CONTENTS

PACK CREDITS

Researched and written by Judith Greenwood.
Edited by Susanna Harding.
Co-ordinated by Mark Slaughter.

CHEEK BY JOWL GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES SUPPORT FROM
The Mercer's Company
The Idlewild Trust
The Inverforth Charitable Trust

CHEEK BY JOWL WOULD LIKE TO THANK
Professor Martin Banham, Workshop Theatre, University of Leeds.
Janet Birkett and Andrew Kirk, Study Room, The Theatre Museum.
Alan Greenwood.
John Harding.
Andrew Kingston (Careers Adviser, Norfolk Careers Services) and family.
Iain Lanyon.
Hannah Miller.
Victoria Shuttleworth.
Jan Shorrock.
Professor Peter Thomson, Department of Drama, University of Exeter.

CHEEK BY JOWL
Alford House
Aveline Street
London SE11 5DQ
Phone 0171 793 0153 Fax 0171 735 1031

Scottish charity no. SCO13544

Cheek by Jowl gratefully acknowledges funding and support from the Arts Council of England.

INTRODUCTION

YOU CAN'T GIVE PEOPLE TALENT BUT YOU CAN GIVE TALENT TOOLS

Any theatre company is a collection of people with various talents and a common purpose. Shakespeare wrote for a company of actors, and Cheek by Jowl perform his work around the world. This pack has been written to give an insight into how a touring theatre company works and to help people understand how the stage picture is put together.

Cheek by Jowl are on tour in 1998 with ***Much Ado About Nothing***. The pack explores Shakespeare's working life in the theatre, his writing career, the actors he worked with and his contemporary scene. Interviews with members of Cheek by Jowl show that this collaborative process is still at the root of theatre-making. The Interviews show the range of jobs available in theatre, people's different routes into their careers, the diversity of their skills and experience and their contribution to Cheek by Jowl's shows. Each practitioner gives tips on the tricks of their trade which can be applied to any production.

The pack is meant to be used as a practical document by anyone interested in the performing arts.

THE INTERVIEWS

can be used to:

- Help people define their own talents and interests.
- Show that theatre is full of opportunities to develop many different skills and enthusiasms.
- Show there are no rules for making theatre: every vision is valid.
- Show that acting is the tip of the iceberg: most jobs in theatre aren't about acting.
- Help people to look at the stage in an informed way, to see what each practitioner is trying to achieve and how each one plays a part in creating the show.
- Help people to use the elements of making theatre professionally in their own productions.

WORKING WITH SHAKESPEARE

can be used to:

- Animate Shakespeare as a working playwright, writing material for real people to perform.
- Show him working with a group of individuals whose talents and enthusiasms are shared by people working in theatre today.
- Show that his life in theatre was like our own: same fears, same struggles, same triumphs.
- Prompt further research into the theatre conditions of his time.

SOURCES AND FURTHER READING

Banham, Martin, ed:
Cambridge Guide to Theatre. Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Boyce, ed:
Shakespeare A to Z. Roundtable Press Inc,1990.

Campbell, O.J.and Quinn, E.G.:
A Shakespeare Encyclopedia. Methuen, 1966.

Lloyd Evans, Gareth and Barbara:
Everyman's Companion to Shakespeare. Dent, 1978.

Madison Davis, J. and Frankforter, A. D:
Shakespeare Name and Place Dictionary. Fitzroy Dearborn, 1995.

Schoenbaum, S:
William Shakespeare. A Documentary Life. Oxford University Press 1975.

Thomson, Peter:
Shakespeare's Professional Career. Cambridge University Press, 1992.
Shakespeare's Theatre. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983.

THE CHEEK BY JOWL STORY

'I'LL GO WITH THEE, CHEEK BY JOWL'

A Midsummer Night's Dream (Act III, Sc ii)

THE BEGINNING

Cheek by Jowl was founded in 1981 by **Declan Donnellan** and **Nick Ormerod**.

The aims of the company were to re-examine the great classics of world theatre and to investigate them in a fresh and unsentimental way, eschewing directorial concepts to focus on the actor and the actor's art.

Ormerod designed sets during the rehearsal period to enable and not to distract from the actor. Donnellan worked with the actors both in rehearsal and on tour to provide more and more truthful performances.

The rise of the company was meteoric. From humble beginnings, the Donnellan/Ormerod/Cheek by Jowl team gained over twenty nominations for the prestigious Laurence Olivier Awards in London and was invited to represent Britain at major arts festivals around the world. To date, Cheek by Jowl has performed across five continents with performances from Tokyo to Rio and Cairo to Kathmandu.

Cheek by Jowl has considerably widened the British theatrical repertoire by giving the British premieres of **THE CID** by Pierre Corneille, **ANDROMACHE** by Jean Racine, **THE DOCTOR OF HONOUR** by Pedro Calderon de la Barca and **A FAMILY AFFAIR** by Alexander Ostrovsky. It is hard to believe that British audiences had previously had no opportunity to see these plays.

THE SECOND DECADE

By 1990, *The Independent* newspaper (London) could say that "...if there is one company to have influenced British theatre in the 1980s, it is Cheek by Jowl". *City Limits Magazine* (London) described Donnellan and Ormerod as "the most exciting partnership in British Theatre" and the playwright David Edgar spoke of British Theatre in a "post Cheek by Jowl era".

Declan Donnellan, Nick Ormerod and Associate Director, Paddy Cunneen were invited to work at the Royal National Theatre, where their celebrated productions have included Lope de Vega's **FUENTE OVEJUNA**, a new play by Tony Kushner, **ANGELS IN AMERICA** (Parts I and II), and Stephen Sondheim's **SWEENEY TODD**. Declan Donnellan is an Associate Director of the National.

SWEENEY TODD and **ANGELS IN AMERICA** between them won 5 Laurence Olivier Awards in the 1994 ceremony, including Best Director of a Musical for Declan Donnellan. At the 1995 Olivier Awards, the company was nominated for four awards and awarded two for Best Revival (As You Like It) and Best Director (Declan Donnellan).

In 1995, Cheek by Jowl became West End producers, successfully staging a London production of **AS YOU LIKE IT** to be followed a year later with **THE DUCHESS OF MALFI**. In addition to these prestigious London seasons, both productions were applauded at major arts festivals in many of the world's capital cities. In 1996, the Artistic Directors staged the world premiere of the musical, **MARTIN GUERRE**, produced by Cameron Mackintosh.

Seventeen years on, Cheek by Jowl has stuck close to its original brief and has discovered many of Britain's leading young actors along the way. Lesser known plays are re-discovered and the Cheek by Jowl magic is applied to popular classics. Designs are still simple and evolve through rehearsal and work continues until the final performance.

In 1998, the adventure continues as Cheek by Jowl embarks upon a world tour with a new production of **MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING**, directed by Declan Donnellan.

'One of the ten great theatre companies in the world'

Time Magazine

CHEEK BY JOWL'S PAST PRODUCTIONS

1981	*The Country Wife*	William Wycherley
1982	*Othello*	William Shakespeare
1983	*Vanity Fair* ✓	Adapted from Thackeray
1984	*Pericles*	William Shakespeare
1984	*Andromache* ✓	Jean Racine
1985	*A Midsummer Night's Dream*	William Shakespeare
1985	*The Man of Mode*	George Etheredge
1986	*The Cid* ✓	Pierre Corneille
1986	*Twelfth Night*	William Shakespeare
1987	*Macbeth*	William Shakespeare
1988	*A Family Affair* ✓	Alexander Ostrovsky
1988	*The Tempest*	William Shakespeare
1988	*Philoctetes*	Sophocles
1989	*The Doctor of Honour* ✓✓	Pedro Calderon de la Barca
1989	*Lady Betty* ✓	Declan Donnellan & Paddy Cunneen
1990	*Sara* ✓	Gotthold Ephraim Lessing
1990	*Hamlet*	William Shakespeare
1991	*As You Like It*	William Shakespeare
1993	*Don't Fool With Love*	Alfred de Musset
1993	*The Blind Men* ✓	Michel de Ghelderode
1994	*Measure for Measure*	William Shakespeare
1994	*As You Like It*	William Shakespeare
1995	*The Duchess of Malfi*	John Webster
1997	*Out Cry* ✓	Tennessee Williams
1998	*Much Ado About Nothing*	William Shakespeare

✓ Denotes a British premiere ✓✓ Denotes a professional premiere

CHEEK BY JOWL'S AWARDS & AWARD NOMINATIONS

1983	*Vanity Fair*	**Edinburgh Fringe First**
		Scottish Arts Club Award
1985	*Vanity Fair* *Pericles* *Andromache*	**Laurence Olivier Award:** MOST PROMISING NEWCOMER
1986	*A Midsummer Night's Dream*	**Laurence Olivier Award Nominations:** COMEDY OF THE YEAR DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR - Declan Donnellan
1987	*Twelfth Night*	**Drama Magazine Best Director Award** - Declan Donnellan
		Laurence Olivier Award Nomination: COMEDY OF THE YEAR
		Time Out Readers' Award - Hugh Ross
	Philoctetes	**LWT Plays on Stage Competition 1st Prize**
	The Cid *Twelfth Night* *Macbeth*	**Laurence Olivier Award:** DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR - Declan Donnellan
1988	*A Family Affair* *The Tempest* *Philoctetes*	**Laurence Olivier Award Nomination:** DESIGNER OF THE YEAR - Nick Ormerod
	A Family Affair	**Laurence Olivier Award Nomination:** COMEDY PERFORMANCE OF THE YEAR - Lesley Sharp
1989	Cheek by Jowl	**Prudential Award for Theatre** (Commendation)
1990	Declan Donnellan	**Laurence Olivier Award:** OBSERVER AWARD (In memory of Kenneth Tynan) for OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT
1992	*As You Like It*	**Ian Charleson Award:** Joe Dixon
		Ian Charleson Award Nominations: Tom Hollander, Adrian Lester
		Time Out Award: Adrian Lester
		TMA/Martini Regional Theatre Award NOMINATION FOR BEST ACTOR - Adrian Lester
1993	Barbara Matthews Administrative Director	created Member of the British Empire (**M.B.E**) For Services to the Arts

continued

1994 *Measure for Measure*

Best Foreign Play,
Barcelona Critics Association

Ian Charleson Award 2nd Prize:
Anastasia Hille

Ian Charleson Award Commendations:
Mark Bazeley, Marianne Jean-Baptiste

1995 *As You Like It*

Laurence Olivier Awards:
BEST REVIVAL
BEST DIRECTOR OF A PLAY - Declan Donnellan

Laurence Olivier Award Nominations:
BEST ACTOR - Adrian Lester
BEST ACTOR IN A SUPPORTING ROLE- Simon Coates

New York Drama Desk Award Nominations
BEST REVIVAL
BEST DIRECTOR OF A PLAY - Declan Donnellan
BEST FEATURED ACTOR - Simon Coates

Manchester Evening News Nominations
BEST VISITING PRODUCTION *
BEST ACTOR - Adrian Lester

Paris Drama Critics Award
BEST FOREIGN PRODUCTION

1997 *The Duchess of Malfi*

Ian Charleson Award Commendation:
Scott Handy

WORKING WITH SHAKESPEARE

So fresh and utterly alive was the entire production that we found ourselves responding to Shakespeare as if experiencing him for the first and best time. I caught myself thinking, "He's good, isn't he? My God! Shakespeare can ***write****!"*

New York Observer 1994. Cheek by Jowl's As You Like It.

It is the first performance of *Much Ado About Nothing*

The actors are nervous: the pale, skinny comedy actor playing Verges runs through his lines with the big bloke playing Dogberry. He knows that Dogberry will abandon the script to ad-lib and banter with the audience, so he just hopes he can keep up with the plot.

The writer is nervous: his reputation as a popular playwright is growing, his company is starting to get official recognition. A lot hangs on the success of this new work. You're only as good as your next play.

The theatre manager is delighted: new plays always bring in a capacity crowd. There are over two thousand people out front this afternoon. The noise is deafening. It won't even matter if it rains.

Theatre does not exist until we all imagine together

Shakespeare wrote for actors, he wrote to be performed. He was like any other theatre practitioner who wants to work with people who believe in each other and in their material. Everybody in theatre wants to express and support the creative project so that it becomes greater than the sum of its parts. This is the story of Shakespeare's life as a working playwright.

When Shakespeare is 18 he and his wife Anne have their first baby, Susanna.

Just before his 21st birthday his twins, Judith and Hamnet, are baptised in the little market town of Stratford.

When he is 28 his play *Henry VI* opens in London to extraordinary acclaim, plays to over 10,000 people, becomes the talk of the town and is a massive success.

What happened in those seven years of his life, to turn him from a family man in rural Stratford to the brightest new talent in the London theatre?
The short answer is, no-one knows. No-one knows where he was between those dates, or what he was doing, or how he managed to transform himself so completely.

Shakespeare scholars have speculated about these missing years and some of them have suggested that he might have been out on tour, in England, with a theatre company.

Perhaps he left home soon after the birth of his children and joined one of the companies of actors which passed through Stratford, companies he had been watching all through his own childhood on their trips to his town. Maybe he became an actor himself, and his talent for playwriting emerged as he learned his trade on stage. If this is what happened, then the company might have asked him to re-write material, adapt scripts and keep the shows up to date for different occasions and new performances around the country.

We don't know where he was in those seven years, but we do know that when he eventually reappears with his play *Henry VI* in London he is with Lord Strange's company of actors and has their famous star Edward Alleyn playing the king. They open on 3rd March 1592 at the Rose Theatre in Southwark, and the show becomes immediately and hugely popular.

Why was this play so astonishingly popular? It is a fact that in the year Shakespeare was born half the population was under 20, with a life expectancy of 35 to 40 years. **Imagine what an impulse there was to live hard, work hard and play hard.**

Could it be that Shakespeare's audience was as young and hungry for new sensations in theatre as he was himself?

Shakespeare lived to be 52, avoiding the major killers of his time: plague, smallpox, ague, malnutrition, poverty and famine. This was some achievement on his part, given that six of his seven brothers and sisters died before him, and that plague killed more than a quarter of the population in Stratford the year he was born. It regularly wiped out a quarter of London's citizens in the years he lived there, too. Despite this culling, the population of London exploded during his lifetime, doubling by the year he was 39, so it could be said that his audience grew up with him. Plays needed performance - there was no money to be made publishing plays in 1592, since 90% of the population was illiterate. So imagine how eager people were for drama, how much they wanted to listen to words and see spectacle. Since the list of plays they could see was limited, by the time he arrived in London in 1592, the demand for new plays had become a real hunger. So it is not surprising that his *Henry VI* brought in a massive audience.

His success with his new play arouses the jealousy of the country's old-established and more traditional playwrights, graduates of the country's two universities, Oxford and Cambridge. One of these, the writer Robert Greene, publicly insults Shakespeare, labelling him an upstart. Greene warns his fellow playwrights that actors will now desert them to work for this new talent. He might have been thinking of Edward Alleyn, so successful as the lead in *Henry VI* for Shakespeare, who only the year before had been playing the lead in Greene's play, *Orlando Furioso*.

This fear, that actors will show no loyalty to the graduate playwrights but will defect from their shows to perform Shakespeare's new plays, tells us something about Greene's attitude to actors. Could it be that he had always seen actors as disloyal opportunists, or did something happen to make him disillusioned with their changeability? **Perhaps he fears that Shakespeare's material will be more actor-friendly than his own plays. Greene must have been furious that here was an actor, not University-educated, with the impudence to write plays which challenged the graduates' monopoly.**

The success of *Henry VI* in March 1592 comes just in time because plague breaks out in September, the theatres close down to prevent the spread of infection, and Shakespeare spends the next two years trying to make his living as a poet. Playwriting is either more lucrative or more interesting to him however, because in 1594 when the theatres re-open, he is registered as a financial investor, a 'sharer', with The Chamberlain's Men. This company has as its stars the actor Richard Burbage, the clowns William Kempe and Thomas Pope, the musician and acrobat Augustine Phillips, and its home is The Theatre in Shoreditch, managed by James Burbage, Richard's father. **It is the beginning of a collaboration between playwright, actors and management which will last for 20 years and emerge as a uniquely successful commitment in the history of English theatre.**

He writes two plays a year for the company, but he does not publish them yet, keeping his material for the Men's exclusive use. Their home in Shoreditch, at the Theatre, is a versatile space with a simple stage which can be removed to leave an arena for bear-baiting, fencing, acrobatics and wrestling. The Theatre's manager James Burbage is the businessman behind its skilful running and he trains up his sons, Cuthbert and Richard, to work with him. But Richard turns out to have a fiery talent as an actor, and soon Shakespeare is writing parts for him. He is so good as Richard III that the audience identifies him with the character, and he is the first actor ever to play the parts of Othello, Hamlet and Lear.

The company is so successful and popular that the Queen invites them to perform at Court for Christmas 1594. Nothing is certain for long in the Elizabethan world, however, and three years later the Queen's Privy Council takes offence at a play by Thomas Nashe, *The Isle of Dogs*, and commands all the theatres to close, blaming them for producing seditious material. The Chamberlain's Men take to the road for a few months and go out on tour until the heat is off. Christmas 1597 sees them back at Court, but with a problem: James Burbage is having trouble with the landlord who owns the ground on which the Theatre stands, so he moves the company into the nearby Curtain Theatre in Shoreditch until he can sort things out.

