

A close-up, high-contrast photograph of a person's face, focusing on the right eye. The eye is a striking, glowing green color, contrasting sharply with the dark, shadowed skin. The lighting is dramatic, with the left side of the face in deep shadow and the right side, including the eye, highlighted. The overall mood is mysterious and intense.

# FRANKENSTEIN

Education Resource Pack

# To Educators

Welcome to Tilted Wig's Education Pack for our production of 'Frankenstein'.

This pack has been designed to support you and your students before, during and after your theatre trip. The resources within are relevant for KS3 English, GCSE English students studying Mary Shelley's 'Frankenstein as a set text, GCSE Drama, A Level Drama and Theatre studies.

In here you will find:

- Articles and timelines to provide socio-historical context for both novel and the setting of our play
- Page to stage – text comparisons for novel and script, side by side
- Themes analysis
- Set questions to help students consider use of theatrical conventions, performance space, impact of design on the audience (set, costume, lighting and sound), character relationships and the performer's interpretation of their characters.
- Space for students to jot down their thoughts, observations and assess key moments of their choice from the play
- Interviews with creative team who discuss their creative aims, choices and collaboration
- Character breakdowns from the official casting notice and key quotes by and about each character
- Practical tasks for you to lead in the classroom

We also share the secrets of our four week rehearsal period, provide an insight into the practicalities of producing a touring a show throughout the UK and our Creative Team give solid advice for pursuing a creative career in the theatre.

Please use the links in the contents page to take you directly to the content you wish to explore.

We hope you find these resources useful. Let us know what you think or if you use the pack using our contacts below.

Enjoy our world of 'Frankenstein'!

Tilted Wig

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[@tiltedwiguk](https://twitter.com/tiltedwiguk)



[@tiltedwig](https://www.instagram.com/tiltedwig) [#FrankensteinUKTour](https://www.instagram.com/tiltedwig)



[Tilted Wig Productions on Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/tiltedwigproductions)

# The Production Company

Katherine Senior and Matthew Parish formed Tilted Wig Productions in 2017. Katherine and Matthew have 15 years experience producing and touring plays throughout the UK with Creative Cow – a Devon-based theatre company they co-founded in 2007.

*From the very beginning of our careers as actors touring the depths of the British countryside, setting up shows in pubs and skittle alleys – and wherever else anyone would take us – we have worked hard to create a professional ensemble company of actors. Our shows now tour to some of the biggest theatres in the UK, yet that same ethos is still the driving force behind Tilted Wig Productions.*

*Whether Tilted Wig is producing a classic play or an exciting new adaptation, for each production they aim to bring together a vibrant and innovative creative team.*

*Over the years Katherine and Matthew have formed strong relationships with top venues all over the country, and with their inaugural production of 'Great Expectations' they were proud to co-produce for the very first time with Malvern Theatres. 2019 saw them co-produce with Malvern Theatres again and also Churchill Theatre, Bromley on 'The Picture of Dorian Gray' and Philip Meeks' play 'Murder, Margaret and Me', which tells the fascinating story of the relationship between murder mystery author Agatha Christie and actress Margaret Rutherford.*

*2020 began with an exciting tour of 'Lady Chatterley's Lover', adapted by Ciaran McConville. The tour was planned across the length and breadth of the UK but sadly was cut short due to COVID-19. 2021 saw us back on the road with a haunting production of The Legend of Sleepy Hollow. 2023 started with a UK tour of a madcap production of Around the World in 80 Days in collaboration with York Theatre Royal.*

*We are delighted to be touring the UK this winter with our electrifying production of 'Frankenstein'.*

*This is a new play based on the classic novel which resets the action to the 1930's/40's. Our aim is to create a tense, psychological thriller that has a really wide appeal; a "ghost story" that comes to life in front of us. The adaptation also asks important questions about the role of science in society, the nature of progress and the dangers of seeking human "perfection".*

*As we predominantly work on classic texts, we often work to redress the historic gender imbalance in literature. With this in mind, our production of Frankenstein will feature a cast of two men and four women (one of whom will be playing the eponymous Doctor Frankenstein). The small cast will realise moments of intimacy alongside epic themes, supported by a sweeping, evocative original score and an absorbing, atmospheric design.*

## **A note on our activities.**

We have included a variety of activities for you and your students throughout this education pack. Some of the tasks are designed to help understand our creative and production processes. Some allow for analysis and independent thought; others are practical and encourage group discussion. We have marked the tasks with symbols throughout the pack – the key for the symbols are below.

These are just suggestions, and you may wish to use them in other ways, please feel free to do so.



### **Context activity**

Provides useful context and interesting facts about the process, decisions or background information.



### **Analysis activity**

Gives students the opportunity to analyse the script, original novel or another piece of literature.



### **Practical / design activity**

Students can explore the creative choices we made using these activities



### **Oracy activity**

Students can express themselves individually or discuss in pairs or groups using inputs from the pack.



### **Writing activity**

Students can take part in a writing activity based on the input from the pack.

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## **A note on the pictures in this resource.**

*AI is the most recent advance to inherit the fears associated with Frankenstein. Some of the images on the following pages were created by humans, the others are AI generated. The only exception is the Characters section where all the images are AI generated. Can you and your students guess which is which on the other pages? The answers are on the Useful Links page.*





# Characters

## casting breakdowns and descriptions

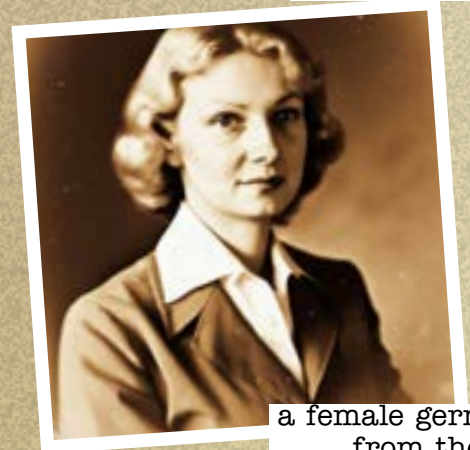
This is the authentic casting breakdown sent out to actors, to apply for the roles, plus key quotes about each character.



*The photos of the characters are **not the actors who play them**. They are AI generated images using key words from the character description. This is intended to promote debate about how generative AI uses human preconceptions to create images. The key words we used are written next to the pictures. **What do you think the choices the AI image generator made say about how we view these people? How would different key words change the image? If you want to try yourself, we used Bing Image Creator.***



a middle aged female polish captain from the 1940s



a female german scientist from the 1930s

### **The Captain/Dr Richter. Female. 50-99 years**

The Captain is a Polish refugee in hiding. When the Doctor finds her in the middle of nowhere, the Captain takes her in and feeds her, saving her life. In return, the Doctor tells her story...

Dr Richter is a German scientist working on behalf of the government. She attempts to convince the Doctor to accept large financial support in exchange for access to her work. Richter is a genetic purist

and treats those who aren't white or able-bodied with thinly-veiled disdain.

We are looking for an actor who is comfortable working in both a Polish & a German accent. We need someone who can convey the weight of terrible experiences and the strength to survive incredible adversary.

**The Captain key quote:** 'I don't trust anyone.' 'The things I've seen... the birds will sing again. I have to believe that.'

**Dr Richter key quote:** 'Times are changing Doctor. There is going to be a moment when people will need to side with progress or stagnate. You could do so much good for this country.'

**Quote about Dr Richter, by Henry:** 'She might have done; she was at the university at the same time as them. But I can't imagine



a man stitched together

them taking a great shine to her. Old money, everything they hated, paid for her doctorate in - something obscure. One of those that could trace their family back for fifteen generations to the same spot. And not particularly bright from what I heard. I'm sure she'll do very well in politics...'

### **The Creature. Male. 20-60 years**

Doctor Frankenstein's Creature - a man stitched together from parts of the dead or nearly dead and brought back to life. It is an experiment gone wrong - he lives in terrible pain, body parts being rejected and rotting away, even animals disgusted by the smell of decay. This is not the hammer-horror image of Frankenstein's monster but a tortured man. Despite his pain, he is incredibly erudite, quoting chunks of classical literature to curse his creator.

We are very open to how this character may look but we are particularly interested in meeting actors that have an unusual quality to their voice/physicality/movement.

**Key quote:** 'You know, once upon a time, I could

not wait to meet you. There was nothing I wanted more than to be human, to come home to you and impress you with my form, to live together as a true family. And then I began to read. Shakespeare, Milton. Worst of all I read your newspapers. And I learnt that humans are barbaric and selfish and cruel. And then I realised I didn't want to be human at all.'

**Quote about The Creature, by Victoria:** : 'It looked fine on the table. But when I saw it alive. With blood throbbing in its veins, yellow skin straining to cover the organs underneath and barely succeeding... I felt a fear I'd never felt before. I knew I'd opened a box that couldn't



an intelligent, driven, powerful female scientist from the 1930s

be closed again. I knew I had to find him and stop him.'

**Dr Victoria Frankenstein. Female. 30-40 years**

We are looking for an intelligent, powerful actress to take on the lead role in our upcoming UK tour of Frankenstein.

Victoria is incredibly driven and believes scientific progress is the most important thing – it is not her responsibility to decide how her

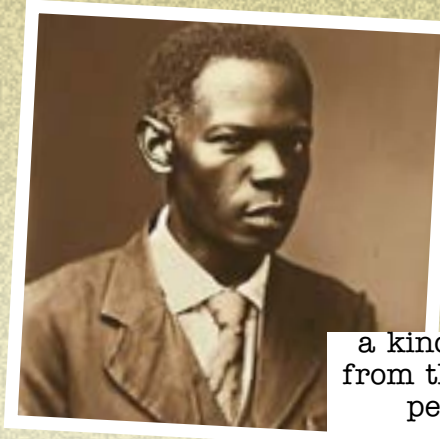
discoveries are used. This single-mindedness eventually leads to her downfall, as everyone she loves is torn apart by her experimentation. We are looking for an actor with enough presence to hold the stage for nearly the entirety of the play as well as the emotional capacity to convey the large journey through the piece.

Please note, it is important that this character is played by a white woman; she experiences privileges within the play that other characters do not due to their race / disability.

**Key quote:** 'It's important you understand; I was doing this for good reasons. I thought that, if I could understand how life is given,

I could help others. I tried to create a perfect person, a superhuman.'

**Quote about Victoria, by Henry** 'Oh don't be silly, she's a true romantic at heart, however



a kind, caring scientist from the 1930s who is a person of colour

much she tries to hide it'

**Quote about Victoria, by The Captain** 'You have a gift. You could help people, people who are desperate, crying out for it, and yet you waste your life trying to, what, make amends? You abandon that poor girl, knowing exactly the kind of people whose hands she will fall into.'

**Henry. Male. Global Majority. 20-40 years.**

Henry is the Doctor's life partner - an English scientist, working abroad.

Henry is kind, caring, supportive but ultimately oblivious to the Doctor's experiments. He is cheery and warm but in the end his ability to turn a blind eye leads to his downfall.

