episode 1: A mental health crisis

[Music plays]

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

Today we're launching a new series of the podcast. It is now one year since we closed our doors to you, our audience. It's been a long, difficult year, and one where we've had little choice but to look into ourselves and our practices and ask: why theatre?

And whilst a lot of the campaigns around saving the arts, ensuring the future of theatre and championing the incredible work produced by creatives in the artistic industries has been focused on the economic benefits of our industry, we wanted to take some time to step back and explore all of the ways in which the arts enrich our lives in less quantifiable and measurable, but no less important, ways.

As we begin to find our way back to some kind of normality, the scars, the grief, the anxiety, the depression of this strangest of years has left its mark. What role, then, can the arts and theatre play in this mental health crisis?

In this series, we'll be speaking to drama therapists, and psychologists, to artists and creatives, to dig deeper into the links between the arts and wellbeing. And to think about some of the practical ways that the arts can play a part in a sort of collective healing.

Here's Michelle with the timely words of Virginia Woolf.



Michelle Terry: Listen not to the bark of the guns and the bray of the gramophones but to the voices of the poets, answering each other, assuring us of a unity that rubs out divisions as if they were chalk marks only; to discuss with you the capacity of the human spirit to overflow boundaries and make unity out of multiplicity. But that would be to dream—to dream the recurring dream that has haunted the human mind since the beginning of time; the dream of peace, the dream of freedom.

[Music plays]

So in this week's episode, to kick things off, we sat down with our artistic director Michelle Terry, Senior Lecturer and Researcher Dr Will Tosh and our head of learning, Lucy Cuthbertson. Sharing their experiences from across the pandemic, from the theatre and education sectors and their own lives, they began to pick apart the vital link between art and wellbeing.

Will Tosh: Alright, this series will focus on well-being, mental health and the arts. What does that connection mean for you, either personally or in your work, or both? Michelle why don't you start.

MT: It feels like there's sort of this collective unconscious of everyone being at the end of their rope and what that means. And why is that? Why are we at the end of our rope? There's obvious things, we've gone through a global pandemic, we think we're gonna be out we're not out, we think that we're gonna get going and we're not gonna get going, but there is something about mental lethargy that's kicked in and I don't know if you've experienced it but I certainly feel partly because of tipping into this new strain, tipping into the other side into winter, something that prompted us all to go hang on a minute we can talk, we can do a series about Shakespeare plays all of that, but actually, what is the function of the work that we do. We don't really talk about this circular economy of the work that we do which also has an impact on well being and mental health, and the work that we do and the plays that we do are rooted in feelings, thoughts, psychologies of people, it's the most human art form fundamentally built around a human psyche. But yet



certainly, throughout lockdown so much of the chat has been what's quantifiable, we contribute X billion pounds to the economy, but there's also something else that we contribute and the only reason I think maybe we notice it now is because we also feel the lack of it. I definitely the lack of self expression because well for me it's being on stage or reading a poem, or reading a book, or reading a play, and there's something about the mental lethargy of not even being able to do that at the moment. I haven't got the capacity to even read a book. Yes there's the, I'm sure we'll get onto the practical thing of making something together, what it is to create together, whether it's in a classroom or on stage or in a lecture room, that there is something about that human creation that happens when you're together. But there's also something about the fact that when you read a story the oxytocin kicks into the point that you're actually experiencing what that person is either writing about or what that person is feeling on stage. I am so full of feeling at the moment that I can't feel anything because my body doesn't know how to absorb all of these feelings that are happening, so and I almost can't read the poem because I don't wanna feel the grief, or I can't read the book because I don't wanna feel the loneliness, so it's how as we reemerge what is the place of the thing that is fundamentally built on feeling and human connection that also has its place in the economy but also has this place in health as well as the wealth of our country.

WT: Michelle it's so interesting hearing you because we've all experienced that, that loss of culture as a thing to consume for want of a better word but if one were to enjoy, to relish, but you've already experienced it as that loss of self-expression you were talking about, that must be incredibly hard, it's been well over a year since you've done that, and you haven't really experienced that outside of taking time off to have a baby, that's not something you've experienced as an artist.

