

**THEATRE ROYAL STRATFORD EAST**

# **OFF STAGE**

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**Creative Team**

# HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide will help you to understand who is involved in creating a show and learn a little bit about the different roles in a Creative Team.

The pack has been split into the following sections:

- 1 WHO'S WHO?**
- 2 THE ROLE OF A SOUND DESIGNER**
- 3 THE ROLE OF A LIGHTING DESIGNER**
- 4 THE ROLE OF A STAGE MANAGER**
- 5 THE ROLE OF AN ASSISTANT DIRECTOR**
- 6 GLOSSARY**

You might want to begin by watching the following interviews with members of the Creative Team of Dipo Baruwa-Etti's *The Sun, The Moon, And The Stars*, which was on in June 2021 at Theatre Royal Stratford East.

- ▶ **The Role of a Sound Designer with Tingying Dong**
- ▶ **The Role of a Lighting Designer with Oliver Fenwick**
- ▶ **In Rehearsals with the Assistant Director, Justina Kehinde and the Stage Manager, Eleanor Butcher**

You will see quotes with tips and advice from Ting, Oliver, Justina and Eleanor's interviews throughout this pack.

There are a lot of theatre terms and words used throughout this pack. To help you out, we have put some of these in **bold** and you can find a definition of them in the **glossary** at the end of this pack.



*Our Lady of Kibeho II* in rehearsal, 2019 © Manuel Harlan

**1**

**WHO'S WHO?**

Creating a show is a big team effort. As an audience member you often only see the actors, but it takes a lot of different people to make a show happen. They work together over the rehearsal period to co-create the show. This team is called the Creative Team. They also collaborate with, and are supported by the Production and Technical teams.

The formation of a Creative Team differs on each show depending on the size of the show, the size of the theatre and the type of show and its needs.

The following roles are often seen in a rehearsal room:

### **Actor**

The performer(s)

### **Director**

Leads the creative team to make the production with their artistic vision and intentions.

### **Writer**

If it is a new play the writer will be in the room to make edits and changes during rehearsals.

### **Assistant Director**

Supports the Director in rehearsals. Often leads on research, warm ups and line runs.

### **Production Manager**

Oversees all of the production and technical elements to ensure the director can achieve their vision within the budget.

### **Set and Costume Designer**

Sometimes there will be a separate person designing the set and the costumes, or sometimes this is the same person. They collaborate with the director to create the visual world of the play.

### **Sound Designer**

Creates or sources the sound for the production and designs how the audience will hear it.

### **Lighting Designer**

Designs the lighting including what types of lanterns will be used, their colour and intensity.

### **Stage Manager**

Usually a team of people who manage the day-to-day running of the rehearsal room, documenting the rehearsals, setting up rehearsal sets, sourcing props and connecting and supporting all the creative team.

Some productions will also have the following creatives in the rehearsal room:

### **Video Designer**

Creates all the video content and any projections that are used in the production.

### **Musical Director**

Oversees any live music in the production. This also includes any singing.

### **Movement Director and/or Choreographer**

Creates all the movement for a production including dance routines, transitions between scenes and the physical movement of characters.

### **Fight Director**

Creates and oversees all elements of the stage fights within the production.

### **Voice Coach**

Helps the actor(s) with all elements of their vocal performance including accent, projection and diction.



*King Hedley II* in rehearsal, 2019 © Sharon Wallace

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# **THE ROLE OF A SOUND DESIGNER**

▶ Start by watching this interview with **Tingying Dong**, Sound Designer for *The Sun, The Moon, And The Stars*, at Stratford East, June 2021