**Key quote:** 'Couldn't do any of this biology stuff. Bit squeamish you see. Much happier with the invisible forces of nature than the very visible insides of a human being. Sorry,



a female scientist's assistant from the 1930s in her mid-twenties with a disability

I actually feel a little queasy just thinking of it...'

**Quote about Henry, by Victoria:** 'He is... wonderful. He gives me all the space I need for my work and the time we spend together...'

he makes me very happy.'

**Francine. Female. 16 – 25 years.**

We are committed to casting an actor with a disability in this role.

Francine is the doctor's collaborator, her closest confidante and in some ways a surrogate child. She is also the moral compass of the play. Whilst the doctor is single-minded in her pursuit of progress, Francine is able to see the potential moral complications of humans playing god and how scientific progress, in the wrong hands, could be devastating. Just like the creature, she has been treated "monstrously" by a cruel and uncaring society.

**Francine key quote:** . 'He learnt to be cruel because that's how we treated him. Did we look for him when he was lost, or try to tend his wounds or teach him about the world? We abandoned him and left him to fend for himself. And when you are alone, this world is a cruel one Doctor. Believe me.'

**Quote about Francine, by Henry:** 'I've no idea. I tried to get it out of Francine but she's impossibly loyal.'



a beautiful playful and charming woman in her mid-twenties from the 1930s

**Quote about Francine by Victoria:** 'When I arrived here, she was begging on the streets. She looked at death's door. She was starving. No one would even look at her. It doesn't matter where you are in the world, people are always terrified of those that are different to them.'

**Elizabeth. Female. 16-25**

Elizabeth is the Doctor's beautiful adopted sister. She is playful and charming; a breath

of fresh air in the serious world of the Doctor. Her untimely death at the hands of the Creature should break our hearts.

This is a relatively small role (one good sized scene) but would be a wonderful opportunity for a recent graduate.

**Key quote:** 'Good grief no, I have not been gifted with a scientific mind in the slightest. My sister tried to explain the workings of the nervous system once, I had to lie in a dark room for several days.'

**Quote about Elizabeth, by Victoria:** 'That she was mine - mine to protect, to love, to cherish. She is more to me than all the world. But I must warn you, we are very different. Where I can be a little...clinical and... solitary, Elizabeth is all warmth and joy. Pure love. Somehow, we make a very good match.'



**Why do you think the creator's of the stage play made these casting choices? Think about:**

- Age
- Gender
- Appearance
- Ethnicity
- Character description

**Would you have changed any of the casting choices?**

**Do you think the actors met these casting choices?**

**Do you think the director or actors modified the characterisation from the original casting notice? Why (not)?**

**What do the key quotes say about the character?**

**Can you find a key quote about each of the characters from the original novel which you think describes them?**





Think of a favourite book or one you have read recently. Using the same format as the character descriptions on the previous pages, try to create a casting breakdown for a play based on it. What kind of person would play each part? What ages and appearance? Would you change anything from the novel such as change the gender of one of the characters or add a new character? Put your ideas below:



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Quick description (age, gender)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Detailed character description: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Quick description (age, gender)

\_\_\_\_\_

Detailed character description: \_\_\_\_\_

Lined writing area for detailed character description.

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Quick description (age, gender)

\_\_\_\_\_

Detailed character description: \_\_\_\_\_

Lined writing area for detailed character description.



# 'Frankenstein' Plot synopsis

## Scene by scene

### Scene 1

1943. Night. A frozen Russian wasteland. A cold and hungry Dr. Victoria Frankenstein knocks on the door of the Captain, who has been lighting a fire. The Captain allows Victoria into her home for shelter. Victoria tends to the Captain's infected hand and explains why she has been wandering the wasteland. She is hunting the creature she made with her experiment, in a quest to create the perfect person. Victoria decides to explain in detail and tell the Captain the full story, from the start.

### Scene 2

1930. Germany. Victoria Frankenstein's laboratory. A full moon shines whilst a storm is brewing. Victoria is focused on her work. She has been waiting for a night with these conditions. Her assistant Francine arrives and announces a guest has arrived: Victoria's sister Elizabeth. They embrace and reminisce about home, but Victoria is distracted and eager to carry on with her experiment. Elizabeth gives Victoria a locket containing a photograph of their mother with Elizabeth.

### Scene 3

Later that evening. The laboratory.

Victoria's supportive partner – and fellow scientist – enters. He snoops in Victoria's workbook but is caught by loyal Francine. He meets Elizabeth and entertains her as Victoria rushes back to her work. They chat about Victoria, who they deeply care for. Both are curious about Victoria's experiment but she and Francine are secretive.

### Scene 4

The same night. The laboratory. A storm rages outside.

Victoria and Francine frantically prepare for their experiment, Victoria removes her locket and they ready the body they have pieced together with a helmet to conduct lightning. A lever is pulled, the body convulses but nothing else happens. Disappointed, the women leave for dinner.

The body convulses and the Creature breathes into life. He rips himself off the slab, scrabbles to a window and escapes into the night.

Victoria and Francine return to the laboratory and realise their experiment worked.

### Scene 5

1933. Victoria's laboratory.

Victoria is visited by Dr Richter, who instructs Victoria that her research must benefit a new German political party. She expresses discomfort and disdain towards Francine. Richter leaves, Henry enters and reveals that Richter wants weapons from him for the same political party. He tackles Victoria's unopened pile of mail and discovers a letter with distressing news about Elizabeth. Victoria expresses guilt and regret that she had not travelled home to see her.

### Scene 6

A few months later. The laboratory. A new storm rages.

Henry and Francine leave for a black tie event, Victoria remains home, alone.

The creature breaks in. Creature and creator meet for the first time.

The creature asks Victoria to create a life partner for him, to cure his loneliness and leaves.

Francine returns. Excitedly, Victoria tells Francine they must make a newer, better creature, but Francine explains the danger and damage this could cause. Victoria agrees and burns all of her notes before leaving.

The Creature returns and realises there is no hope now of a partner being made for him. Hurt, betrayed and angry, he encounters Henry and extracts revenge on his 'creator'.

### Scene 7

The Captain's hut. 1943. Russia.

Victoria pauses from her story to sob. She is comforted by the Captain, who urges her to give up the hunt and use her skills to help people suffering in the war.

The door flies open. The Creature appears. Hunted has found hunter.



Image A

## 'Frankenstein' Plot comprehension exercise.

Here are the scenes from the play. It follows a similar structure to the novel. Can you remember / guess the order? Some of the time words have been removed to increase the challenge!

**Scene** \_\_\_\_\_

Germany. Victoria Frankenstein's laboratory. A full moon shines whilst a storm is brewing. Victoria is focused on her work. She has been waiting for a night with these conditions. Her assistant Francine arrives and announces a guest has arrived: Victoria's sister Elizabeth. They embrace and reminisce about home, but Victoria is distracted and eager to carry on with her experiment. Elizabeth gives Victoria a locket containing a photograph of their mother with Elizabeth.

**Scene** \_\_\_\_\_

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1943. Night. A frozen Russian wasteland. A cold and hungry Dr. Victoria Frankenstein knocks on the door of the Captain, who has been lighting a fire. The Captain allows Victoria into her home for shelter. Victoria tends to the Captain's infected hand and explains why she has been wandering the wasteland. She is hunting the creature she made with her experiment, in a quest to create the perfect person. Victoria decides to explain in detail and tell the Captain the full story, from the start.

**Scene** \_\_\_\_\_

The laboratory. A new storm rages.

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**Scene** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Scene** \_\_\_\_\_

Victoria's laboratory.

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**Scene** \_\_\_\_\_

The Captain's hut. Russia.

Victoria pauses from her story to sob. She is comforted by the Captain, who urges her to give up the hunt and use her skills to help people suffering in the war.

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# Themes in Frankenstein

Below are some of the many themes that the book and the play share. At the end of each section there are some questions that may be useful discussion starters.

## Ambition and the pursuit of perfection

In our play, Victoria's greatest ambition is her greatest downfall. Even though she begins her experiment with good intentions,



Image B

she is flawed and becomes obsessed by her success and her quest. Her vision narrows and she becomes isolated and alienated from her family instead of spending time with them and using her knowledge and skills to help other people.

Ambition is a popular theme in literature. In Greek mythology, Icarus is a symbol of caution. He was escaping Crete with his father, the inventor Daedalus. Icarus was given a pair of wings made by his father for the escape. Fuelled by pride and the success of flying, he ignored his father's warnings and flew too high and too close to the sun. The wax on the wings melted and Icarus fatally plummeted into the sea. Shelley's husband Percy wrote the poem 'Ozymandias' reflecting on futility of the vanity, arrogance and ambition of past rulers. The ambition of the Macbeths drives them to commit murder and leads to their own demise. These stories are hundreds of years old and still act as a warning to us of the dangers of ambition mixed with pride.

More hauntingly, in 20th century history the pursuit of a so called 'master race' was at the core of the Nazi party's ambitions, resulting in the atrocity and horror of genocide. In our production it is implied that Dr Richter is a member of this party, which is gathering strength and power before the start of the Second World War. **What do you think the consequences would be if Dr Richter got their hands on Dr Frankenstein's notebooks?**

## Women, childbirth and creation

Our writer and director, Séan Aydon has chosen a female Doctor Frankenstein in our production for several reasons (detailed in our Page to Stage article). One of these centres on birth/creation, leading to questions about expectations around women.



Image C

Mary Shelley was a young woman when 'Frankenstein' was published (21) and only 18 years old when she began writing. Women were not expected to have careers or write about gruesome topics, and so it was published anonymously. It wasn't until the revised edition in 1831 when Mary's name was published with the novel. **How do you think readers would have responded in 1818 if they had discovered the author was a woman?**

Our production has a female Doctor Frankenstein. She turns her back on the creature who calls her 'mother'. The lens of creature and creator shifts with this new dynamic. Instead of creating life the 'natural' way, by trying to conceive and giving birth, Victoria creates life artificially by resurrecting parts of the dead. She then rejects her creation, who she is repulsed and terrified by, instead of nurturing and protecting him. **If you are familiar with the novel, do Victoria's actions generate more sympathy for the creature?**

**Is your reaction to Victoria abandoning the Creature any different to that of Victor's rejection of him? If so, what can this tell us about how the role of women is**



image D

## perceived in our society today?

### War and revolution

Mary Shelley wrote *Frankenstein* shortly after Europe had been ravaged by the Napoleonic wars. These were truly terrible in their destruction, leaving six million people dead on all sides and tearing up cities and countryside. This is clearly in Shelley's mind as in her 1817 book *Six Weeks' Tour through a part of France, Switzerland, Germany and Holland*, she describes the desolate landscape as they travel through it. By transposing the story to the time of The Second World War, our playwright has made the tale more familiar to a modern audience with much of the technology and cultural sentiment still in place today. The marriage of war and technological advancement, and the threat this entails, is further brought home by the interest of the authorities in using Frankenstein's creation for its own purposes. **Are there ever any benefits to war?**

### Teenage rebellion

Mary Shelley was no stranger to teenage rebellion. When she was 15, her father, William Godwin,



Image E

affectionately described her as "singularly bold, somewhat imperious, and active of mind". Little did he know how right he was. Mary started having secret romantic meetings with her father's friend, Percy Shelley, when she was 16 and he was 21. The place they chose to have these secret meetings? Her mother's grave. It is also believed by many that she lost her virginity to Percy in the same cemetery.

