



PROTEST | RESOURCES TRANSCRIPTS

PROTEST | AMY JANE COOK

It's really different for every project but for this one it was very kind of open-ended because they're three essentially three monologues so there's no locating sort of place that the play takes place there's no kind of naturalism to you know you're recreating a specific room of a house or anything like that so you've kind of got a complete open-ended freedom when you get a script like that but it can also be daunting to have something that open-ended so you've got to kind of narrow down what are the things you want to achieve with the director so first of all kind of talk about how do we want these to be presented these monologues and what is the relationship between the three monologues is really important so you know know do we create a world in which the actors within the monologues are very isolated or do you create overlapping worlds where they can sort of move through each other and that kind of helps to find the space one thing Natalie was really clear about at the beginning was that she wanted it to be really physical so she definitely didn't want to have you know three people standing in space delivering them monologues she wanted to see you know girls young women being very active and playing against that stereotype of girls you know just sort of sitting quietly and being pretty and you know seeing them being really active and physical and doing things that you know the characters talk about you know people assuming that's what the boys do and these girls were all very strong and there's one who's particularly interested in sports so we wanted to reflect that physicality we wanted to see girls being messy and getting sweaty and so we needed to create a kind of landscape where they could do that and not just kind of something that held them in space so that was kind of the starting point.

The key thing with a show like this where it's very physical is always to get the set into rehearsals as quickly as possible so we were lucky enough to have that and it would sort of be kind of impossible to rehearse it if you were just marking the things and not actually doing them so they kind of rehearsed it up to a point where they could in terms of character work and then they needed to start working in the physical action so the set was in rehearsals that was really helpful you always in rehearsal space have the set marked out on the floor in tape anyway so that people know what the parameters are but very often people get a stand in for if you have heights or levels or anything like that you'll need that. There are lots of reveals in terms of their costumes so we've rather than have the set reveal things we've made it more about the girls actively creating the reveals themselves which came out of rehearsals so it did mean that in terms of costume we had a kind of concept of what the costume would be and then that very quickly changed and evolved into something very different because they had to accommodate all these reveals so it's you know rehearsals are always a learning process and directors will always ask for you know lots of things that weren't originally there and you just you try and adapt and work around it and you know they'll find out things in rehearsals that ultimately enhance the show but you could never have pre-directed a whole show before you get into rehearsals.

If you've got a period piece or something and you know it's set in 1890 in a big country house you can research that particular thing with this because it's open-ended and kind of abstract it's not so much researching a topic or a specific thing but you certainly always usually start a creative process by collecting images and kind of sharing images back and forth with the director seeing what appeals to them Natalie was showing me sort of videos of movement that was kind of her main starting point and she was sort of showing sets that moved and rotated and enabled the actors to always be kind of in motion and so that was kind of her language and then I was thinking about from that kind of loops things that could create endless kind of cycles of action so looking at kind of running tracks looking at sort of BMXing tracks that have loops thinking about you know things that young people interact with that allow them to be physical so kind of playgrounds you know it is sort of centered around their school life so it was sort of useful to look at imagery of schools and playgrounds and activity spaces although we didn't recreate a sort of naturalistic playground what we've ended up with is something definitely influenced by playgrounds that gives opportunities for different levels

different speeds different kind of types of movement from jumping, to hanging and swinging and climbing so that's kind of what we what we started looking at.