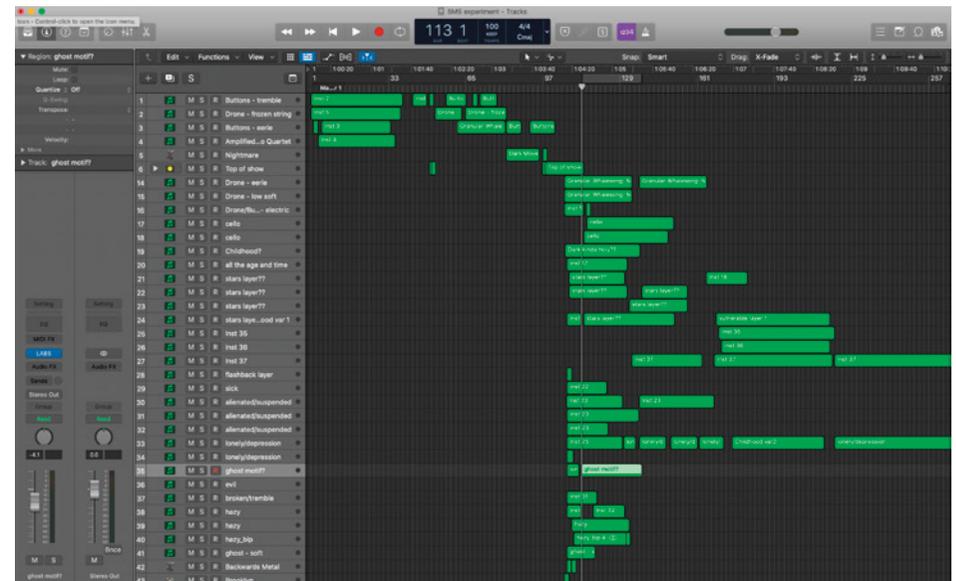
## JOB DESCRIPTION

The Sound Designer is responsible for the audio world of the play. They design what the audience hear, and how they hear it. This includes creating or sourcing **sound effects**, **composing** music for an **underscore or soundtrack**, and choosing to mic an actor to amplify or change their voice. In plays, there are sounds that the characters can hear (music playing, doors closing, sirens etc.) and sound/music can also help support the atmosphere and mood of the scenes, just like in films.

As well as creating and sourcing the music and sound, the Sound Designer, is also responsible for deciding *how* to play the sound in the theatre. They will think about where the speakers are in the space and which speakers are used for each sound **cue** to create different effects. For example, if a character is listening to music on a radio, the Sound Designer might choose to play the sound from a speaker on stage so that it feels to the audience like the sound is really coming from the radio on stage.

Sound is a really subtle method to influence the audience, a lot of the time they are not aware of the sound, but they feel that it is there, and it really makes an impact.

Tingying Dong, Sound Designer



The computer file showing some of the composed sound for *The Sun, The Moon, And The Stars*

# WORKS CLOSELY WITH

The Sound Designer works closely with the Director to ensure that there is a shared vision for the storytelling. They also work closely with the Lighting Designer as often lighting and sound changes (called cues) will happen at the same time.



View from Sound Desk for *The Sun, The Moon, And The Stars* © Tingying Dong

My favourite thing about being a Sound Designer is to create the content that helps with the storytelling, it can sometimes tell the untold story that is not delivered through the actor or the text.

Tingying Dong, Sound Designer

## OTHER CONNECTED ROLES

The Sound Designer is responsible for creating the sound and then other members of the team are responsible for installing and running the sound during the shows.

**Sound Technicians** Responsible for assembling and maintaining the sound equipment.

**Sound Operators** Responsible for managing, monitoring and playing all the sound cues within a show.

# SOUND DESIGN PROCESS

## 1. Reading the Script

The process of the sound design starts with reading the script in detail, thinking of the general concept of how sound may work in this particular show.

## 2. Collaborate with Director

Meet with the Director to agree a shared concept.

## 3. Create Sound

Prepare sound content before the rehearsals. This might involve sourcing music or composing and recording music or sound effects.

## 4. Rehearsals

Work in rehearsal room to take inspiration from the rehearsals and try out content and ideas. Continue to create content. Drawing up the technical designs for how the sound will be shared in the theatre.

**TOP TIP:** Really listen to everything around you in your daily life, and when you are watching a film or a theatre production. Lots of people don't really listen, there is lots of sound happening around us.

Tingying Dong, Sound Designer

## 5. Cue List

Creating the cue list which will show all the sound cues in the show including notes on volume levels and fades and if any of the cues are paired with a lighting cue. This will be shared with the Sound Operator who will be the one to operate all the sound in the show.

## 6. Fit Up

During the fit up, which is when the set is built in the space and the technical equipment is installed, the Sound Designer will work with Sound Technicians to ensure that the sound system is installed to their technical designs.