MT: No, but even with the baby I was having time off from work but I was singing the baby songs, and I was reading the baby stories, there was something about expression that I had the mental capacity to engage in, I could engage and empathic, there was a



vicarious empathy that was happening, an expression of feeling happening even if it wasn't me that was expressing it, I was, something was happening to my body through that empathic response that I hadn't been able to engage in. And now because I'm so tired, because of the accumulative effect of lockdown that all of us are experiencing, and just trying, the self-protection that kicks in to not feel something I can't even really sit down with a book at the moment. I'm consuming lots of television which is great and that serves its purpose but in terms of like what's tapping into the soul and the psyche which we just take for granted but it is just the most natural human thing to do, that's what separates us from the beast is our ability to create narrative and to talk about feelings and express feelings. And I just wondered if there's something about this time that, this frustration that people are feeling, and that is the overriding thing that is coming out at the moment, because that is actually the one thing you can express, you can express frustration right now and a little bit of rage, but I can't quite touch grief I can't quite go anywhere near loss, some of these things, if I could experience them might pass through me much quicker than they currently are. And I think about those kids that have not had that time in each other's presence in the classroom, even if you're not being conscious that you're feeling things, the rough and tumble in the playground, or the imaginative just you be this person and I'll be that person, you know like that thing that happens through human connection.

Lucy Cuthbertson: Yeah, I'm, I'm, I'm hoping, just listening to you there I'm hoping that when we get out of this, when we, obviously children, often they're described as having an amazing resilience, children, and it's often labeled as that. But actually I don't think that is the case and I'm hoping adults really, I hope we have the resilience that, to be honest when we experience it again that it will just come back, it will feel, it will feel partly like riding a bicycle, but actually that we will now just have that extra layer where we appreciate it because we have that gap without it, and I'm hoping that all of those wonderful things about that connectivity that art provides us with, will just come I'm hoping will come flooding back.



WT: Lucy one of the prompts is, what have the particular difficulties of the last year shown you in terms of the role arts can play in tackling mental health crisis? And I know that's something that you're so passionate about that you can do in terms of arts and schools as something that has a huge potential to help address that, and I was really encouraged when you just said you hope that people will recognise what we've been without and it will all just come flooding back. I mean is it just because I'm a hideous pessimist that I think if schools have been without it for a year and their kids haven't vapourised then they'll go well they learned online and that was kind of fine, do we need to get them in a room and doing stuff if we can't afford it and we haven't got the time in the schedule is that, is that a reasonable fear do you think? Or is, are you more optimistic?

LC: No I think it's a reasonable fear because that was, that was the trend anyway but I think the issue of arts on the curriculum and arts in schools is a whole massive issue and that's one debate for sure, if those disappear we are robbing children of what it gives them without a doubt. When they do have drama and art and music and dance and those kind of activities that they have to work together on, I think they will bounce back. We have noticed I think during lockdown that kids, the online events that we've been doing where they come together but they come together with say 20, 30 other families that's just been extraordinary. So seeing them all in their little isolated boxes and how they're just desperate to connect with other boxes across the boxes with other kids in other rooms has been wonderful to watch and gives me a lot of hope. What I have noticed recently which has made me sad is watching students and teenagers who were very happy for example to have their camera on in the first months of lockdown, when we were doing student events online, and these last few months very recently we are now getting lots and lots of students attending these events, they've paid to attend them but they don't have their camera on and they don't want to put their camera on, and it feels like they're retreating, and



they don't even want to connect with the other kids on the call. So I'm really hoping schools are going back almost just at the right time, I know all the anxieties people have got about it but I think for those kids and their mental health then what they need in terms of being with each other is coming just at the right time or just in time rather.

MT: Are you noticing that in your work as well Will?