Shakespeare lives in lodgings near the Theatre but in May 1597 he buys a house, New Place, in Stratford, the second largest in the town, and moves his wife Anne and their family in. He can afford to do this because his professional success in London is growing and in 1598 it becomes secure when the Privy Council, which issues licences for performance, issues them to only two companies - the Chamberlain's Men and the Admiral's Men.

Shakespeare's first play of 1598 is *Henry V* and his second is probably ***Much Ado,*** with the actor Will Kempe as Dogberry. **The company are beginning to outgrow their temporary refuge, the Curtain, but the dispute over the Theatre's landlease still rages, so the energetic Burbages do something extraordinary to save their stage.** On December 18th, it is so bitterly cold that the Thames freezes over. On the night of the 28th, Richard Burbage decides to outwit the landlord of the Theatre. He gathers together about 14 people, including his brother Cuthbert, their mother, a carpenter called Peter Street and some friends and hired labourers, and together they dismantle the scaffolds of the Theatre. They carry the timbers through the sleeping city, slide them across the frozen river, take them down the South Bank to Bankside, and by 1st January they are ready to start building a new theatre with the wood of the old one.

On 21st February 1599, the Burbages, Shakespeare and four of the company's actors sign the lease for the land on which it will stand. It costs them £600 to build and they call it The Globe. It stands proudly on the busy embankment, among the rows of small houses. It is the first theatre in England to be designed and paid for by a group of actors.

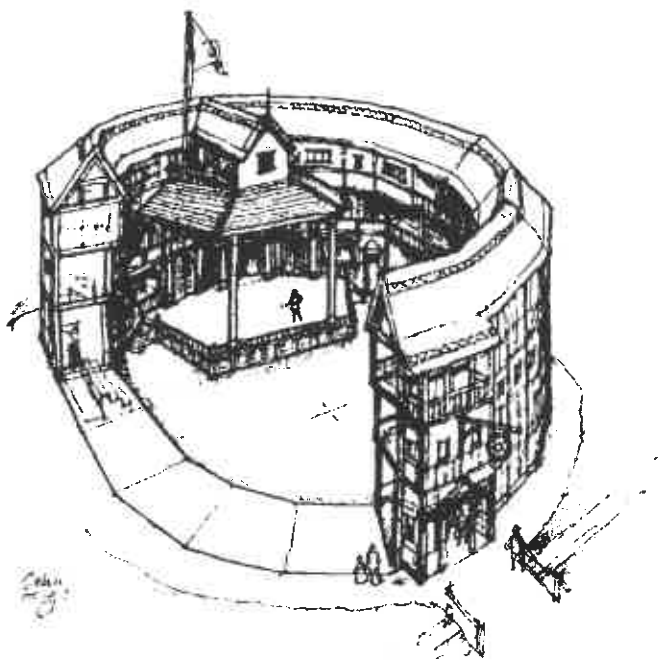
Shakespeare is now, at 35, a successful playwright

He has a company of *actors* to write for, some of whom have been performing his material for years; he has a *theatre* to work in; he has a *management* which trusts him, values him and gives him a financial cut of the company's success; he has an *audience* which is young, energetic and ready to imagine. He also allows four of his plays to be published this year: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice, Henry IV part 2*, and ***Much Ado About Nothing.***

In 1601, although his father dies and leaves him his house in Stratford, Shakespeare remains in London. He continues to spend money in Stratford, however, and it is a measure of how wealthy the theatre has made him that he is able to pay £320 for land there.

But it is in London that he makes both his reputation and his fortune, and here that he expresses his prodigious talent for theatre in play after play. **Once settled in the Globe, his writing moves into another gear. Between 1600 and 1611 he writes, and the company performs, *Hamlet, Troilus and Cressida, All's Well that Ends Well, Othello, Measure for Measure, King Lear, Macbeth, Timon of Athens, Antony and Cleopatra, Coriolanus, Pericles, Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest.*** All this work is against a background of national change because the Queen dies in March of 1603, and in September his company's patron the Lord Chamberlain dies.The new King James 1 takes on the Chamberlain's Men, renaming them the King's Men, and in December Shakespeare's name appears on a castlist as an actor, performing in Ben Jonson's *Sejanus* at Court.

In 1605, he turns to his roots again to invest his money, by paying £440 for a land deal in Stratford. He continues to secure his professional future in London, however, when he signs a lease on an indoor theatre at Blackfriars with the Burbage brothers and three of the King's Men actors, in 1608. This brings his annual earnings up above £200. His personal life in this year is eventful, too: he becomes a grandfather, when his daughter Susanna has a baby girl in Stratford, and in September his mother dies. The company move into their Blackfriars theatre in 1609, and in 1613 he takes a lease on the gate-house in the Blackfriars precinct, but it is not known whether he ever lives there. In his will, he bequeaths it to his daughter Susanna.



At the age of 50, he has already outlived most of his contemporaries and begins to suffer the loss of his working partners, as the actors he has written for over the years fall ill from plague or other fatal diseases.

By 1613, he is taking life more slowly, writing in collaboration with John Fletcher as a way of handing over at the Globe, and he retires to spend the last three years of his life in Stratford.

After his death in 1616, none of his grandchildren produces any heirs and so Shakespeare's line, and the inheritance of his talent, is not preserved for the future.

His plays are preserved.

In 1623 two actors from the Globe, John Heminges and Henry Condell, gather all his available scripts into one volume and publish them as the First Folio.

MAKING A LIVING FROM THEATRE

Trying to make a living as a playwright was the same for Shakespeare as it is now

He needed an investment of faith, of trust and of money from other people before he could reach his eager audience.

He had to have patrons, rich people interested in the arts, who would support him during the times he was writing.

He needed a company of actors waiting to perform his work, who would pay him for it.

He had to forge mutually beneficial relationships with theatre managers, who would put his plays on in their theatres and not allow the prompt copy to fall into the hands of a rival company who could then perform it and steal their audience.

This illustrates a truth of theatre which has not changed in 400 years:

Playwrights need actors who can express their work
Actors need playwrights who can write good material
Managers need plays which people will pay to see

The relationship of all parties involved is, and always has been, a symbiotic one.

Earning money in the theatre

In an age when annual salaries were	**£17**	*for workmen*
	£20	*for teachers*
	£600	*for lawyers*
	£1,000	*for judges*
A theatre manager could earn	**£400**	
An actor could earn	**£10**	

Shakespeare earned £250 a year during his time at the Globe. He was a sharer in the Chamberlain's Men, together with some of his fellow actors. This was a simple system; they put up the money for each production and divided the takings proportionately.

It was possible to live well on a theatre income. People outside London could manage on £2 a year. It cost a penny to go to the theatre, an orange cost a farthing, eggs a halfpenny each, a pig for roasting cost sixpence, beef was twopence a pound and beer was a penny a quart. People made their own bread and their own clothes - material was cheap and long-lasting.

ACTORS

The reputation of the actors attracted the audience - playbills did not carry playwrights' names

Companies of actors were established and paid for by the monarch and by rich, powerful Tudor families, hence the names: the Queen's Men, the Chamberlain's Men, The Admiral's Men, Warwick's Men, Leicester's Men, Lord Strange's Men.

The material they performed was traditionally produced by men educated at one of the two universities, Oxford or Cambridge, but Shakespeare was a new breed - a grammar school boy, not a graduate, experienced as an actor, writing new material which challenged the University men's monopoly.

Actors worked hard.

- The Admiral's Men performed for ten weeks at the Rose in 1595, and gave 57 performances of 20 plays, including 4 new.
- In one seven month season they gave 150 performances of 30 plays, 14 of which were new.
- In one three year period, Edward Alleyn had to learn and remember 70 different roles.

Actors had status.

- Acting was listed by the Queen's Privy Council as a trade in 1581, a profession in 1582 and a 'qualitie' (skill) in 1592.
- Actors were employed by royalty and nobility.
- English actors were famous for acrobatics and clowning, and became popular at home and abroad.

Actors were well-disciplioned

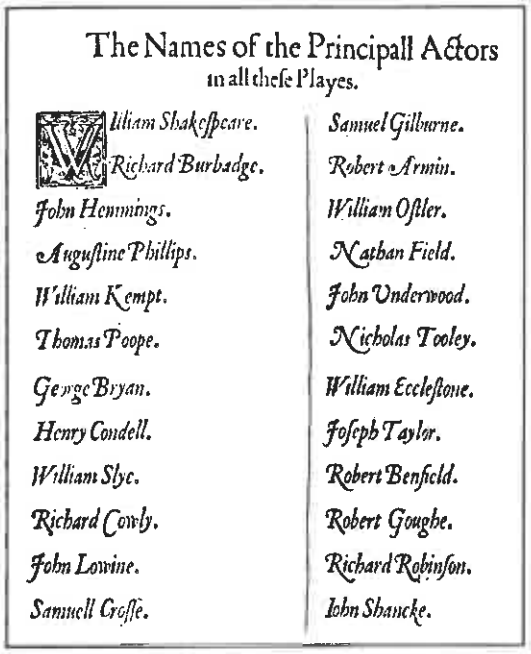
They could expect to be fined for:

- being late for rehearsal,
- not getting into costume by 3 p.m. before a show,
- being drunk,
- missing a performance, unless they were ill.

Actors had to be fit.

They were trained to be:

versatile acrobatic
quick at learning long parts
accomplished dancers and singers
good verse speakers quick at improvising
handy with weapons



The Names of the Principall Actors in all these Playes.

William Shakespeare.
Richard Burbadge.
John Hemmings.
Augustine Phillips.
William Kempt.
Thomas Poope.
George Bryan.
Henry Condell.
William Slye.
Richard Cowly.
John Lowine.
Samuell Crosse.
Samuel Gilburne.
Robert Armin.
William Ostler.
Nathan Field.
John Underwood.
Nicholas Tooley.
William Eccleston.
Joseph Taylor.
Robert Benfield.
Robert Goughe.
Richard Robinson.
John Shancke.

Shakespeare was writing for performance and he chose to associate himself with particular actors throughout his working life, so we can imagine how these people helped him realise his vision of his plays and brought in an audience to the theatre.

Edward Alleyn 1566-1626

Special skills: rhetoric, epic parts
Famous roles: Tamburlaine, Faustus and Barabas for Christopher Marlowe. Orlando Furioso for Robert Greene, 1591. Henry IV for Shakespeare, 1592.
After playing Henry for Shakespeare, Alleyn leads another company, the Admiral's Men, into residence at the Rose in 1594. Alleyn retires temporarily from the stage in 1597, but comes out of retirement in 1600 when the Queen asks to see him perform again. He retires from acting in 1605 and manages the Fortune Theatre, which makes him rich - he is able to spend £10,000 on a manor in Surrey.

Richard Burbage c. 1567-1619

Special skills:
An energetic, physical actor though can also be subtle.
Is charismatic and tends to be cast as the hero.
Good vocal range for expressing different emotions.
Has talent as a fine artist and scene painter.
Famous roles: Richard III Lear Othello Hamlet
Many collaborations over 20 years with Shakespeare, who writes for his particular talents.
Business links: His father James owns the Theatre. Before he is 20 he's acting as bouncer for his father. He is a leaseholder in the Globe in 1599

William Kempe died c. 1608

Special skills:
Finest clown of his generation; plays simple-minded rustics, country bumpkins.
A talent for mispronouncing words and pulling funny faces.
A frank ad-libber, good at banter with an audience.
Popular for his crude, earthy language and spontaneity.
Acrobat and dancer: people come specially to the theatre at the end of a performance to see his jigs.
Famous roles: Dogberry in *Much Ado*. Shakespeare writes it with Kempe in mind.
Business links: Belonged to Chamberlain's Men.
Leaseholder in the Globe 1599

Richard Cowley died 1619

Special skills: Versatile, good clown. Has a comedy physique - very thin, gangly and pale. He plays the straight man to Will Kempe, who is big.
Famous roles: Verges to Kempe's Dogberry, 1598, and Quince in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* when Kempe plays Bottom.
Business links: Globe sharer after 1599. Remembered in Augustine Phillip's will.

Thomas Pope died before 1604

Special skills: Boisterous clown, acrobat. Quick-witted jester, good at word-play in contrast to Kempe's country bumpkin.
Famous roles: Works abroad before Shakespeare comes to London, experienced actor.
Business links: A founder of the Chamberlain's Men in 1594. Leaseholder in the Globe, 1599.

Shakespeare's Theatres		
1592	**Rose Theatre**	**Lord Strange's Men**
1594	**The Theatre**	**The Chamberlain's Men**
1599	**The Globe**	**The Chamberlain's Men, later The King's Men**

Robert Armin — c. 1568-1615

Special skills: Musical, has great verbal wit. Plays philosophical fool parts, court jester types. Takes over from Will Kempe and has a contrasting style of acting - melancholy and thoughtful. Is subtle and clever; can play complex characters. Is a writer himself; writes two books of comedy routines.
Famous roles: Feste in *Twelfth Night*, written with Armin in mind; Touchstone in *As You Like It*; Fool in *Lear;* Autolycus in *The Winter's Tale*.

John Heminges — died 1630

Special skills: Good business manager, is a trusted friend of Shakespeare.
Famous for: Editing the Folio edition of Shakespeare's plays in 1623.
Business links: Leaseholder in the Globe, 1599. Shakespeare leaves him money in his will; Augustine Phillips leaves him a gift in his will.

Henry Condell — died 1627

Special skills: Good businessman, clever investor.
Famous roles: Cardinal in *Duchess of Malfi* by John Webster.
Business links: Becomes a sharer in the Globe after 1599. Edits the Folio, 1623, with John Heminges. Shakespeare leaves him money in his will; Augustine Phillips leaves him money in his will.

John Lowin — 1576-1653

Special skills: Remarkable dancer.
Famous roles: Falstaff. May have played Henry VIII. He grows hugely fat in middle age and takes on bluff, outspoken roles; able to play either hero or villain.
Business links: Is a new recruit to the King's Men in 1603, then stays with the company for 40 years. Buys a tavern after he retires but dies in poverty.

Augustine Phillips — died 1605

Special skills: Acrobat. Extrovert actor, athlete and entertainer. Musician. Dancer - devises jigs.
Famous roles: Tours with Lord Strange's Company before working with Shakespeare. Experienced and versatile actor.
Business links: One of the original Chamberlain's Men. Leaseholder in the Globe, 1599. Named in the licence given by the King to make the Chamberlain's Men into the King's Men, 1603. Leaves Shakespeare and other fellow actors gifts in his will.

THE AUDIENCE

The people who went to watch Shakespeare's plays got a bad press from the Puritans, who closed down the theatres in 1642. The Puritans disapproved of playmaking, they described theatres as little better than brothels and made the audience out to be an ignorant unruly rabble. This picture of the groundlings as a mob has entered popular culture. **So what was Shakespeare's audience really like?**

They came in their thousands.

The Fortune and the Globe each held 2,000 people. On weekdays, about 1,000 turned up. The theatres sold out for new plays and on public holidays.

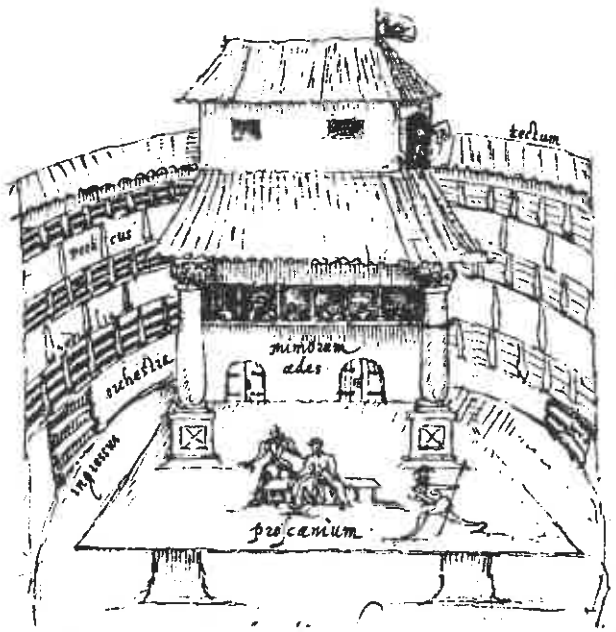
They got what they paid for.

It cost a penny to get in, and then:

- **Paying one penny to stand as groundlings** and forming the bulk of the audience were shopkeepers, tradesmen, craftsmen, their wives and daughters, and apprentices. These were 17 to 24 year olds, so they were probably full of youthful exuberance, but not a rabble: to get an apprenticeship, they had to come from well-to-do families and usually they had a grammar school education.
- **Paying two or three pennies to sit in the gallery** were the gentry, who were professional men,or attendants from court or from noble families.
- **Paying six to twelve pennies for private rooms or seats near the stage** were rich people, like earls and nobles.

They were noisy.

They were not afraid to show their emotions. Tragic death scenes or patriotic statements made them cry openly; their laughter was exuberant, and they loved comedians like Kempe who could answer back to the heckling and catcalling.



If they took against a character, they could stop the action and drown out speeches with yelling and hissing. Shakespeare had to write material for his actors which would let them hold the audience's attention. He had to make every character sympathetic or energetic, and he had to keep the action moving forward.