## 7. Technical Rehearsals

Technical rehearsals where all the sound cues are tested in the theatre with the lighting, set and actors.

## 8. Previews

Any final changes can be made over the preview period which are the first few shows in which an audience are present before the show officially opens.

## 9. Opening Night

The show officially opens and Press are invited to review it. The Sound Designer's job is now done and the sound will be looked after by the Sound Operators.

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# **THE ROLE OF A LIGHTING DESIGNER**

▶ Start by watching this interview with **Oliver Fenwick**, Lighting Designer for *The Sun, The Moon, And The Stars*, at Stratford East, June 2021

## JOB DESCRIPTION

The Lighting Designer is responsible for designing all of the lighting within the show. This will include the lights used to light the stage, as well as any lights that might feature as part of the set. The Lighting Designer will need to decide which **lantern** to use, where to put it in the theatre, what colour the light is and how bright or dark the light is (the intensity).

They work with everyone to help create the mood of the production through the lighting choices they make. They work in close collaboration with the Set Designer as this can heavily influence where it is possible to put lanterns or shine lights.

CUE	pt	TIME	CUE POINT	LIGHTING	Page
0.5			PRESET		
1	1	0	WITH CLEARANCE	LOSE H/L'S FTB	
	2	0		GOBO SLOWER	
2		0	ONCE BLACK OUT		
3		0	WITHIN SND Q	B/O	
4	1	6	LIGHTS UP ONCE FEMI SAT	LIGHTS UP	1
	2	12		ADDS 10 AND 53	
4.5		7	F/ON	SMALL BUILD ON CHHAIR	
5		15	SEEIN GHOSTS	OPENS OUT SR	1
6		20	HIS KEHINDE	WARMS UP	2

Lighting Cue List for *The Sun, The Moon, And The Stars*

**TOP TIP:** See lots of shows. You soon work out what you like. Find a lighting designer and ask if you can come and watch them work on a show, watching from the focusing of lights through to the press night and seeing how all those decisions are made. Perhaps because I was a Lighting Technician first and then a Lighting Designer, I think it is crucial to know what you are working with. Learn how to work in a department, learn the practical side, how to rig lights, what different lanterns do.

Oliver Fenwick, Lighting Designer



# LIGHTING DESIGN PROCESS

## 1. Reading the Script

The process of the lighting design starts with reading the script in detail. This often happens before you have seen any set designs.

## 2. Collaborate with Director and Set Designer

Meet with the Director and Set Designer to look at the physical world that is being created and how lighting can support that and agree a shared concept.

## 3. Lighting Plan

The next step is very practical as you begin to think about what types of lanterns create certain looks, where to put them in the theatre. The decisions will be drawn up into a Lighting Plan.

## 4. Cue List

Creating the cue list which will show all the lighting cues in the show including what lanterns are used, what colours, the intensity of the lights and fade times, and if any of the cues are also paired with a sound cue. This will be shared with the Lighting Operator who will be the one to operate the lights during the show.

## 5. Fit Up and Focusing

This is where the Lighting Designer will work with Lighting Technicians to **rig** and **focus** the lights. Putting them up in the theatre and ensuring that they are focused (or pointing) in the right direction for where the light needs to shine.

## 6. Plotting

Plotting is when the lights are programmed into a computer in the Lighting Desk. Each different lighting cue is recorded, and the Lighting Operator is then able to control when the lights change throughout the play.

## 7. Technical Rehearsals

Technical rehearsals where all the lighting cues are tested in the theatre with the sound, set and actors.

## 8. Previews

Any final changes can be made over the preview period which are the first few shows in which an audience are present before the show officially opens.

## 9. Opening Night

The show officially opens and press are invited to review it. The Lighting Designer's job is now done and the lighting will be looked after by the Lighting Operators.