WT: It's really interesting Lucy, it says that about a change in the comfort feel about having their cameras on and things. I mean that's certainly something I've noticed all the way through lockdown with university students, it's a little bit different with post-graduate students, but certainly undergraduate students with quite large groups, I've really felt that one of the real drawbacks about teaching literature and arts online is that it makes your position as lecturer and teacher and educator akin to something like an invader because someone is in their home, they might be in their bedroom, and if it's not a student I know particularly well I'm effectively saying to a student, I will come and sit in your bedroom and talk at you about Shakespeare. And that's not a particularly pleasant thing to experience or welcoming thing to hear for lots of students, and I completely get that, I wouldn't like that. I sort of noticed that slight reticence to have the camera on or engage with, who for a student I've never met before I just represent an outsider coming into their private space, that's felt quite hindering over the past year in terms of being able to engage. And in fair and really equitable terms as well to say come to the shared space and let's talk about Shakespeare that's amazing, stay in your room and I'm gonna come and yell at you about Shakespeare is not that amazing and is a bit weird. It needs students coming back to spaces that are dedicated to study and to enjoyment and to engagement and to love and to critique and to challenge and to celebration, because that's, those are the places where these things ought to take place.

MT: Yeah that's interesting something you said then about being on, well I'm gonna use the word neutral quite loosely, but there is something that's neutral territory about a classroom or a lecture hall



or a theatre, that the whole point is that strangers come together spend some time, galvanized around a story or an idea or a question and then go again. But it's like how do you preserve those spaces that are private but suddenly the distinction between public and private is so blurred, I mean we've got it at work haven't we, there's just no boundary between your personal and professional, and how you don't internalize that how do you keep externalizing the feelings rather than retreating and yeah.

WT: Michelle you're so right, to kind of, you know to be cautious about you know, lecture theatres and university spaces being neutral, because you know they're not they're invested all sorts of things, they are at least, the purpose of them is relatively clear which is, we are here to have this discussion. And I think it's that sense of purpose that possibly gets slightly muddy when we lose that sense of shared space.

MT: A purpose.

LC: Yeah [laughs].

WT: That would be nice [laughs].

LC: Yeah sense of purpose, I think that's what a lot of us are suffering from at the minute isn't it, that the longer this goes on the more that it just gets chipped away at because everything has changed so vastly and you just think well are we needed, is this needed? People are still alive and they're managing and we're getting through this but we haven't been functioning in the way we used to. And I think purpose and self-esteem and self-confidence and all those aspects of how you feel about yourself have been under major attack during this haven't they because so many jobs as they used to be, have just disappeared.

WT: The next question is when we talk about the power of the arts can you break that down a bit, what kinds of things eg. Inspiration, creativity, belonging etcetera, can art offer people and especially to people who think the arts as a monolithic idea might not be for



them. So what you were saying is exactly that isn't it, it's that all these separate things and sort of life skills again sounds really instrumental but such an important aspects of life the engagement with culture, arts, literature, performance can help us with.

LC: Again I suppose my experience of working with children and what they have or haven't had, what they are so desperate for going back to school, those who want to go back to school, some would say they don't but actually, I think they do, what they want is to back and see their friends and that's the thing that comes out over and over again. They want connection, they want engagement, however much they moaned about teachers and lessons, they have missed their teachers, they have missed human connection, and you know that's the work we do isn't it. And teachers who work in the arts, work in group lessons in particular where your success as a student in that particular lesson is reliant on other people, which is unusual in a lot of subjects, that teaching has completely changed. I mean there are some lessons online, of course, they're different they're not in the room they're online, but not those lessons those have been, have been radically, radically different. And they have then relied on these students individually creating something on their own which is fundamentally a collaborative art form and that's very very odd [laughs]. But then you know, you've had to do the same I guess as well haven't you in, with the theatre work you've produced.

