

A Taste of Honey

1.

BY SHELAGH DELANEY.

DIRECTED BY EMMA BAGGOTT.

FRI 15 MAR – SAT 13 APR 2024

Resources, Content Warnings & Self Care Pack



Resource Pack - A Taste Of Honey

This document has been designed to support schools and college student audiences attending performances of A Taste Of Honey.

We've created this document for those who would be comfortable with more information and to give you a little insight into the show. We hope the information and resources in this document will help audiences experiencing the show, and support planning for anyone who may be concerned about their visit.

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Show Information

Content Warnings

- For ages 12+
 - Contains themes of alcohol abuse, racism, domestic violence, sexual themes, teenage pregnancy, homophobia, sexism, and ableism. Also contains loud noises, bright lights, darkness, and flashing lights.
-

Running Time

Approximately 2.5 Hours with interval.

Travel Recommendations

Trams

If your school or college is near a tram stop you can get your students to us for just £1 each and £2 per teacher. A great way to save money on coaches and also give students the life experience of how a lot of our audiences use public transport to access our theatre. More information [here](#).

[Fares and passes for young people | Transport for Greater Manchester \(tfgm.com\)](#)

Coaches

For all information about coach drops offs and parking please click [here](#)

A bit about the show

A stunning portrayal of the complex bond between a mother and daughter who, despite their sharp bickering, are both holding on for that Taste of Honey.

Helen has done it again, another fly-by-night flit dragging Jo from one Salford flat to another, only this time she has out done herself giving her daughter panoramic views of the slaughterhouse. But Jo can feel her Mum's restlessness, another man will appear and lure her away and Jo will be left to fend for herself, so when Jimmie offers to stay for Christmas Jo is swept up in his charm and the promise of escape – no matter how precarious that may be.

Shelagh Delaney's iconic play, directed by Emma Baggett, is a sharply observed portrait of working-class life in Salford in the late 1950s.

"I am delighted to be directing the RET forthcoming production of A Taste of Honey. It was one of the first text's I studied as a teenager and has long lived in my head and heart. I have always been inspired by Delaney's radical and courageous decision to centre working class women at the centre of her drama and not as subordinate to the interests of male characters. Delaney makes all of her characters in her play extraordinary by placing them centre stage.

It is a real privilege to be directing this play at the RET, a stone's throw away from Salford where Delaney was born, and A Taste of Honey is set. I am looking forward to bringing this revolutionary text to new audiences."

Emma Baggett, Director



Art direction: By Feast Creative

Themes in A Taste of Honey and a note on the language.

A Taste of Honey by Shelagh Delaney's is a radical and courageous play which centres working class women at the centre of the drama and not as subordinate to the interests of male characters. The play explores themes around care and responsibility; love, sex and friendship; gender, class and race. Shelagh Delaney's play depicts characters who are oppressed and experience social marginalisation. Society has marginalized all the characters in different ways due to their race, gender or sexual orientation. Delaney was frustrated by watching theatre that didn't represent her lived experience and the world that she existed in. Delaney was interested in presenting the world that she knew and saw – Salford in the 1950s. She once said, "I write as people speak".

A Taste of Honey was written in 1958 at a time of great socio-economic change in the UK. A decade earlier, as a result of The British Nationality Act, Afro-Caribbean immigration to Britain increased and by the early 1950s gangs of White teenagers who were part of the Teddy Boy movement were reacting in an ever-increasing hostile manner towards Black families who had moved into their area. Equally during this time there was a climate considerable oppression towards people from the LGBTQIA+ community. During the late 1950s you could still be imprisoned for being gay.

The language in the play at times reflects these attitudes and offers up a window through which we can see how far we have travelled as a society away from such prejudices. Sixty-six years on from Shelagh Delaney's play being written, the Britain of 2024 is still not an anti-racist or anti homophobic society and we need to continue to work to educate and nurture a truly inclusive society. By being reminded of some of the language that was spoken in Britain at the time of this play we can assess how much in our language and within our communities has shifted and what is still in a state of flux and promote conversation as agents of change and not as passive bystanders.

Meet The Cast

6.