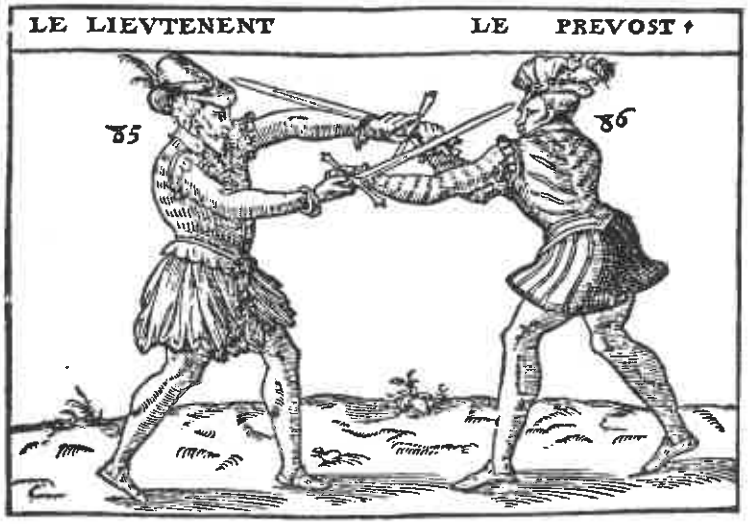
They were used to listening, so rich images and detailed descriptions of scenes and people and the vivid expression of ideas must have been a delight to them. Often he was writing about their history and politics, which must have fascinated and provoked them.

WHO WAS WRITING PLAYS?

The work of Shakespeare's contemporaries is still performed today.

His audience could see plays by Francis Beaumont, George Chapman, Thomas Dekker, John Fletcher, John Ford, Robert Greene, Thomas Heywood, Ben Jonson, Thomas Kyd, Thomas Lodge, John Lyly, Christopher Marlowe, John Marston, Philip Massinger, Thomas Middleton, Thomas Nashe, George Peele, Cyril Tourneur and John Webster.

In the year *Much Ado* was first performed, Francis Beaumont left Oxford without a degree but still went on to become playwright for the King's Men when Shakespeare retired; Thomas Dekker had income from 16 plays but still ended up in prison for debt; Ben Jonson was arrested for killing an actor in a duel but still managed to write *Every Man in His Humour;* George Peele made his name writing plays with charming songs in them for children's companies but could also turn out *The Battle of Alcazar* with a ferocious role in it for Edward Alleyn.



The hard facts to conjecture from

There was a population explosion during Shakespeare's lifetime.
His audience grows up with him.

Half the population was aged under 20 when Shakespeare was born.
They are young, energetic.

They had to work hard to stay alive: many people died young.
They need some fun.

There was only a small repertoire of plays in the country.
There is a great hunger for new material, for novelty.

Shakespeare's plays proved really popular.
Plays, actors and playwrights have power to arouse an audience's imagination.

The Queen's Privy Council closed down playhouses when plays displeased Elizabeth.
Tudor bureaucrats are scared of the power of plays.

There was a growth in theatre-building in Shakespeare's lifetime.
Theatre can be dangerous: by confining drama to playhouses, which can be closed down at the Queen's pleasure, Tudor bureaucrats make it easier to control.
Theatre can be profitable: businessmen are prepared to build arenas with stages because they know they can make money out of performance.

SHAKESPEARE'S ROUTES

Life on tour for Cheek by Jowl in 1998 revolves around packing suitcases, catching trains, checking into airports, boarding planes, booking into hotels, looking for somewhere decent to eat out, trying to get home at the weekends, and juggling the expense of keeping a house together whilst spending most of the year in digs and theatres.

And that's just the material side of life: keeping friendships and relationships afloat from a distance of hundreds of miles, and whole days of time-difference can be a tricky, risky and exhausting business. **If it's like this for us, in the late 20th century, what must it have been like for Shakespeare?**

He lives in London from the age of around 28, runs the whole of his career there for over 20 years, but doesn't buy a house there until the year he retires to Stratford. And all the time he is living in digs and working in London theatres, he buys property in Stratford and keeps his family there, looking after his wife, his children, his grandchildren, his parents and his sister by giving them all somewhere to live.

His lodgings in London are always close to the theatre he is working in. When the venue changes, he moves to stay close to his place of work. The year before ***Much Ado*** is performed, he moves into lodgings near The Theatre, in Shoreditch, and in the summer he buys a house, New Place, in Stratford, so that his wife Anne can live there with their two daughters, Susanna and Judith.

Then at the turn of the century, when his company builds the Globe on Bankside, he moves to new digs close to the theatre. Although his father dies the following year, and leaves him the family house in Henley Street in Stratford, Shakespeare stays in London and moves to lodgings in the northwest area of the city. In the year that his daughter marries and makes him a grandfather, and his mother dies in Stratford, he signs a lease for a new theatre in London. Yet he does not buy a house in London until 1613, the year he retires to Stratford.

The modern enthusiasm in touring theatre for getting home at the weekends was not an option for Shakespeare.

It would have taken him at least a couple of days to travel on horseback between London and Stratford. The roads were not in good condition, becoming little more than tracks at some points of the journey, and turning into mud-baths in the winter, where a horse with heavy luggage strapped to it could sink in to the stirrups. He probably went home infrequently, to see his family and to check on his investments in the town. He may well have missed all the significant events in his family's life, which makes it interesting to look at the relationships he examines in his plays between parents, children, married couples and lovers.

THEATRES

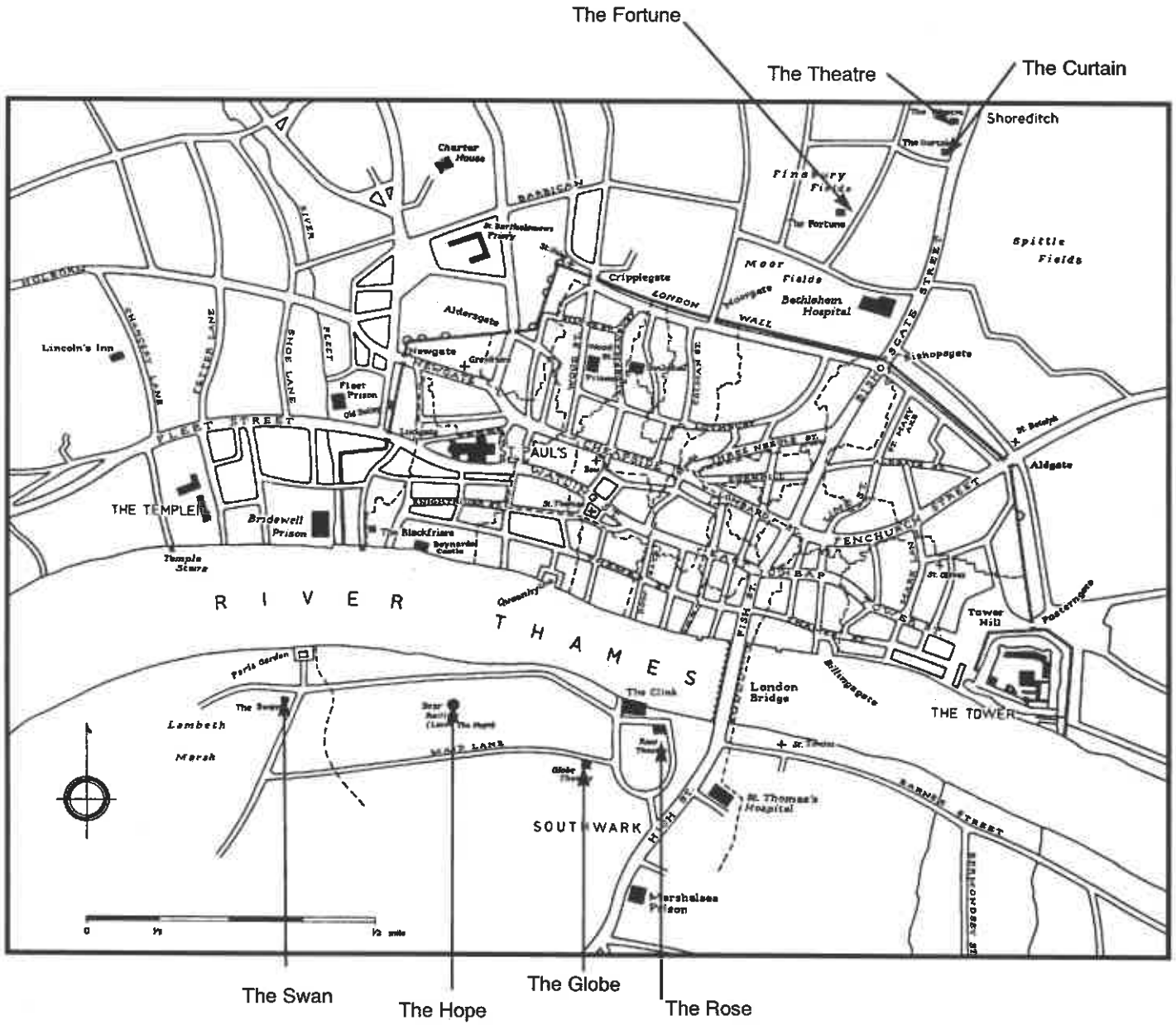
Theatres were free houses, which means they did not have a single company in permanent residence. Companies hired theatres when they had a show to perform.Enterprising men like Burbage built theatres to make money, whether it was from animal baiting or play performance. Burbage's investment in Shakepeare's work shows how lucrative his plays must have been.

The Theatre 1576, Shoreditch, just to the north of today's Liverpool Street Station. Manager: James Burbage. Main company: the Chamberlain's Men.The Theatre is the first purpose-built playhouse in London. Several acting companies play there.In 1597 it closes amid wrangles with the landlord over the lease. The Burbages dismantle it to make the Globe in 1599.

The Curtain 1577, near to the Theatre in the grounds of the dissolved Holywell priory. Manager: Henry Lanman. Its name refers to the district, Curtain Close, and not to stage curtains, which aren't in use yet in theatres.Closes sometime after 1627.

The Rose 1587, just south of what is now Southwark Bridge.Manager: Philip Henslowe. Main company: the Lord Admiral's Men.This is the first theatre to be built south of the Thames, in what is to become the most important theatre district of London. It is torn down around 1606.

The Swan 1595, on Bankside, near Maiden Lane, just south of Blackfriars Bridge. Manager: Francis Langley. Pembroke's



Men perform a scandalous play here, *The Isle of Dogs*, by Thomas Nashe in 1597 which causes the Queen's Privy Council to close down London theatres for four months. When the Swan reopens, Langley finds it difficult to recruit a new acting company. After his death in 1601 the theatre's bad luck continues, and it falls into decay around 1632.

The Globe 1599, Bankside. Managers: Cuthbert and Richard Burbage. Main company: the Chamberlain's Men, who become the King's Men in 1603.The Globe is the first theatre in England to be leased, designed, built and paid for by a company of actors.The lease is signed by the Burbage brothers, Shakepeare and four actors: Augustine Phillips, Thomas Pope, William Kempe and John Heminges. It is the site of the first performances of many of Shakespeare's plays. A cannon ball fired during *Henry VIII* sets the thatch on fire and burns it down in 1613 but it is soon rebuilt with a tiled roof. It is torn down in 1644 and tenements built on the site.

The Fortune, 1600, north of the river, near Cripplegate. Manager: Philip Henslowe.It takes its name from the statue of the Goddess of Fortune over its entrance. It is built on the same lines as the Globe, as a rival to it. It burns down in 1621, is rebuilt two years later, puts on surreptitious play productions after the Puritans close theatres down in '42, is pillaged by soldiers in '49 and finally destroyed sometime around 1656.

The Hope 1613, Bankside. Manager: Philip Henslowe.This is an extremely smelly theatre. Henslowe keeps bears next to the stage, hoping to make money from animal baiting. It is torn down in 1656 for tenement building.

DIRECTION

DECLAN DONNELLAN

DIRECTOR

Performed on a bare stage decorated with green banners, the production triumphantly returns to Shakespearian basics.

Evening Standard 1995. As You Like It.

A Midsummer Night's Dream 1985

***Rehearsals start in a month. What are your thoughts on* Much Ado About Nothing?**
I think one of the things about it is, I don't see it as being a particularly light comedy. It's always considered very funny: Beatrice and Benedict are so nervous of falling in love, and they don't quite, and everybody watches them and applauds them at the end when they do fall in love. But actually, there's nothing as terrifying as making a declaration of love: the terror of being engulfed or being destroyed is central to the psyche.

Falling in love is one of the darkest things: you are jumping off a cliff at night and hoping someone's going to catch you. I think that side of it is important to explore. The reality of falling in love is, it's wonderful, but it's only wonderful because it's extremely dangerous. I think you have to take the danger in *Much Ado* seriously, rather than think of it as being a social comedy that upholds the status quo.

Why did you choose* Much Ado *this time? (Cheek by Jowl's last Shakespeare was* As You Like It, *1994, revived after its 1991 success).
It's a play I want to do because I don't know what it's about, and I won't even know what it's about after the final performance. I'm still thinking about *As You Like It* four years on and thinking about how much I missed in the play. Reviving that play was one of the times I felt my most creative. I was able to go into something further and that was a wonderful realisation, to know that the work can't finish. There would still be a lot of life to be found in *As You Like It* if it was performed once a fortnight.

But if you could get to the end of a play it wouldn't be worth doing, because it wouldn't appeal to your imagination.
Quite. These plays are tremendous matrixes of information that add up to many different things. If you do Shakespeare, and you're honest to it, it will always come up different every time, depending on the personalities of the people that are in the room. I'm not saying the plays can say anything: they are extremely specific, but what the specificness is changes according to you. They're tremendous mirrors, and it's an art to make a good mirror.

What attracted you to theatre?
One of the things I found exciting about the theatre was understanding it was a space in which I could be disobedient. I think disobedience is crucial to sanity. When I was little, I watched filmed theatre performances on the television and there was something extraordinary about hearing live laughter through the medium of televison and seeing a proscenium arch curtain going up and down. It was the artificiality of it that grabbed me, because that means you could have fun in a space that's not real. You can do all the things in that space that you can't do in your real life. We have such weights put upon us, and it's actually good to let off steam and touch the base of disobedience. Plays can ask questions that challenge nearly everything.

Is it possible to train directors and actors?
I've no idea. I don't know how you can train any artist because I think creativity is possibly, maybe, the defining characteristic of a human being. Your creativity is what you heal yourself with, and we all heal each other through our creativity. Consequently, I think you can teach people all sorts of things but the moment when the creative spark gets born is mysterious and specific. You cannot give somebody that spark; the good thing is you can't take that spark away either. But you can make them feel so policed that they can never admit to the spark being there.

Policed?
It's one of the great problems in teaching, to teach people without giving them a sense of right and wrong. Practically, I'm saying that I think we have to beware of all law. Law is a symptom of a failure of love, and after a while the law will, in fact, end up blocking the love and blocking the creativity. There have to be laws, but we must understand that laws are failures.

So what do you do in the rehearsal room?
I think you can say that the more laws there are, the more of a problem there is. So, as few laws as possible. When I'm with actors, I can't give them anything but what I can do is take away. I can encourage them to dismantle fears and terrors and to feel they are not being judged by me to be either right or wrong. There must be this absolute bond of trust with the people there. The work has got to be kept free of the right/wrong trap. That's all I know, really.

Various methodologies have been invented for making theatre. What about those as laws?
You need to know the rule to break it. Methodologies must be understood, they're very important, although any methodology that's to do with creativity is of limited function. There are disciplines which need to be acquired, then you need to recognise they're disciplines so you can smash them if necessary and not if not - it's your individual discretion. Sometimes the rule, well-applied, can enable somebody to be creative. If a child comes to you and says, "What do you want me to draw?" and you say, "Nothing. Draw something from your own head," they won't draw anything. If you say, "Draw me a house," then they either draw you a house, or they say, "No, I want to draw Mummy."

So can you give the pack's readers any help with their own shows?
- Practically, I notice one of the things the actors look to me for is to have a strict control of certain things on the stage, and one of them is a sense of space. Where are they going to come on from? How do they move in a space? Rules of blocking which they can then break.

The most terrible thing for an actor is to say, "You come on from anywhere and you do anything you like when you're onstage and you go off again when you like." It's not going to help an actor if you say that.

- One might do a lot of investigation in rehearsal about the family background of characters but I would hope that the audience won't see that the work's happened. It's important for the actors to do it, so they can syncopate on the rules they've developed, but it's not about putting the rule on. The moment you start putting the rule on, it will break.

- It's boring to learn your lines, but what I don't want to see in a rehearsal period is actors learning their lines while they're being directed. I've got nothing to say to them because they don't know enough for us to have fun.

- I encourage people to be present with what they're doing, and with each other. Paying attention is not the same as concentrating, because you can concentrate past your ability to attend.

Did you like theatre when you were a child?
I wrote, directed and, I blush to say, starred in a play I put on when I was ten, at my primary school, St. Joseph's in Hanwell. I was always writing plays and putting them on because I was obsessed by it. When I was sixteen a schoolteacher took us to see lots of plays, the RSC, and Brook's *Dream*, and when I went to Dublin I used to go to the Abbey. Theatre seemed terribly glamorous, and an adult world. It seemed a refuge away from being a child, being at home or at school. I just wanted to play, it was my means of playing.

Theatre's your playpen.
I just love it, I love stomping around in it. People give little boys machine guns to play with, which is very dangerous, and they give little girls mummy and daughter dolls, which is fifteen times more dangerous. People play with fire, that's the essence of play. And I have to say, the rehearsal stresses at the age of nine haven't really progressed or got more sophisticated.