MT: Yeah, I mean I would go so far as to say we haven't produced theatre because theatre is fundamentally about, whatever we choose to call them, audience, witness, participants, like that's, theatre is about congregation, and we've not been able to do that. We've done storytelling, theatrical forms of storytelling, but I suppose as well there's something about, the arts is forever having to justify its existence. The question that will always sit alongside the arts is yeah but really when you could be funding a hospital, or really when you could be funding a children's home, or really when you could, and we're not very good at articulating civic responsibility or social impact or the public benefit of art, and I suppose specifically theatre. Why theatre, will always be the question that theatre has to keep asking itself because it's always got to be in



response to human beings, so I think it's no bad thing for us to have had a year where we've gone why theatre, why does it actually matter, what is it's, what is its purpose? And I was gonna say beyond entertainment, but also entertainment is also really important, that has benefit to go for three hours you're not gonna have to question your, it's not gonna be an existential crisis, it's not gonna be like, you're just gonna go and have a lovely time for a few hours. That has benefit, and then there's theatre that will challenge you, take you out of your comfort zone, and then there's theatre it's just like, with the Globe where all you're doing right is together going what does it mean to be alive? Someone has offered this as a possibility. Kind of going back to what you were saying Lucy and Will about turning the camera off, it's the one thing I've really, that I noticed really early on, part of the times when I was trying to read data that I was never going to be able to read. We're all so literate at reading body language and I can't see anyone's bodies, we're so literate, consciously or unconsciously about what happens when those hormones kick in about, looking into the whites of somebody's eyes or you know, and we talk about that so often with the playing conditions of the Globe, like you can see the whites of someone's eyes. Well it's not just the whites of someone's eyes you also get that hit of those hormones that kick in when you look into the whites of someone's eyes, and someone might go I'm with you I wanna engage on when you say to me to be or not to be, and someone might go actually I can't contemplate that question now or look away. But something happens in that human connection, because it's unquantifiable you can't, you don't know how to value it, but I, why theatre, that would ever be the thing that drives theatre to keep going because you're constantly having to justify your existence.

WT: It's also it's interesting that it's a sign really healthy self-critique, and I think, a sign of actually of great thoughtfulness that people in theatre we are forever preempting the question. You don't hear people kind of going why premiership football? They might go why premiership, but they're not gonna go sort of, why do people play football, why do people, and I kind of go we do it because we're human, and there's you know, we do it because we tell stories, we



do it because we're fundamentally empathic creatures and we take pleasure in putting ourselves in other people's shoes, and sometimes we find that challenging and sometimes we're very bad at it, and so we require training and support in order to be able to do that, which is what theatre and storytelling can do. And it's not accidental that people have invested money and assets in buildings solely dedicated to telling stories, and it's not just because of arts council funding that we've done that, we have a sense of duty, we've done it because it touches something in us, and it's because people want to and they're desperate to come and hear those stories and to get those human experiences and connect with something that's beyond themselves but also part of themselves. And I suppose when we do think in a kind of monolithic way about the arts as a whole sector of society that encourages us to think quite transactionally, I don't think we can find an answer to kind of, why the arts? Because the arts aren't breakdownable in quite that kind of way, we just you know, we know why it's sort of because it's essential to human identity isn't it.

LC: It's the fault of you know, how things are measured isn't it, it's the fault of how we value and quantify things, and value things that are quantifiable. Because what you're describing about theatre, and theatre having to justify itself that's also a classic case in the arts in education and drama, and education in particular which never made it to the national curriculum and therefore was constantly on the backfoot and the first to be cut often and having to justify what it did, what did it do for students? And because so many of those amazingly positive things for students, and not just drama as a subject and the beauty of studying that subject, you know the merit of that in itself, all the kind of soft skills that come from it, those soft skills are hard to measure, they are about you know qualitative assessment, and people just don't trust those in the same way. It's seen as something that can't really lead to anything concrete, you know what's the point and yet the point of those subjects, not just for how people feel about themselves but in terms of the skills they provide, in terms of working with people, and working in groups of people and being able to articulate confidently and finding your



voice and all of those things and that's so important, we just really struggle to be able to get the argument across.