When you do a touring show the first thing you do before you design anything is you put all the sizes of all the different venues on a plan and you always create a kind of template for the smallest space and template for the biggest space and you try and make it as consistent as possible because the stage management team have to you know construct it every time and they don't want to have you know 12 different versions of the set to put up so you generally try and create a sort of standard size and then if you have to like a smaller version and a larger version and with this we created two sizes so we've got the standard version and and then a slightly compressed version. Most of the spaces are fairly similar in scale so the set has to sort of compress so we've got a series of kind of structures that are kind of climbing frames and they usually sit sort of separate and then there's one venue where they sort of lock behind each other so you've got to try and minimize the reblocking because there's not a director or movement director on tour in the venue where it gets smaller the associate director is going out so she will be there to re make sure the reblocking is there but it's it's always a big consideration on tour that you want to not have too many changes because it it has a big knock on effect so when you rehearse a show you do what is called blocking which is basically the actors learning where to stand and when for example an actor would know when I deliver this line I'm standing on this particular part of the set if that particular part of the set isn't there anymore because the set has shrunk in size that blocking needs to be reblocked so you have to move them to another place so it's kind of thinking I think it comes from thinking about people in space as blocks that you move around a board and you know that you have to change where those blocks sit if the space changes yeah and then with the shapes and the spaces itself I think curves felt right I think they're really fluid and it felt very interesting this kind of figure of 8 shape the idea of kind of continual looping and the kind of way in which the girls kind of follow each other but also lead at different times and so we have a series of kind of curves circles and they're all kind of cut out and the shapes are reiterated all across the space with the climbing frames we've sort of used the voids in the climbing frames at the back so we're trying to kind of reuse the shapes so it kind of becomes echoes of the shapes across the set when you're designing you shouldn't limit your ideas or creativity based on thinking about the environment because you could tie yourself up in knots and not allow yourself to find the right solution for the play so whilst it's really important I think the first thing to do is just think about what the play needs and go start with that and then once you've established your idea and sort of got your design then the next step is to think about how to achieve that in a sustainable way you know it is really hard because by the nature shows have short runs often so the question is always what is the set made of and what happens to it afterwards and certainly when I started out and you don't have any money for shows I got every single piece of wood for the shows off you know Freecycle and eBay and you know Facebook and things like that so still use a company called Scenery Salvage quite a lot so they're a big scenery warehouse so for example a lot of theatres I know the National Theatre certainly do send every single one of their sets to Scenery Salvage so that means they take it apart and they you know every window every door every everything they keep it so they have a you know a massive sort of aircraft hanger full of windows, doors, kitchen elements, you know, lighting, furnishings so in theory there's not really any need for anything to be thrown away in theater so I think that's one of the most important things is when you're done with the set what happens to it and if it is made of plastic something is made of plastic it's not necessarily the end of the world because plastic is very durable and if that plastic item goes on you know for another 20 years and is in however many you know other shows then it has served a purpose they've thought really hard on this show about transport and the emissions and so they've tried to sort everything from locally within Newcastle and if they can't then they've tried to get it as close as possible and you know the things you're trying to avoid is going further and further away and getting something that's been shipped from China basically there's also a lot of parts of the set if you stand behind the set you can see it's made of old things so it's on the reverse of the painted sides is old bits of old set so you can see that they haven't bought new wood they've just taken old things chopped them

up made them into different shapes in terms of the floor the floor is a dance floor which is plastic but it's a dance floor that was already owned by Fuel Theatre and they've taken it and just repainted it and repurposed it so there's a kind of loop in theatre that can keep going and there's not really any reason that anything should be skipped at the end you know it's it's a tricky thing in with costume you're always always trying to say well can we get it from the costume store first of all if it can't come from the costume store can you buy it secondhand and often with theatre what it comes down to is time and you can try really hard to get everything in advance but ultimately you'll get to just before the show and you do a costume fitting and something won't be right and you need something else and you have to buy it new and you probably have to go to Amazon or something because you need it next day because the show's going to open you know these things inevitably happen but if after the show you can then put that back into a system and not just be like oh well we don't need this dress anymore you know if you can either charity shop it or put it back into a costume store then you're just not creating waste so I think that's the really important thing is thinking about it once it served its purpose what does it do and with a touring show I certainly know this show is going to go on a long tour and then it's going to go in storage with the ambition that it can be brought out of storage you know every year if it needs to and do more tours and therefore it's not just lasting for four weeks like a normal show it can go on and on and on so they've built it in a very sturdy way to make it robust enough to last for several years you know so it's all about thinking ahead of the end of the show.

Because it's sort of an abstract set you you can it can be any colour or it could be no colour at all you know so we thought about what is the impact we want it to have when young people see it for the first time and we were keen that they should be excited by the show that it should seem vibrant and fun that it doesn't convey the sense that they're coming to see a very serious abstract piece of theatre that they will enjoy it they will laugh it's playful it's exuberant you know there are some very very serious topics in it but the overall impression we want people to take away is that it's been a very dynamic enjoyable show even in spite of the very serious kind of subject matter it's undeniable that colours are gendered and so we wanted it to be something that reflected the young women and girls and that had elements of femininity but that wouldn't make you know young men and boys feel excluded or like this is a girl show which is sadly something that exists and you can't ignore it so we tried different colour palettes we tried to think about a version where it was all just exposed wood so there was no colour we tried sort of darker, slightly more sombre colour palettes we tried super bright poppy colour palettes and we yeah asked a range of kind of 8, 9 year olds I think some 11 and 12 year olds were asked as well what they thought and just fed back about we didn't tell them what the show was about but we asked them without knowing anything about the play does it look like the kind of show you'd like to see so that was kind of our research does it appeal or does it alienate you? and we kind of found that they were a lot more responsive to it not many of them had sort of gendered responses to it but we kind of went for a palette that's very bright very poppy very fun we want you know these like girls to feel like they are you know energised exuberant young people but we also kind of didn't want it to feel too young so rather than going for kind of the more primary colours that you would go for maybe if you were decorating a nursery or something and you know or that you see in very young children's toys we went for colours that maybe slightly more going towards what a 9, 10, 11, 12 year old would like to paint their bedroom as they're kind of entering towards their teenage years you know so slightly more chalky versions of the colours that feel a bit more refined and a bit less like kind of like it's a sort of nursery school you know playground set up.