Although he believed in free love, her father did not approve of the match and tried to separate them. Soon after the couple ran away together, taking Mary's stepsister, Claire Clairmont, with them and escaping to Europe. This reflects The Creature's rebellion against his own master and the chase that ensues, firstly the creature pursuing the creator and then vice versa. **Is teenage rebellion an important stage in becoming an adult?**

### Nature versus nurture

The creature is initially abandoned by the only person he can call family. He is initially a blank canvas, unable to interpret the world in any more complexity than a toddler. However, he seems primed for compassion. The cruelty of

strangers and the abandonment of his parent seem to make him into what some would interpret as 'the monster'. However, there is the question of whether his unnatural creation, the defiance of God and/or nature has destined The Creature to be 'evil'. The absence of a parental figure might be something felt by Shelley who, for the first few years of her life had no mother figure (and may have felt responsible for her death in childbirth). Her relationship with her later stepmother was difficult and there appeared to be little affection between the two. **Is nature or nurture a more powerful driver of human personality?**

### Loneliness and isolation

The creature is alone because of rejection by his parent and society. The doctor chooses to push loved ones away in pursuit of work or to protect them from The Creature's vengeance. In both cases the absence of others takes a

toll on their physical and psychological wellbeing, making them more hateful of each other because of this isolation but also obsessed with each other at the same time. Mary Shelley too was separated from her friends and family for several years by eloping with Percy Shelley. Their journey across Europe is also reminiscent of *Frankenstein* and the Creature's as they pursue each other. **How has the loneliness and isolation many people felt during the recent pandemic affected society?**

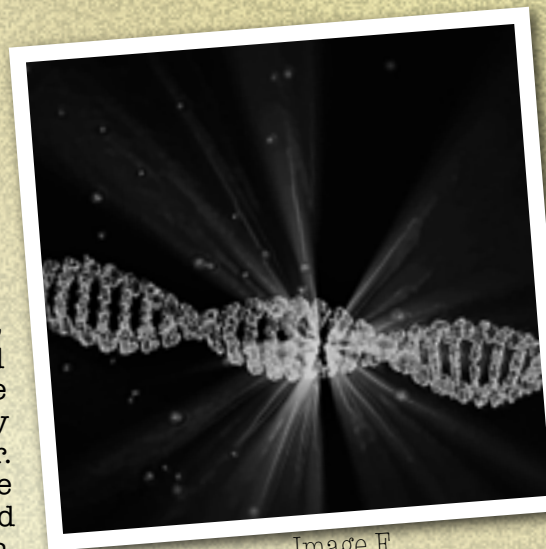


Image F



Image G

## Unrequited and lost love

Although revenge and fear pervade the story, in many ways it is the importance of love that forms its core message. In the novel,



Image H

is grieving over the loss of his mother to scarlet fever. The Creature created as a result is naturally inclined towards goodness, trying to help the family he encounters, but is turned to hatred because he is not loved. The Creature states that he will cease his revenge upon Frankenstein if he is given his own partner who will love him. The Creature's revenge on his creator consists not of killing him, but killing all those he loves, because The Creature knows this is the greatest punishment. And at the end of the original story, the Creature does not rejoice at his creator's death, but mourns him, realising this is the only person with whom he has any meaningful relationship. Shelley's own relationship with love was equally problematic. She believed in free love in principle, but was incredibly jealous of her husband, Percy, conducting an affair with her stepsister. Not only that, Mary had to deal with his love of his new child by his current wife while she was mourning the loss of the child she had with him. She loved her father deeply, but ran away from him at the

age of 16 to be with Percy and also rejected many of his enlightenment ideals in her later works (replacing them instead with 'feminine' principles of love). **Does the pursuit of love bring out the best or worst in us?**

### Playing God

'Frightful must it be; for supremely frightful would be the effects of any human endeavour to mock the stupendous mechanism of the Creator of the world.' Mary Shelley on the Creature.

Mary Shelley was no stranger to tragic death. Her mother

Frankenstein pursues ways to cheat death because he

over the loss

died days after giving birth to her, two of her children died in infancy, her husband, Percy, died in a boating accident, her half-sister committed suicide, and all this before she had hit her mid-twenties. It was no wonder that she might consider the possibility of bringing back someone from the dead. This is the ultimate act of playing God: science taking away the one inevitability we all share and giving this astounding power to a mere human. Like in many subsequent Science Fiction stories, such power is too much to handle and leads to disastrous consequences. The subtitle of the original novel, 'The Modern Prometheus' is a clue to this before we even turn the first page. Prometheus was a mythical Greek figure who stole fire from the gods and gave it to humans. He was punished for all eternity by being chained to a rock and having his insides ripped out by a bird of prey every day. The play takes place at a time when both the best and worst of science and technology were in full view. On one hand disease had been fought back, communication and transport were fast and affordable, people had access to clean running water, electricity and heating at home. On the other hand, eugenics, weapons technology and rampant industrialisation had devastated many countries around the world. At the time the play is set, the race was on to build a nuclear bomb. The question was not whether humans should have such God-like power, but who would get it first: the Soviets, the British, the Americans or The Nazis. **Would the creature have similarly world-changing power if it had really happened?**



Image I



# From Page To Stage: Adapting A Classic Text

*Adapting a classic piece of literature for the stage, to appeal to a contemporary audience comes with its challenges and rewards. Here our writer and director Séan Aydon explains his process of adapting 'Frankenstein'.*

When looking at a classic story there are various ways of approaching the text. Sometimes you are a pure adapter, taking the original text and translating it from a written work to a living one. However, on this project, I have used the original text more as a starting point from which to respond with a whole new play. The major plot points remain the (predominately) same but there is almost no dialogue lifted from novel. This then feels like a conversation between me and Shelley, taking her work, digesting it through my world view and finding something that explores her ideas in a whole new context. Those who know the book well will find references throughout – however, this is a completely new story.

The book itself is not particularly theatrical; it is told in a series of letters and recollections. I wanted to find a way to bring it into the present whilst retaining that element of feeling like a “ghost story” told in the past tense – I love the idea of two people sitting by a fire, telling a story that grows in the audiences’ mind until the tension is almost unbearable... I decided we would retain the original framework (the Doctor telling the story to the Captain) however, once that tale began, we would switch into the world of the story and experience it as it happened.

With an adaptation, it is key to decide the themes and questions in the text that you are going to focus on. **For me, 'Frankenstein' is an exploration of what it means to be human, the dangers of scientific progress and whose responsibility it is to decide how these discoveries are to be used. I also find interesting the idea of parental responsibility or “nature vs nurture” – how much do we bear responsibility for our creation’s actions?**

I find it useful to set myself rules and

challenges and decided the following at the outset. I decided there will only be two locations; the location of the present (from which the story is told) and the laboratory. All scenes need to happen in these two places. This challenge focuses the story and forces me to work harder on the character and dialogue rather than relying on scene changes to keep the audiences entertained (in my opinion – fewer, longer scenes make for better theatre). I also decided every character must be completely developed and no one should be

there purely to develop the plot. This meant amalgamating some characters and leaving some completely “off-stage” such as Justine Moritz, the unfortunate girl who the Creature frames for murder.

There are practical outcomes to these rules which also have a relation to me as writer and director. By having fewer locations, we can realise the ones we do have in more detail and keep the story moving with more pace. By only having

well developed characters, we will have a smaller, tighter cast and roles that will reap more rewards for the actors playing them. It also means the audience will have a deeper connection to the characters they get to know.

## SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

### LOCATION

For the most part, the locations remain the same. I moved the family home from Geneva to London – mainly for our UK audience but also as it’s further away and helps to explain why the Doctor rarely goes home. The lab is in Germany as that is where the Doctor studied at University of Ingolstadt. The Captain meets the Doctor in uninhabited Russia. However, whilst the locations are the same, the time period changes the relevance of them significantly...

### TIME

Our biggest shift takes the action from the late 1700’s to the 1930/40’s. Right at the beginning of the process, I knew I wanted to make it feel more contemporary, to relate more to the ethical questions of today and to feel more real. However, setting it in 2023 felt too clean and clinical. It felt less scary and that the questions in the text might feel too “on the nose”. As I looked between those two time periods and thought about the locations



Image J



in the text, I landed upon the period around the second world war.

There is no historical context that we have a better shared understanding of than World War II. We are well aware of the horrors of the time and by setting our play amongst them it raises the stakes immeasurably; **the Doctor's experiments have the power to change the whole world in a way we can all imagine.** I looked back at the questions of the play I most wanted to focus on and they seemed to be enhanced by this new context. By exploring it through the prism of that time, a world where eugenics and racial purity were growing in popularity, it began to highlight the dangerous path that chasing "perfection" leads to. The majority of the action takes place before the war has begun – this means whilst our characters can naively dismiss politics as irrelevant to them, we know that will all soon change.

#### CHARACTER SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

##### DR VICTORIA FRANKENSTEIN

I decided relatively early on that I wanted to have a female Doctor. There were three main reasons for this. Firstly, I thought the relationship between the Doctor and the Creature would be very different with the use of the word "mother". There are many associations with the word mother, all of which Victoria rejects. She is literally able to create life through birth yet chooses to reject nature and create for herself. Secondly, I felt that if Mary Shelley was writing today, there's no reason why she wouldn't choose a female protagonist (her mother, Mary Wollstonecraft, was a famous feminist writer and advocate for women's rights). Thirdly, because we want to do a better job of representation – classic texts are nearly always predominantly populated by male characters and we want to create more roles for female actors (our adaptation has 5 female roles and two male).

In many ways, the Victoria is very similar to Shelley's Victor. She is desperately driven and ambitious, unsatisfied with the achievements of mainstream science. One shift I wanted to make was to change Frankenstein's motives for agreeing to make the second creature. Shelley's Doctor agrees out of fear of what the Creature could do to their remaining loved ones. However, our Doctor is seduced by her own brilliance and the possibility to go even further. She forgets all the horror and sees only her own success... It is important to me that Victoria is likable whilst being fundamentally flawed. There is a strong argument for her being the villain of the piece yet in the moment we can understand her choices. In the end, she

is unable to overcome her flaw, to turn back and dedicate herself to something greater – which ultimately leads to her downfall.

##### THE CREATURE

I have always been dissatisfied with the representation of the Creature. Often he grumbles and moans, in some versions he is completely non-verbal. Ask any child, and they can give you a zombie like impression of Frankenstein's monster, stumbling and searching for brains. But Shelley's Creature is nothing like this. He is incredibly erudite and articulate. The idea of this well-versed classicist in a patchwork quilt of a body seems much more terrifying to me.