MT: But isn't it amazing how we've moved so far away from trusting the things that we can't quantify like what we're talking about is feelings. Like we don't know how to quantify feelings and yet they are one of the most fundamental things to being alive. If we're only using a tiny percentage of our brain, our thinking brain every second of every day, what's the other 90 odd percent of our unconscious, like what are we doing when we sleep. Like this is all the stuff that Hamlet was dealing with 400 years ago, it's still the stuff we're dealing with now, and maybe this is a crass generalisation but because there was still something, there was still a divinity, a verticality to creation, that we were attached to something bigger, whether you believed in a god, no gods, you believed in Hades or not, there was just something holistic about where human beings sat, there was something sort of cosmic about who you are. And the more, there's got to be a direct correlation to the more and more you reduce a human being to something that can be quantifiable the more and more you reduce what it means to be human, how do you give expression to those feelings? We are hearing politicians say that the mental health crisis will cast a shadow over this period longer than Covid will but what do you think a mental health crisis is, you know depression is sending sadness, grief back into yourself and that ability for those feelings to cause you harm, how do we become feeling literate and we become feeling literate through art, it's art that gives name to stuff, and yet we undermine it so much.

[Music plays]

MT: You can't talk about the struggle for human freedom unless you talk about the different dimensions of what it is to be human, and when we're talking about art you're talking about meaning, you're talking about love, you're talking about resistance, you're talking about imagination, you're talking about empathy. All of these are part and parcel of what it is to talk about human freedom and so art is about those who have the courage to use bits of reality to get us to see reality in light of a new reality, so it's about vision by means



of imagination, it's about empathy in terms of looking through this world and seeing the possibilities of a new world a better world, a more decent, a more compassionate world. And so be one a painter, musician, sculptor, dancer, in fact be one a human being who aspires to learn the art of living because in the end that's what I think the arts are really about. How do we become, all of us become artists of living, which has to do with courage, which has to do with love, which has to do with justice, which has to do with leaving the world better than we found it.

[Music plays]

WT: Another prompt is to with specific things in, in, in the arts. What are the specific things like pieces of art, or practices from art that you find yourself returning to again and again?

LC: I do find, and not just because we work at the Globe, I do find myself often thinking through lines of **Hamlet**. I think that sits with me all the time, erm certain lines from that, and they'll just kind of pop out at certain moments in my brain or out of my mouth in a way that sounds really [laughs] really pretentious, yeah there's line from that play which will always sit with me.

[Hamlet Act I, scene 2]

James Garnon as Claudius: How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

MT as Hamlet.: Not so, my lord. I am too much i' th' sun.

Helen Schlesinger as Gertrude: Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.
Do not for ever with thy vailed lids
Seek for thy noble father in the dust.
Thou know'st 'tis common. All that lives must die,
Passing through nature to eternity.



MT as Hamlet: Ay, madam, it is common.

HS as Gertrude: If it be,
Why seems it so particular with thee?

MT as Hamlet: Seems, madam, Nay, it is.

LC: And I love explaining that play and the storyline to quite young children actually, or erm or top primary maybe, year 7. So I always use it if I'm working with children at some point I'll use **Hamlet** and explaining the storyline, which when you condense it just sounds so outrageous [laughs]. And then it just gets a whole lot of conversation going and it's just the most extraordinary, extraordinary play.

MT: What about you Will?

WT: I was gonna ask you the same question while I'm still thinking. I mean it is, I'm not an artist, I'm not an actor. And one of the things I've been doing for the past year, are the things I did before this year which was teaching and research and writing and in some senses those practices, obviously, we've spoken about the challenges of teaching online, but those practices are things that have continued this year, and I'm sure some people have found a year of enforced isolation kind of great for knuckling down and reading and writing, I haven't particularly and I think a lot of people haven't for reasons that Michelle was speaking about, because actually one's brains are not, they're not in a great state to kind to feel that kind of ease and sort of excitement that composition needs, that writing composition needs. And I was really thrown the first lockdown, the very start of the first lockdown at the end of March last year, I lost the ability to read for pleasure which I have never experienced in my life, and I couldn't do it during that first lockdown. I think it was my brain recognising a sense of panic and threat beyond the self that it was not prepared to let me indulge



in or think about, and the consequence of that was that my imaginative brain shut down, and even when something completely unconnected to the current moment or to pandemics, my brain was like, I don't know how to make sense of this, these are just words on a page why are you even wasting your time looking at words on a page.