We did think about whether the girls were going to be wearing just their regular clothes but we felt because the play is very focused around school in the very first moment of the play where we first meet the characters they are all just after school so we felt that it was right that they should be wearing school uniform we also felt that it helped our actors are slightly older considerably older than then you know they're not 11 yeah it just helps to create that sense of someone being younger than they actually are which is always good because you really need to be able to suspend your disbelief and invest in these characters as being 11-year-old girls also what it helped us do is we didn't want to give away at the very beginning of the play that they're all at the same school because you sort of

find that out throughout so with the uniform we've gone for a sort of overriding colour theme of green but we've given them all different versions of the school uniform so that when we realise that they're all at the same school they make sense as a collection but we don't look at them to start with and necessarily go oh they're all lined up in exactly the same clothes so it takes us a little while to see that oh they are actually all linked and it does make sense we haven't put any kind of school insignia on the costumes or anything because we didn't want to be that obvious we didn't want to like make up a school logo we thought it better just to leave all logos off and just use a kind of colour theme that ties them together.

It's quite sort of abstract space I certainly don't think anyone would walk in and think oh it's a, you know, this or that it certainly has echoes of a playground it's got two large climbing frame structures one is a sort of S curve one is a big kind of semicircle the one with the S curve is designed specifically because there is character in the play who has a kind of refuge in the woods and a place where she goes when she feels overwhelmed and scared and she goes and sort of hides in this space so we need to create a small space in which she could be so there's a sort of large part of the S which creates big arch that they can climb over and then the smaller part which creates this sort of little safe space and then there's a series of podiums as well and there are sort of podiums talked about throughout the play about the idea of kind of winning and champions and you know standing on the Winner's Podium also the idea of podiums is in like standing up and speaking being an activist and you know there's a sort of a big protest at the end you know so we're creating these podiums for them to stand out and speak out and sort of have their voices lifted up and then there's a sort of big running track that flows through the whole thing so they can run around the running track and sort of interact with all the spaces. Yeah I think lighting really helps so Ally who's done the lighting has done an amazing job and really a designer's job is to work always with the lighting designer to create something in particularly when it's sort of kind of abstract then your job is to work with a lighting designer to work out how to bring this abstract space to life so she's really cleverly concealed lots of LED light like throughout the space and all the kind of cutout shapes have these LED lighting strips down the side so she can isolate different areas of the set so for example when Chloe's in her bird hide in the woods the an LED strip isolates that little section. Similarly the girls all have their own colour palette which Ally's created so we can kind of isolate them in space in their kind of their colour world and that helps the podiums can also create little islands that they can be on and because we've got such different levels and spaces you can position the actors throughout the space at different heights in different spaces so while they're all occupying the the same space they can the pictures are very different so I think that's kind of what we've aimed to do with all these different levels.

I think a line in the show where one of the grandmas says and what you what are you going to do now because they can't just be angry or sad about something you have to then say what's next how do we change it and I think that's the question the show asks is how do we change this? The show kind of conveys to young people that whilst you feel all these feelings they're all very valid we all need to do something together about it we can't just you know shout about it on social media and think you've done something because you haven't really you know you've got to make a stand or like think what's the practical action I can take and how most importantly how can I have the ripple effect to influence everyone around me and I think that's what's shown really nicely in the play is the ripple effect of you know it can just start with one person and I think when you're young you can sometimes feel like you don't have much power and I think all these girls at different points in the play feel like they don't have much power but when you start having a knock on effect on the people around you then you can make big change because you are just one person but if you tell five people and they tell five people and they tell five people then you've had a huge effect.

PROTEST | HANNAH LAVERY

Protest is a play for young people kind of 8 + it's about three girls in their final year of primary school who for different reasons are inspired to to activism to make a change in the local community and then they are inspired by each other and the play culminates in a a protest or a coming together of their local community to sort of demand and inspire change that's in terms of climate, the climate emergency but also in terms of kind of anti-racism and in terms of gender equality.

I used to be a teacher about but I'm also a mother of three children and I noticed especially kind of when having conversations around the pandemic there were so many calls to action whether it was Black Lives Matter you know the climate emergency and in conversations with my children there seemed to be a sense that there was nothing they could do and so I think that was my starting point and then I talked to a lot of activists who have spent their lifetime campaigning and working towards a better world working towards change and I spoke to them about how they sustain that change and one of the things that was the sort of common thread was that actually it is in the small actions it's in the small wins that helps you sustain so I think I wanted by things that happen in their lives inspired to do something and that maybe they don't win completely but they have a small win they have something hopeful about that and I wanted I suppose to create a play for my children and for people like my children who needed to to feel hopeful that they had agency there was something they can do.