So how did you get into theatre as a profession?
I did theatre all the time at Cambridge, then I decided I'd go into law. I always had this incredible hankering after the theatre but because it meant so much to me, I suppose I was frightened I'd be rejected by it.

So what happened?
I was living with Nick after Cambridge. He was becoming a designer and we decided we wanted to work together, do something creative together. Nobody would give us a job. We went around and tried to find rooms in pubs to do shows, because that's what you did then, but no-one would give us one. I did a couple of things for no money, and a man called Lyle Jones spotted them and gave me a job, putting plays on with his students at the Arts Educational Drama School. That was really the turning point for me.

It was extraordinary, suddenly being with people who needed to be looked after because they were younger than me, and who wanted simply to be helped to act better. Whatever that means.

What does it mean?
No-one can say. Acting is a stylised form and what's good and what's bad is completely subjective. I have a multitude of conflicting feelings about what acting is. I don't think there's an objective truth about it. And tastes change as you grow.

So what do you do to help actors?
I work for all of us in the room so that everybody, including me, will feel that we are getting somewhere. Suggesting things. For example, I was well taught at school and I have always felt at home with big Shakespeares and foreign classics. I have no self-consciousness about those plays, so I was able to stop people being frightened of those big texts, and help them into them. Through that I evolved an incredibly strong interest in acting, which I think has always been at the centre of what I've done. And it was fascinating to see it later with an audience and see what an audience got from it.

There are no techniques?
I haven't really evolved techniques. It sounds grand, but I'm quite anxious not to become a master who evolves a method and then becomes the slave of the theory. I've always wanted to jettison past techniques.

I've worked with you for eight years, and some things are constant. Your recognition of an actor's fear, for example.
I somehow feel there's this *it*, there's this thing that's done, the performance, the thing that's between. It's about the spaces between people rather than what's in somebody. I try to divest people of this terrible feeling of individual responsibility weighing on their shoulders. I try to make them understand it's not about them, it's about the thing between. It's important that I direct the play, the piece of theatre, rather than going into that kind of Lee Strasberg thing which is that you work on the individual and that you're going to transform the individual inside their own heads. I would find that intimidating. I would find it dangerous, to be frank.

I think it's really important to remind actors that the performance ends with the curtain call. When the curtain first goes up, anything can happen in the next half hour, as they used to say on Thunderbirds. But at the curtain call you say to the audience, "We didn't mean it really." The only way to be free is to know that somehow ultimately it doesn't matter. It's by not mattering at all that it can matter so much. If you castrate theatre by saying you have a moral responsibility to do X,Y and Z, then you completely lose the point of it, because theatre's a refuge from the policing that goes on in any society. And in any head.

You mean we can face difficult things together in theatre?
I think one of the reasons we go to the theatre is to be present with extremities of feeling. We have to block out certain things in order to survive in society and it's easy to become isolated from these things. We keep an awful lot of conflict out of our private lives, and a lot of plays are about people watching conflict so that maybe they don't need to act on it themselves.

At the theatre we keep our eye on extremities that might engulf us. In an act of theatre you assemble eight or nine hundred people in a space, then together you touch these dangerous feelings vicariously. So I think it's good to see *Much Ado,* where two people fall in love and come together hilariously and rather bloodily. The darkness and all those things get explored and we can recognise them, measure them against ourselves and then maybe let them go. Which is different from brushing them under the carpet.

Theatre can show us our darkest selves.
Yes. But not just negative things. We have to keep the shadow and the light in balance. Often the most dangerous things are to do with falling in love and to do with the joy of it. The joy in itself is extremely subversive and dangerous, and we often keep joys out of our lives because they rock the boat. I think one thing it's fairly safe to say is that you go to the theatre to watch the boat rock. If the boat doesn't rock, you might as well stay at home.

DESIGN

NICK ORMEROD
DESIGNER

The Duchess of Malfi 1995

As You Like It *conjured up a forest with green ribbons floating in space.* The Duchess of Malfi *can convey a cathedral merely with the smell of incense.*

New York Observer 1996. The Duchess of Malfi.

Does it help you in your work to have been an actor yourself?
Oh yes, hugely. Not that I ever was an actor professionally, though I did act at school and as a student. Actually, I think anybody in the theatre is hankering to act. Most people are attracted first to the theatre by acting. The experience of the audience is really of actors, not of looking at a great big set or beautiful costumes. With Cheek by Jowl, I'm involved in creating the company through the casting process, and acting fascinates me.

So how did you get into design?
I did a tiny little bit of design at the end of my time at university. I was doing three years of law there, then I did another year and qualified as a barrister, and then I gave it up.

You had a major change of direction?
Yes. I decided to go to design school, Wimbledon School of Art, for three years. My first job was a year at the Lyceum in Edinburgh as an assistant. Then Declan (the director) and I started doing bits and pieces at the Royal Court and at Arts Ed. Drama School.

What qualities does your job call for?
I think you need an enthusiasm for theatre. Theatre is very pragmatic, it's to do with working with people. It's no good coming into theatre with your own vision and thinking you're going to absolutely realise something which is in your own mind, because the process of working with people will make your vision change. One of the essential things about Cheek by Jowl is that it's a collaborative vision. It always puzzles me when designers say to me, "I would never enter into a discussion with an actor. I'd just say, this is what you're wearing." I find that completely extraordinary, so I can't imagine doing that.

Are your design instincts tuned naturally to simplicity, or do you keep designs simple so that they're easy to tour?

I think my design instincts are tuned naturally to simplicity, I think that's true. So that's an easy answer. The touring came later. Touring came because it was possible to tour. Simplicity came first.

Can you give the pack's readers any help with designing sets and costumes for their own shows?

Cheek by Jowl go to lots of different spaces, but if people want to create something in their own space then I would recommend:

- Go and stand in the space and try to get a feel of it. Try to respond to the space you have, and don't think of anything in it. Don't think of creating a theatre or an auditorium or a stage. Maybe you can create a space in which the audience walks around. The fewer preconceptions of what you do in the space the better, because theatre can be anything.

- Create a coherent world in your own terms. You don't need to limit yourself to a certain period.

- You can be free with Shakespeare because he is free. He throws in all sorts of ingredients. For instance, in *The Winter's Tale,* Bohemia has a sea-coast (which it doesn't in reality), dates are flexible, people are mentioned who aren't alive, and he doesn't give a damn so you can afford to be free in how you treat him.

- The French classics are really very tight. The world the characters come from is highly defined. You could do it in togas or in modern dress, but you need to create their world tightly.

- Your audience knows they're coming to the theatre. You're not presenting them with a segment of reality. People walk onstage and the audience know they're not 1930s' dictators, but they've come prepared to suspend their disbelief. So you can create your own world.

For costume I think in terms of basic things, like:

- The function of a person: what he *does* is the first prerequisite. Is he a servant, or is he a king? What *sort* of king, within the context of the world that you're creating? You could make him a king by just giving him a piece of gold paper stuck around his head, but if you're trying to suggest other ranks below him, you need to be able to gradate it.

- Mould costume around the actors you have: for *The Duchess of Malfi* I chose a frock based on a 1930s dress for Anastasia Hille playing the Duchess. It was classic, and it suited her shape.

MUSIC

PADDY CUNNEEN

MUSICAL DIRECTOR

There is a perception of the delicate deep musical sense which underlies Shakespeare. The use of gongs to measure time and rhythms, to suggest emotions and landscapes, the introduction of percussion, the use of metallic sheets for storms make up a scenic game rich in ideas.

ABC, Almagro, Spain, 1984. Pericles.

Don't Fool With Love rehearsal 1993.

What first fired your enthusiasm for theatre?

Sadly, I can't really remember. There was no great epiphany. I did see Peter Brook's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with the rest of my class and an enthusiastic English teacher, and I remember it very well, but it didn't fill me with a burning desire to work in theatre. I was much more interested in football at the time. (When I was associate director at the Everyman Theatre Liverpool, it was noticeable how the desire to appear in *Brookside* almost rivalled the desire to appear in the Liverpool red or Everton blue as an aspiration for the city's youth!). I did go with my family to the pantomime at Lewisham every Christmas, but theatre seemed to be the pursuit of a social group to which we were not party.

So how did you get into it?

I studied Music at university but found the academic attitude to music too self-serving - there's more to be had from music than cold rationality. So I left university without a degree, looking for a way to eat on a regular basis and maintain an involvement with music. I played in bands. The audience reaction to music at a gig was extremely satisfying. There's nothing quite like music for lifting spirits en masse. Then, chance meetings with friends of friends took me around the country to do music for shows. It was all accidental. However, I do feel I was made to work in the way I do, so maybe the accidents were led by a predisposition in my nature. Freud did say there are no accidents.

So didn't you have any training for theatre?

I trained for my job by doing my job. Everything had to be invented on the spot. When I came to work for a professional company, my understanding of how theatre worked was poor. I was given the jobs of at least three people. Benignly exploited by a hard-pressed small-scale theatre ensemble I wrote music, recorded it, rehearsed the company, performed as an actor and musician, ran the sound department, rigged the lights and sound, loaded the scenery for get-ins and get-outs. That was my real training. I read a few books on sound theory and theatre craft.

Why did you want to work for Cheek by Jowl?
I saw their production of *Macbeth* at the Donmar Warehouse. I had recently worked on the play for another company, so it was a revelation to see the same text animated in a completely different way. The narrative was spectacularly clear, fed by the individuality of the actors. It was like watching a football team pass the ball fluently, cover the necessary territory and then score almost at will. I wanted to be a musical Eric Cantona in such a team.

Why do you like your work?
One of my main enthusiasms is for working with a group of people who have a common aim. Theatre at its best is a collaborative affair, with every department contributing their own particular skills. Music can have a special position in all this:

- it can be a bridge between the actors and the subtext,
- it can unlock a scene in rehearsal,
- it can feed into the process of text exploration.

What are your preparations for rehearsal?
I like to go into rehearsal with as little prepared as possible. It's usual with Cheek by Jowl work to let the company members be the prime resource: their skills are the medium through which the music can be delivered. It's important for me to undergo the same kind of open-ended rehearsal that everyone else goes through. Any text could have different meanings in different contexts, whereas a production is more tangible. I try to write for the production and not for the play.

What's it like being in rehearsal?
I have to be willing to do my bit without warning. Declan (the director) is forever saying to me, "Perhaps you could do some music now," and my initial reaction is always one of terror, because I may have no idea what to do. It's a case of swallowing hard and jumping in. Just by being open and flexible, one can usually think of something appropriate for the piece. It's particularly satisfying when something worthwhile comes out of such moments. It feels creative, in the old sense of making something out of nothing. It's a great buzz, that adrenalin-soaked feeling of fear, and it's addictive. Trouble is, I find that in order to get that buzz, I'm working more and more at the last minute.

But motivation isn't a problem?
Motivation isn't a problem, because music is a sociable and enjoyable group activity. It's enjoyable because it demands not just technique but emotional engagement, which is the driving force behind technical expressions. We're all committed to achieving the music.

Is everybody musical, somehow?
I believe so. Even if it's not true, I still have to believe it because I have to make music for productions using the resources of a company's musical skills, real or undiscovered. I diagnose the musical potential of the company by finding the actors who are innately musical but haven't had a chance to develop their talent, and those who really do believe they're tone deaf. I release them from their negative conditioning by encouraging them to concentrate on *listening.* I don't believe in the theory of 'tone deafness'. Once you listen more critically, then it's possible to correct your own mistakes, and the overall level of musicality rises. Listening is a severely underrated musical skill. We take it so much for granted. Even accomplished musicians can forget how important it is.

What should we be listening for in performed music?

- Real listening involves concentration and is **an active, if silent, participation in music**.

- **The introduction to a song does so much work.** Ignoring it will leave the singer adrift. Singers frequently switch off during the band's introduction and then have the problem of mustering the confidence to start singing.

- **The colours of an orchestration can provide great clues to the psychological drives of a song**.

- **The best way to study other musical styles is to listen to them**. It may not be possible to truly understand music whose cultural basis is different from the listener's own but, like the fun of speaking foreign languages abroad, there is a similar pleasure in getting to know the wide variety of musical philosophies which exist beyond Mozart and Oasis.

Is there a great enthusiasm for music amongst actors?
I don't know of a single person who is not responsive to music, and almost everyone wishes they had had the chance to learn to play an instrument. Frequently I'll give a musical instrument to someone who has never played one before, with the news that they will play it in the show in three weeks' time. Or if they can play, say, the trumpet, I'll give them a trombone. They're highly motivated - who wants to go onstage and play badly? - so they meet the challenge with enthusiasm, and we achieve a lot quickly. It's fun. Playing music together is joyful.

The people reading this may have to create their own shows. Any tips for their music?

- **I improvise with a particular atmosphere in mind**. Eventually, the required atmosphere seeps into the improvisation, then it needs developing.

- **The way in which musical material is arranged** is a major factor in the atmosphere it creates. For example, a large ensemble of players implies a world on a certain scale, which may be important for epic pieces.

- It's no accident that the musical cliché of drums works for adding tension and portent to a scene. The challenge is to **try one's best to avoid the cliché** and achieve the same effect by different means.

- **Simplicity and clarity** are always important. Atmosphere can be created in a minimalist way by, say, scratching on a violin string.

- **Establish a theatrical vocabulary**, then it's possible to create atmosphere by unorthodox methods. I've used actors breathing on reverbed microphones to create storm effects.

- **Music isn't just scene-change Polyfilla**: it can contribute to the aesthetic setting of the play, and be an atmosphere by virtue of its musical style. It can encourage an audience to make emotional demands on the experience of attending a play.

MOVEMENT

JANE GIBSON

MOVEMENT DIRECTOR

Lady Betty rehearsal 1989

The highly formal movements of the characters obliquely suggest the pageantry of sixteenth century Court and Church life while hinting at the derangement of the society being depicted.

Sunday Times Malta 1996. The Duchess of Malfi.

What first fired your enthusiasm for theatre?

The thing I remember as being really amazing was when I went to see *The Emperor's New Clothes* at Birmingham Rep. What they did - I remember it clearly and I must have been very small - they put up this imaginary fabric and came out into the audience, up through the stalls, up through the centre stairs, unfolding all this invisible fabric. I remember thinking, "That's fantastic." Making the king believe in the fabric. I remember thinking that was wonderful.

Did you want to be a performer?

I was always performing when I was little, lots of dancing, mime, poetry, all the acting exams. So I knew from very early on. I particularly liked physical things. And then when I was 17, I went to Central School of Speech and Drama. When I was 21, I went to study with Lecoq in Paris - it's a theatre school, but it's very physically orientated. Someone from there recommended me to do some teaching at LAMDA, so I started to train to be a movement teacher. I taught all the movement-based subjects: improvisation, animals, masks, clowns, buffoons, historical dance. I started a family quite early in my life, and teaching suited me. I much preferred it to acting. Acting didn't suit me, it didn't suit my personality.

How did you move from teaching into working for theatre companies?

There was a group of teachers at LAMDA who formed a new theatre called Common Stock, one of the first community theatres in London, and I was a founder member of that, so I was teaching and starting to work in the theatre as well. Then Di Trevis was offered a company at the National by Peter Hall, and she asked me to be her movement director. That was my chance to get out of teaching totally. I've never gone back to teaching in drama schools, although my work does have a lot to do with teaching.

I had twenty years of learning about movement in relation to actors, so by the time I was made Head of Movement at the National by Richard Eyre, I had the experience to work with well-established and famous actors. You do need to have that sort of confidence with them, otherwise they won't have confidence in you.

What was your first show with Declan?
Declan (the director) saw a production I'd done of *Nana* which I co-directed with my friend and colleague Sue Lefton, and he asked me to do *Fuente Ovejuna* at the National. It had a strange snowballing effect, because on the first night of *Fuente*, Richard Eyre asked me if I'd do *Hamlet* and on the first night of *Hamlet*, Howard Davies asked me if I'd do *The Crucible*. I think Declan opened a door to show people what movement could bring to a production. He balances his high level of analysis of the text with a heightened understanding of the dynamic of movement, of space and of actors in space.

Does this collaborative way of working bring special benefits?
There's a whole load of stuff to investigate before you even come to the first scene of a play. Each actor has an individual body and they need to start to use their bodies like a good clay which can transform into something and take on another rhythm. Declan is perfectly prepared to give me the space and time to do this work. He makes an investment in movement and then he gets his pay-back, which is that the actors are physically dynamic in Cheek by Jowl. It's one of the things that people look forward to. They're not going to see a load of actors slumped on a sofa for an hour and a half, they're going to see something happening in the space, something on the front foot, something forward.

All of us in the team work off the moment and off the energy of the group of actors that we're working with. Every piece is unique because it's only those particular people that could make it. Nick, the designer, is also actor-friendly; he's interested in space and the dynamics of space before you put a massive set in it. He doesn't put a massive set in it because he wants the actors to be able to move in the space. And that's the same with what they're wearing.

Are you aware that you have preconceptions about a play before you start work on it?
I don't think I have preconceptions. You just don't know what's going to happen, or where it's going to happen, or what space it's going to be, or anything. It has all the fearfulness and energy required to go on a journey, because you never know where you're going or if you're ever going to get there.

People reading this may have to present their own shows. What should they think about when they begin to work with movement?

- **Your breath is your life**, your inspiration, your expiration. You must be aware of your breathing. It's an absolute starting point, which people often ignore because they take it for granted.