LC: Was this because what was happening in the world was so fantastical?

WT: Yes exactly, it was because I think the consequence of letting my brain wander free with the potential consequences of what was happening in the world were too extreme and my brain was like, no this is not happening because this is beyond our care and it's frightening and just no. You know that was about a month and so it came back, but it was a very vivid demonstration to me of ironically enough, not the kind of, not the sort of reassurance of art because I was denied it, but the significance of it and the importance of literature and creative storytelling, because I could really feel the lack of it, and I registered that what my brain wasn't allowing me to think about swept up in that ban the idea of imaginative literature because that is what one needs to sort of think about the world outside. And so by not being allowed, my brain not allowing me to think about the world outside, I also couldn't think imaginatively. Michelle how about you, what are your practices?

MT: I've had a similar experience to you were like I've not been able to, I'd sort of gone to place of, I've attributed it to not wanting to feel anything, because the feelings were so big. But actually, you're right there's also something about the power of the imagination going actually don't engage with that because you can imagine the most wonderful scenarios but you can also imagine the most apocalyptic scenarios so you almost can't open the door to the possibility of either. So I was just similarly kind of haven't read for pleasure, haven't really been listening to music, like I don't keep a journal but you just have to scribble bits down just to express and I've not, haven't been able to do that. Then as the world kept tipping my brain kept doing, you don't know enough, like you need knowledge



now you need to, when stuff around George Floyd happened like having to devour everything that was available to understand and my brain wanted to go, you must understand now, you must understand the climate crisis, you must understand BLM, you must. But certain knowledge but it wouldn't let imagination in and that's when I started to go, how long has this been going on for because I've sort of had the privillage of an imaginative world in theatre. Like I would still get that hit even though it was my job I would still get that place where I was actually able to get that catharsis of feeling because I go on stage, and like you said I get to say bits of Hamlet or I get to get really livid as Hotspur or like, you have a catharsis through, through my job. I'd not built that into my life because it was my job and suddenly going I don't know how to do it. Road trips were often about either listening to audio books or music but because we've not been driving anywhere you suddenly realise that's not been in our life either. So even just rather than putting the TV on straightaway just putting on the radio in the morning, and I don't know how it happened the other night we played 'Both sides now' by Joni Mitchell to Scout, because again we've got a four year old, they're so full of feeling with zero ability to know how to regulate them, we put on 'Both sides now' and she just stopped and she said can we have that again, can we have that again, and like gradually Paul and I just went, oh my god we just haven't been feeding our souls like we've been feeding our brains like, and that critic in the brain going you need to know more, you should be doing better, like it's so easy to feed the critic and to feed that thinking brain, but we hadn't been feeding our souls and suddenly in comes Joni and it's like oh my god.

WT: And Michelle what you're describing is so, that so resonates so much because you're describing low-level depression there, and I think all of us have sort of felt. And I think the inability to connect with art is a real symptom of that and I'm really struck Michelle by your sort of equivalent feelings I had at the start of lockdown, it is, it is kind of a red flag when ones ability to engage with art and music and literature takes a bit of a tumble. That's a point where we're gonna go ok stop, address this, something isn't probably 100% well. And obviously, it wasn't for us because we were in the middle of a



pandemic and we were anxious, so it's not hard to find the cause, and maybe that's a bit of a, a sort of a realisation of this year, that when you, when you stop engaging with things that you found pleasurable and satisfying that's a real sign of something, and I know that's not a new idea, of course that's obviously a sign of depression but it's been, it's been sort of chastening to experience that personally.