Well I was really lucky to be picked up by Imagine, so Imagine is a Scottish based company that supports children's theatre and they also run Edinburgh International Children's Festival. So I wrote the play initially as a sort of work-in-progress with Imagine and Imagine then went forward with partners with Northern Stage and Fuel and National Theatre of Scotland to make it into full production, and then Natalie Ibu came on board as director and so then we sort of took the play which was initially because of the pandemic I sort of envisioned it almost like a radio play so there was these sort of intertwining monologues so there was a real discussion when we were bringing it to the stage about how we could create something that felt more vital in the sense that felt there was more action so there was some work on that kind of taking it into this version and then also what Natalie one of the things that Natalie picked up was that actually this play is about is quite physical and sense of these girls run and they climb trees and they ride their bikes and so it felt that there was something powerful to say about how little girls are often portrayed as being as being not physically active and actually that's such a part of their lives and so they wanted to sort of do that I think Natalie was really committed to bringing that alive and I strongly believe there's always something you can do and I think that change happens within our kind of local communities or for children within their schools and there's always something you can do so I wanted to leave that as a sort of kind of final moment in the play that there's something that you can do you know it's there's a power in coming together and there's a power in community.

It's all there on the page but I think what we did developing into production was we did a lot of like intercut - finding out the moments where the monologues - I mean the monologues were always intercutting a little bit but it was about doing that even more so find those moments where we could sort of they could come across each other so there was a little bit of that in the development of it and looking at where the possibility for kind of physicality and um yeah so I think in terms of like the words on the page they're all I think really there's not much that's not there from from earlier drafts but I think what it was was looking at where can we cut in where could another person cut in a bit more and where where was the dynamism in that where was the most exciting place for them to cut in with each other and when could they just stretch out and like you know there's I think in in the second half the play Chloe really gets to stretch out and that was really because Chloe was the more of the reserved thing so she had to gain the confidence to suddenly be up - so all of these little things that we sort of played with so we were kind of moving the script around a lot and there's a

lot of that in discussion with Natalie and then when we got the actors in the room was then also looking at oh actually there's there's a need here for more or for less. In the initial three monologues you heard them kind of intercut and then as the play went on you started to realise that they were at the same school and that the people were talking about were the same people and that I wanted it feel like a tag team so so it was the you know one person does their talk and then that they Inspire this and just because I think I was interested that ripple effect that sometimes we're not aware of the things we do that when we are brave that we actually make other people brave and so I wanted, I was really struck, by that idea about if you show courage if you do the brave thing the ripple effect is that somebody else feels that there's space for them to be brave so I wanted that idea so there were like moments but I also really like that slow reveal of them where 'ooh' you know? and so there was some of that kind of so that was always in it right from the beginning and if anything we've lost we lost a little bit of it in the way we did it but actually you know like I think some of that was because of the kind of necessity to to give it to kind of cut in at different areas we sort of because it happened in the original plan much later on that you started to go oh wait a minute that's all the granny they're talking about is Alice's granny and this oh right okay wait a minute I can see so I quite like that jigsaw puzzle of it and and the and the rich language and the kind of and I suppose that comes from just spending years and years reading to my kids and realising the more poetic like the more the stories I read that were full of imagery the more I could spell bound them so there was some of that wanting to sort of create a sort of magic and a and a spell so that you can talk about these kind of difficult things but in a way that feels like you've really drawn them in and there's a rhythm to it. I mean you know I'm also a poet and that's like a different experience because you're very much sort of you know you write the poem you get a little bit of editing I mean obviously gets some editing but you're sort of in charge of it until it kind of it's quite, your quite, it's quite a solo process so there's something for me when I'm writing plays that's quite exciting because usually I'm just kind of on my own so I kind of enjoy all this sort of input and you know and not I mean you know when you've there's always it's always never completely easy because you just want to go oh well done that's great that show works fine off you go but actually I think when you're a playwright and your relationship with a director is very much about it's about a gift, it's like, I've done this and I give it to you and you have to allow them to come in with their creativity and what they want to do and I think you have to be careful not to get in the way of that so its a real trust and I think the same thing when a director then gives that to the actors you know and then when the actors give it to the audience so there's all this process of just giving it away a little bit of time so I think that's part of the thing and I think the you know being collaborative and listening to other people's opinions knowing that you have to hold on to something so being careful about how much it sort of changed but at the same time knowing that I think I was very lucky that everyone got in involved in this very quickly and we're very excited about it so you know you can let go of some of your anxiety about whether it's liked or not because you know that these people have committed to it and now it's just about you know everyone wanting to make it the best it can be so it's really wonderful it's wonderful having sort of letting it go a bit and seeing what other people want to bring to it.