JILL HALFPENNY
as Helen



DAVID MOORST
as Geoffrey



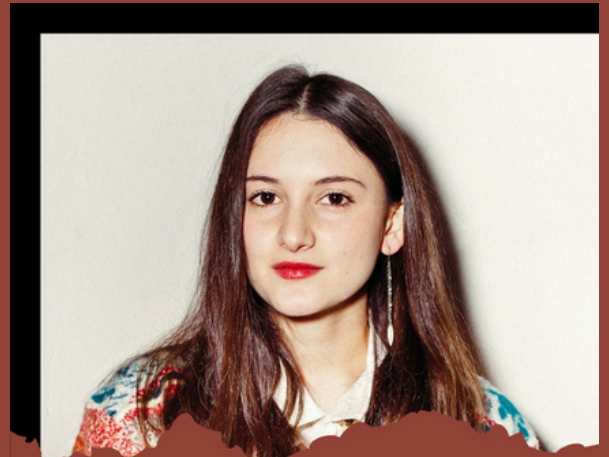
OBADIAH
as Jimmie



ROWAN ROBINSON
as Josephine



ANDREW SHERIDAN
as Peter



NISHLA SMITH
as Jazz Singer

Creative Team

7.

Director Emma Baggott

Designer Peter Butler

Lighting Designer Simisola Majekodunmi

Arranger / Orchestrator Alexandra Faye

Braithwaite

Sound Designer George Dennis

Movement Director Sarita Piotrowski

Fight Intimacy Director Kaitlin Howard

Voice and Dialect Coach Natalie Grady

Assistant Director Sam Holland-Bunyan

Casting Director Annelie Powell CDG

Casting Assistant Alice Walters



Production Manager Tom Langford

Stage Manager Sarah Caselton-Smith

Deputy Stage Manager Sarah Barnes

Assistant Stage Manager Clare Heath

StageManagement Placement Claire Cole

Wig Assistant Lymara Barber

Prop Maker Sarah Worrall

Costume Maker Holly O'Neill

Costume Assistant Rachael Duncan-Jones

Costume Student Placement Wayne

Gregory

Set Construction Splinter Scenery

Automation consultant Misha Benjamin

Production Electrician Conor Skelton



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Check out our meet the cast Instagram Reel

Meet The Director

We would like to introduce you to our wonderful director Emma Baggott.

Below you can listen to her talk about the show

Emma Baggott, breaks down her production of *A Taste of Honey*, “a show about Salford, written by someone from Salford.”

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About The Writer

‘Never underestimate 18-year-old girls’, Shelagh Delaney once warned readers of the NEW YORK TIMES. She knew very well what they were capable of: around that age, she had been preparing the play that would make her name, A TASTE OF HONEY. Delaney the aspiring playwright had been remarkably shrewd in who she approached and how she presented herself. In April 1958, she wrote to the great theatrical innovator of the period, Joan Littlewood, director of Theatre Workshop, emphasising her status as raw untutored talent from the mean streets of Salford, and even claiming ‘A fortnight ago, I didn’t know the theatre existed’. By her own account, young Shelagh had been taken to see Terence Rattigan’s latest play, VARIATION ON A THEME, hadn’t been at all impressed by it, finding it contrived, and thought to herself that maybe she could write a better play, drawing on the people and situations she knew. So she did. And here it was for Littlewood to read, roughly typed on the back of headed paper Delaney had ‘borrowed’ from her employers at the time, engineering company Metropolitan-Vickers

In actual fact Delaney was already a fairly seasoned theatregoer – and had even worked as an usherette at the Manchester Opera House – who’d harboured a longstanding ambition to write ever since she’d been at school. Although she presented her appeal to Joan Littlewood as pure happenstance, the canny young writer had done her homework and targeted the theatre director specifically because of her willingness to work with novice writers and the personal connections she had to Salford. The ingenue strategy was to pay off: Littlewood wrote back agreeing to mentor her and produce her play. Littlewood had taken the bait that Delaney had so carefully prepared but she was certainly no dupe. A savvy promoter, she knew what a marketable property she had on her hands: the piquant audacity of a working-class Lancashire lass, daughter of a bus driver, daring to believe she could out-write Rattigan. This was just at the point when a theatrical revolution was taking place, and the kind of English drama represented by Rattigan was being rapidly displaced by the Kitchen Sink and the Angry Young Men. And here, reporting for duty, was an authentic Angry Young Woman; still in her teens too, during a decade fascinated by that new demographic creation.

Shelagh Delaney’s A TASTE OF HONEY had all the reckless courage associated with teenagers. It tackled in a forthright and fearless way numerous social taboos of the period: unmarried motherhood, interracial relationships, homosexuality.