- **Our thoughts travel up and down our spine**. Our spine is our central nervous system. It's good to have a flexible spine, a spine that's available to you, not stuck and locked.

- **If the group you are working with is introverted**, look for things that would open them up and make them extrovert - playing games like children, making noise, running, shouting.

- **If the group is modest, inhibited**, I would find things which make them touch each other physically.

- **If the group is terribly loud and extrovert** and has lots of generalised energy, look for things where they'd be much more centred, quiet and sensitive. Bring that little part of them back to life.

- **If the group is agitated or nervous,** I often get them to lie on their backs and concentrate on their breathing to focus their energy.

How can people use movement to express the status and relationships of characters onstage?

I would say that a good fifty percent of status is in the space: how people take up space, where they put themselves in the space. It doesn't involve any text at all, it involves working with one body in relation to another body:

- Who goes in front, who goes behind? Who goes to the side, who comes to the centre?

- Who takes up more space, who doesn't have any space?

- Who owns the space? In the classic plays, often the kings and queens actually own the space and they own the people in it. The lower classes and the servants are owned, and do not own any of the space.

- How do other people relate to you? You can't force or demonstrate your own status, you allow other people to confer status on you.

Energy must be an important word in your work.
Energy is something you want to bring out from your centre which isn't to do with words. You want to express something through your body. Often the high points in life are not expressed through words, they're expressed through something physical. Energy is a kind of focus, a concentration of your ideas when everything is there and it's totally committed. It doesn't equate in my mind with loads of running around, leaping, jumping.

I'm always encouraging actors to work from their centres so that every movement is a hundred percent filled. Even if it's just the way they stand, the way they turn, the way they move across a diagonal, it must be completely filled and have meaning. My parents always look forward to Cheek by Jowl, they're very deaf and they're eighty but they love the shows because they can feel this energy coming out.

LIGHTING DESIGN

JUDITH GREENWOOD

LIGHTING DESIGNER

As the evening progresses, Mr. Ormerod gradually asserts his own artistic presence, with the collaboration of Judith Greenwood. In both of these cases, less speaks for more, with minimal props and subtle changes of lighting adding fluidity to the production as it moves effortlessly from court to forest, from day to night.

New York Times 1991. As You Like It.

The Blind Men 1993

What first fired your enthusiasm for theatre?

My mum had an encyclopaedic knowledge of actors, born of watching black and white films when she was young, and I learned my fascination with actors from her. Then when I was twenty six, I had a flurry of theatre-going one fortnight. I saw Leeds Art Theatre's amateur premiere of *A Little Night Music* in the Civic Theatre Leeds, Derek Jacobi playing Hamlet in Bradford, and the RSC on tour with *Three Sisters* in Dewsbury Town Hall. In that show, a girl came on during the interval and started preparing the stage for the second half. It suddenly dawned on me that people apart from actors were employed to work in this amazing world.

Did you come from another job into theatre?

I was selling parts for tractors when I had my theatre fortnight. Before that I'd been a librarian. Once I realised there was work in theatre which wasn't acting, I rang up a local company which advertised itself as a Theatrical Supplier, and asked for a job. They hired me to deliver vanloads of lighting equipment to schools and theatres. So I got into lighting by accident.

Where did you train?

My degree was in English. I knew I had to prove myself if I wanted to move into the technical side of theatre. I did the MA in Drama and Theatre Arts at Leeds in 1981, a fabulous course, practical and inspiring. Then the chief at Opera North took a chance and gave me my first crew job, because I'd always delivered his hire equipment on time during my van driving days.

Can you describe how you do your job?

I read the script but I don't think about the play too much, I let Declan (the director) and the actors show me what it is in rehearsal. I talk to Nick (the designer) about his ideas for the set, to get a feeling for atmosphere and colour.

Angie (the costume supervisor) gives me swatches of the costume fabrics to help me make colour choices, and Mike (the deputy stage manager) keeps me up to date with script changes and developments in rehearsal. Anthony (the production manager) and I work out between us how to get the set and lighting right in each venue. I talk to the theatres we tour to to find out what equipment they have, as we don't carry any of our own. I draw a lighting plan using the equipment list and stage plans from the theatre we open in, and I try to keep it straightforward so that I will be able to reproduce the look of the show anywhere around the world. Then I go out with the tour and re-design the lighting as necessary to fit the show in each venue.

Why do you like your job?
I love hard physical work, so the ladder climbing and rigging and focusing side of lighting suits me, it generates energy. I like choosing the right equipment and tools for the job. I enjoy working with venue crews, finding a common purpose in getting the show on. I like watching performances, so the chance to sit through the show several times is a treat to me.

Why did you want to work for Cheek by Jowl?
They came to the Buxton Festival one year when I was working there and I was sent to help get their *Midsummer Night's Dream* into the Octagon theatre. I didn't know much about them so I stayed and watched the show, and it was the funniest production I'd ever seen of the play. After that I saw everything I could by them. Then a friend of mine became their lighting designer, and he asked me to relight *Sara* on tour in 1990. We co-designed *Hamlet* then I took over for *As You Like It*. Once Declan and Nick have chosen to work with people, they let them get on with it. It's a refreshingly mature way of working.

What's it like on tour?
It's either gruesome or it's fabulous. When we're abroad in a theatre that's difficult to work in, waiting to have all our instructions translated and struggling for hours to make things happen, then going back to gloomy hotels and feeling we're never going to get the show on, it is awful. But when we're in, say, New York, and it's going well, and I'm walking over Brooklyn Bridge on my way in to watch the show, it's the greatest job on earth. And whatever the get-in is like, there is nothing to match the feeling of sitting in the auditorium with 800 people as the show goes up, seeing the actors on a stage full of light and colour and thinking, "We did that."

Hints for people lighting their own shows?

- Make every lamp work for its place in your rig. Ask yourself, is its job being done by another lamp? How many different ways can you use that light?

- What's the main direction of the actors' movement? Is it diagonal, for example? You may need to light along that axis.

- The first thing I draw on any plan is one beefy backlight in the show's main colour: it makes people stand out from their background, is good for atmosphere, can be used as a scene - change light. I add a second if I want a colour contrast.

- Don't be afraid of shadow, but make sure it's shadow you control, not thrown by accident.

- For time of day effects, decide with the designer where North is onstage, so you know where sunrise and sunset should come from!

- If you have room on your stage for lamps on stands in the wings, try using sidelight in one colour, say gold, with another colour, say deep blue, from overhead. It can make people look like jewels.

- When you go to shows, take lighting notes. Look at the equipment, the colours, the angle and direction of light, how effects are achieved.

- Look at light in paintings. Try to work out how artists cheat with light to create their picture.

- The best book in the business to learn from if you're starting to light is still Francis Reid's *Stage Lighting Handbook*. (A & C Black, 5th edition).

COMPANY MANAGEMENT

SIMON STURGESS

COMPANY MANAGER

The production thrived on excellent teamwork.

The Times Malta 1996. The Duchess of Malfi.

Measure for Measure 1994

What was your first experience of theatre?

When I was ten, my father - a Theatre Studies lecturer - co-opted me to be a child in a production of *The Devils*. I had no idea what was going on, but the atmosphere was exciting and dangerous.

How did you start working in theatre?

By accident. After taking a Physics degree I had various jobs, one in a wholefood shop, one as a care assistant, then one summer I got a job as night security for an outdoor theatre in Lancaster and it led to crewing the show and doing stage management. I stayed in theatre because I loved the people and the informal atmosphere. I never trained for my job, I learnt everything by doing it. I do think it's a good idea to train these days, though.

What does company management involve?

Looking after people, looking after money, facilitating the flow of information in many directions and acting as the company's representative in the theatres we tour to and with other organisations. I do cues in the show, as another member of stage management, and I keep an overview on it because ultimately it's my responsibility to make sure the show happens every night to a high standard.

What qualities do you need to do your job?

I am - usually! - sociable, which is important for company and stage management. I am something of a perfectionist, and even get a weird pleasure from the discipline of keeping things straight financially.

Why did you want to work for Cheek by Jowl?
They have a reputation for high quality work. This will be my first tour with them; I have been working for another touring company with offices in the same building as Cheek by Jowl so I know and like their office staff. And it helps that the tour is going abroad!

Do you like touring?
Touring life can be great fun, but the irregularities can be disruptive to people's social lives and to more intimate relationships at home. It can also be difficult to maintain the right level of closeness with other company members on tour, and there's a danger that the enforced togetherness of touring can sour relationships which would otherwise have remained sweet. Sometimes it is necessary to keep some distance, or coolness, from the company so as not to jeopardise working relationships further down the line. This is especially true for the company manager, who has to have some authority and impartiality.

PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT

ANTHONY ALDERSON

PRODUCTION MANAGER

As You Like It 1994

Imaginative, professional theatre of a high order. I suspect this production will influence our own theatre-making from a technical point of view.

The Sunday Times Malta 1996. The Duchess of Malfi.

What first fired your enthusiasm for theatre?

My parents took me to the theatre from an early age and the excitement of being there has never really gone away. It was a small boy's dream, to be in a place where the impossible always seemed to be possible.

Did you want to be a performer?

At the age of ten I was earning £60 a week as a junior dancer with the Royal Scottish Ballet, performing in *The Nutcracker Suite.* Then I broke both my knees in a skiing accident, which put paid to my stage career. My first technical job was as an apprentice stage carpenter.

Where did you train?

I did Physics, Geography and Design at A level, then trained in stage management at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. What was then a two year Diploma course is now a three year degree course, and to obtain a place applicants are required to get two A levels. Before, if you could read and write you could get in.

What does your job involve?

My role as production manager is that of communication and logistics. In simple terms, I organise people and equipment to be in the right place at the right time and I make sure it does not cost more than the budget allows. In practice, I'm glad to say, it is a good deal more exciting than I've just made it sound! The production manager has to be able to maintain an overview of an entire production, so he or she needs a basic knowledge of all technical aspects of theatre in general. In many other industries the job exists under the title of Project Manager.

What satisfactions does the job give you?
Every production is different, a new challenge with new problems. This job creates opportunities that allow me to be versatile in a whole range of skills. With touring some problems are not apparent until the last minute, and then the need to think while running is essential. Often there's a bit of an adrenalin rush.

You've just joined the company. Why do you want to work with Cheek by Jowl?
I want to work with them because of the company's style and spirit. They use the rehearsal period to discover the values of a production, whereas many companies will create these values and then try to achieve them. Cheek by Jowl's way of working means that the time I have to solve certain problems, like building the set for example, is greatly reduced. But that does make the challenge all the more satisfying to achieve.

What are the difficulties of touring?
Maintaining a home and relationships both personal and professional can be difficult, they require more effort and organisation. Touring often brings the best and the worst out of people. For long periods of time you could be living, working and socialising with people you might not ordinarily spend more than a working day with, and this requires a certain level-headedness and care for the people you're travelling with, the people you have left at home and the people you meet. I personally love the atmosphere. Every show has a new story for the people involved.

Any hints and tips for would-be production managers?

- Make the best use of the team you are in.
- Keep the project simple with an attention to detail and style.
- Have no fear in making mistakes, so long as you can prove you understand what you are aiming for.

STAGE MANAGEMENT

MIKE DRAPER

DEPUTY STAGE MANAGER

Measure for Measure 1994

One felt the currents of energy that bound them together. They know one another's rhythms and impulses so well that they don't have to wait for words to start responding. That is true to life as we know it.

New York Times 1995.The Duchess of Malfi.

What first fired your enthusiasm for theatre?
Going to the newly-opened Birmingham Rep in the '70s when I was at university. The sets were amazing and the acting always excellent. I've been a regular theatre goer ever since.

Have you always worked in theatre?
My degree is in Biochemistry, with a teaching qualification in Biology, and my first job was as a Biology teacher at a comprehensive school in Weston-super-Mare where I also jointly ran a drama club. After two years I joined the Royal Navy. In 1994, at the age of 40, I gave up this well-paid and successful career to fulfil an ambition I had held for many years to work in theatre.

What training have you had for your job?
I trained at Bristol Old Vic Theatre School on their two year Stage Management and Technical course, gaining an HND in Performing Arts (Stage Management). I loved the course, which covered every aspect of theatre and TV. I would recommend it to anyone who wants the best possible practical training rather than the heavily theoretical training of many degree courses.

What does the Deputy Stage Manager do?
During rehearsals, the DSM is the link between the director and cast and all other departments. Through detailed, typed rehearsal notes (in good English!) everyone must be kept informed of all decisions made in rehearsal.

The blocking (the moves of the actors around the stage) is recorded in the prompt copy of the script - also called the book - as are the lighting and sound cues. In fact, the book is where copies of all information about the production are kept and it is the DSM's responsibility to ensure it is an accurate record. During the running of the play, the DSM cues the show so that all lighting, sound, flying and scene changes happen at the correct time.

Is your experience from other jobs useful in this one?
Having been in the Navy, I know the value of teamwork and how a group of individuals working closely together can produce work of an amazingly high standard - better than any one of them could have produced alone. I love being part of a team, motivating, helping others and co-ordinating their efforts, so that the final production is quite simply the best it could possibly be.

This is your first tour for Cheek by Jowl. Why do you want to work for them?
Cheek by Jowl are well known for the emphasis they place on teamwork and for valuing the contribution every member of the team makes to the final product. They also employ the best actors, technical crew and office staff, all of whom are committed to producing good theatre. The director, Declan Donnellan, is renowned for bringing clarity of storyline to the most difficult of texts. Who wouldn't want to work for Cheek by Jowl!

What's it like being on tour?
Touring can be either GREAT or GRIM. It really is worth the effort to make sure everyone in the company gets on because if everyone is happy there is a tremendous feeling of group solidarity and nothing seems too big a problem.

Any advice for people interested in becoming stage managers?
Go and see as much theatre as possible. Be organised, write everything down. Enjoy it!

COSTUME

ANGIE BURNS

COSTUME SUPERVISOR

The Tempest rehearsal 1988

Radiant, celebratory and wonderfully funny, thanks in great measure to Ormerod's witty and observant costumes.

International Herald Tribune 1995. As You Like It.

What first fired your enthusiasm for theatre?
As children, my brother and sister and I used to put on plays at the 'big house' with all the local children and charge everybody a halfpenny. That was in the '50s.

Where's the big house?
In Lanark. It was called Vere House, we put on little performances there. My father had cinemas so we were well into watching movies every day, and I had a mad uncle who ran a theatre company in Ireland so we were always doing shows and writing little plays. The costume side was from my mother who was a wonderful seamstress. Everybody made clothes in the '40s and '50s. I made lots of clothes for myself from the age of ten.

And did you make costumes for your performances?
We put things together. My mother did costumes for the primary school productions but at secondary school I took on board the costume side of it, it came to me naturally. I enjoyed doing it.

What happened after school?
I applied to the Art School in Glasgow when I was 16. They said I was too young but could apply the next year. On my way home I passed the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Dramatic Art, got a prospectus, spent the next few days building a model theatre and doing

the lighting, took it along and was accepted for the production and design course. I think they were fascinated to see if I could run these huge flats, they thought I'd never be able to do it but of course I did. I did all the costumes for the acting and the teaching course, I just loved working in wardrobe. Then I was offered work at the Citizens' Theatre while I was still at drama school. They were looking for people to work on their shows at weekends and evenings, and there I was. No real training, just went straight in and learnt it on the hoof.

I moved to Leicester to the old Phoenix Theatre and then on to London by '68. I was freelance. In those days you did all the making and running of the shows, there was no division. You'd go in at eight in the morning and you'd get home at midnight, seven days a week. The unions weren't part of it then, but you were so fired with enthusiasm you just worked, nobody thought, how many hours a day have we done? For me it's still like that.

How did you come to work with Cheek by Jowl?
Nick (the designer) and Declan (the director) did *Romeo and Juliet* at Regent's Park Open Air Theatre, I think it was '87. That's when I met Nick and we got on really well, and they asked me to come here. And I've been with them ever since. Once bitten, smitten!

How closely do you work with Nick?
Closely. I don't do much thinking about the show before I talk to Nick, that way I can be fresh and ready for the challenge. Nick comes up with the drawings and we talk them through. His drawings are easy to work from and he usually knows what he's after. He gives references, which are important: they tell you where the designer's idea has come from, so you know what you're aiming for. He'll suggest colour. I've noticed over the years a particular colour might keep emerging. That's quite common with designers, colours they like will be repeated through their years of design. Occasionally he'll say, "I see that as satin or velvet," then I go and find what I think is right for the job so that he has a good selection. Often we dye things because he can't find what he's after. Some designers like to do all their own choosing and buying, but I get the feeling Nick trusts me enough to cover everything.

Once Nick's accepted the fabrics, it's in my hands until the fittings. He leaves all the fastenings and the cut to me. One thing about Cheek by Jowl, they tend to get into rehearsal and change things. You might have designed something that a character doesn't feel or the actor doesn't see himself wearing. Or suddenly Declan might say, "Let's have another set of costumes for - ." You have to take it in your stride and as long as the money's there, you do your best to achieve it. Budgets are a difficult thing, and getting more difficult.

Do you get particular satisfactions from working for Cheek by Jowl?
You get a real feeling of a team, and belonging, even a family feeling. And you feel that your expertise is accepted.

What qualities do you need to do your job?
Stamina. You've got to challenge yourself to keep going. When I have work experience students, I look for people with initiative and staying power. And you need a sense of humour. Commitment. Real keenness.