I was writing it imagining kind of P6, P7 so that I was thinking about these these kids so I kind of didn't I suppose my biggest thing is I don't want to patronise them because I know my kids and they're, you know, I think sometimes we're adults and we look back at like 11, 10 year olds we think of them as very very little but actually they're pretty on it and so I wanted to create something where I was actually talking to them and allowing them to talk in their kind of grownup way but the that beautiful thing at that age where they're kind of sometimes they're just so incredibly mature but at the same time they'll be telling these incredibly wise mature things but they'll be hanging off the side of a play frame when or climbing frame when they're telling you it so it was something about keeping that joy of being young alongside these kind of wise heads and and actually in that time when they first start to really meet the world and meet the world sometimes and it can be quite painful realising the world isn't quite as fair as they thought or as just as they thought so it was about that moment when you're writing children then it's about remembering back to those moments and not patronising but at the same time remembering that kind of the youthfulness and the joyfulness of that age and

the way in which they talk and I spent a long time listening to the way the rhythm of the way kids talk so there was stuff of that and there was also was really lovely about you know P6, P7 at least around my kids they hadn't quite they weren't quite sucked into to social media yet so you still had the freedom for them not to be on their phone to each other and to actually see each other in the real world so that was quite exciting and I think actually if anything it's harder because they're much more discerning audience and in some ways like they're not going to just take it read what they're saying is good you got to really win them over so when we were in rehearsal we'd bought the the primary school from across the road in one day in kind of quite early on rehearsals to see how they were reacting and where we could like what was not landing and yeah we were definitely trying our best to sort of make sure that the play was going to speak to the audience it was intended for.

I mean this feels like a very politically charged moment there is there's so much division and I think there's there's there is so much that makes us feel that we can't change anything and feel hopeless whether that is facing up to what the climate emergency and the changes and the things that will happen as a result or whether that is around you know the kind of rise of the far right and feeling that there's more racism that's happening now than than ever before I think in some ways in some ways I think we have moved forward but when you look at the way refugees are spoken about you know boats not people I mean I think there is a moment where a lot of people feel that there's no space for their voice and that it's very difficult to find agency and it's very difficult to create change so yeah I think it feels very much belongs to this moment and it belongs also I suppose to a moment you know within covid, there was I think that what we started to realise when we like I live in a small town as we realise how much we rely on each other how much we need our neighbours and so there is something there about finding strength in your community and and kind of intergenerationally the there there's a very there's kind of two important grandmothers in this play as well so I think it feels like it does really belong to this moment it's so much part of the conversations that people are having and so it was a response to that and it was a response to this kind of I think sometimes this feeling of overwhelm that there's just almost too much to cope with you know there's so much that that needs to be changed and I think that we can sometimes retreat and just say 'I can't do anything' and give up so there was something about that.

I think the theme is activism it's about what we can do that we can always do something it's about how we sustain our activism and I suppose the biggest thing of this play is about hope and finding hope in community and finding hope in each other and being inspired by each other and about friendship because I think what the thing was just finding these three girls so once they started speaking to me it was hard not to sort of want to take them to a hopeful place if that makes sense and I think a lot of it was about speaking to activists who've been being activist for 20, 30 years and like asking them how do you sustain it how do you keep going and realising actually they're the most incredibly hopeful people and actually there's something about the hope, I suppose, hope is a doing word you know like it's a it's not we think it's a passive thing but it's actually about doing something and so I think I wanted to give that sense of hope and nail that down by actually getting them to do something to be to attempt to make change whether that's achieved or not we'll never know but the fact that was the hopeful thing is that they they tried and they supported each other I think it was nailing it down I think it was about really discovering these three girls and the writing and then realising this is what they wanted to do.