It rebelled against what Delaney saw as the dramatic stereotype of ‘gormless’ working-class northerners, countering this in her own writing with characterisations she felt were much more authentically faithful to her ‘very alive and cynical’ friends, family, neighbours and colleagues in Salford. ‘I write how people talk’ would be the young writer’s own defence of her direct, droll and occasionally dreamily baroque style of dialogue. Even though the play would be extensively workshopped by Littlewood and company before its 1958 Stratford East premiere, it was obvious that a distinctive and eloquent new dramatic voice had been discovered, and it shone through. Influential cigarillos and her desire to buy ‘a big, fast car’ (even though she couldn’t drive yet) with the proceeds from her hit play, punningly described as ‘Shelagh’s taste of money’. Although Kenneth Tynan and many others saw in her the future of British drama, other critics were not persuaded. Alan Brien of THE SPECTATOR (incidentally a friend of Terence Rattigan) dismissed A TASTE OF HONEY as jejune juvenilia, stating that ‘five years ago, before a senile society began to fawn upon the youth which is about to devour it, such a play would have remained written in green longhand in a school exercise book on the top of the bedroom wardrobe.’ Its only value, he suggested snobbily, was anthropological, as ‘the inside story of a savage culture observed by a genuine cannibal’; a stark reminder of the North/South divide that bisected English society in the Fifties, rendering those from ‘The North’ as exotic mysteries to certain Southerners.

But they were not the only ones to take issue with Delaney’s drama, and she received some of her most vociferous criticism from her own hometown. Back in Salford, certain quarters of the local media worried about the negative light in which Delaney might be casting the region. Chief driver of what would amount to a press vendetta against Delaney was the SALFORD CITY REPORTER newspaper, which ran critical headlines of local girl made good like ‘A taste of cash for Shelagh but a kick in the teeth for Salford’. Angry civic dignitaries perceived it as a condescending caricature of the North, emphasising what they saw as its worse elements for the delectation of well-heeled London theatregoers (a concern substantiated by comments like Alan Brien’s). But Delaney sincerely loved Salford, and lyricised the beauty of the industrial landscape and the warmth of the people in a documentary film she made for the BBC’s arts programme MONITOR in 1960, describing her hometown as vibrantly alive, ‘restless with all the coming and the going’ on the great canals, and ‘even romantic if you can stand the smell’. She said it exerted a pull on her ‘like a terrible drug’.



She didn't want to leave. But she was perturbed by the rapid urban redevelopment she saw around her, and publicly expressed her disquiet at the City Council 'tearing down whole parts of Salford' and sending residents 'far away' to remote estates, 'sterile places' where, she said, 'there's no neighbourliness, it takes years to do this.' Delaney was never sufficiently humble, homespun theatre critic Kenneth Tynan would commend *A TASTE OF HONEY* for finally bringing 'real people onto the stage, joking and flaring and scuffling', and hailed Shelagh Delaney as 'a portent', the shape of things to come for British drama. Graham Greene was so impressed, he gifted her with a new typewriter to replace the battered old one on which she'd had to bash out her debut play, hailing her as a working-class dramatist of greater maturity than John Osborne, writer of the groundbreaking kitchen sink drama of 1956 *LOOK BACK IN ANGER*.

A TASTE OF HONEY transferred to the West End in 1959 for a long run, was produced on Broadway where it drew fascinated audiences, and the film rights were sold at a high price, leading to Tony Richardson's 1961 award-winning screen version (with screenplay written by Delaney, brilliantly adapting her own work for a new medium) which was a box-office hit. *A TASTE OF HONEY* and its young author were a sensation. The popular press reported with interest her exploits, including her newly acquired taste for orange curacao and or deferential to please the city fathers. Being so outspoken in her writing and in interviews made her enemies. Her biographer John Harding suggests that Delaney's experience of 'being vilified in print, accused of exploiting her hometown for cash' and having 'her talents and achievement openly queried' when she was barely in her twenties undoubtedly left its scars. She later wrote an astonishing short story, *ALL ABOUT AND TO A FEMALE ARTIST*, a verbatim compendium of the condescending reviews, begging letters, and hate mail she'd received when she first became a public figure, which leaves the reader in no doubt about what it feels like to be the recipient of people's envy, snobbery and misogyny, and demonstrates with great prescience how young women deemed to have overstepped the boundaries of propriety become the locus of others' dark thoughts.

Her recent biographer Selina Todd argues that Delaney anticipated many of the later demands of the women's liberation movement. Certainly in word and deed she refused to go along with the limited pathway set out for a working-class girl and demanded more from life. She passionately defended young women's right 'to raise, sometimes on a grand scale, merry hell' in an article she wrote in 1962:



'They drink. They dance. They sing. They LIVE. They mix freely with boys. They spend quickly what money they have in spite of advice to be thrifty and save for the future. For what future? The answer to this question is not as speedily given as the advice that sparked it off. "Settle down. Settle down. Settle down." The cry goes up and the criers looked hurt and confess themselves puzzled when the cry is ignored.'