The key to our Creature is pain. His body does not work as it should, parts are incomplete, flesh is being rejected and rotting away from him. Yet he lives.

The Creature often describes himself as something new, something other than human, despite being made of human parts. He has no sense of self, no sense of a place in the whole, because he has no memories. Blade Runner (and its source text Do Android's Dream Of Electric Sheep?) are a contemporary exploration of the Frankenstein myth. In this section, Tyrell (the Frankenstein character), talks about his creations (replicants) and describes how without memories we are not human.

The Creature should be pitied as well as feared. He did not ask to be created after all. But then again – did any of us?

**Deckard:**

She's a replicant, isn't she?

**Tyrell:**

I'm impressed. How many questions does it usually take to spot them?

**Deckard:**

Twenty, thirty, cross-referenced.

**Tyrell:**

It took more than a hundred for Rachael, didn't it?

**Deckard:** [realizing Rachael believes she's human]

She doesn't know...

**Tyrell:**

She's beginning to suspect, I think.

**Deckard:**

Suspect? How can it not know what it is?

**Tyrell:**

More human than human is our motto. Rachael is an experiment, nothing more. We began to recognize in them strange obsession. After all they are emotional inexperienced with only a few years in which to store up the experiences which you and I take for granted. If we gift them the past, we create a cushion or pillow for their emotions and consequently we can control them better.

**Deckard:**

Memories. You're talking about memories.

*Blade Runner, 1982*

## CHARACTERS I CHOOSE TO BE IN OUR ADAPTATION

### THE CAPTAIN

Just like Shelley's Captain Walton, our Captain is the vessel through which we receive Frankenstein's tale. However, that is where the similarities end. Our Captain is a mysterious figure in the middle of nowhere, who gives little away to the suspicious stranger who turns up at our door. It is later revealed, she is a Polish refugee, escaped from one of the German camps. This backstory allows us to bring in the reality of the war going on around them and to ask the Doctor some of the questions we might be asking by the end of the play. The Captain has seen the very worst humanity has to offer and has strong views on scientific responsibility.

### ELIZABETH

Much of Shelley's Elizabeth remains present in our character. She is clever, kind and universally loved. Unlike in the original story, she is no longer the Doctor's love interest – the idea of someone marrying their adopted sister felt uncomfortable in a contemporary world. She also is the first victim, unlike William in the original. This makes the world of the play smaller and means that when someone dies that we have grown to love too, the pain is greater.

### HENRY

Henry takes the mantle of love interest from Elizabeth – although in the original there is such a depth of love for his friend that it doesn't feel a huge leap. Like Victoria, he is a scientist, but doesn't share her blinkered determination to change the world. He is caring and, ironically, possesses many of the "mothering" qualities Victoria lacks. But he

also serves as a representative of a different type of person – the essentially good man who turns a blind eye. As the Creature asks, is he not as culpable as Victoria?

### FRANCINE

The first of two characters that aren't in the book. I realised early on that the Doctor needed a companion in her work, otherwise she would have no one to talk to. I wanted to have someone who could feel an apprentice to the doctor but also challenge and question her.

This role is written specifically for a disabled actor. By having someone with a disability present, we immediately see the flimsiness of the idea of human perfection. Even today, we live in world designed for a "normal" person (where normal is a 70kg, white male between 20 and 30). Francine has the fire of oppression and is able to challenge the dangerous ideas Richter (and to some degree the Doctor) strive towards. When the doctor clumsily tries to inspire Francine with the opportunity to create life in God's image, Francine can ask where she fits in the doctor's perfect world.

Francine also brings in the idea of nature vs nurture. She shuns the idea that the Creature was always destined to destroy and claims responsibility – "he learnt to be cruel because that is how we treated him". However, ironically, she herself is proof of the opposite. She has been treated terribly in her life and yet has the strongest moral compass within the play.

### DR RICHTER

Richter is a complete invention. She is a way of reminding the audience of the danger of this new context, a world where an increasingly supremacist government would be very interested in this kind of scientific progress. She is disarming and reasonable – hopefully some of the language she uses feels dangerously modern.



Image K

# Side by Side Excerpts

Look at how the writer adapted the following pages to the novel. What did they keep? What did they change? What elements of the novel are represented by the performance or staging, not the script? Would you have done anything differently?

## Novel

Elizabeth had caught the scarlet fever; her illness was severe, and she was in the greatest danger. During her illness many arguments had been urged to persuade my mother to refrain from attending upon her. She had at first yielded to our entreaties, but when she heard that the life of her favourite was menaced, she could no longer control her anxiety. She attended her sickbed; her watchful attentions triumphed over the malignity of the distemper—Elizabeth was saved, but the consequences of this imprudence were fatal to her preserver. On the third day my mother sickened; her fever was accompanied by the most alarming symptoms, and the looks of her medical attendants prognosticated the worst event. On her deathbed the fortitude and benignity of this best of women did not desert her. She joined the hands of Elizabeth and myself. “My children,” she said, “my firmest hopes of future happiness were placed on the prospect of your union. This expectation will now be the consolation of your father. Elizabeth, my love, you must supply my place to my younger children. Alas! I regret that I am taken from you; and, happy and beloved as I have been, is it not hard to quit you all? But these are not thoughts befitting me; I will endeavour to resign myself cheerfully to death and will indulge a hope of meeting you in another world.”

## Script

VICTORIA:

I can't. I can't go. Please.

*Henry relents and sits on the floor beside her.*

When my mother died, it was Elizabeth who was sick first. They were all terribly worried of course but my mother couldn't bear to see her ill. They were all warned, as hard as it may be, to stay away, in case they caught it. Well, my mother listened for a while but when Elizabeth got worse she couldn't bear to stay away. Elizabeth got better. Mother didn't last long. She wrote me a letter on her deathbed. Begged us to look after each other for as long as we lived. “There is nothing more important than each other”. I swore I would. And I've failed her.

HENRY:

It's not your fault –

VICTORIA:

I should have been there –

HENRY:

You couldn't have known.

VICTORIA:

Mother would never have left her side. Thank god she didn't live to see this.

### An example of a paragraph becoming a stage direction.

Whilst in a book everything must be explicit to the reader, on stage so much is communicated between lines, in the looks and expressions of the actors. There was something exciting in this section I wanted to use as a provocation to the actors – their eyes can't literally “light up” of course, but it will stir something in them!

I see by your eagerness and the wonder and hope which your eyes express, my friend, that you expect to be informed of the secret with which I am acquainted; that cannot be; listen patiently until the end of my story, and you will easily perceive why I am reserved upon that subject. I will not lead you on, unguarded and ardent as I then was, to your destruction and infallible misery

VICTORIA:

I created life. You don't believe me. Or you think I'm exaggerating. But it's true. I didn't start from scratch of course but, out of portions and odd ends I made something – alive.

*The Captain's eyes light up.*

CAPTAIN:

You brought someone back from the dead?

VICTORIA:

No, not exactly. I took lots of... parts. Of the dead or... nearly dead. And I created a new human out of it.

## The first description of the Creature

His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath.

VICTORIA:

It looked fine on the table. But when I saw it alive. With blood throbbing in its veins, yellow skin straining to cover the organs underneath and barely succeeding...

## The creation of the creature

One of the phenomena which had peculiarly attracted my attention was the structure of the human frame, and, indeed, any animal endued with life.

Whence, I often asked myself, did the principle of life proceed? It was a bold question, and one which has ever been considered as a mystery. I revolved these circumstances in my mind and determined thenceforth to apply myself more particularly to those branches of natural philosophy which relate to physiology.

To examine the causes of life, we must first have recourse to death. I became acquainted with the science of anatomy, but this was not sufficient; I must also observe the natural decay and corruption of the human body. In my education my father had taken the greatest precautions that my mind should be impressed with no supernatural horrors. I do not ever remember to have trembled at a tale of superstition or to have feared the apparition of a spirit. Now I was led to examine the cause and progress of this decay and forced to spend days and nights in vaults and charnel-houses. My attention was fixed upon every object the most insupportable to the delicacy of the human feelings. I saw how the fine form of man was degraded and wasted; I beheld the corruption of death succeed to the blooming cheek of life; I saw how the worm inherited the wonders of the eye and brain. After days and nights of incredible labour and fatigue, I succeeded in discovering the cause of generation and life; nay, more, I became myself capable of bestowing animation upon lifeless matter.

VICTORIA:

I thought that if I could understand how life is made, I could prolong it for everyone. A world without sickness, where broken parts can be replaced. A world where, short of a violent death, we could all live forever.

When did life start? How did life start? Was there one, mysterious moment where we click into being. Like a bolt of lightning. I made it my life's work.

To understand life, first you must understand death. I spent many years in morgues, watching decay work its way through us. I'm not a superstitious person, the dead never bothered me. What always astonished me most was how fragile we all are. We are held together so lightly; this incredible structure can be knocked off kilter with the lightest touch. I wanted to find a way to protect, to bolster nature. To make mankind invincible. And I found a way. Of sorts.

## Translating a letter into dialogue

*There was something I found enjoyably contemporary about this section, like two siblings chatting and particularly the use of the word “gossip”. It felt a useful way to add comedy and provide a counterpoint to the darkness of the rest. It was also a real insight into Elizabeth’s voice and her spirit of fun. Some of the names I changed to feel less Genevan so they wouldn’t ping out to a UK audience*

Now, dear Victor, I dare say you wish to be indulged in a little gossip concerning the good people of Geneva. The pretty Miss Mansfield has already received the congratulatory visits on her approaching marriage with a young Englishman, John Melbourne, Esq. Her ugly sister, Manon, married M. Duvillard, the rich banker, last autumn. Your favourite schoolfellow, Louis Manoir, has suffered several misfortunes since the departure of Clerval from Geneva. But he has already recovered his spirits, and is reported to be on the point of marrying a lively pretty Frenchwoman, Madame Tavernier. She is a widow, and much older than Manoir; but she is very much admired, and a favourite with everybody. I have written myself into better spirits, dear cousin; but my anxiety returns upon me as I conclude. Write, dearest Victor,—one line—one word will be a blessing to us. Ten thousand thanks to Henry for his kindness, his affection, and his many letters; we are sincerely grateful. Adieu! my cousin; take care of yourself; and, I entreat you, write!

Elizabeth Lavenza.

VICTORIA:

Tell me everything! What’s the gossip?!

ELIZABETH:

Well! You remember pretty Dora Mansfield?

VICTORIA:

Of course.

ELIZABETH:

Well she married an Australian miner – gold miner you understand, not a child – and followed him out there.

VICTORIA:

Wow.

ELIZABETH:

And you remember her ugly sister, Susan?

VICTORIA:

Poor Susan...

ELIZABETH:

Well not so poor anymore! She married a rich old banker – it seems beauty truly is in the eye of the beholder.

VICTORIA:

Ha!