Can you give any practical hints for people producing costumes for their own shows?

- Costume can tell an audience what the climate is, the time of year or day, the occasion, a person's age, trade, status, nationality, even their state of mind.

- Do it as well as you can all the time. There's not a lot to be saved in making something flimsy. If you use cheaper fabrics they might not stand up to it, so it's a false economy.

- You might need to make costumes because the real thing is too delicate for theatre use. The last play we did, we were looking for '40s clothes and we were trying to find all those lovely chemises and underwear, but they're so fragile they don't withstand the wear and tear of a performance every day.

- It's the wardrobe manager's job to keep the clothes clean, and sometimes it's quicker to give actors a shift to wear under a costume, to stop the sweat going through, which can get bunged in the wash and tumble dried.

- Occasionally we have to use things like Velcro which I absolutely loathe and detest, it's a dreadful thing to hear great crunches of Velcro going. Try and make the fastenings on costumes appropriate for the period.

- With Cheek by Jowl I always ask, "Are they on their knees all the time?" Declan has someone on their knees in white trousers straight away and usually the trousers are gone before we open. If actors are going to be on their knees they need two pairs of boots, two pairs of trousers, or a girl needs two skirts.

  Just before the part in the play where they kneel down, often we change into the second outfit if there's time, so it's the same pair of boots, the same trousers, the same skirt that's taking the wear all the time, so we're not opening at the top of the play with the plot exposed on somebody's knees!

- If shirts need to have blood on them I prepare them well in advance.

- Assume everything will take twice as long and cost twice as much as you think. Sometimes you need to spend a lot on one particular costume, which is fine if you know that you can supply the others within your budget.

- If you are touring think about the maintenance side, getting things cleaned, washed, dried, especially if you've got two shows a day. You don't know what you're going to find laundry-wise on tour.

- If you are having heavy costumes made, take that weight into consideration. If you have to pack them they will take up space and cost more to transport. Plus, actors have to wear them!

- Everyday clothes can work onstage. When we did *The Duchess of Malfi* almost everything was bought. However, it can be difficult finding what you're after, so you often end up making modern clothes, because fashions change so fast.

WARDROBE MANAGEMENT

FIONA McCANN
WARDROBE MANAGER

Clever costumes and magic-box design add to the fun instead of holding things up.

The Leveller 1981. The Country Wife.

As You Like It 1994

What first fired your enthusiasm for theatre?
The path which led me to theatre began with an art foundation course where I found myself interested in sculpture and 3-D. On completion I realised that I wanted the items to be useful as opposed to just being looked at, which led me to think - if they were props in the theatre they could be both!

How did you train for your job?
I switched to a Drama/Theatre Design course where I realised I had found my niche. From there, after realising I definitely wanted to be behind the scenes (I hated acting!), I went to Rose Bruford drama school in London to do a Technical Theatre Arts course for three years. During this time we studied everything: lighting, welding, construction, stage management, costume, props, sound and design. Having always loved fashion and costume I found myself heading in this direction.

What does your job involve?
Within costume there are many different jobs. For this production, as wardrobe manager, it is my duty to maintain the costumes on tour. Two weeks before the show opens, I assist the costume supervisor (Angie Burns) in altering and finishing costumes, and I set up a kit of equipment needed for the tour, i.e. haberdashery, cleaning products etc. When you are touring you are never quite sure what the facilities will be like from one theatre to the next, so it is important for your kit to be self-sufficient. Once the show has opened, there is always the possibility with a company like Cheek by Jowl that costumes could change, so one has to be prepared to think on one's feet.

During the show, costumes and wigs may need to be set backstage for quick changes which actors often need help with. At the end of the show, costumes need to be cleaned and often repaired. On tour, it also means packing up at the end of each venue and unpacking at the next.

What personal qualities are important in your job?
It is important in my job to have an eye for colour, detail and cut. To be organised, flexible, patient and *sensitive* (as you are dealing with people's bodies!). Wardrobe is often the place where people come for a cup of tea and a chat.

What do you think of Shakespeare?
I studied Shakespeare at school and college - *Hamlet, Othello, The Tempest* and many more. The beauty of his work is that it is still relevant in contemporary society, tackling issues such as infidelity, racism, politics and of course all the base emotions - passion, jealousy, lust, hatred and often humour. Shakespeare will always be relevant and he writes a mean plot!

Can you tell us anything about being on tour?
Touring is great fun although it is hard work. It is so important to have a good working relationship with your colleagues, as they become everything to you on tour. Digs vary hugely and in adversity bad accommodation can make you homesick, so keeping in touch with friends and family is a must. I couldn't be without my mobile phone!

Any hints and tips for people working on costume for their own shows?

On a tight budget there are many ways to save money:

- Shopping in charity shops.
- Borrowing from theatre costume stores.
- Offering a credit in the programme or a free ticket to see the show in return for donated costumes.
- Making things yourself from unlikely materials.
- Mostly you have to be inventive and creative and able to think on your feet!

CASTING

SERENA HILL

CASTING DIRECTOR

The troupe keeps faith with its original mandate: to breathe life into the classics of world drama not by means of imposed concepts but through the expressive powers of living actors.

New York Times 1995.
The Duchess of Malfi

Lady Betty 1989

What first fired your enthusiasm for theatre?
Enthusiastic parents who loved music and so on, but it was really a teacher at my primary school who was a drama teacher as well. She would read and inspire my imagination with poetry and the *Winnie the Pooh* stories. It was particularly helpful for me because I subsequently discovered that I was dyslexic, and had a lot of difficulty learning to read. People thought I was deaf, they often think dyslexics are deaf. I didn't discover I was dyslexic until I'd left grammar school, and I left early because of it. I didn't go onto further education.

So being dyslexic almost propelled you into a vocational training?
Yes. I went to secretarial college. I didn't qualify for the shorthand because I wrote things down in my own way, my own logic. Fortunately I'm good at typing but I can't punctuate or spell, even now, so I'm helped with that. Dyslexia affects your short term memory badly because you can't retain things in a conventional sense. I can often tell an actor's dyslexic from talking to them, let alone hearing them read, because it affects their logic. It often makes people disorientated.

I always feel inarticulate although I don't have any problem talking or enthusing about actors. Perhaps I'm not as inarticulate as I imagine, I just fear that I will be misunderstood because I jumble things around a bit. However, you do acquire advantages with dyslexia, oddly enough. You develop other things. I have an excellent visual memory. It's an asset for the job. People are wonderful here, they're supportive, they don't question it, they just let me express myself as I can.

Did you come from another job into theatre?
I did. I was lucky enough to be secretary and then assistant to a theatrical agent for five years. I now see it as a training period. It taught me how actors approach going for work, how they deal with rejection and how they cope when they're working. I loved it there, it was absolutely fascinating and invaluable for my work now.

How did you go from that into casting?
When I was at the agency, I realised that I have a creative side to me and I'm able to work with artists. I wanted to be nearer the creative work. I was only interested in the theatre - I didn't want to pursue any other medium - so I applied for a job at the Royal Court and went there as their casting director, for two years.

And was your agency work sufficient background for that job?
The Royal Court gave me a break. Theatre is fantastically unsentimental but extremely supportive. If you look as though you're worth supporting, fortunately, people will. For a limited time, of course, then you have to prove yourself. The Royal Court was a good environment for me; I love working on new plays, it's a good way to learn, but it was tough and demanding, so I had to toughen up as a person. In casting, you're often giving bad news, disappointing news, and you learn to do that kindly and responsibly.

Did you ever want to be an actor?
Yes, because I didn't know there was anything else. I certainly didn't know there were such things as agents and casting directors.

And did you act?
I was in an amateur group whilst I was working for the agent. That's also where I learnt I was dyslexic. A sweet man who was directing us in *The Diary of Anne Frank (*and who was also a teacher) phoned me and said, "You didn't say a single right word but you made sense of it. If I go over the words with you, can you learn?" I said, "Yes I can," so I did it, and my two years there educated me. I started reading plays, lots of plays. Now I do a day's work here and then I go to the theatre at night, because I'm looking for actors all the time. I go about 4 times a week, and I have done for 15 years.

What does the job of casting director involve?
You are **working for a director**, to help them to realise a piece of text with like-minded artists, so what I have to do is read the play and understand it, and then meet the director. I need to know a bit about the director's work, because I am there to complement their taste.

By definition I will **know more actors** than a director does because that is a service I provide. But it's no good me knowing these actors and not being able to convey anything about them. I have to understand what the director is after, to understand the piece, and to have good taste myself, because otherwise they would lose confidence in me and consequently wouldn't see the actors I ought to be encouraging them to see.

You have to have **enormous arrogance with equal amounts of humility.** You are giving directors the confidence to go with exactly who they want to go with. The job's not about you.

Casting involves taking decisions and **making a commitment to how a play becomes inhabited by human beings.** So it's often quite stressful.

I can **prepare actors** in what the director's looking for and what they ought to do in terms of an audition set-up, and that can be helpful for them. After all, I invite actors to meet directors only because I want them to get the job. It's nerve-wracking for actors because they're being perceived and looked at and judged, and in one sense they have no control.

Is it different, casting for Cheek by Jowl?
Declan (the director) and Nick (the designer) want to form a company of like-minded, sympathetic human beings. They look for people with enormous humanity, warmth and generosity of spirit, people who are often quirky, original and individual but who will still make up a coherent company. The actors are encouraged to take responsibility for the work. Actors are never satisfied, they are extraordinarily vital people but equally they are delicate and need to be wanted. Declan says for him, too, it's necessary that he's needed, because then he has a contribution to make to other artists. I love the way he talks about it in that raw, rather crude way, because actually that's the essence of it all.

What personal qualities does a casting director need?
It might sound rather whimsical, but a lot of it is about intuition. I've obviously got a huge amount of experience, but it's all relative. You need to understand people, to understand what stage a particular actor might be at, not only in their development as an artist but also as a person.

Are the casting processes for theatre, film and television different?

- In television, the actors rarely meet, so you're not forming a company. But the job is essentially the same.

- In T.V. and film, the piece of writing you're casting for often details a character's physical type, specific age, colouring of hair and so on, and people get preoccupied with that. In the theatre, you can pad an actor out or give them a wig: you can play.

- In T.V. and film, you might do the same take over and over again but you only cover one page of text, so you don't have to learn much at any one time. Actors who've done a lot of film are used to learning a bit and then forgetting it. When they do theatre, they're often terrified about learning an entire part.

- There's a different channelling of energy. In T.V. and film, actors have to find a rush of energy and concentration when they're filming, but they mustn't lose it while they're waiting, or when they're being made up. In the theatre, you need the energy to sustain the show, and the development of relationships within it, for three hours.

- In a way, actors in the theatre take responsibility for each performance, every evening. In television and film, that's not part of what the whole thing's about. Once you're in the can, that's it, you have no more say.

Touring makes particular demands on people. Do you bear that in mind when you're casting for a touring company?
As much as I can. It seems to me Declan and Nick want to create an atmosphere that is comfortable and conducive to creativity, so I look for actors who will do well in that environment. I always describe carefully what the whole package of work involves, like being away from home for a long time, so that actors can make an informed decision about the job. Not that we always get it right. From time to time, there may be a personality clash you haven't foreseen. Frankly, the odd spark is not unhealthy, and actors, like everyone else, will create that.

What do you advise hopeful young actors to do?.

- Know yourself. Some actors, if they're going to audition for *Uncle Vanya*, will read other Chekhov plays if they don't know them already. Others are much better at not preparing; they are too nervous, the anxiety level is so great that it's better for them to work from that moment, to be spontaneous once they're in the room.

- Some actors auditioning for a particular theatre company might see a show there, so they can get a taste of the house style.

- It's worth finding out about your part, if you can. If you can't get a look at the play ahead of time, try and ask a bit about it. (Sometimes it's frustrating, you're not told enough, they just want to look at you and see who you are).

- For film and T.V. it's often helpful to dress for the part. In the theatre, in my experience, it's completely unimportant.

- Punctuality is vital.

- You should be prepared when you walk in that room to start the work that's required. That's your trade. Your personal warm-up must be elsewhere.

- If the director asks what you've done recently, just tell them a bit about it. Some people tend, out of nerves, to tell an entire story, which is irrelevant and tedious.

- Often directors will ask questions they probably know the answer to, just to see how and why you say certain things.They're not being critical, it's a way of getting to know you.

- Some directors are anxious if people are too articulate about the text, (which I think is sad), but an actor is often nervous and may be saying too much. Although it's nerve-wracking, an actor has to try and listen to what's being asked.

- It's your time as well! If you want a bit of help on the text, or you're going to read, you have a right to ask, "Have you got anything you'd like to tell me about it before I get up and do it?" Use the time with the director, but be sensitive to it.

- If you have to do a speech take your time, but don't be indulgent.
- When the audition's finished, don't hang about. Get out. Your time is over. Leave the room. Pick up your coat and put it on outside.

ACTING

ZOE ALDRICH
ACTOR

The actor is the spectacle.

Avui, Barcelona 1994.
As You Like It.

Measure for Measure rehearsal 1994

What first fired your enthusiasm for theatre?
I come from near Stratford - great for a kid but incredibly boring for a teenager. School was dull and the RSC was the only exciting place. My parents took me to see *A Midsummer Night's Dream* when I was in my early teens. I thought it was enchanting, I found the atmosphere stimulating, so I just kept going to see things. There is a technical college in Stratford which teaches mainly catering and business studies but it's got a good Drama A level course, so I went there. I carried on seeing stuff in Stratford but the college did trips all over the place, so I got exposed to a wider range of theatre.

Did you feel then you wanted to act?
I did but I didn't think I was the right sort of person to be an actor. A lot of people on the course were extrovert, full-time performers, and I felt you had to be like that to act. But I was hooked on theatre, so I decided to read Drama at Bristol University where it was possible to explore many different areas, such as directing, lighting, stage management and acting. In the final year I decided acting was what I wanted to do, but I had to save money for drama school so I worked as a researcher and teacher for a year at Manchester University Drama Department. Then I got into Webber Douglas drama school. Since I had to fund it myself and I didn't want to be in training for ever, I took the two year course.

How did you get your first acting job?
I'd seen one of Katie Mitchell's shows which I thought was brilliant, *Women of Troy*. I wrote to her and she auditioned me. It was a tiny part, playing a mourning woman in *The House of Bernarda Alba* at the Gate but it was lovely watching how she worked. I thought, "Oh this is great, you just write to people whose work you like and then you get seen by them and then you get work."

It doesn't often happen that way. It was a secure first experience: an all women group, eight weeks of rehearsal and a far more unconventional process than most of the professional stuff I've done since.

Do you think of what you do as a job?
Yes, although when it's good it seems absurd to be paid for it. It sounds really naff, but I think of it as a privilege. When you first start, you're so grateful and amazed to be employed as an actor, but I think it's important to take it seriously. It is your job and it has union rules.

The difficult thing about this profession is the uncertainty of the employment. I still find it hard when I'm not working to perceive myself or introduce myself as an actor. People assume they understand the job of acting in a way that I would never assume I understand a lawyer's job, for example. Maybe that's because actors are so much in the public domain.

What do you get out of acting?
I love language, but not in an academic way. I loved it at Stratford and at school, it gives me a real buzz. When I was working as a researcher, there were all these theories about films and plays but I felt there was a whole layer missing. I think the process of standing up a text you're working on has a fullness about it. Theatre combines the physical, the emotional and the intellectual and I haven't found anything else that does that. I love working as part of a company. I believe fundamentally in the need for theatre, now more than ever.

Do you believe in it more than other media?
I believe in cinema but not in the same way. There are so many things that have to be filtered through before you get to the middle, you have far less control. Because TV and film are so dominant now, I think shared experience of live performance is really necessary.

You joined the company for this tour. Which Cheek by Jowl shows have you seen?
I saw *Don't Fool With Love* and thought it was riveting. Whenever I've seen the company's work, I have felt that a play has been fully explored and committed to. When I saw *As You Like It* I really wanted to be in the company, I thought it looked like such good fun. And the end of it, the celebration! Often you get all the trappings of a celebration at the end of a Shakespearian comedy, but there's no genuine feeling, it hasn't been earned, and I thought in Cheek by Jowl's production it was. I also love the idea of one play being worked on and performed over a long period of time.

Are you looking forward to working on* Much Ado *for the next few months?
It's early days yet! I do like the idea of touring a show which continues to evolve and develop after the initial rehearsal process.

Are you quite fluid in your own approach, or do you like to get things settled?
There's a bit of me that feels far more secure if I settle things, but I always think such work has little worth. I prefer to be playing and out on a limb, but I think a part of all of us wants to have something 'set' - a false security.

Do you like Shakespeare?
At my school, it was appallingly taught. It was literally that thing of looking at the plays and then translating them into modern English, which seems designed to kill them stone dead. No-one actually talks about what anyone's feeling. I've always found reading Shakespeare incredibly hard, I read and read a play and I still don't understand what's happening until I actually see it. Having studied *Romeo and Juliet* at O level I was dreading seeing the film, but it was the one thing that revived it for me. And I was able to see the stuff at Stratford in the early to mid '80s, people like Helen Mirren and Bob Peck and Michael Gambon, which was exciting. You can have some of the worst experiences seeing Shakespeare but you can also have some of the finest.