Shelagh Delaney refused to meekly settle down. Although she faced struggles in constructing a sustainable career as a writer, and suffered perhaps from a lack of ongoing mentorship ✨of the kind that many of her male contemporaries benefitted from✨, she did go on to do more richly engaging work across stage, film, television, and radio drama, up until her death in 2011, as well as seeing her debut play continue to speak to new audiences across successive decades. But then she knew all along it was a mistake to underestimate the power of a determined teenage girl.

Melanie Williams Professor of Film and Media at the University of East Anglia and author of A Taste of Honey (BFI Film Classics

Here are some women that form the Royal Exchange Theatre, reading a letter from Shelagh Delaney to “the Mother of Modern Theatre”, Director, Joan Littlewood.

This letter from an 18 year old aspiring writer paid off, and Littlewood agreed to mentor Delaney, as well as produce her play, A TASTE OF HONEY. Through this play, the trajectory of how women’s stories were portrayed on stage began to change.

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Rehearsal Snaps



Joel Fildes



Joel Fildes



Joel Fildes

Trailer & Teaser Time



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See our official trailer here to get a
feel of the show



Cast Interviews

Here are some clips to get to know some of our cast.

Actor Exchange

Rowan Robinson & Jill Halfpenny



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Exclusive Actors Interview

During rehearsals for this new production of A TASTE OF HONEY, Jill Halfpenny (playing Helen) and Rowan Robinson (playing Jo) – both appearing at the Royal Exchange for the first time – discussed their approach to their characters and their thoughts on Shelagh Delaney’s groundbreaking play.



Were you familiar with A TASTE OF HONEY when you were cast?

Rowan Robinson: Yeah, I knew it. I first read it when I was a kid. I sort of grew up knowing about it. My family had told me about it. I’ve not watched the film. Being from Salford, there’s not a lot of Salford plays out there. So I just kind of always knew it, and then when it came through in my email inbox, I was like [silent scream] yeah! I’d always wanted to do the play.

Jill Halfpenny: I think I came to it at drama school – didn’t do it, but read it. Like Rowan said, it just always kind of lives in the back of your head somewhere – something that might be a possibility. Then when it came through... sometimes jobs come through that just feel right. And to do it here, at the Royal Exchange... I suppose it’s just serendipity, isn’t it?

Will you be playing Helen in your own [Gateshead] accent?

Jill: No! You’re joking me, I’d get ran out of the theatre

What did you family say when you got the part?

Rowan: I mean, I grew up with my mum, and she’d spoken about A TASTE OF HONEY all my life. My aunty would go, ‘Oh, I lived through that! I was there on that street!’ So it always just felt very, very special. I’m doing it for myself obviously – I’m loving it – but I am sort of doing it for my family a little bit as well.

When I found out I'd got the job, I rang my Mam straightaway, and we cried. She was round at my aunty's, and they were having Tuesday night tea. She was like, 'Oh my god! She's playing Jo in A TASTE OF HONEY!' All the kids were screaming. They're really happy because they've not been able to watch me in anything really, when I've been in London and at drama school and all that.

Jill: That's so nice!

So they're all coming to see it?

Rowan: Oh yeah! All my family are coming to watch. My mum's coming to see it, like, four times!

To say that you'd only ever read the play before, is it springing any surprises on you as you get to grips with it?

Rowan: Yeah, there have been a lot of surprises, because there are things you miss when you're not analysing it from a character's point of view. We've done a lot of text work and research about the world of the play and Shelagh Delaney. There's so many things from her life that you don't realise are planted in the play, a lot of details that you'd miss the first-time round, reading it or watching the film. Assessing it from an actor's and a character point of view, it becomes a lot more in depth.

It's a play that caused a sensation in its time and was seen as putting a slice of real life on the stage. Is it difficult to revive it without it feeling trapped in aspic?

Jill: I think that the characters are quite easily brought to life on and off the page. It still lives and breathes with real clarity. Like Rowan says, once you start interrogating something, there's so much more depth and nuance to it than maybe you thought when you first read it. But that's the same with most plays, especially if they're well written. Something that we've been noticing is the characters' thought processes – how quickly they think, because you do think quickly in real life, but sometimes in plays there's quite a lot of time to breathe. There isn't really any time to play to breathe in this play.

Rowan: Yeah, they're quite scatty-minded people. And I think in terms of the themes of the play, they're still things that are relevant and still exist, definitely in Salford today. Homophobia and racism all still exists in this world right now, so they're not things that feel too far away.

The play tends to get categorised as realism, but it's actually a lot odder than that, isn't it?

Rowan: Yeah! It's really weird!