ELIZABETH:

And lovely Louis, your old pal –

VICTORIA:

Ah Louis, how is he?

ELIZABETH:

Well he was sick of course, for a long time as I’m sure you remember, and very low with it. But he seems to be doing much better and last I heard he was going to marry a French woman, older, nothing wrong with that though. He is besotted and everyone just loves her.



## Page to Stage Task

Thinking about how the director approached adapting the novel for this play, use the text below to create a scene.



\*Decide on the setting of the scene and describe it briefly at the top of the page

\*Decide if you are going to include voice over or an on stage narrator or monologue to share the thoughts of Victor. Or will you leave them to subtext?



\*Include dialogue between the characters

\*Which paragraphs can you turn into stage directions?



\*Will you suggest using any devices to move the action along? Tableau?

\*How will you show the passage of time/the journey/the weather?

You could expand this task by choosing a completely different setting and era, like our production has.

### Extract from Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. Chapter 5

Those were the last moments of my life during which I enjoyed the feeling of happiness. We passed rapidly along: the sun was hot, but we were sheltered from its rays by a kind of canopy, while we enjoyed the beauty of the scene, sometimes on one side of the lake, where we saw Mont Salève, the pleasant banks of Montalègre, and at a distance, surmounting all, the beautiful Mont Blanc, and the assemblage of snowy mountains that in vain endeavour to emulate her; sometimes coasting the opposite banks, we saw the mighty Jura opposing its dark side to the ambition that would quit its native country, and an almost insurmountable barrier to the invader who should wish to enslave it.

I took the hand of Elizabeth: "You are sorrowful, my love. Ah! if you knew what I have suffered, and what I may yet endure, you would endeavour to let me taste the quiet, and freedom from despair, that this one day at least permits me to enjoy."

"Be happy, my dear Victor," replied Elizabeth; "there is, I hope, nothing to distress you; and be assured that if a lively joy is not painted in my face, my heart is contented. Something whispers to me not to depend too much on the prospect that is opened before us; but I will not listen to such a sinister voice. Observe how fast we move along, and how the clouds which sometimes obscure, and sometimes rise above the dome of Mont Blanc, render this scene of beauty still more interesting. Look also at the innumerable fish that are swimming in the clear waters, where we can distinguish every pebble that lies at the bottom. What a divine day! how happy and serene all nature appears!"

Thus Elizabeth endeavoured to divert her thoughts and mine from all reflection upon melancholy subjects. But her temper was fluctuating; joy for a few instants shone in her eyes, but it continually gave place to distraction and reverie. The sun sunk lower in the heavens; we passed the river Drance, and observed its path through the chasms of the higher, and the glens of the lower hills. The Alps here come closer to the lake, and we approached the amphitheatre of mountains which forms its eastern boundary. The spire of Evian shone under the woods that surrounded it, and the range of mountain above mountain by which it was overhung.

The wind, which had hitherto carried us along with amazing rapidity, sunk at sunset to a light breeze; the soft air just ruffled the water, and caused a pleasant motion among the trees as we approached the shore, from which it wafted the most delightful scent of flowers and hay. The sun sunk beneath the horizon as we landed; and as I touched the shore, I felt those cares and fears revive, which soon were to clasp me, and cling to me for ever.

A large rectangular area with a black border, containing 25 horizontal lines for writing.

A large rectangular area with horizontal lines, intended for writing or drawing.





# Q & A with the 'Frankenstein' Creative Team

*Behind every successful production is a melting pot of creative ideas, talent, negotiation and collaboration.*

## **THE CREATIVE TEAM**

Writer ..... Mary Shelley  
Adaptation and direction..... Séan Aydon  
Designer.....Nicky Bunch  
Lighting Designer.....Matt Haskins  
Sound designer & Composer ..... Eamonn O'Dwyer  
Company Stage Manager & Deputy Stage Manager  
.....Marc Watkins  
Assistant Stage Manager ..... Guy Dennys  
Make-up Artist .....Missy Brazier  
Fight Director .....Jonathan Holby

Produced by Tilted Wig

Marketing.....Beth Nichols Marketing  
Press.....Katherine at Bright Media

Education Pack produced by Holly Gillanders.  
Designed by John Barron.

*Over the next few pages some of our creative team share the processes and ideas behind this production of 'Frankenstein'... and some top career tips.*

## **Questions for Katherine Senior, Tilted Wig Producer**

**Before you read this interview, have a look at the questions from it. What do you think the answers will be?**

- *What does a typical working day for a producer look like?*
- *Who else on the creative team do you collaborate with to be able to perform your role effectively?*
- *What aspects of rehearsal and performance are you accountable for to ensure the production is a*
- *Can you provide a snapshot of the process of producing a tour? (i.e from seeking venues to opening night at the first venue)*
- *What skills does a theatre producer need?*
- *Do you need to obtain performance rights to produce an adaptation from a novel?*
- *What appealed to you about telling this particular story to audiences across the country?*
- *What are your top tips for keeping a production on time and on budget?*
- *Do you have any advice for students who are keen to pursue Theatre Producer as a career path?*

**Now read the answers and see how they match your ideas. Do you think you would like to have this job? What key skills do you think you need?**

**What does a typical working day for a producer look like?**

I suppose the question could be, what does a day look like for a typical producer? We may not be typical producers as one may imagine one. Myself and my partner, Matt run the company and we have 3 small boys under the age of 5 so it's quite a juggling act between those two very different worlds!

From the start of the process i.e. choosing the production and a director, I then get going with creating the artwork for the show with a graphic designer. This image will sell the production to the audiences and initially the tour venues that Matt will reach out to for

bookings. As the "pre production" moves on (which is anything pre the show opening) Matt will do deals with the venues, agree contracts. We will both be involved with setting up casting meetings with the actors, and along with the director we will hold auditions and meet with creatives. It's then a case of drawing up contracts for the cast and creatives, I will work alongside the press and marketing team to make sure we have "assets" for the venue marketing teams to sell the show. Assets include posters, trailers, production shots etc. Depending on whether it is an adaptation, Matt and I will work closely with the writer and have several read throughs of the play, online and in person so we can get it to a stage we're happy with for rehearsals. This is a very general idea!

**Who else on the creative team do you collaborate with to be able to perform your role effectively?**



Image 1

Our closest collaborator is the director as they are the decision maker in the rehearsal room and they work closely with the designers to achieve their vision for the piece which Matt has to make sure, along with his Production Manager (who looks after the budget) that everything is affordable and logistical for a tour.

**What aspects of rehearsal and performance are you accountable for to ensure the production is a success?**

We are accountable for everything, really; if the budget goes over- we're in trouble as we would then to make it back on the Box Office at each venue and our blood pressure couldn't take that.

We need to ensure, along with our Production Manager who is our next port of call on

all aspects of the set and production, that everything is safe for all concerned, that the correct insurance is in place. When we were touring in the pandemic, we had to make sure that everything was Covid Secure, so Risk Assessments were much longer during that period! The well being of the company is a our prime concern and we ensure that through our Company Manager (who is the cast and creative's first port of call) that their needs are met. The only aspect we have not control over, is creatively as it's not our place to interfere in the creative process during rehearsal(unless there is a safety, budget, running time issue) and production- we have to hand it over to the creative team.

**Can you provide a snapshot of the process of producing a tour? (i.e from seeking venues to opening night at the first venue)**

We have built up a good list of contacts over the 15 years weve been touring. Matt will reach out to these theatres and if there programming suits our offer, then they will book us in(that makes it sounds easy- it's a long process sometimes of first pencils, second pencils, moving weeks, dropping out etc!) and we will try and book it in a geographically friendly way!

Once rehearsals are underway, Matt is liaising every day with the production manager on the state of prop sourcing, costume sourcing/making, set building(although it's normally done by this point), and prepping for tech week. We then get the production in on the Sunday at our opening venue. Build the Set for the first time, rig the lights as per the designers lighting plot plan, sound is installed, set has details added ie paint and dressings. On the Monday/Tuesday/Weds the tech will start in earnest at which point the actors will arrive and the company will slowly go through every cue in the script that has a change of lights, sound or physicality. It depends on the complexity of the technical aspects as to how long this process takes, but the show ALWAYS goes on either on the Thu matinee or Thu evening at the opening venues. By which time, Programmes

have arrived(which I have worked with the graphic designer to create weeks previous), FOH staff are in place, and the doors open to an audience for the first time! Which is always nerve wracking.

**What skills does a theatre producer need?**

Matt and I compliment each other as is very good at understanding budgets in an efficient way. By efficient I mean, he keeps within them and he is very quick to know what is affordable and what is not which is valuable when talking to venues and doing the deals and also later on the process when we are buying materials for the production and spending on marketing and press.

I have more of any eye creatively and so can offer, ha! It's hard to actually define what you can offer sometimes. I enjoy working with the graphic designer and building a visual for the show, one that will be appealing in a commercial sense i.e. sell tickets

but also appeal to new audiences. I am an actor, so as well as producing our shows for the tour, I am currently working on my piece which I am R&Ding (research and developing) in the new year- so all these skills help you as producer, because I think you need to have a very good understanding of all aspects of the process and the production. We know what it's like to tour for actors so we endeavour to create an environment that is comfortable; we know how tech days work

and Matt is involved in the "get ins" and "get outs" and then he'll get changed, do his hair and go and meet the theatres Chief Executive. As I said before, we're not typical producers!

**Do you need to obtain performance rights to produce an adaptation from a novel?**

Hmmmmnnnnnn. So, the "rule" is that if it's 70 years after the death of the author, it is in the public domain which means it's free.. HG Wells came in the public domain just a few years ago hence the recent adaptations of *The Time Machine*, *The Invisible Man* and *War of the Worlds*. However, we toured *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and we presumed (never do that) that it was in the public domain because

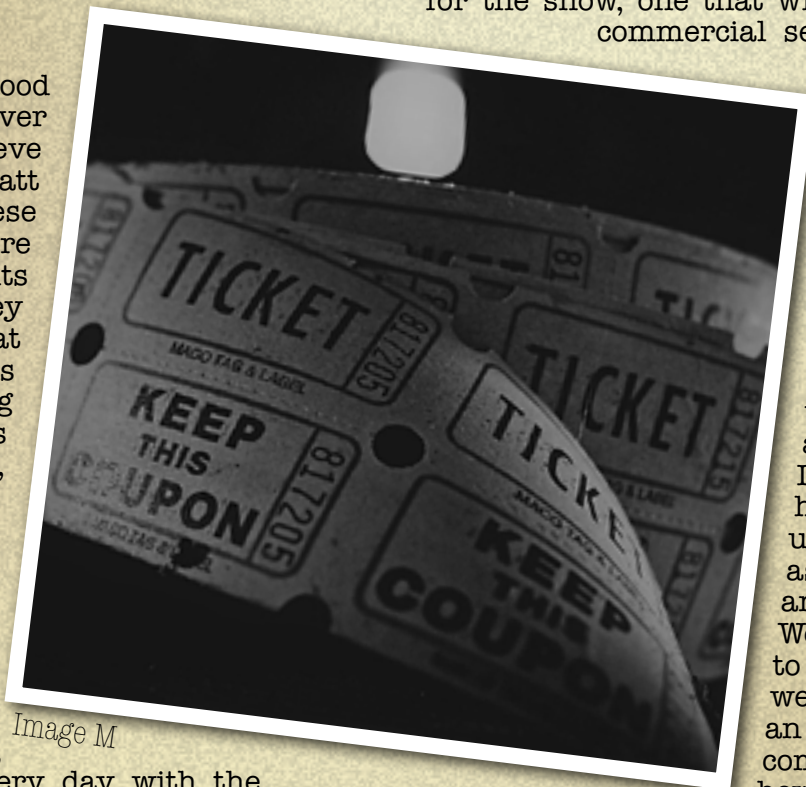


Image M

it met the above rule. BUT because this book had a lot of controversy around it there was a second edition, the Cambridge edition which was still in the public domain because it was edited later. The Estate of DH Lawrence were so amiable and keen for the production to go on that all was well (phew! That was a scary few weeks) and the show went on, albeit for 2 weeks because of some global pandemic that shut the tour down. So, just double check with the estate (which is the body that looks after the author after their death). Sherlock Holmes adaptations are going on left, right and centre, often without permission but they do have rights. Trademark rights. So you need to just do your research.