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# **THE ROLE OF A STAGE MANAGER**

▶ Start by watching this interview with **Eleanor Butcher, Stage Manager (Props and Furniture) for *The Sun, The Moon, And The Stars*, at Stratford East, June 2021** (Start the video at 04:19 to see Eleanor talking)

## JOB DESCRIPTION

Stage Managers are responsible for overseeing the smooth running of rehearsals. They are the link between the different members of the creative team. They also source and manage **props** and furniture and arrange the rehearsal schedule with the director. They are responsible for creating **the book**. The book is a copy of the script that contains all the technical cues and the **blocking** for the show. It serves as a reference for all of the creative team and is used by the Stage Manager during a performance to **call the show**. This means they tell the lighting and sound operators when to operate the next cue which will change the lights or play a sound effect. They do this using **Cans**, which is a radio system that allows the team to communicate backstage.

The Sun, The Moon and The Stars - Props List 1				
Prop	Qty	Pg	Notes	Setting
Location: Modern Day - London				
ALL FURNITURE REMAINS ON STAGE THROUGHOUT				
Half smoked Cigarette	1		To be lit onstage by 'Femi' Kibong Tanji and put on SR. Herbal Tabacco.	Preset SL
lighter	1		Used to lit the cigarette. (needs to fit in pocket)	Preset SL
Mirror Ball	1		To be thrown - may need to be reinforced.	preset US

Props List for *The Sun, The Moon, And The Stars*

Stage Managers are usually split into three different roles.

### Stage Manager or Company Stage Manager (SM/CSM)

Leads the Stage Management team. They are responsible for health and safety of everyone in the production. Creates the rehearsal schedule with the Director sending out rehearsal calls.

### Deputy Stage Manager (DSM)

Responsible for creating the book and calling the show. Sending out rehearsal notes that highlight any key information from rehearsals that the rest of the Creative Team need to know.

### Assistant Stage Manager (ASM)

Responsible for finding and maintaining the props and managing the backstage team.

Depending on the scale of the show, the number of Stage Managers and their roles might change completely. On smaller shows you might have one Stage Manager who covers all the roles and on large shows, for example in the West End, you may have a team of 5 or more Stage Managers.

On the production of *The Sun, The Moon, And The Stars*, at Stratford East, there are two stage Managers divided into two roles:

### Stage Manager Props and Furniture

taking on more of the Assistant Stage Manager responsibilities as well as creating the rehearsal calls.

### Stage Manager on the Book

taking on more of the Deputy Stage Manager responsibilities.

<b>The Sun, The Moon and The Stars</b> Rehearsal Call 19 <b>Friday 4<sup>th</sup> June</b> Theatre Royal Stratford East, Gerry Raffles Square, London E15 1BN		
TIME	CALL	COMPANY
10:00 – 12:00	LX and Sound plotting and notes	Technical Team
11:00- 12:00	Notes in Hedley	Ms Kibong Tanji
12:00 – 13:00	<b>Lunch</b>	
13:00 – 16:45	Working notes on stage with Mic (No costume)  (Work from end of play backwards)	Ms Kibong Tanji
16:45 – 17:00	Clear desks	Tech Team
17:00 – 18:00	<b>Dinner</b>	
17:30 – 18:00	Rig check and house open	
18:00 -18:25	Reset/ warm up on stage (Iron in)	Ms Kibong Tanji
18:25	Half Hour	Ms Kibong Tanji
19:00	<b>Press night</b>	Ms Kibong Tanji
20:15	<b>Call to end</b>	

Rehearsal Call for *The Sun, The Moon, And The Stars*

My favourite thing about being a Stage Manager is the moment when you have finished rehearsals and you are about to go into tech and you do the final rehearsal room run through and all the creatives come to the room and you get to show them the show. You can see everyone coming together, just before the show goes into the theatre and it's still a bit raw, but you all worked really hard and you can proudly show off what you have done as a big team.

Eleanor Butcher, Stage Manager (Props and Furniture)

# WORKS CLOSELY WITH

Stage Management work closely with the Director to support rehearsals, the Set Designer to help with sourcing props and the Production Managers to help manage the budget. They are also responsible for ensuring the whole creative team knows what is going on and is kept informed for changes. The Stage Manager (or team) are the lynchpin of any production.