Jill: It has real fantasy elements to it. We've been talking about that a lot. It gets put into that category of 'kitchen sink', but actually, when you start to investigate, it goes into fantastical kinds of worlds and languages and people bursting out into song. It's not actually realism, a lot of the time. But that makes it more fun, doesn't it?

Rowan: Yeah, definitely!

Are these characters that you like, or that you recognise?

Rowan: Oh, I love Jo. I feel very connected to the women in the play especially. Yeah, and I just love her so much. She's a very multifaceted person. She has her nasty streak, but she's also really kind and caring and funny. I've really enjoyed exploring her so far. I can't wait to discover more about the characters.

Jill: It's great being in the rehearsal room and watching the characters develop. I'm watching Rowan and every day I see more of Jo. It's so cool. I love the characters. I love the fact that they're not one thing. I love the fact that it's not about, 'do you like this person? Do you hate this person?' To me, everyone is very complex in the play. Everyone is in a sort of eternal conflict as well, which I think is just really real. I think we're all a bit like that. Sometimes it's obvious when you're doing a play who you're meant to hiss at or boo at. To me, these are just really, really complex characters.

Rowan: Yeah, they're full of contradictions.

Jill: It's so full of contradictions all the time, isn't it? A bit like Shelagh Delaney herself. She loved Salford, she was so loyal to Salford, but she also couldn't wait to get out of Salford at given points in her life. And the play is very rooted, but it's very restless. There's always that sort of push and pull all the time, which feels very Shelagh. When you watch her in interviews, when you hear what she said, it feels like she was constantly in this state of conflict, which I really relate to, and I think that's exciting to watch on stage. With these characters it's 'where do they want to be, where do they want to go, why are they never settled?'

Shelagh Delaney's dialogue is so distinctive.

Jill: We've been talking about the way Jo and Helen talk to each other. For all the harshness, without sounding stereotypical about the working class, but even the way I was brought up, that kind of banter, back and forth, that's a love language. What other people might perceive as just constant put-downs is a love language. Like, 'Hey, I've got you, but don't get too big for your boots'. My Mam used to say things like that.

Rowan: Keeping you grounded!

Jill: And then, every so often there'll be a little moment of tenderness or concern, and it really pings out, because it's not what they say all the time. And I think that is very real.

So, it's as much about what's not said as what is?

Jill: Yeah

Rowan: Yeah, absolutely.

As director, what is Emma Baggett bringing to the play?

Jill: I'm sure Emma wouldn't mind me saying that she did a dissertation on Shelagh Delaney at university. She has loved Shelagh and studied Shelagh for years, so for her it's quite an honour to do this. But obviously, when you hold somebody in such high esteem, you have to be careful not to give them too much reverence. You still have to go for it. The ideas that Emma's got and the things that she's bringing to the table – for me, it feels like when you watch the show, you're going to be hit with lots of different sensations, through your sense of smell, your ears and your eyes....

Rowan: Yeah, that's so true. It's a multi-sensory experience! I remember when I met Emma for the first time at the casting recall. I said, 'Obviously this is a Salford play and you're doing it at the Royal Exchange, arguably the heart of Manchester. What makes you think you can do it, as someone who's not from Salford?'

And you still got the job?

Rowan: I know, yeah! But what she said – and I completely agree – is that the Royal Exchange is just such a special space. The theatre itself is so interesting, you really feel like you're in the action with them – with us – and that's really important for this play.

And I think it just is special for me anyway, knowing that my family from Salford are going to be able to watch it. Salford residents are going to be able to watch it. This isn't for, like, some other audience, it's for the people that this play is written about, and for, and to. I think that's really important. It's a really amazing opportunity that we've been given, to tell our story to the people that it's about.

Andy Murray

Let's Set The Scene Of 1950's Salford 20.

As the play was set in Salford in the 1950's it may be a good idea to set the scene of the time.

- Most households lived in overcrowded conditions and with inadequate cooking facilities that made it difficult to sterilise sputum cups and crockery.
- During WW2, almost 4 million British homes were destroyed or damaged, which led the UK to experience a major housing crisis at the end of the war. House construction had virtually ceased, labour was in short supply and an estimated 750,000 new houses were needed. Despite this, the government prioritised social housing, ordering over 150,000 temporary prefabricated homes to be built. Over time, the acute housing shortage was alleviated by local house building policies, which saw one million new homes built between 1945 and 1955. The ongoing slum clearance that began during the Industrial Revolution managed to move 900,000 people out of slums during the 1950s and 1960s.
- The sense of danger present with every loose brick, dangerous pipe, smashed window or broken floorboard. As these houses fell into various stages of dilapidation, they presented young explorers with a host of **many** challenges. The most exciting one of all – and made even more exciting by its express forbidding by parents – was climbing. These houses often had gable ends with an outcrop of house bricks, holes and easy-to-reach window ledges and roofs that proved irresistible to the army of tiny explorers investigating the thousands of instant Adventurelands only minutes from our doors.