**How did you become a theatre producer? What was your career path?**

I trained as an actor and still work as an actor, when children allow me, and met Matt at drama school. The training we received was true ensemble training and we learnt all aspects of the theatre. I had an interest in the lighting and so when we left drama school after 3 years and headed to London in search of the dream, it soon became apparent that was not happening! After some pretty rough jobs, including some acting, we decided to approach a director and ask if she would direct us in a play. We opened *The Private Ear and The Public Eye* in a pub in Exeter. This was not a pub theatre, this was a locals pub that just happened to have big upstairs area where we utilised the space to put on the double bill. It was well attended and went down well and so we carried on. We found more pubs that wanted theatre, we found village halls, skittle alleys, churches, anywhere that would take us and our clapped out old postal van. Soon 6 actors were clambering in that red rocket(it was so slow) with all the set, props, seating and we set up, flyered out on the streets, set up a bar, did the play, took it all down at the end of the night and went on to the next place. Soon we hit upon studio theatres, and then main stages and now we tour only theatres main houses as we couldn't make the former work financially. We were not funded and it's impossible to do it without funding or private capital! So we're not just theatre producers. I like to think of myself as theatre maker.

**What appealed to you about telling this particular story to audiences across the country?**

It's a piece that we were always very keen to look at producing because of its wide appeal.

When Séan the writer and director approached us with his version we were very excited to

read it. The setting for this telling is a brilliant backdrop to tell a story that people know so well but at the same time reach a new audience, especially a younger audience and we are so excited to share it across the country on this national tour. We hope audiences feel it's a piece they recognise as a part of the literary cannon but are also surprised by it's fresh interpretation.

**What are your top tips for keeping a production on time and on budget?**

Work closely with your production manager and creative team. Be on hand. Always to answer questions. Make sure everyone knows there is not a bottomless pit of money. Planning is key to both but especially to being on time. To have a clear schedule of what happens when and who is in charge of that aspect will keep things rolling along nicely!

**Do you have any advice for students who are keen to pursue Theatre Producer as a career path?**

Make sure you know about how to put on a production- understand what each member of the team does, what they need, how hard it may be, what difficulties they may face. This is why it is so good to know how each department works then you are never asking something of someone that is not possible. Have a good understanding of budgets. You don't need to be a maths wizz (excel will do all that) but you need to understand how to put a budget together and to do this, perhaps gain some work experience with a producer. There are schemes out there for young people. Stage One is the most well known. But there are initiatives across the industry to support new producers. We would be happy to talk anyone about it.



# **Composer and Sound Designer: Eamonn O'Dwyer**



**Before you read this interview, have a look at the questions from it. What do you think the answers will be?**



- *What was your journey to becoming a composer and sound designer for the theatre?*
- *How does your role integrate with the wider creative team? Do you work closely with other aspects of production (i.e. lighting, set and costume design)*
- *How does the music and sound design for this production help to convey the different locations and heighten key moments of the action?*
- *How can the soundscape and score of a production enhance meaning for an audience?*
- *Do you have any tips for students who are interested in pursuing Sound Designer or Composer for theatre as a career path?*

**Now read the answers and see how they match your ideas. Do you think you would like to have this job? What key skills do you think you need?**

## **What was your journey to becoming a composer and sound designer for the theatre?**

I started my life in theatre as a performer, and had quite a busy career as an actor-musician for over a decade. I've always written music, but while I had a long stint in the West End (in the National Theatre's 'War Horse') I started writing my first musical, 'The House of Mirrors & Hearts'. That show ended up doing quite well - it won an award for the score, and got a London transfer - so that opened a few doors for me in terms of writing, and I began to do a lot more. For a little while I wrote music for shows **and** performed in them too, but that got pretty exhausting (!) so I phased out performing completely. All through that time I was getting more interested in making digital music, so now my time is divided between electronic sound design and musical theatre. It's a really pleasing combo!

## **How does your role integrate with the wider creative team? Do you work closely with other aspects of production (i.e. lighting, set and costume design)**

Absolutely. Before a production begins I'll chat closely with the director to find out their vision for a piece. That's often been crafted along with the design for a show, so whatever sound-world I create has to complement that - taking into account the time-period, style, feel. Or sometimes it can be a collective decision to

go against that, which is fun! My work with the lighting designer will happen more in technical rehearsals, when we start to shape specific moments - making sure lighting and sound are doing the same things; fading up, snapping off, lightning/thunder strikes etc. That synergy is especially important in horror!

## **How does the music and sound design for this production help to convey the different locations and heighten key moments of the action?**

Music in theatre is all about storytelling... creating atmosphere, driving narrative, colouring emotion. Sometimes music and sound can reflect exactly what's happening on stage (a love scene, a chase, a funeral etc), but sometimes you can be scoring subtext - what a character is feeling about a certain situation, rather than the actual situation they're in. And with more abstract sound design you can often shape an audience's experience



Image N

without them even realising it. Sometimes we have to be careful not to tell an audience what to think, but sometimes we have to do exactly that!

## **How can the soundscape and score of a production enhance meaning for an audience?**

Music in theatre is all about storytelling... creating atmosphere, driving narrative, colouring emotion. Sometimes music and sound can reflect exactly what's happening on stage (a love scene, a chase, a funeral etc), but sometimes you can be scoring subtext - what a character is feeling about a certain situation, rather than the actual situation they're in. And with more abstract sound design you can often shape an audience's experience without them even realising it. Sometimes we have to be careful not to tell an audience what to think, but sometimes we have to do exactly that!

## **Do you have any tips for students who are interested in pursuing Sound Designer or Composer for theatre as a career path?**

Go and see as much theatre as you can, and really listen to what's happening. Also, try and broaden your musical horizons as much as possible - listen to as many styles of music as you can. Theatre composition is often about being a chameleon, fitting into different styles and time-periods and making them your own, so the more you have at your fingertips, the better.



# Lighting Designer: Matt Haskins

production?

Do you have any tips for students who are interested in pursuing Lighting Designer as a career path?

**Before you read this interview, have a look at the questions from it. What do you think the answers will be?**

- *How did you become a lighting designer for the stage?*
- *Did you collaborate closely with the director on the design? Who else do you work closely with to perform your role?*
- *How does the lighting design of 'Frankenstein' help to communicate the mood, setting and themes of this production to the audience?*
- *When designing for a tour, do you have to plan according to the lighting rig and equipment that the venue have, or does the production tour with it's own lighting kit?*
- *How long does the lighting get in take for this production?*
- *Do you have any tips for students who are interested in pursuing Lighting Designer as a career path?*



Image O

**Now read the answers and see how they match your ideas. Do you think you would like to have this job? What key skills do you think you need?**



Image P

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When designing for a tour, do you have to plan according to the lighting rig and equipment that the venue have, or does the production tour with it's own lighting kit?

How long does the lighting get in take for this



## **Designer – Nicky Bunch**



**Before you read this interview, have a look at the questions from it. What do you think the answers will be?**



- *How do the colours and textures of your designs help establish the world of *Frankenstein*?*
- *What do the costumes communicate to the audience about the characters in this production?*
- *What practical considerations do you need to think of when designing for actors who are touring and also multi-rolling?*
- *What practicalities do you need to think about when designing a set which will be fitted in a different*
- *venues with different sized stages?*
- *Who do you collaborate with in the creative team to do your job?*
- *There is an inevitable impact on the environment linked to touring, but the use of materials for the set and costume helps to combat this. Can you tell us more about the sustainability of this set?*
- *Do you use a particular piece of software for your designs?*
- *What 3 adjectives would you use to describe the mood of the *Frankenstein* set?*

**Now read the answers and see how they match your ideas. Do you think you would like to have this job? What key skills do you think you need?**

**How do the colours and textures of your designs help establish the world of *Frankenstein*?**

**What do the costumes communicate to the audience about the characters in this production?**

**What practical considerations do you need to think of when designing for actors who are touring and also multi-rolling?**

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**venues with different sized stages?**

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Image Q

**There is an inevitable impact on the environment linked to touring, but the use of materials for the set and costume helps to combat this. Can you tell us more about the sustainability of this set?**

**Do you use a particular piece of software for your designs?**

**What 3 adjectives would you use to describe the mood of the *Frankenstein* set?**



# The Four Week Rehearsal Process

*Our director Séan Aydon gives a behind the scenes insight in the rehearsal process he leads our cast through, in the four week rehearsal period leading up to opening night.*

Time management is a key part of being a successful director. It is very easy to get carried away, working on the most exciting bits and neglecting others. At the same time, we need to be open to discoveries and to allow things in the rehearsal room to take us by surprise. To keep us on track, I divide my time into week-long chunks, each with a clear objective.

## WEEK ONE

The first week is all about understanding. I want to make sure there are absolutely no unanswered questions about the play, however simple they may seem. You would not believe how often six weeks into a run, actors can discover they had a different understanding of the same line.

We are also trying to break down this overwhelming play into manageable, bite-sized chunks. The way I do that, is by **creating units**. There are many different definitions of exactly what a unit is but the way I work is from Katie Mitchell's practical work on Stanislavski (if you're interested in directing, her book *The Director's Craft* is the best starting point you'll find).

Simply, **a unit is the period of stage time between two events.**

An event is something that happens that changes *everyone* on stage.

Every time a character enters or exits, that is an event (these are the easiest ones!) Then there will be really obvious ones like a character breaking someone's neck or revealing they are a long-lost child. Some events can be as subtle as a look – but it is so important that we find these as a team and pin them down. They are the structure of the play and will help us tell the story. Even when we make different choices on how we may play the scene, these events always remain.