What are the main features of touring life for you?
I haven't toured much, I've mainly done rep theatres. But I have stayed away from home a lot. The times I've found it the hardest are when I haven't had a home base. I think you have to be really honest about what you need, and I really need my own place to go back to, even if just for one day a week, a Sunday off. At the same time I think a lot of people like cutting off from their lives, especially if you're going a long way away.

Is it a mixture of excitement and dread when you have to go off on tour?
Yes, it's frightening. I don't think the feelings change about going into a new group or going away, but your way of foreseeing or accepting those feelings changes. You know it's going to feel new and uncomfortable initially, but you find a way of dealing with it. At that stage, I do think staying in touch with people at home is important.

Did I notice on your CV that you've done drama work with mentally handicapped people?
I did that for a year in Southampton before I went to university. I was a Community Service Volunteer and I was living and working in a hostel. One of the education centres that the residents went to did drama, so I joined with the guy there, then I did workshops with an organisation called Sesame. Even really big, formal institutions have role-playing training now. There is a lot of that kind of employment around, it's another way of applying your skills, and you can initiate it. It's saying not everything is show-oriented.

Hints and tips for people who want to act?

- People say you have to really want to be an actor to become one, but actually you don't have to worry about that, because the process of auditioning for drama school or starting to try will make your mind up for you.

- See companies; work out what it is you're interested in.

- I think drama school's a good technical training. You get more enjoyment out of your work if you are fully prepared for what you do.

- I had a university training in a drama department where you could do a lot of practical work. It was diverse and rich. We got experience of all the different skills and a sense of responsibility for the beliefs behind them. I liked questioning why I wanted to act and why I liked particular companies.

- A drama degree is the time when you can explore whatever you want to. Make full use of that time.

- There are paths into acting besides drama school. People come from different backgrounds.

- Many things about an actor's life are passive, such as unemployment and waiting to be chosen, so know why you're doing it. Know what you want. It may not mean you can always get directly to it, but it helps.

- If you can go into an audition knowing what you feel about the job, what you have to say, then they can make a decision. You will always think, "What do they want? What are they looking for?" that's human, but try and put it to one side.

There are no methodologies you can follow, no secrets you can uncover?
No. Don't worry if it takes you time to get to whatever it is you choose to do. It's to do with expression, so whatever happens to you along the way will be of use. Try to lose the sense that there's a correct path to take. It's a great relief to let go of that, because it doesn't exist.

ACTING

MATTHEW MACFADYEN

ACTOR

Is it possible to perform Shakespeare with actors dressed in tracksuits? The boys and girls of Cheek by Jowl showed it is. Nothing is impossible, nothing is incorrect or ugly when performed with devotion.

Lanza, Spain, 1984. Pericles.

Philoctetes rehearsal 1988

What first fired your enthusiasm for theatre?
Encouragement from my mother, initially, and then deciding I was most happy acting, excited by the process and atmosphere of it all.

Did you train to be an actor?
I left school at 17 after A levels. I was pretty certain that I wanted to be an actor. I won a place at RADA to do the three year acting diploma.

What qualities are useful in your job?
I think the important qualities for any actor are stamina, discipline and a strong belief in yourself. Also a sense of fun, of play, an enthusiasm for people and stories. The inevitable unemployment can be difficult and confidence-draining so it's important to be positive and resourceful till the next job comes along.

What's your attitude to Shakespeare?
I studied Shakespeare at school and the classroom process of analysing the texts in order to write informed essays seemed dry and frustrating. I really discovered his plays in the theatre, either acting or watching. I think the beauty and power of Shakespeare's writing comes alive most fully in performance.

You've worked with Cheek by Jowl before, playing Antonio in* The Duchess of Malfi. *Can you say something about the way Declan and Nick work?
Declan (the director) and Nick (the designer) work in an ideal way, slowly exploring, improvising and 'playing' in rehearsal so the work is organic, never forced, creating an atmosphere that is alive and open to discoveries and insights.

Declan has the ability to remove the pressure from actors, giving a confidence to be braver and more truthful.

In your experience, does Declan's continuing examination of the play on tour make special demands on the company?
It does entail a certain amount of openness and readiness to embrace new ideas about scenes and characters. This work in progress allows the play to retain a freshness and excitement for actors and audience after many months of performance.

Can you tell us anything about life on tour?
Touring life can be glamorous and exciting, especially seeing new and exotic countries and playing to foreign audiences. Sometimes it's arduous, being always in transit, adapting and acclimatising to different cities. I've just finished a five month tour of the Far East and Australia which was wonderful but inevitably put pressure on relationships at home and in the company.

Do you have any hints and tips for people who want to be actors?
I think it's important to find a play or a piece of work that really fires you, excites you, something you can't stop thinking about or toying with.

PRESS AND PUBLICITY

MARK SLAUGHTER

MARKETING MANAGER

This Shakespeare production shows off British theater at its most vibrant and vital.

Wall Street Journal 1995. As You Like It.

A Midsummer Night's Dream 1985

What first fired your enthusiasm for theatre?

My parents were interested in theatre, and I had a teacher who inspired me and introduced me to a local youth theatre run by a mad drama teacher in his spare time. I acted and did anything that was asked. Youth theatre increased my self-confidence and gave me an interest. I wasn't into football and so, in many ways, was not part of a team with kids of my own age, but in theatre I could be part of a team. I'd stumbled upon my group. I liked the people, the conversations with people who were interested in drama. This youth theatre stuff led on to singing with a band. I flirted with the idea of being an actor, but I didn't know how to go about it and I didn't know what other jobs there were. As I learned more about the insecure and unpredictable nature of acting as a career, I became less interested in pursuing it and more interested in looking for alternatives.

Is there anything you wish you'd known at school before you started your working life?

I wish I'd known that you can have a creative, exciting, challenging job within theatre that isn't about acting, that there are fascinating jobs where you can be a part of the production. I've always been good at writing, I've always liked dealing with people, I like a kind of buzz, and they're all the things that feature highly in my job. If only I'd known they existed, maybe I wouldn't have floundered - I did flounder a bit.

What happened?

I left school, didn't go to university, got a job in the Civil Service then in a building society and I was so bored, so frustrated, it was unbearable. I was doing really well, could have fulfilled everything my parents wanted, been a branch manager, had a cheap mortgage, I was really on course for all that. But I'd just had enough. There was a job advertised for a publicity assistant in the local theatre near where I lived. It sounded interesting and I applied. I got down to the last two but didn't get the job, but in the process of applying and being interviewed I realised this was something I'd find interesting. It was so varied, it was creative.

What did you do to get into theatre, then?
I was 22, I'd done some travelling, I'd had some dead-end jobs, I wasn't getting anywhere. I thought, "I need to go back to college." So I went off to do a media studies course which wasn't related to theatre, but I could relate it to theatre in my mind. We studied video, print, radio, photography, business studies and exhibition management. This was at the London Institute, two years' full time, HND. We had to get ourselves work-placements, and the Barbican took me for three weeks in the press office. I did press cuttings, captioned photos and helped out. As I'd worked in offices before, I knew how to use the phone and the computer, I could type and be efficient. There I was in this busy, big marketing department in the RSC, which was brilliant. Then they asked me to cover for someone and kept me on part-time in the second year of my course.

What do you like about working in theatre?
What I love about working in theatre is, it's about people, whether it's the effect a piece of theatre has upon its audience, or the people who work within the industry itself. Marketing is a kind of people-gathering thing, bringing the right people together. I have to plan a campaign to advertise the show and I have to fire other people with enthusiasm for it in theatres all over the world.

What qualities do you need to do your job?
Imagination and being good with people. It helps if you like playing around with words. I know marketing managers who hate writing copy, but it's one of my favourite things about the job. You need a good eye for an image that's going to sell the show, an image that is true to the show and to what the director's trying to do. That's difficult with Cheek by Jowl because they don't make any assumptions about a play before they start working on it.

How does it work?
I talk to Declan (the director) and we come up with something which is true at that time, and which is possibly vague because it will change as rehearsals progress. Declan has no preconceptions about *Much Ado*, but he has chosen it, so I can ask him what it's about for him, and he has said it's about love and the cruelty of love. Everything he says will inform what I do. I have to keep fluid. I like that, it keeps everything fresh throughout a long marketing campaign.

It's not like this with other theatre companies, is it?
No. I found it quite difficult when I first started because I was used to going to a director and saying, "What is it about?" and they'd say it's about this, or that. You can't commit yourself to anything with Cheek by Jowl, you have to stay responsive. If I was from a background of commercial marketing, with fixed targets and goals, I might find Cheek by Jowl mind-boggling, it might appear too vague, because it's hard to say precisely how we're going to market it. You have to love theatre. If you only loved marketing, it would drive you mad.

So how do you do it?
I try to get under the skin of the play. I talk to the creative team to find out what details, information, feelings or atmosphere are available, then I strip down the play and come up with the sound bite message which will create that atmosphere. But you can't be precious about it, you have to be open to people playing around with it. I encourage a team approach - get other people's ideas in - then we can all have fun with it. I have to be prepared to write an absolute load of rubbish, let other people look at it and say, "Well, that's crap, isn't it, but that second line works, doesn't it?" and be confident that we can write it again. It's hard, but when you get it right, it's really satisfying.

What are the special features of foreign touring?
It's difficult doing everything by fax and phone, because sometimes I can only fax someone in the middle of their night and they can only phone me in the middle of mine. But there's something exciting about faxing New York, and having faxes rolling in from Paris and Moscow. We're conscious of how we're represented here and abroad, but I don't tell anybody how to market Cheek by Jowl. They know how to attract their audiences in, say, Brazil, and I don't. But I do know how I want Cheek by Jowl to be perceived, so I have to ensure foreign venues are producing material with which I'm happy, which means getting help with proof-reading information in another language as it's faxed through to me. I try to develop a constructive relationship with venues abroad because that can help to make a happy, harmonious time when the company's there. It's fantastic going out on tour. It's great seeing how the company is respected and applauded, and it's great getting out there and having some fun and being part of the company. Going out on tour might be more difficult if you've an ordered life, with a family and a life at home that is set and established and routine, but I can throw things in a bag and go tomorrow.

Do you like working to deadlines?
The deadline does have a magic effect on me. I'm trying to get better at it, because my job is all about deadlines. Some of the stuff we do sounds terribly creative but there's another side of the job which is about filing, number-crunching and running a marketing operation in a business-like, professional way. I've always worked well under pressure and I've always responded well to a deadline hovering just above my head. But if you work too tightly to a deadline and it all goes wrong, you're stymied, there's no room for manoeuvre. Plus you create a load of stress for yourself and life is really so much nicer without it!

Any hints for people publicising their own shows?

- You know yourself that some words are a turn-off, while other words are attractive and appealing. For instance, saying something is played "against a bleak landscape" will make sure you don't sell a single seat.

- Read other people's copy critically.

- Be observant of how people write.

- Look at posters, leaflets and ads for all kinds of products, with a critical eye - just because you don't like it doesn't mean it's no good. Maybe you are not the target audience for that product and therefore its promotion will not work on you.

- See as much theatre as you can.

PRESS AND PUBLICITY

SHARON KEAN
PRESS REPRESENTATIVE

A Family Affair 1988

We must see and feel this
kind of knowledge every
time we sit down in a theater
if theater is going to
keep mattering to us.

New York Times on Sunday 1995. The Duchess of Malfi.

What first fired your enthusiasm for theatre?
When I was eight, I went to see *Oliver* at the Royal Court Theatre in Liverpool and I saw a revolve onstage. At one side was Fagin's den and on the other side was the street. I thought it was magic, it was the cleverest thing I'd ever seen. At school, we did drama up until just before I did my O levels. I also did a dance class every day from when I was seven until I was seventeen, but that had nothing to do with any desire to perform. Nothing on this earth would make me!

How did you come to your job?
Completely by accident. I did a degree in Microbiology and Biochemistry, then I worked as an au pair in America for a few months. After that I went travelling for about a year, and when I came back I needed a job, so I looked in *The Stage* for ushers' jobs.

There was a box office job at Wyndhams in the West End and I went and worked there. The first play that was on while I was there was *Once a Catholic*, then *Piaf*, and then a company called Belt and Braces doing *Accidental Death of an Anarchist.* Completely different sorts of people came up to the box office and bought their tickets for these three shows, and I got fascinated by what made people go to the theatre and decide what they were going to see.

After three years there, I went to work at the Mermaid as Box Office Manager until it closed, by which time I'd been accepted to do an Arts Council Practical Training Scheme in Administration. It doesn't exist now, but it was a self-design course and I tailored mine to publicity. I didn't finish the course because I was offered a job as a marketing assistant.

Then I went freelance. I was working for the Donmar Theatre in 1984 and one of the companies which came in there that year was Cheek by Jowl. I've been involved with them ever since.

What does your job involve?
I present a show to the public through the media. It's not like marketing, where you are relating directly to the public. I am relating directly to a journalist who relates to the public. Individual journalists might be interested in theatre or film but the newspaper as an entity is interested in everything, so I look for things to say about the show that are true, things that are different. *As You Like It* being all male, for example. I have to do research before I write a press release, so it makes me sit down and look at all the information I've got and assemble it in a concise way.

I have to take a decision about what is and isn't interesting. A lot of artistic people think rather obscure things are interesting but they're not interesting if you're sitting on the Underground reading your Evening Standard. So as someone who has no arts background, I tend to think that what I find interesting about the arts is probably interesting to most people without an arts background. In Cheek by Jowl's case you're looking for a story that will interest people who are already interested in theatre. You're not looking for everybody's interest.

What qualities and enthusiasms do you need for your job?
Talking! I think you have to be able to talk well. You also have to be efficient because if the Evening Standard is going to run a story and they need a picture, you have to make sure they have that picture or you lose the story. If people want biographies before a radio interview, you have to get them. The people in the radio station will deal with you again if they know they get everything they need when they need it. You have to be sweetness and light and charming. Something I think I got from doing a science degree is an ability to be concise. I train people who've done arts degrees and when they're writing a press release they tend to write an essay when they've only got space for four paragraphs.

So is a science degree good training for writing about theatre?
I think it takes a bigger jump of imagination to imagine what an atom can do, how an atom works or that atoms even exist, than it does to work out what Hamlet felt like.

Is it necessary to be objective or does your job require you to be partisan?
It requires me to be objective, because tomorrow I will be on the phone talking to the same people about a different play. They must believe I mean what I say. As a press agent you never comment about the quality of the work. I will only tell people what the director tells me the play's about. My opinion is absolutely neither here nor there. But I'm lucky, I represent almost all the big subsidised companies and that is where a lot of the best work is, in the big touring companies: Cheek by Jowl, Method and Madness, English Touring Theatre, the Lyric Theatre Hammersmith.

What's it like working for Cheek by Jowl?
They are a trusting company. Once they've decided that you have their best interests at heart they let you get on with it. There's a familiarity born of affection and working together for thirteen years. If I don't agree with something they say, they don't immediately think I don't believe in the work. Quite the opposite. I'm selective about the clients I take and I have to believe the work they're doing is good. Often I'm promoting something I haven't seen, and with Cheek by Jowl I can, without hesitation, say "Here's another good one coming up" and it almost inevitably is. All I need to say is it's a new Cheek by Jowl production and the people who matter know what that means. Declan and Nick have always said, "If you want to come and see *Macbeth* and you can understand what we're doing, you're the people we want to play to." Declan has never pretended that he wants his theatre to be all things to all people, which has an honesty I've always loved.

Do you have any tips for people who may have to write press material for their own shows?

- **Good photos are of more value than anything else.** Clear, simple photographs with, as a rule, no more than two people, standing close to each other or sitting or lying: newspapers will not print empty space. So if you have a limited budget, don't do an advert, do photos.

- **Don't waffle**. Keep it short. Even if it's only half a page, it's more likely to be read than three pages.

- **It has to be easy to read**, it has to run on, and it has to sound as if you are interested.

- **Don't use adjectives.**

- Imagine you are reading the newspaper. **What will catch your eye?**

- **Be efficient and aware** of deadlines for newspapers and magazines. You need to give newspapers a good four weeks' notice if you want them to print your press material.

- When you listen to the news in the morning, and you listen to the top three stories, they could be war with Iraq, the new budget and three million people killed in floods in India. **Where does your play fit into the global view?** Everyone on the show needs to keep a sense of proportion.

GRAPHIC DESIGN

IAIN LANYON

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Foreign success is an uncertain recommendation, sometimes meaning a performance loaded with flashy business for audiences who don't understand the language. That is not the case here. This is a blank canvas that gradually fills with action and colour, and you would get the story if you were stone deaf.

Independent on Sunday 1995. As You Like It.

The Doctor of Honour 1989

What first fired your enthusiasm for theatre?

Shirley Bassey. I never saw Shirley Bassey, but my parents bought some tickets for her at the Winter Gardens in Bournemouth. I was eight or nine. They went to collect the tickets and I wandered into the auditorium and saw this huge space with all these wonderful colours and lights. At school we did one play a year and I got involved in building sets. Then when I was about 14, I joined Potters Bar Youth Theatre and no-one was interested in getting an audience, which struck me as strange because I thought that people ought to know that this thing was going on. I was interested in art, and I discovered that people would pay me to design a poster, and it would be distributed around town as a free exhibition. Normally in fine art you have to pay for an exhibition to go on, whereas in graphic design there'll be 150,000 pieces of print around, all with my name on, and companies pay me for that privilege. I also discovered that with printing inks you can get really bright colours, and I was always interested in bright colours.

How did you train?