MT: Ah yeah, and I do wonder like when we talk so freely about we're heading into a mental health crisis that is what we're talking about, we're talking about a culture that has gone into a low-level depression. Because again people are denying themselves expressing their feelings because everybody's feeling something, so sort of you don't want to say it out loud, and also you do that thing where you go someone else has got it worse than me, and privilege, and we're all getting more and more versed in the language of privilege and the language of like how lucky we are and da-da, and actually where do we go as a culture? I do wonder if there'll be a surge in religion, a surge in cultural engagement where you just feel connected to each other, there's something linear that happens but also something bigger than you.

LC: I think it'll definitely be an appreciation. Even if things go back to something we vaguely remember I think this different level of appreciation that we've just obviously we've taken it for granted haven't we all our lives. I went to Greenwich Theatre in the brief time we had when we were allowed to go back to theatres and I went to a socially distanced event, now there was a really small socially distanced mask-wearing audience, it was really moving and it was really affecting in a way I hadn't expected. So I'm, I am very interested to see what that does for people when we get back. But I think that lack of concentration is an issue, it's definitely an issue in teaching, I mean it can be anyway with young people but I think that has, I don't know I feel like it's really prevalent now with concentration. I mean we've got it haven't we as adults, and we've been working so hard that that's masked some of this I think, you know we are lucky to have been working but the extent to which we've been working and how fast we've been working, and long and



hard in such astounding circumstances because we haven't understood what's happening and what we're doing, it's masked these issues for us, hasn't it.

MT: And also that it's OK to have them, again I don't think we're very good at like, grief is natural, depression is natural, anxiety is like the thing that saves us from being killed by the beast, these are really natural things, like you were saying about Hamlet it's no surprise that to be or not to be are the most famous words anywhere.

MT as Hamlet: To be, or not to be, that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
And by opposing end them. To die—to sleep,
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to: 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;
To sleep, perchance to dream—ay, there's the rub:
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause—there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life.
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
Th'oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of dispriz'd love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of th'unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have



Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,

MT: Somewhere in us we ask what does it mean to be alive. We can contemplate that, like it's OK to contemplate it, it's ok to talk about it and again I think there's something around storytelling and art and what happens in classrooms that gives permission to talk about things that maybe aren't talked about.

LC: Yeah and it's heartening to hear the schools have decided to try and, part of their recovery agenda is about getting in more art, focusing on the arts, using the arts as a recovery, as a recovery tool, as a recovery policy and it's nice to hear that being said and stated as something they're recognising as being really important and will help hopefully, help students engage and talk about what's been going on.

WT: So we're having this conversation, we're recording it on the day that the Globe is announcing it's Summer 21 season which will kick off a bit later on in the spring, early summer. We're providing some art, we're kind of welcoming our audiences back, what do we hope that they gain from that? What do we hope that our audiences gain from a visit to us this summer?

MT: I hope, it's something that I identified in me, or I noticed in me is that I sort of hope is true for others is that I realise that when I'm engaged in something creative the rest of the world stops. What I have really missed is that being on stage, and I think is maybe why I'm drawn to theatre more than TV or film is because when I'm, once a play starts no one can stop it and for three hours you're just thinking about that one thing, I'm allowed to be present without the rest of the noise happening. And I hope that when we come back we have created work that gives permission for that, there is so much noise and there is so much anxiety and there's so much real things to worry about, I hope that we give permission for people for two hours, two and a half hours, three hours to just be present and let the rest of the world fall away for a bit.



[Music plays]

The speeches you heard were from our 2018 production of Hamlet which is available to watch on our Globe Player.

And the quote you heard read by Michelle in the middle of the discussion was from philosopher Cornel West.

That's it from us but we'll be back next week with another episode exploring wellbeing and the arts.

You've been listening to Such Stuff with me, Imogen Greenberg, Michelle Terry, Dr Will Tosh and Lucy Cuthbertson.

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