- Male homosexual sex was certainly a historical reality in the '50s, but it came with mounting social and legal risks. You could be imprisoned for being gay.
- 1950s Britain saw several strides towards the parity of women, such as equal pay required by law for women teachers (1952) and for women in the civil service (1954), thanks to activists like Edith Summerskill, who fought for women's causes both in parliament and in the traditional non-party pressure.

Career In The Spotlight - Design

We sat down with the incredible designer Peter Butler to give us some insight into his beautiful design of the show.

What inspirations have you taken from Salford?

In the early stages of the design process, we took a trip to Salford to gather primary research ideas. Our objective was to explore remnants of the 1950s era, considering that many homes were lost due to slum clearance during that time. The demolition of terrace houses paved the way for the construction of new homes and tower blocks. Given the limited remains to look at in Salford, we decided to create our own resource, which inspired us to shape the design for the play. This resource served as a reference point for a bygone time and place that we couldn't physically revisit.

What other inspirations did you draw from?

We meticulously analysed the playtext, extracting key words, themes, and locations. Then we delved into various books and archives in search of images depicting life in Salford at the end of the 1950s. Our research extended to encompass clothing, art, and music specific to the area during that period. We began to understand the social and economic landscape, including where people worked and how they lived. Through this exploration, a vivid picture emerged, providing invaluable insight into how our characters might navigate their existence.

Drawing from our findings, we crafted a new world for the play—one characterised by a palpable undercurrent of restlessness and the convergence of disparate locations and materials. This approach helped us to infuse some authenticity into the design, with the aim of portraying the era and its inhabitants.



Which characters costume did you have the most fun designing and why?

All of Helen's costumes were meticulously crafted by the costume team here at the Royal Exchange. Collaborating closely with actress Jill Halfpenny, who brings Helen to life on stage, has been an enriching journey driven by artistic exploration. Together, we've engaged in thought-provoking conversations aimed at unraveling the intricacies of Helen's character.

These discussions have spanned from broad conceptual inquiries to fine-grained details. We've delved into questions such as: How does Helen's persona within the play inform her sartorial choices, and does she leverage her attire to assert herself? We've also pondered over details like the height of Helen's heels and the authenticity of her hair colour.

Every member of our team, including Felicia, our Costume Supervisor, has played a pivotal role in shaping and bringing Helen's costumes and character to life. This collaborative effort has undoubtedly been a highlight of the creative process for me.



Sketches By Peter Butler

Focusing on Geoffrey, can you tell us about how his costume helps his character development and informs his journey through the play?