I decided I would go to Warwick University to do an English degree because it was my best subject at school. Warwick had a theatre built in 1974 and I started there in 1973 so I got involved right from square one, again more on the production side than the acting side. I carried on doing posters. After my degree Warwick Arts Centre employed me for one year as a Cultural Affairs Officer. Then they employed me full time to do Marketing, but I was always more interested in print than I was in the press side. After about two and a half years of that I went to the Royal Opera House, where I was responsible for all their print and for liaising with designers. Then I went freelance in the early '80s, at a time when lot of companies like Cheek by Jowl and Joint Stock were starting up.

There was a huge injection of cash from the Arts Council, and these companies expanded rapidly and used people like me to improve their image. A lot of my early clients were guinea pigs because, although I did know a lot about the technical process of printing, I hadn't been to art school, so I had to learn the design process on the hoof. The sad thing is, since I've been freelance I haven't worked in a theatre and I miss the buzz.

What qualities do you need to do your job?

If you can **communicate in words**, then you can work out what the design should be. A lot of designers are not good at communicating with words, they're better at communicating with images, so they end up giving the client six different images, and the client has to choose the best one, whereas I tend to give the client one image because we've talked a lot about it beforehand.

A knowledge of social, political and art history generally is important. When you become a graphic designer you are treated by artistic directors as an equal, so if you've got a passionate director saying "We have got to do this poster about the Irish famine" and you don't know anything about the Irish famine, that's a chasm you can't breach. Some people think art college is wonderful. I didn't go that way, so I can't recommend it, but I do think you need a rounded education.

A good technical knowledge of print. I'm designing something which is meant for reproduction, so I need a partnership with the printer. A lot of art colleges do not teach students the technical side. You talk to any printer and they get exasperated because graphic designers don't make the effort to learn their side of things. I love going down to the printers, I love the smell of the ink, the noise, the fact that these machines are producing my work, and I like discussing how to make things better.

You've got to be organised about money. You're a small business, you've got to write down the time you spend on a particular job and all your expenses. I was no good at maths at school, but now I'm quite good at my own money!

There are **certain design rules** which are not flexible, but most of it's flexible. I'm never going to say to the people marketing a show, "You must not touch this design, it is sacrosanct." I'm going to say, "Look, this is a marketing tool, let's work on it together."

You have to learn a lot about **what a computer can do:** not just what it can do on screen, but also how to get an image to the printer so that they know how to print it.

Does Cheek by Jowl ask for particular qualities?

Nick (the designer) and Declan (the director) want things to be cutting edge. A lot of Declan's copy is to do with things being dangerous, that's his word, and I've got a tendency to make things more accessible, and I think that's probably a good combination. A poster has to be more accessible than the production: you've only got thirty seconds on a poster. In a production you've got two hours.

Does working for Cheek by Jowl give you particular satisfactions?
Declan is generally regarded as the best person at Shakespeare in this country and possibly in Europe, and I find Shakespeare a pretty good writer to design for as well. People know certain aspects of Shakespeare's plays and so you don't have to start from square one, you can assume a certain knowledge, build on it and play little games with it.

How did you create the Cheek by Jowl logo?
I did some scribbles on the back of an envelope. I was interested in the idea of it being a stamp of authority, so that's why it's rounded. It's at an angle because that makes it more dramatic. It's always used large and you can always see through it, so therefore it's not using up much visual space. With a good logo, people should recognise the company without having to read any words. I hope they can say, "That's a Cheek by Jowl production because there's that round thing on there."

What inspires your ideas for the show's image?
I have to produce the image before rehearsals and casting start, so I read the play and talk to Declan and Nick. What they're after is a simple image, they don't expect me to read their minds, they don't expect the poster to echo the play, because when I'm designing the poster the production doesn't exist. What they want is something which is strong in its own right. The comments they tend to make are to simplify things, to take things away rather than to add, which is why they're easy to work for. They say, "Can you zoom in more, can you make it more dangerous?"

Where does the* Much Ado *image come from?
Advertising has a lot of images just now of the juxtaposition of bodies. Things like the Haagen Dazs adverts, where bodies are close together. It's the cult of youth and the cult of sex, so our image is jumping on that bandwagon. Nick said he liked the idea that the guy looks like he's a soldier. Obviously that's in the back of your mind, because we know that Benedict is a soldier, but it wasn't the main thought. The idea is, the guy is a bit like Marlon Brando, or a soldier who's taken his uniform off; that idea of Southern Mediterranean men who are much more likely than Englishmen to wear just a singlet. The woman in front is clearly not English, and there's a feeling of hot and cold.

Can you help people define their own talents and make their career choices?

- **Do you like a challenge?** Graphic design is one of the most challenging things that you can do. It takes all my thought processes because there are so many different aspects of it. I'm working on eight jobs at the moment and I get a great adrenalin buzz from it.

- **Are you interested in photography?** You can now do graphic design as well, because you can take your own photos, scan them in and manipulate them on computer.

  What if you can't draw? We're obsessed these days in art about drawing from imagination, but people like Rembrandt and Durer and Picasso spent years learning their trade, copying other great masters, before doing anything original. They would bring models into a studio and paint them, they wouldn't do stuff from their imagination.

I think you need to be taught certain skills in any profession, and it's the same in graphic design. I know a lot of technical things about printing, I know how to take photos and I know how to think properly. But if I need an illustration I'll use someone else. So I'm a graphic designer who can't draw from my imagination.

- **Does it need a huge investment of money?** When I first went freelance you had to have drawing boards and cameras, it cost a lot. Now you can set yourself up with a really good computer and printer for under £3,000.

- **Can you make a living from it?** The vast majority of actors do not make a decent living but the vast majority of graphic designers do. If I was working for a major West End graphic design company, I could be earning up to £80,000 a year. By being freelance, I earn between £25,000 - £30,000, which in theatre is a good income. And you don't have huge responsibilities. I run my own little office here, I don't have high overheads, I don't have a large staff to worry about, I do it all myself and I don't have to work more than 40 hours a week. I have to do a lot of thinking outside working hours, but that's fun.

- **Isn't freelance work insecure?** Ironically, you've now got more security being freelance than you have working for an organisation. When I left the Royal Opera House people said, "You're crazy, you're leaving a really stable job to go freelance, why are you doing it?" whereas now, 15 years later, the tables have been completely reversed.

Any tips for people designing posters for their own shows?

- The one thing that a poster should exude is confidence.

- I like posters with people on them, because that's what theatre's about. If you've got a person on a poster and you don't go to see that show, you're rejecting that person, and it's more difficult to reject a person than a logo.

- I like bright colours coming out of dark backgrounds because that goes back to that Shirley Bassey thing, being cocooned in the space. I like posters which cocoon you.

- If you're printing something you don't pay more for solid bright colours than you do for weak and washy ones. I think the public responds to strong images, strong colours. Theatre is a concentration of what happens in real life, so the posters and the colours are a concentration too.

- If you're flyposting, yellow type on a black background stands out more than virtually anything else.

- With graphic design, you build on preconceptions, you take people's icons and do little twists on them. For example, Declan and I hate *Hamlet* posters which show a weak indecisive person, so our *Hamlet* poster had a strong character on it.

With *The Duchess of Malfi,* I wanted Malfi to be more graffiti style, and I didn't want the Duchess to be a victim. She's not a victim, she rises above that.

- Because a poster's simplifying things, don't bother thinking about complicated routes, stick to simple ones. You could rough out 25 ideas, but it would take too long. Analyse your ideas in your head, which ones will work and which won't, then do two or three ideas on paper. You'll save a lot of time and keep your profit margins up.

- Sometimes you have to spend time wandering around getting new ideas. You can't just stay in and create something out of nothing, you have to go and see what people are looking at now. I'm constantly buying magazines and going to see films and shows.

RUNNING THE COMPANY

BARBARA MATTHEWS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As You Like It rehearsal 1994

That it should have been in Bucharest last week and heads straight to New York after its five nights in Blackpool says much about the company's international stature.

Blackpool Evening Gazette 1995. The Duchess of Malfi.

What's so good about running a theatre company?

It gives me a unique opportunity to combine a love of the unexpected, the passionate, the emotional and the creative (and the people who produce all those things) with a desire for order and efficiency. In many ways the entrepreneurial and managerial skills I need are the same as for running any business, but the results are so much more rewarding. I love the fact that we are dealing with people, with their fears and vulnerability as well as their triumphs and their dreams. It is fantastically rewarding to work with people you admire.

Downside?

It's stressful making sure all the company and all the set arrive in the right place at the right time and in relative comfort. Getting those schedules organised can be tricky, and Customs procedures can be difficult. Making arrangements with different cultures in languages I don't speak is hard.

Not glamorous, then?

Foreign touring is glamorous because we are always treated splendidly by our hosts and you get to see fascinating places and meet wonderful people. The company is feted wherever it goes. But that's just the public face of my job. A lot of my time is spent in smoke-filled rooms with men in suits, dealing with the boards of various councils and committees, or sitting at my desk making three year or five year plans to secure Arts Council funding. If I don't get that right, the company can't do anything, so there is the stress of that responsibility. The pre-planning of the tour, negotiating with venues, understanding the legal side of the business, are all part of my job as executive director.

You're responsible for a big budget. Is that scary?
I like dealing with money! In my opinion a confidence with things financial is an essential requirement for anyone running an arts business. If you do not get the money right everything else suffers. The size of the sums does not make much difference. You still have to make everything balance and spend money wisely. The risks increase, of course, which can make life exciting!.

How did you come to work with Cheek by Jowl?
I saw a production of *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* which Nick (the designer) and Declan (the director) did in a fringe theatre. Then, when they formed Cheek by Jowl, I saw their first show which was *The Country Wife.* They were revolutionary in their energy, the clarity of their story telling and the simple ingenuity of their design. I wrote and told them how much I admired their work and as a result they asked me to work with them.

Did you ever want to be an actor?
When I was 10, I wrote, directed and starred in plays which I put on in the hall at home, bossing my friends and family around. I was the only girl in the 6th form at a boys' school (where my father was headmaster), so I got to appear on stage in all sorts of things. I acted at University with varied success, but the turning point came during my Chemistry finals. The National Student Drama festival came to town, and I offered to help out a few hours a day and ended up working from 9am to 3am for the whole week. It had never occurred to me that there was anything to theatre other than what happened on stage. That week opened my eyes to the roles of technician and administrator. I scraped through my degree, but it didn't matter: I found a postgraduate course in Arts Administration, and I was off.

You came from a science degree into the arts. Does that crossover produce the qualities you need to be an administrator?
An analytical approach and a logical mind are a big help. You need to understand people who think instinctively and yet be able to present things in an ordered way yourself.

Any hints on how people interested in working in theatre can assess what they're good at?

They could ask themselves some fundamental questions, such as:

- What really gives you the most satisfaction: status, money, making something?
- Are you a natural risk-taker, or do you need to know what the outcome of your actions will be?
- Do you want the security of belonging to a big organisation with defined career paths, or do you want to make it up as you go along?
- Do you enjoy having to fight your corner or do you prefer the quiet life?
- Can you take the unpredictability of not knowing what you will be doing next month and where the next pay cheque is coming from?

- Do you like doing things which have a definite 'right answer' or do you prefer things to be more flexible?

- Do you like interaction with other people and their ideas or do you prefer to work on your own?

  Once you know what sort of person you are, you can measure up the degree to which each job or career will meet your aspirations.

ADMINISTRATION

MATTHEW GORDON

ADMINISTRATOR

Cheek by Jowl travels by car, bus, train or (God and accountants willing) plane.

Vogue, New York 1995. The Duchess of Malfi.

The Company at the airport, 1985.

What first fired your enthusiasm for theatre?

I remember seeing a lot of different things when I was young and the whole occasion of going to a theatre was magical, exciting. I didn't know how it worked, it was escapism.

Did it make you want to act?

Yes, right until I was 18. When you're young, I don't think you decide you want to be an administrator! You want to be an actor. Acting's what most people know about, they don't know about the range of jobs available. Then, during my year off before university, I realised I'd never be the actor I wanted to be. I had in the back of my mind that administration might be another path.

At university I did a Drama and Theatre Studies degree. We all had to take a general technical course in the first year - the idea being that we should have a knowledge of stage management, lighting etc so we would be more rounded performers - and I found I enjoyed it. I ended up doing three years of technical work, training as a lighting designer and set designer. My degree specialization was Administration but I decided I could combine that with my technical skills by working for a production company. The two placements I did in my fourth year were with the Cameron Mackintosh organisation and Cheek by Jowl. Two contrasting places, not what I was expecting, but they made me realise what I wanted to do. Reality is different from what you're taught at University.

Were your placements useful?

At University we had a lecture on networking which I didn't take seriously because I didn't really understand it, but I've met people through doing my two placements and all my jobs

have led on from each other. I've been lucky, being in the right place and being available at the right time. I think the main thing is to get out and meet people although not in a calculated way: if you're too calculating, people know what you're doing and it doesn't work. You have to get out there and get the experience and if necessary do some voluntary work.

What was your first job?
I started off working for National Youth Music Theatre as a volunteer when I was at university. They gave me work when I graduated, which allowed me to gain some office experience. From there I went to The British Council and worked in the Drama and Dance Unit which is where I got a lot of training and foreign-touring experience. I freelanced while I was there, did a tour for National Youth Music Theatre and slotted other things in, so I got the practical production skills. And then I went straight from the British Council back to Cheek by Jowl.

Can you describe what your job involves?
On one level I'm responsible for the day to day running of the office, from making sure it is well equipped to running the payroll; things which aren't to do with theatre, things you don't learn at university, you learn them by doing your first couple of jobs. I deal with certain aspects of the management of the tour, from running auditions and issuing contracts through to getting visas and making sure that company members and venues have all the information they need. I'm also responsible for assisting Barbara (the executive director), Nick (the designer) and Declan (the director), making sure they know what's going on and that there's communication between everyone.

What about tour work?
I'm the first point of contact for people phoning Cheek by Jowl's office, so one of the things I've had to do since I joined the company in October 1997 is get up to speed on what we're doing with *Much Ado About Nothing* and what we have been doing over the last few years. On tour, Simon (the company stage manager) and Anthony (the technical stage manager) will liaise with me on a day to day basis. Certain matters go straight to Barbara but I deal with whatever problems I can, and try and come up with solutions with Simon. There's a definite structure which is laid out, but which is fluid: if Barbara's away and we can't contact her, Mark (the marketing manager) and I may have to make a decision. I came from the British Council, a large company where I had strictly defined responsibilities; what I've had to work out here are those things I have the ability and authority to do and those I don't.

What qualities do you need to do your job?
Work in theatre is largely problem-solving. We can plan for most things, but when the company's abroad unexpected things will need dealing with, so I have to be able to re-prioritise and adjust whatever systems I set up. I work office hours, but the company performs in the evenings and weekends, so I have to be flexible about the hours I work, as with other theatre jobs.

You have to know when to set deadlines and when to allow space for members of the company who are being creative. I say to Declan, "I need to know which scripts we're going to use and when we're going to use them," but I must accept that this involves artistic judgement about which edition to choose, what cuts to make, etc, so I may have to wait for an answer.

The job needs patience, a sense of humour and a general knowledge of theatre. I don't do anything directly technical but I know enough about stage management and lighting that, if you were to phone from abroad and say you need a gobo and some more gels, I would know what they are. Stuff that's not immediately obvious, but it informs what I'm doing.

Why did you want to work for Cheek by Jowl?
Cheek by Jowl has a reputation for high quality, exciting work and it's got a strong image. I enjoyed my placement and wanted to come back. When the position became available, the timing was right in terms of the experience I wanted to get and the level I was at. I think it was a logical progression.

When I worked for the British Council, there was back-up in all areas. If I wanted to book a hotel room there was an accommodation office; if I wanted to book a ticket we had a travel agent. It was great to have the support but it meant I had a strictly defined role, which is the same in any large organisation. Because Cheek by Jowl has three members of staff, there's a need to be flexible and solve problems. All those things make the job fun; the things that drive you batty actually give you satisfaction. It's the challenge, and if you don't want the challenge it's not the right profession. Theatre can be stressful but it's positive stress, not knowing what's going to happen but knowing that you're working towards some communal goal. Although I spend most of my time in the office, I know how my role is integral to the production as a whole. It's satisfying when you see what everyone in the company's worked towards, when you take the show out on the road.

Hints and tips for careers in theatre?

- Training's great, but back it up with practical experience or you won't know what the job involves. Experience of working in an office, being able to type etc, may make you more attractive to a potential employer.

- Be inventive when looking for work. A lot of it isn't advertised, it's through people you meet.

- Think laterally rather than logically. When I went to the British Council, it wasn't my direct route. I wanted to work for a production company, not a funding body. But without the British Council experience I wouldn't be at Cheek by Jowl now. So in the long run I've got to where I want to be but I've had to go sideways.

- Be alert, aware. Find out what's about to be produced, what might be happening next year, and if there are any opportunities. Read *The Stage* - it lets you know what's going on and who's working in theatre. Many companies interact with each other, so it's a great help to know people by name and what they do.

- Learn how to talk to people - which is something I found difficult to begin with - how to approach people at parties and chat to them and have the confidence to do it. You have to psych yourself up to it and realise everybody else is psyching themselves up too. Relax and be honest with people, and don't pretend to be somebody you're not; people are going to know what level of experience you've got and whether you're any good, because it's a practical profession.