I think it's a provocation so I think for me you know some of the responses have been incredible and I remember I was being told that because I would get a little... one of the directors, this director used to just like hang about outside and listen to people as they went past and she overheard a little girl saying 'I'm going to go and save that tree mum' I think there was one grandmother that came out and just said 'I'm a champion granny that's me' so there's all these lovely little moments but I think that's what I wanted I wanted people to kind of take the play you know the gift of the play forward to kind of say well actually there's something what can I do and I think that was my hope that people would come out and go right I could do something I could do that or I could do something or what

what in my community can I change. Actually I think as well there's something about feeling less alone that I think when we're little and we're dealing with things you know like Chloe's dealing with her parents who divorced, Jade's dealing with with racism and Alice is dealing with sort of that first realisation that as a girl the world's going to be slightly different from her than the boys and I think I wanted also to have that thing about feeling less alone because sometimes we think oh I think especially when we're young we think that things we're going through are just about us and then what that joy about going oh actually this isn't about me this is about the systems I live in or this is about the way society is designed and I think it was there was something about feeling less alone and being able to sort of hand some of that back and go actually this is not my fault or this is not because of me this is because of the way the world structured. But also I think I was that little girl in P7 who was really political was really aware of stuff in the world and I just wanted to I think I just wanted me not to be alone so I think I created three girls like this would have been the friendship I wanted when I was in you know P7 and I wanted that I wanted to feel like there was other people that felt the same way as me so I think I was sort of writing it you know not necessarily in a kind of really obviously political or making any statement about stories about girls but just like well these are the girls that I know but also these are the girls I wanted to know when I was in P7 there was a little bit of that. But like my daughter said 'why can't we have stories where the main character is a girl why does that mean that it's it's not exclusive it's just you know'.

PROTEST | THE CAST

So we first see Alice basically telling the story of a problem that she's having and also about, when she tells about her her love for running and her family's love for running.

Her mom's a runner, her Grans a runner but when we meet her she has just found out that her teacher has decided to put the boys against the girls essentially in a vote for who's going to run, and what order to run in a relay and Alice really really wants to be the last runner because that's always the best runner, but the fact that her teacher has said that she's going to get them to vote, she knows that no matter what happens the boys are going to get voted for so she's sitting in her kitchen like what do I do?

So Jade is a young mixed race girl, she's naturally inquisitive and she loves words and she's very emotionally connected I think to her world but right at the beginning she is running away from some boys- her and her best friend they're running away from these boys who have been shouting racist words and slurs at them and it's the first time that they're both experiencing that and she's coming to terms with what's happening at the beginning.

We find Chloe in the woods by her house and she goes there most mornings and after school and she's picking up the rubbish because she absolutely adores nature and I think that also came from her father's love for nature and we find out that her father has moved to Belfast having separated from her mom and that's been very difficult because she completely idealises him and her whole world is about birds and nature and just seeing how little people have like respect for that is really hard and confusing for her so she takes it upon herself to clear up anything she sees.

I think for me always reading the script going through the beats and working out particularly with a script like this, which is very like, it's essentially three monologues so trying to work out the connection between each section how it like jumps between sections keeping the thought going. It's really important to sort of really read it in depth and work out what that is. Trying to familiarise yourself with it little bit before you go into the room because otherwise it's just overwhelming.

Yeah big chunks.

Big chunks.

I mean personally I like to look at the punctuation as well because I think that says a lot about a character you tend to do that with more like Shakespearean work it tells you how the character is breathing and thinking at the time, so for example for Jade there's a lot of ellipses in her text and that was really interesting to think she's such a thinker all the time so that was interesting.

Yeah another big one as well was dialect as well, because Chloe and Jade that's their dialects aren't our natural dialects because Geordie, Northumberland I guess
-London so

Yeah so I guess having a look at finding a speaker finding someone who has that dialect and kind of working through those different neck nouns and vowels and everything to have an idea before you go in.

So uniting is when you essentially draw big lines on your your script um to work out where each change of thought happens or each change of theme or - so usually what happens is you unit your text you draw big lines you work out where that changes and then you'll title that section. So by titling it it gives it a name it gives it a purpose and just as an actor it's helpful particularly when you're starting out and you're exploring text for the first time it just gives you a little bit of a more solid view of, right so I'm talking about this in this section and particularly with a script like this like you might

have a big section where you're not talking and then you come back to what you said so it keeps your brain reminding 'ah okay' I might not be talking in that section but I'm still talking about the same thing that I was two pages ago so it like joins everything together and it just helps your brain to kind of map it out how it all works.

I was just going to jump on that because I think with other types of work you're used to bouncing off the other characters so that helps you with your thought process a lot but yeah realising you know there could be three to nine whole pages where you're staying in that same thought and you've got to kind of use your units to stay on that level and keep alive as well so it was very helpful.

For the first sort of three days of rehearsals we didn't have the set so we were purely looking at the text and we spent a good long time uniting the text just to work out what our characters were thinking what our actions were but also trying to map the timeline of the show, because it's very bitty and it jumps around a lot although we end up in the same space we're all at different points and different times. Like my text is like so far back compared to everybody else, you're quite - I just say where I am - moment very very last bit

And like Jade goes forward, back, upside down around just so it it was really important that we like we had like big bits of paper on the wall trying to like work out that timeline was and what the map looked like which was really useful.