23

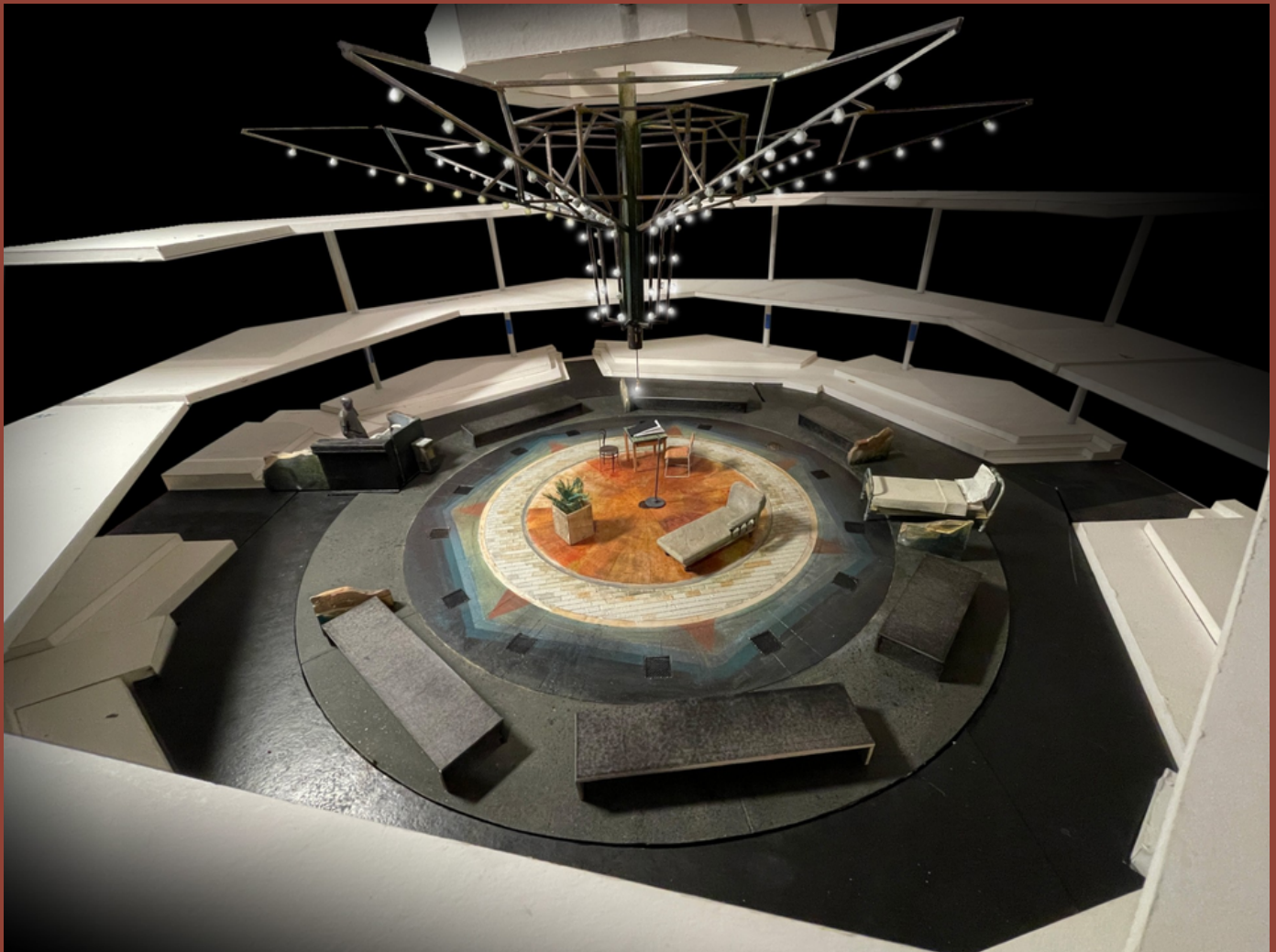
When forming Geoffrey's character, we grappled deeply with the challenge of authentically portraying a gay man in the repressive social climate of the 1950s. In an era where homosexuality was illegal, Geoffrey's mere openness about his sexuality would have subjected him to arrest and social isolation. Jo observes Geoffrey's consistent choice of black shirts, prompting us to delve into the symbolism behind this wardrobe choice.

In looking deeper into the script, we stumbled upon a poignant line borrowed from *THE SEAGULL*. In this extract, Medvendenko questions Masha's penchant for black attire, to which she responds, "I'm mourning for my life." This powerful quote served as a poignant reminder of the profound internal struggle faced by individuals like Geoffrey, who were forced to conceal their true selves for fear of societal condemnation. Despite the constraints imposed by the era, we remained committed to authentically exploring Geoffrey's identity as a gay man. In our pursuit of this, we opted for a softer haircut and engaged in discussions with the actor David Moorst during fittings, meticulously sculpting Geoffrey's physicality to reflect the nuances of his character and the challenges he confronts in expressing his true self.



What has been your biggest challenge in the design?

The weathered carousel structure hanging above the stage has been quite a challenge for us. Bringing such a large piece into the space requires careful planning to ensure it fits smoothly with the flow of the play. During rehearsals, I've seen it as a dynamic addition. Treating this inanimate object as if it has its own energy has helped us blend it into the action of the story. By giving it some poetry in its movement with the help of lighting and sound, we hope we've turned it into an engaging storytelling tool, with the aim of enhancing the theatrical experience for the audience.



Model Box Design By Peter Butler

Clips

A Taste of Honey Film by Tony Richardson

[https://www.bing.com/videos/search?](https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=a+taste+of+honey+film+youtube&docid=603513239504098705&mid=7E67FD5CEE23E5E9C5357E67FD5CEE23E5E9C535&view=detail&FORM=VIRE)

[q=a+taste+of+honey+film+youtube&docid=603513239504098705&mid=7E67FD5CEE23E5E9C5357E67FD5CEE23E5E9C535&view=detail&FORM=VIRE](https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=a+taste+of+honey+film+youtube&docid=603513239504098705&mid=7E67FD5CEE23E5E9C5357E67FD5CEE23E5E9C535&view=detail&FORM=VIRE)

Shelagh Delaney's Salford (Ken Russell, BBC Four) -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iXmMsOBrx9g>