We worked slowly through the play, stopping whenever anyone had a question or finds an event. At the same time, we also made two lists – **facts and questions**. Facts are completely objective things we know to be true (e.g. Elizabeth is Victoria's adopted sister). Questions are everything we can't answer with the text (e.g. Before Victoria finds The Captain, when did she last eat?). I tried to limit us to questions that are going

to help the actors play the scenes (we only had four weeks!). Sometimes questions might require research into the historical context of the play or questions for the author. With 'Frankenstein', as I wrote the script as well, I was able to answer most of these questions, but I would send the actors off with small research projects on subjects we wanted to know more about.

In the background of this work, we also explored physically to break up the table work. We had movement work to bring us together as a group and **explore our characters physicalities**. We also worked with a fight director to lay the groundwork for our fights – with any technical work like fights or dancing, the earlier we begin the better.

At the end of this week, we had gone through our text with a fine-toothed comb and created a solid "radio-play" version of 'Frankenstein'.

## WEEK TWO

Week two was about **exploring in space and developing the relationships between the characters**. However, I wanted to do it in a way that the focus was on communication not on any literal demands such as "I need to light a match here" etc. It's about exploring the psychology of our characters and what they are trying to achieve in each scene.

Before we start working on a scene, I like to warm the words up first. Even though by this point the actors knew their lines well enough to work without a text, we started by reading the scene again. This was an opportunity to check in with the text, to make sure we haven't mislearnt anything, and to remind ourselves of the stage directions. After this, we ran the scene again, but this time whilst **play a simple game of catch with a tennis ball**. This is a great way of getting a different part of the brain working and helps the lines feel natural and owned by the actor.

Then **I would set up an exercise to help find a quality I think the scene needs**. For example, if the scene is between two people who know each other very well and I want it to feel more conversational, I might offer the following starting point "I want you to play the scene like you're in a bar, you're on your second beer, you're just two old friends chatting". I'd give them a table and some chairs, something to drink (not real beer!) and some props to play with. (I find pistachios particularly useful – they're so fiddly, they give actors something physical to focus on rather than worrying about what their hands are doing. Make sure no one is allergic before you start!).

After that's run its course once, I'd respond



to what the actors found and try to provoke them further. I might give them separate and opposing objectives – they can be really simple things like to get the other person to make eye contact with you. But I'll be responding to what the actors create and trying to find ways to push it further, to access the subtext and undercurrents of the scene. **Simple games like hand slaps, or grandma's footsteps or even chess can add tension to a scene and force the actors to work more intuitively rather than planning what they are going to do next.** What we are trying to do here is to create options for the actors, to open up the idea of the different ways they can play a line. **I want them to discover by doing. By the end of this week, we had deepened our intellectual understanding into a physical one.**

### WEEK THREE

The third week is about taking all of our discoveries and putting them into the literal world of the play. We worked with a **“mark-up” on the floor (the outlines of the set marked out in tape) and as many of the props as we could get together in advance.** As I knew the transition between the Captain's Hut and the Lab was going to be quite complicated, we had those set elements made in advance so we could make it as seamless as possible.

Most of the decisions on staging are made far in advance of rehearsals – by placing a door in a certain position and a chair in another, you have made a lot of the actors' decisions for them. But outside of those decisions I tried to give the actors as much freedom as possible. **What I am always keen to encourage is for them to play with the distance between each other, to keep that as big as possible for as long as possible. Especially when working on big stages, that is where the drama exists.**

The work this week is much more practical. We could have done it in week one, however, by laying the groundwork of understanding I found the actors made more informed decisions, felt more comfortable in their bodies, and worked a lot more efficiently. **At the end of week three, we had a version of our whole play as it would exist in performance.**

### WEEK FOUR

In week four, we are now trying to play with the longer journeys through the piece. This means running larger sections or even the play in its entirety. Then we might go back and focus in on areas that felt weaker or unclear. Then look at the overall arch again.

In this final week, **we spoke a lot about the Stanislavskian idea of the super-objective – an overarching desire that can get the character from the beginning of the play until the end.** They can be hard to decide upon but

once found are such a useful way of focusing all the small decisions we have made into one greater goal.

It is important by the end of this week to **make sure there are no flat moments or dull scenes that you are relying on tech support to invigorate;** problems in the rehearsal draft will only be magnified on stage. Through this week, we added in a lot of sound support to play and to get the actors used to the underscoring.

**The last thing I always do in a rehearsal process is to run the play one more time, sat in a circle of chairs with nothing but the actors and the text.** Before we go into the excitement and vastness of the theatre and technical rehearsals, **I want the actors to remember the core of the play. I want them to stop and listen to each other again.** To focus on communicating with each other and why they need to speak.

# Oracy and debate exercise

Students should line up in two columns, one a line of Francine's, one a line of Victoria's. Each Francine should face a Victoria.

Cue all Victoria's to deliver the line below in unison, on the count of 3, looking into the eyes of the 'Francine' opposite.

**VICTORIA:** I'm a scientist. My job is to make discoveries not work out how they are to be used.

Then cue the Francine's to speak the lines below together, looking directly at the Victoria opposite.

**FRANCINE:** I don't think that's true at all. You can't drop a gun in a playground then shrug when someone gets hurt.

Repeat a few times, giving the direction to imagine different settings which change the delivery of the line, for example; whisper, like you don't want to be overheard, but are having a heated discussion/having a chat in a crowded café/like a barrister presenting argument to a jury in court

Print out copies of the extract below or present it on a white board. Make sure each student can see or has a copy of the script. Split the room into team Francine's and team Victoria's, then split the 2 groups into smaller groups of 3 or 4.

Using the extract below as a starting point, groups should summarise their characters point of view and as team create an argument, building from Francine or Victoria's point of view to persuade the listener that either;

Debate topic 1 – world of the play

**Victoria; Science is neither moral nor immoral: it is the act of discovery.**

Or

**Francine: Science needs a moral compass: knowledge is power. Power can be dangerous.**

Debate topic 2 – current real world examples

Each group choose from a real world scientific example:

The benefits of medical experiments on animals to cure human diseases – agree or disagree

Generative AI, such as ChatGPT, put human jobs at risk – agree or disagree

The threat of nuclear weapons prevents wars and so saves lives –agree or disagree

Smartphones have imprisoned us in social groups we cannot escape from-agree or disagree

Groups should read out their argument to the rest of the class. The class should vote for the most persuasive argument (not including their own!)



Image R

## Text excerpt from our play for debate exercise

FRANCINE:

No doctor! There is no fault in the brain or the heart. He learnt to be cruel because that's how we treated him. Did we look for him when he was lost, or try to tend his wounds or teach him about the world? We abandoned him and left him to fend for himself. And when you are alone, this world is a cruel one Doctor. Believe me.

VICTORIA:

The conditions were wrong. He should never have been allowed to escape from our care, and yes you're right, we should have looked. But this time will be different, this time –

FRANCINE:

And what about your friend Richter?

VICTORIA:

What about her?

FRANCINE:

What if she hears about what you're doing and investigates? Or worse, what if she catches one of your creations? The power that this could hold in the wrong hands...

VICTORIA:

I'm a scientist. My job is to make discoveries not work out how they are to be used.

FRANCINE:

I don't think that's true at all. You can't drop a gun in a playground then shrug when someone gets hurt.

VICTORIA:

Don't be so naive Francine! If every scientist was to be held responsible for every depraved use of our work, we would all of us be damned. A life saving blade in the hand of a surgeon could be a weapon of murder in the hand of a madman. If I were to drop a rock on a man's head, crush his skull, and say "don't blame me, blame Newton, his gravity did the work?" would you pardon me?

FRANCINE:

Imagine it doctor. An army of them. Stronger, crueller, more disposable than any in human history. Imagine the death, despair, and horror your creation could wreak on the world. This is no great invention that can be twisted for foul uses – the danger your creation holds far outweighs the good it could do. You know that as well as I do; only your pride prevents you from admitting it.

# Scene stills - photo tasks

Every photo tells a story.

Here are photographic stills from our production.

For each scene:

- A. Guess what is happening – where in the action of story is this scene taking place?
- B. Who do you think the characters on stage are? Do the costumes give you any hints?
- C. Look closely at the space between the characters, what does their positioning on the stage suggest to you about the relationship between the characters?



# Historical Inspiration for Speculative Fiction



## Social and Political History Timeline

1775 -83

American Independence. The first democratic republic of the modern era is born. Goes on to inspire many future revolutions and rebellion against authority

1792-1815

The Napoleonic wars. Six million are left dead and Europe is devastated.

1861 - 65

The American Civil war. The South secedes from The North in order to maintain its slave based economy. The North eventually wins and slavery is abolished.

1871

Unification of Germany. Previously small states such as Prussia and Bavaria unite to form a powerful new country. The appearance of a new superpower puts the rest of the European powers on edge and there is constant talk of invasion.

1789-99

The French Revolution. Despite high ideals, this quickly descends into fear and bloodshed. Religion is seen as the enemy by some revolutionaries, who then embrace hard, cold reason with a level of extremism that upsets many onlookers

1807

The Slave Trade is officially abolished in the British Empire. However, owning a slave is still permitted until 1833.

1867

The Second Great Reform Act. All men in England and Wales are given the vote for the first time. Despite some opposition, women are excluded.

1870 -1914

New Imperialism. Improved technology and financial crises mean European Powers begin a new, highly efficient, but devastating imperial campaign.

Frankenstein, 1818

Mary Shelley

Considered by many to be the first great work of science fiction. Although most people imagine The Creature coming to life after a lightning strike, Mary Shelley never actually mentions an electrical reanimation at all. However, it is likely she was inspired by Galvani's ability to seemingly make dead things 'come to life' and other scientists harnessing the God-like power of electricity. The Industrial Revolution was also inspiring debate over whether technology was developing too fast and in a way that did not benefit mankind, while on the flipside vaccines suggested that science could combat death. The devastation of the wars in Europe provided the desolate background and the question of whether one human life could be more valuable than another is a key theme of the text. Many future developments seem to echo the book such as medical advances, genetic modification and eugenics.

20,000 Leagues Under the Sea, 1871

Jules Verne

The story follows a group who become prisoners aboard a state-of-the-art private submarine. Its captain, Nemo, has devoted himself to scientific study of the deep and has rejected mankind, but at the same time defends weaker peoples he encounters against military aggressors. Nemo was originally written as Polish, forced from his homeland by the Russian Empire, until the publishers changed this so as not to offend a large Russian readership. In a sequel, he was Indian, forced from his lands by the British Empire. The ship, The Nautilus, is based heavily on the pioneering French ship, Plogneur, but is powered by electricity. The book predicts u-boat warfare, deep sea exploration and terrorist tactics.