**STRATFORD  
EAST**

## REHEARSAL NOTES

THE SUN, THE MOON AND THE STARS BY DIPO BARUWA-ETTI

DATE: 22 MAY 2021 REH NOTE NUMBER: 9

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**GENERAL**  
NO NOTES TODAY

**PRODUCTION**  
NO NOTES TODAY

**DESIGN**  
NO NOTES TODAY

**SET**  
NO NOTES TODAY

**COSTUME**  
1. WITH REFERENCE TO REHEARSAL NOTE 7, STAGE MANAGEMENT NOTE 1, PLEASE BE AWARE THAT SEVERAL THINGS NEED TO FIT IN THE JACKET POCKET. IN ADDITION, THERE'S THE POSSIBILITY OF HOUSEKEYS. THE LIPSTICK NEEDS TO BE STORED SOMEWHERE ON HER PERSON, NOT IN THE JACKET.  
2. THE SOONER WE CAN HAVE THE JACKET TO WORK WITH THE BETTER, AS THERE IS A LOT OF MOVEMENT THAT IT WILL AFFECT.  
3. MS TANJI IS KEEN TO WORK IN THE REAL SHOES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

**STAGE MANAGEMENT**  
1. WE ARE GOING TO TEST MAKE UP OPTIONS EARLY NEXT WEEK. PLEASE CAN WE HAVE SOME EXTRA SENSITIVE MAKE-UP WIPES AND A FLANNEL TO TRY THE REMOVAL.

**PROPS**  
NO NOTES TODAY

**LIGHTING**  
NO NOTES TODAY

**SOUND & MUSIC**  
1. ON P.45 CAN THERE BE SOME HUBBUB INTO COURT THAT CONTINUES UNTIL A GAVEL BANGS IT TO SILENCE JUST BEFORE 'GUILTY'.  
2. ON P.47 THERE SHOULD BE SOMETHING AKIN TO THE TINTS MOMENT AS THE CHILD LOOKS AT FEMI THIS GOES INTO A LOUDER VOLCANO MOMENT ON THE NEW TEXT BACK TO TINTUS FOR A PAUSE AS SHE SAYS 'I OVERPOWERS ME. I CAN'T DO IT. I AIN'T GOT WHAT THEY DO IN THEIR BLOOD' THEN BACK INTO COURT NOISES AS SHE GOES INTO THE BATHROOM.  
3. ON P.48 CAN THERE BE SOME SEASIDE OUTSIDE SOUND AS THEY LEAVE THE PUB.  
4. ON P.55 THE SOUND OF THE SEA COMES BACK IN JUST BEFORE 'DARKNESS FALLS'.

Rehearsal Notes for *The Sun, The Moon, And The Stars*

**TOP TIP:** Look up who the Stage Managers are when you go to shows. Contact them or the theatres and ask them questions. We are very willing to help anyone who wants to get into Stage Management. Ask them if you could have a tour backstage. My other top tip is don't be shy. Go for it! Everyone started somewhere.

Eleanor Butcher, Stage Manager (Props and Furniture)

**Initial Chair options - The Sun, The Moon and The Stars**  
Having had a little browse this weekend these are the initial chairs I have found that are currently available for you to have a look at, I hope I am on the same page.  
The current brief:  
- Orange  
- Cut out back  
- Can have black or silver legs  
Some of the options do not tick all the boxes but I thought would be worth having a look as the shape was good or legs etc.  
1. Description: SUPERB PAIR OF VINTAGE RETRO HEMPLOY FURNITURE ORANGE STACKING CHAIRS 1970.s  
Shop: Ebay  
Price: £39.50  
<https://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/124698716594>

2. School stacking chairs  
Facebook market place  
£30  
(brought to have in rehearsals as a stand in.)

3. Kandya stackable chairs, set of four, 2 brown, 2 orange.  
£80  
Facebook market place  
[https://www.facebook.com/marketplace/item/364197281291201/?ref=saved&referral\\_coid=emsl](https://www.facebook.com/marketplace/item/364197281291201/?ref=saved&referral_coid=emsl)

4. DISPORT DEFINITIVE CHAIR  
£44.40  
<https://www.edu-quip.co.uk/prod/30528/disport-definitive-chair>

5. Fondle designer - stacking chairs pk 4  
£364 + £73.75 each but have to buy 8 pk 4  
<https://www.offsetfurniture.co.uk/fondle-designer-stacking-chairs.html>