Shelagh Delaney is interviewed by ITN in 1959

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SM22loR53TQ>

A Taste of Honey Q&A by BFI

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yr9u-dc_EKg&t=2s

A Taste of Honey - Shelagh Delaney and Joan Littlewood National Theatre

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T8opucP3PRo>

Tastes of Honey: Shelagh Delaney, class and feminism in post war Britain

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLQuFaDR2n0>

Articles

Shelagh Delaney gave working-class women a taste of what was possible

<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2011/nov/21/shelagh-delaney-working-class-women>

Shelagh Delaney Obituary

<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2011/nov/21/shelagh-delaney>

Shelagh Delaney: the return of Britain's angry young woman

<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2014/jan/25/shelagh-delaney-angry-young-woman-a-taste-of-honey>

Artsnight: Shelagh Delaney

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02lds7p>

Where will our working-class playwrights come from, now the arts have been sidelined?

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2019/oct/01/where-working-class-playwrights-come-from-arts-sidelined-michael-gove>

Shelagh Delaney: The Start of the Possible

<https://www.bl.uk/20th-century-literature/articles/shelagh-delaney-the-start-of-the-possible>

Looking at the original script for A

Taste of Honey

<https://www.bl.uk/20th-century-literature/articles/looking-at-the-original-script-for-a-taste-of-honey>

Self-Care Guide: A Taste Of Honey

As the show explores themes around teenage pregnancy, racism and homophobia we wanted to highlight some local organizations doing incredible work in helping young people navigate some of these if affected.

Young Parents' Specialist Service



This is a specialist service offered to all young women who are under 19. The young parent's midwives provide specialist guidance and support for young parents throughout pregnancy, and following the birth.

<https://mft.nhs.uk/saint-marys/services/maternity-services-obstetrics/specialist-antenatal-clinics-and-services/young-parents-specialist-service/#:~:text=The%20Teenage%20Pregnancy%20Support%20service,Wednesday%27s%201.30%20pm%20%E2%80%93%204.30%20pm.>



Read more

Chrysalis Manchester

Young Parents' Specialist Service This is a specialist service offered to all young women who are under 19. The young parent's midwives provide specialist guidance and support for young parents throughout pregnancy, and following the birth.

<https://manchestercommunitycentral.org/contacts/view/225130>



Read more

Kids Of Colour

Kids of Colour is a project for young people of colour aged 25 and under to explore 'race', identity and culture.

Create spaces for young people to feel supported, validated and celebrated, while also working to challenge the racism that affects young people and their communities; building collective resistance and solidarity.

They work across the communities of Greater Manchester, and are led by a small, part-time team.

READ
MORE



<https://kidsofcolour.com/>



The Proud Trust

The Proud Trust is an LGBT+ youth charity empowering young people to be proud of who they are. The Proud Trust delivers youth work and one-to-one support across Greater Manchester. The charity also runs a national training and inclusion programme for schools, Proud Connections Live Chat, and manages Manchester's LGBT+ Centre, The Proud Place.

READ
MORE



<https://www.theproudtrust.org//>



Self Care Suggestions

If you're concerned about attending the show, there are a few things we'd suggest that might help.

Before the show

Read the content warnings before deciding to see the show.

Sit with a friend

The show can tackle some tough themes so maybe sit with a friend or someone you trust.

After the performance

If you've found something in the show triggering we'd suggest talk to someone you trust or one of the organisations we've listed above. You can also talk to a member of our staff who will be able to signpost you organisations around the area

Famous Places To Visit In Salford



Working Class Movement Library



Salford Lads and Girls Club



Ordsall Hall



Salford Quays

New Schools and College Tours and Workshops



We are excited to be launching brand new tours of the Royal Exchange Theatre exclusive to Schools and Colleges.

You will explore our wardrobe, wigs, hair and make-up departments, where you may see costumes or prosthetics being made for an upcoming show. You will hear incredible facts about the rich history of not only the theatre, which was opened in 1976, but also the life of the building before this. You may meet some interesting characters during the tour, including our mascot Borris the bear.

As well as being informative, this new tour has been designed to be interactive and accessible, including a range of activities and opportunities to get hands-on with some of the elements that bring our shows to the stage. This will result in your students coming away with their own stories to tell.

<https://www.royalexchange.co.uk/project/schools-colleges-tours/>

Careers Workshops



We have also launched new Careers Workshops for you and your students. In this we'll explain the different departments within theatre and tackle the 150 jobs and roles of the people who work there. Using practical exercises and tasks, students will work together to learn about the different career paths and form mini theatre companies to take on the various responsibilities of these roles.

<https://www.royalexchange.co.uk/project/careers-workshop-for-schools/>