We've also were told to go and find images of basically anything that we say that has an image to it so you know what you're seeing the audience knows what you're seeing and that was so helpful of me especially relatives because I talk about your Gran, I talk about your Granddad and so to actually have a face to the name made it things come alive a lot more.

And we also worked with the movement director Nadia and that was really interesting because it's such a text heavy piece that I'm not sure about you two but I had no idea what it would really look like and we move a lot. Well we had to do warm-ups every day we realised how physically challenging doing the show was and yeah it was nice to get into the mindset and also the physicality of an 11-year-old which was I think a big learning curve definitely yeah.

So fun though yeah all about freedom and you don't realise kind of how like held you become when you get older so all the activities we did using adjectives like crinkly and fluffy how you physicalise that is just so weird is it and but just you left feeling like 'oh my God I can move my body again' and we were also really encouraged to get off book as early as possible so that we could really embody everything and safety purposes as well - like if we're jumping all over this you don't want to script in your hand so that that was actually helpful-

Yeah absolutely because each character Nadia called it a score each character has their own score so even when we are not talking we need to be alive the whole time so even if there is like big sections when we might be like not in the main focus but that score helps us to stay alive and helps us like it's very individualised at our characters.

By using things like movement and adjectives and feelings of things and it just puts you into a more childlike place where you're discovering things for maybe the first time, I think something that was important for us to think about as well is we didn't want to play too young yeah exactly like oh I'm playing a kid now that's but that's not realistic like 11-year-old is just a smaller person so it was important to kind of work out the physicality like in a bigger scale and then from there you could start to internalise it and make it more truthful.

We're very fortunate as well during the rehearsal process we had the rehearsal space was next to a primary school so we were able to have some of the year six classes come in to watch kind of the

process and a given an idea and give feedback as well and performing to them you really do see how mature they are at that age and so for us when we were doing it we were like we've been playing this way too young. People that more aware of everything than we really thinking so that was at least for me a big learning curve, of stuff they were saying back to us the feedback was so like intelligent and poignant and specific and they notice everything, it was amazing yeah wasn't it.

Yeah they - kids hear so much and they're so articulate and I think that's one of the biggest things that we've had to add to our characters as well yeah and actually we've taken some of the things some of the kids have recommended to us, like one of the signs I hold is verbatim a quote from one of the girls that we saw because I was just like that's great like show racism the red card which I know it's like a phrase is out there but it shows how that's in the mindset as well and these kids absorb everything.

One of the interesting discussions I had with actually our voice coach Rosie was how the injustices that you've experienced as a 20-year-old it's very different when you are 12 , and you know now you understand the weight of it and everything but a 12-year-old doesn't they they're feeling it really viscerally at that time but also they have a lot of hope a lot of joy and other things are happening all the time and I think about like my nephew as well he will be doing this one thing he'll cry because he's tripped over, but oh there's a butterfly and like that it's kind of like that and I think with Jade I tried to keep hold of that. There are these horrible things happening but there is joy and there's her nan and there's ginger cake and there's all this stuff out there and if anything that's also quite helped personally as well-

I mean referencing Greta Thunberg in this Chloe has this obsession with her as well because she's this young girl who's speaking her mind and is so brave and challenging these big like corporations and the world essentially and doing it because she cares and I think I did a lot of research into her as well and how she started and the support her parents gave her as well but it it really was - I learned something from her as many people do and it's what we want people to take away from this is no matter how big, old you are your voice is powerful and it it's important what you have to say.

It was a little bit like playing in a playground wasn't it it kind of just went off you go, have a little have a little walk around, what can you what can you do, what can you swing off, what's safe to jump off of that was a big thing and remember when the one day you were like can I get my feet in and just hang and they like give it a go see see how you feel and then ended up being in it.

It was really just a lot from us which was really nice actually to have that freedom it was also like remembering that there were stuff you can do, I just at one point was like oh I could cartwheel like oh yeah I can cartwheel because. I haven't done that in so long and jumping off of like the blocks and seeing how far you could run in the space and how far back and like really exploring the edges of the whole set was really fun, yeah and that was just it was just like the second week you just like running about.

I do a lot of running in the show -yeah you do- but originally that first monologue the whole thing was done running it's 9 minutes long, so I got very fit in that first week slowly but surely we paired that back a little bit.

I think with Jade it kind of comes in two points I think it's the conversations with her Nan after everything that's happened is quite a key point for her because I think there's a lot of fear that she's feeling and there's a lot of protective acts like her dad tries to paint over some of the bad words that are graffitied and things like that but it's the conversations with Nan that inspire her to start writing these be kind posters and I think those two points in the script that's massive for Jade because it's like it's it's an act she can act on that now, there is something hopeful out there.