6. moulded plastic office stacking chair - bistro  
£59.99  
<https://lethbrayworkforce.co.uk/shop/1210000/Plastic-Stacking-Office-Canteen-Cafe-Bistro-Meeting-Chairs.html?c=1210000>

Stage Manager Props Options for *The Sun, The Moon, And The Stars*

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# **THE ROLE OF AN ASSISTANT DIRECTOR**

- ▶ Start by watching this interview with **Justina Kehinde**, Assistant Director for *The Sun, The Moon, And The Stars*, at Stratford East, June 2021

## JOB DESCRIPTION

The Assistant Director is responsible for supporting the Director in the rehearsals. They often take a lead on pre-rehearsal research. This might involve research into themes, locations or time periods the play is set in, anything that is going to help the creative team and actor develop their understanding and vision for the piece.

They will often support the actors to learn their **lines** and run separate rehearsals as requested by the Director. They will often lead the warm up activities for the rehearsal and, in the case of one person show like *The Sun, The Moon, And The Stars*, they will take part in improvisations with the actor.

They also give **notes** when the performance is up and running for an audience and if there are **understudies**, they will run these rehearsals.

My favourite thing about being an assistant director is the opportunity to be in the room with the director. You get to learn from someone else's creative process which enriches your own artistic skill set.

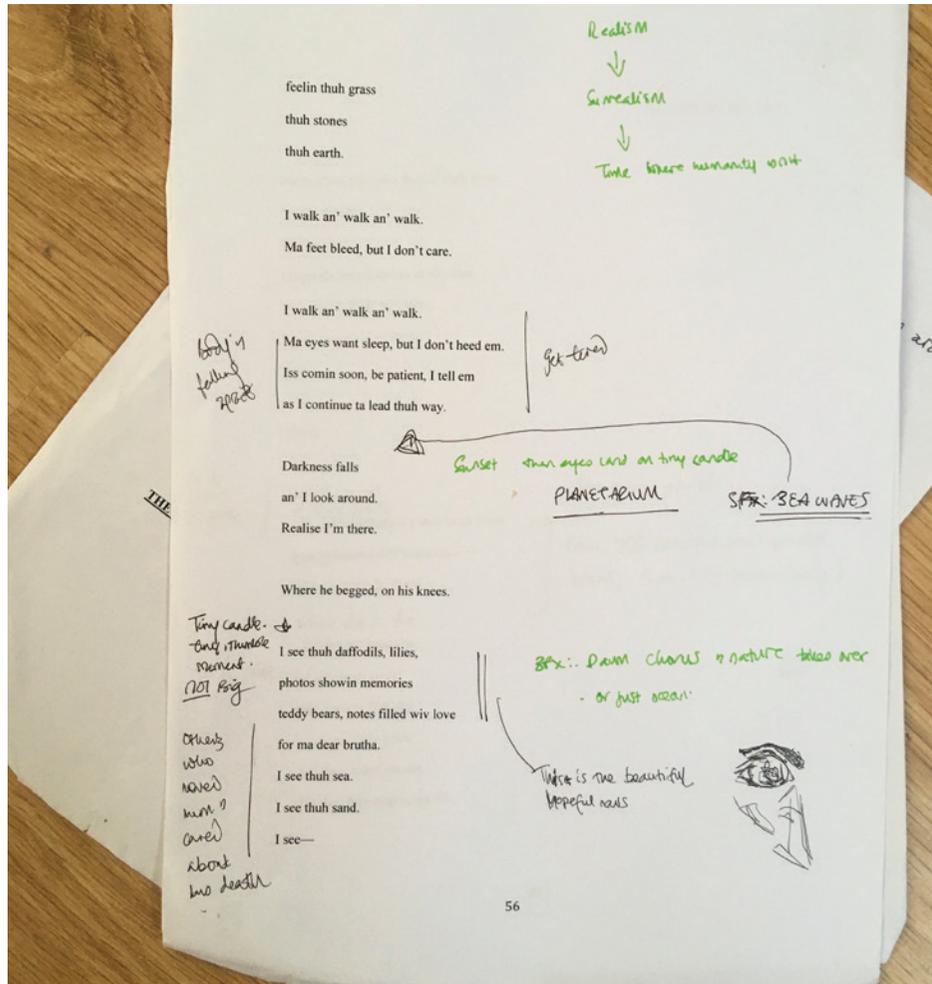
Justina Kehinde, Assistant Director



In rehearsals with Stratford East Youth Theatre, 2021, © Greta Zabulyte

# WORKS CLOSELY WITH

Works very closely with the Director to help support their vision for the play. Also works closely with the actors.