The War of The Worlds, 1898

H.G. Wells

Possibly the only Sci-Fi book to compete with Frankenstein in terms of the number of films it has spawned and its presence in popular culture. H.G. Wells said it was a reaction to the devastation of the British Imperial conquest of the indigenous people of Tasmania. Here, the tables are turned, and Britain becomes the victim of invasion from a massively technologically superior race of Martians. With unrest in Europe, invasion novels were particularly common at this time, though usually with another European power such as Germany as the aggressor. In the book Wells predicts tanks, laser weapons, chemical warfare, Blitzkrieg tactics and space travel. A teenager called William H. Goddard dreamed of travelling to the stars after reading it. He later becomes the inventor of the liquid propelled rocket and father of The Space Age.

1760 - 1840

The First Industrial Revolution. Steam is harnessed to drive machines for the first time, causing massive technological and societal change, for good and ill.

1796

Edward Jenner develops the first safe vaccine. Medicine finally seems to have a weapon against one of the leading causes of death.

1857

Louis Pasteur proves that micro-organisms cause a range of diseases. Finally, mankind knows the face of its greatest enemy

1858

Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace simultaneously propose the theory of evolution. The idea that species, including humans, are transient and fragile revolutionises thinking

1870 -1914

The Second Industrial Revolution. Steel manufacturing becomes much more efficient and large-scale electricity generation becomes feasible. Leads to rapid expansion of railways, modern infrastructure and telecommunication.

1780

Luigi Galvani discovers that dead animal muscles twitch when an electric current is passed through them. He mistakenly believes that living things generate and are powered by 'animal electricity'.

1804

In Wales, Richard Trevithick's locomotive records the first ever steam powered passenger train journey. Two decades later the world's first regular passenger train launches in northern England.

1863

France launches Plogneur. The first mechanically powered submarine.

1877

Advanced telescopes allow Giovanni Schiaparelli to observe the surface of Mars. He sees lines which he mistakenly believes are water channels. Many believe these are artificial canals indicating an advanced civilisation.

'Frankenstein' is thought by many to be the first Science Fiction novel. Science Fiction has always taken inspiration from contemporary events to make commentary on the world around it. Here are some important works from history and the social and scientific events that may have inspired them

### 1914-1918

The First World War. The bloodiest conflict up to this point. Features the first examples of air to air combat, aerial bombing of civilian targets, chemical weapons and tanks.

### 1929

The Great Depression. A massive drop in The US stockmarket causes a global economic crisis. Massive unrest follows and the world heads to war, both on the battlefield and in culture.

### 1960s - 1980s

Womens liberation movement. Women demand greater legal rights and social respect in The USA and other Western countries.

### 1973

Roe v. Wade. A legal case in the US Supreme Court establishes the right to abortion for all women in The USA.

### 1980

Ronald Reagan is elected US president. He ushers in a new era of religious conservatism and economic de-regulation in the USA.

### 1893

Women's suffrage. New Zealand becomes the first major country to allow women the vote at a national level.

### 1922

The Soviet Union is formed. Despite being formally a group of equal nations, it is in effect a totalitarian empire ruled from Moscow.

### 1939 - 1945

World War 2. The biggest loss of life through war in history. By the end, The USA and Soviet Union emerge as the new Super Powers.

### 1964

The Civil Rights Act is signed into law in The USA. Formal racial segregation is officially ended (although racial discrimination still persists to this day). There is massive opposition among some states

### 1979

The Iranian Revolution. The unpopular Shah is replaced by a hardline religious government. Although many women take part in the revolution, they face reduced freedoms and rights afterwards

#### Rossum's Universal Robots, 1921

Karel Čapek

This stage play gave the English language the word 'robot', from the Czech word 'robota', meaning 'forced labour'. Despite this, the robots of the play are really more like clones, as they are artificially created biological life-forms that are identical to humans, manufactured and sold by the company the play is named after. By the year 2000 the entire world economy is reliant on them, but they rebel, putting humanity in peril. Having seen his homeland, now Czechia, nearly obliterated by the industrialised warfare of The First World War, Čapek used the play as a warning against technological advance without moral guidance. It is also a criticism rampant capitalism and the factories that almost turned workers into robots themselves.

#### Nineteen Eighty-four, 1949

George Orwell

Probably the most famous example of dystopian Science fiction, this envisages a totalitarian state in the near future. Despite being communist and therefore supposedly based on equality, there is a massively unfair class structure and everyone is watched and controlled at all times by cameras, two-way TVs, inane TV series, language manipulation and computer generated songs. Orwell was a socialist and had even fought in the Spanish Civil war for the left-leaning Republicans, but was appalled at the hard-left authoritarian communism of the Soviet Union. His work predicted many of the issues we worry about today including the surveillance state, surveillance capitalism, social media, screen addiction, generative AI and post-truth society.

#### The Handmaid's Tale, 1985

Margaret Atwood

The author describes a dystopian future where women's rights have been severely restricted. Pollution and radiation poisoning have caused widespread infertility and environmental problems and these lead to extremist behaviour from some individuals. The US government overthrown by a hard-right, authoritarian faction after The White House is attacked by ultra-conservative American citizens. They install a religious, conservative regime where women who can still have children are forced to become breeders, birthing multiple children to the elite. Atwood plays on the recurring theme of the 20th and 19th centuries of the 'dominant' group fearing the new powers of a 'weaker' group, as seen in racial segregation, antisemitism and anti-immigration policies. As well as eerily foreshadowing the Capitol Riots in 2021, Atwood predicts unrest due to man-made environmental damage and the global rise of the alt-right.

### 1905

Albert Einstein publishes four papers which together transform the world of physics. These provide a vital key to understanding the universe. At the same time, some realise that these findings could be used to create a devastating new weapon.

### 1929

The BBC launches the first public television broadcast. It takes seven years for the first regular service (also by the BBC) to take place.

### 1936

Alan Turing publishes a paper predicting the building of a programmable computer. He also proposes that one day a computer will produce dialogue that is sufficiently human-like to deceive a human reader. In 1944 he successfully creates Coloussus, the first programmable electronic computer.

### 1960

The first female oral contraceptive pill becomes available in The US. It gives women the potential to take greater control of their bodies and family planning.

### 1918 -1920

Spanish Flu. Despite its name, the disease probably originated on a farm in The USA when a bird flu jumped from chickens to humans. After two years, up to 50 million are killed. More than double that which died in The First World War.

### 1945

The USA drops the first (and only) atom bombs in wartime on Hiroshima and then Nagasaki in Japan. It causes the greatest loss of life from a single weapon in history. The resulting radiation sickness kills many more.

### 1962

Rachel Carson, an American biologist publishes Silent Spring, a book which suggests corporate greed and human folly may be destroying nature through over use of pesticides. This helps to build the modern environmental movement which will eventually lead to efforts to combat climate change.



What major events in science and social history can you think of since the 80s? Add them to this timeline.

Can you think of any works of Speculative fiction that they might have inspired?

Can you create a Speculative Fiction story based on a recent event, discovery or invention?



## Social and Political History Timeline

Do you know any of these works of Speculative Fiction? What events do you think inspired them?

- The Lord of the Rings
- Godzilla
- Eighty Days Around The World
- 2001: A Space Odessey
- The Time Machine
- Star Trek
- Capricorn One
- I am Legend
- The Matrix
- The Dawn of the Dead
- Avengers Endgame
- Brave New World
- The Planet of the Apes
- Interstellar
- The Martian
- Westworld
- Gullivers Travels
- Alice inWonderland
- The last of Us



# Frankenstein Map & Tour Dates



# Useful links and references

## **Frankenstein novel revision**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zwpfvwx/articles/zmh8jsg#zrh8jsg0>

## **Designing for productions**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/z7p4vk7/revision/1>

## **Theatre glossary**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zj94382/revision/1>

## **Backstage insights at the Old Vic**

<https://www.oldvictheatre.com/discover/the-hub/insights>

## **National Theatre 'Frankenstein' resources- Mary Shelley, A biography-**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E4p96vqI3zA&>

**Mary Shelley's Author's Introduction to the Standard Novels Edition (1831) in 'Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus. Revised Edition', Penguin Classics, published 1992.**

## **Images by humans**

A: Photo by Florian Klauer on Unsplash

D: Photo by Hasan Almasi on Unsplash

E: Photo by Shadi on Unsplash

F: Image by LaCasadeGoethe from Pixabay

G: Image by Zafer from Pixabay

I: painting by Michelangelo

K: Image by Tehzeeb Kazmi from Pixabay

M: Image by Igor Ovsyannykov from Pixabay

P: Image by Marko Heinrich from Pixabay

Q: Photo by Ryan Ancill on Unsplash



# Observations from the performance

## Performance observations

1. Choose an actor from the cast and reflect on their interpretation of the character they played:

\*What was their posture like?

\*What speed did they move at?

\*What dynamic quality did their physical gestures have? Fast and sharp? Slow and deliberate? Graceful and flowing? What impact did this have on the audience?

\*What did the physicality tell you about the character?

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2. How did the actor playing Dr Richter and The Captain change their voice for each character they portrayed?

\*Accent -

\*Pitch of voice (loud, soft, hard)

\*Enunciation (were they clear and crisp and easy to hear. Did they talk quickly?)

\*Intonation - did they bring energy to their voice? Was it dull and all one note?

\*Pace - (fast, slow, stilted?)

\*What did the change of voice tell you about the character?

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3. Was the movement quality of the ensemble natural or stylised

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Genre and setting observations

1. What genre would you describe this production as?

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2. How did the director use the space to indicate a change of time or location?

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3. This production of 'Frankenstein' is set in the lead up to and during the Second World War. What other era would you have chosen to set it in? How do you think a change in setting would impact the themes of the play?

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4. Can you identify the themes in this production? How were the themes represented in the production?

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5. Was there a moment in the play that really stood out to you? Jot it down if so.

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6. How do you think the audience around you felt when they left the auditorium?

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7. How did the production make you feel?

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Staging, costume and set design observations

1. What staging configuration was used for the staging of this production? Proscenium arch? In the round?

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2. Could levels have been used on the set? How could that have helped mark out the different action in the story?

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3. What materials, colours and textures were used for the costumes? How are the costumes designed so that actors can have the flexibility to move?

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4. Describe a costume you can remember in detail. Did it evoke a particular time in history?

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5. How did the set make you feel as an audience member?

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6. Did the spacing between the characters help you to understand their relationships with each other? Can you write down an example?

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7. Thinking about the conventions used in this production, were you reminded of the work of a particular theatre practitioner who may have influenced the work?

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Lighting and sound observations

1. What lighting effects did you notice (blackouts, fades, colours, gels)

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2. Was there a particular moment where the lighting helped to enhance the atmosphere and mood of the action?

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3. How did the production use light and sound to indicate a change of location or passing of time?

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4. What stood out to you about the sound design of the production?

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6. What considerations do you think the designer need to make when deciding what materials to use for the costumes?

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7. How were props used in this production?

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8. Was there anything about the production you would have changed and why?

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**Notes**

Use this space to jot thoughts about the production, adjectives that spring to mind that describe what you see or feel during the performance or sketch elements of the production design.

Lined writing area consisting of approximately 30 horizontal lines.