I think with Alice first of all the the race with the boys is a quite a key point so essentially she- her mom says to race the boys and then you win the race and everyone will know that you're the fastest and then you'll get to be the like main runner in the relay so I think when she wins the race and then doesn't get picked by the class that's a real key point because it's the first time she's ever really faced injustice before and she doesn't she's trying to work out she trying to understand why that would be the case, like it's very black and white she won the race so she should get the lead position like why not, so I think that's quite a key point and then again conversations with her Gran like and the Grans are often the instigators and like the well in the protest I suppose but like in general they're the instigators in like keeping you going, so when she discusses it with with her Gran and her like then encourages us to go and do this talk at school about it, I think those are kind of really key points in her knowing that she can, she's fallen down but she can get pulled back up again.

Yeah again probably two moments because throughout the beginning of the play Chloe's quite quiet and observant and at the end it kind of comes to her she's like it's my time to speak and a moment where Greta Thunberg has asked everyone to go on strike she's like I'm going to do it and no one else joins her but it's the first moment moment she really speaks out and says well I'm going to do it anyway, and then another moment with that would be when she's writing her list on the stones and leaving them around and writing on the pavement and drawing because that's what she loves and she knows how to do that and speaking to Lily which is Alice's Gran and her saying just do it enough is enough stand up just say it and that whole end protest I think of we can do this and then her dad saying how proud he is of her because that's all she's ever wanted is to make him proud but also made herself proud whilst doing that so yeah I think finding the voice at the end.

My character doesn't really talk about anyone apart from herself and her immediate family and her best friend which is is very Alice because she's very like I know what I want and I'm going to get that in everything outside is like not secondary but it's like right now it's not what I'm focusing on, so in in terms of like key relationships we've got her Gran obviously and her mum and her mum's a an interesting relationship because they're clearly very close there is a slight nod in the play to the fact that her mom is quite in some way distant and it's whether she's just very very busy and she's very like Alice she's always on the go so there's a there's a slight kind of I suppose an idolisation of her mom like I want to be like that I want to be able to catch my mom and then obviously her best friend Haley who's she's just great she's very like her she's very into running as well but there's a real kind of through line of anyone who's good at running is is okay with with Alice so.

Jade just knows the whole town it seems and I think that's through like her parents and it seems like her dad is very friendly with everyone and has there's a really big community there and she loves that her mu m and dad seem like a task force almost like they always partner up and they want to protect Jade but I think Jade's key relationship is her Nan and probably it was her Granddad too but sadly he passes away and yeah her grandparents have such a big influence on her I think they they are the people that have really encouraged her to be kind be hopeful be loving and I think it's they they've said set so much up of how she what she's becoming as like a young woman I guess at this point.

And Chloe just loves all the grandparents I mean just talk about anyone her own age she spends a lot of time with, well did spend a lot of time with Jade's Granddad before he passed away and then now Grandma and then Lily but also I guess that relationship with her absent father who she adores but clearly doesn't seem to be in her life very much at all and her brother as well that she mentions who I think his grappling with potentially confused sexuality and then at the end you find out um he comes to the protest waving his rainbow flag with glitter all over his face and he's finally happy he seems to be really settled in himself and it's you don't really hear a lot about him but the subtle moments you do you really see a beautiful story of kind of his his journey as well without him being so present in the story which I think is lovely little moment that's been added in by Hannah.

I think probably I mean the ending, I love because that is the real moment of connection with the

audience was was going out and giving them the placards and then they they are the protest they are one of they are the hundreds that have joined us on that day they are with us, they're counting with us and it's like you've been watching us now we're watching you kind of to to feel that every night is just lovely you just see like all the young not even young like everyone just being so like I get to join in And we're like actively wanting them to be like there and present and to stand up and scream and it's just so lovely when everyone can let loose and like be part of it.

There's power in togetherness so obviously stand up for what you believe in but also stand up for what other people believe in and if you're only one voice then you're going to be heard but you're not going to be heard in the same way as if you join with other people and there's there's yeah power in that and there's different ways of using your voice and if you don't find like feel comfortable speaking, draw, make you know do what you love and say what you want to say yeah in that that's a really I think a big thing about this as well isn't it it's all the different ways of doing that for yourself yeah acts of kindness as well yeah I mean the big message is like be kind but I think it's also looking for kindness in different ways it's not always in what you think it looks like and just being free to do that don't feel ashamed of being nice and kind and it can feel very um everything's so big like you want to save the whole world and it can be so overwhelming but if you can do even the smallest thing the littlest change like the town that's still beautiful that's still special that's a bit less intimidating yeah then do that because you are making a difference.

Anything is difference.