Assistant Director Script Notes for *The Sun, The Moon, And The Stars*

**TOP TIP:** join a youth theatre company, Stratford East have a great youth theatre company. Talk to the person running the workshops and ask if you can sit in or support in any way. Pay attention to the shows that you really like and who those directors are. Make a list of them and reach out by email to ask to sit in the room and see what happens.

Justina Kehinde, Assistant Director



*Sleeping Beauty* in rehearsal, 2019 © Scott Rylander

# GLOSSARY

## **Blocking**

Where the actors stand and move on stage during a performance

## **Calling the Show**

When the stage manager watches a show either from the side of the stage or on a monitor. They give all the technical cues over a headset radio so that the technical operators know when to change the lighting or sound. They also call actors to the stage from their dressing rooms over a backstage announcement system.

## **Cans**

Headphones with built-in mics that are used by all the creative team during a technical rehearsal, dress rehearsal and live production. The Cans allow everyone to communicate with each other without the actors or audience hearing them.

## **Composing**

Creating new music or sound.

## **Cue**

A mark for when a technical action should take place. This might be on a particular word in the script, or a visual moment, for example an actor entering the stage is the cue for the music to start and the lights to go down

## **Fit Up**

When the set is built on stage and all the technical equipment (such as lanterns and speakers) are installed in the theatre, ready for the production.

## **Focusing**

When the lights are adjusted from where they are rigged, so that they are shining exactly where the Lighting Designer needs them for their design.

## **Lantern**

This is what the lights themselves are called in theatre. There are different types of lanterns that cast different types of light.

## **Lighting Desk**

The desk and computer which is specifically designed to programme and operate the lights from.

## **Lines**

This is another way of saying the script or the text that the actor says.

## **Notes**

This is feedback for the actors or production team for changes that need to be made. Usually, notes are given by the Director or Assistant Director.

## **Plot /plotting (sometimes called Programme)**

When all the sounds and lighting cues for the show are programmed into the lighting desk and the sound desk.

## **Props**

Any objects that are used by the actors in the production.

## **Put on its feet**

A phrase used to mean to start acting the script out, rather than sitting and reading it.

## **Rigging or Rig**

The act of putting in place the lanterns and speakers that will be used by the production. These are often hung from scaffolding bars which are on the ceiling and walls of theatres.

## **Sound Desk**

The desk and computer which is specifically made to programme and operate the sound from

## **Sound Effects**

Recorded sounds used to aid storytelling.

## **Technical Rehearsal (sometimes called Technical Period or Tech)**

The time when the show moves into the theatre and the actors and technical team work through the show from beginning to end trying out all the technical cues to make sure they work.

## **The Book**

A copy of the script that contains all the technical cues and all the blocking for the show. It serves as a reference for the creative team and is used by the Stage Manager during a performance to call the show from.

## **Underscore or Soundtrack**

Music that accompanies the scene to help create mood and atmosphere. It is music that doesn't exist in the world of the play, the characters can't hear it.

## **Understudies**

Actors who learn specific parts so that they can stand in should the other actor get ill or not be able to perform.

# GET IN TOUCH

*We hope this has been a useful introduction to some of the things that go on off stage and behind the scenes at the theatre. If any of this is of further interest to you or your students, please contact us, we'd love to show you around.*

**Learning & Participation Instagram:  @trse\_getinvolved**

**Stratford East Instagram:  @stratford\_east**

**Stratford East Twitter:  @stratfordeast**

**Facebook:  Theatre Royal Stratford East**

**Website: [stratfordeast.com](http://stratfordeast.com)**

*This pack was written by Jordana Golbourn and designed by Rebecca Pitt.*

*If you have any questions, get in touch with Learning & Participation at Theatre Royal Stratford East on [getinvolved@stratfordeast.com](mailto:getinvolved@stratfordeast.com)*