



WEEK 2 - 3RD TO 7TH FEBRUARY CORPUS PLAYROOM MAINSHOW

ALL ABOUT ME!

Bonsoir! I'm Fran, a second-year (studying?) English at Magdalene, and I am very excited to announce that I will be directing Willy Russell's 'Stags and Hens (The Remix)' at Corpus Playroom in Week Two! Willy Russell is one of my favourite writers, best known for 'Blood Brothers' and 'Educating Rita' - and it is, in fact, the first time that 'Stags and Hens' will have been staged at Cambridge. Although I am not from Liverpool, (I am from the Wirral, which is in Merseyside, and still technically Liverpool City Region, may I add) it is an endeavour very close to my heart. Russell's work is special, and I am very privileged to be able to bring a little bit of home back with me to Cambridge.

ABOUT THE PLAY

The play is set in a run-down nightclub's toilets in Liverpool, where a bride and groom's respective pre-wedding parties collide - literally. The action jumps between the men's and women's loos as both groups descend into alcohol-fueled bickering, gossip, and insecurity. The bride, Linda, finds herself questioning her impending marriage to the hapless but well-meaning Dave, especially when her former boyfriend, now a successful musician, unexpectedly turns up performing at the club. Meanwhile, Dave - on his stag night - is too drunk to function, leaving his friends scrambling to keep the evening (and the wedding) on track. As tensions escalate, secrets surface, loyalties are tested, and both groups confront uncomfortable truths about growing up, settling down, and the fear of making the wrong choices.

MY VISION

Although the play was written in the late 1970s, I want to push the time period by a few years, to the early 1980s: the era of New Romanticism. Think Duran Duran, The Specials, Depeche Mode, Soft Cell, vibrant colours, and above all else, big hair. The period, however, was also a time of austerity for northern industries under the Thatcher government - mining communities and port cities alike were left to ruin. After the Toxteth riots in 1981, government officials

urged Thatcher to not spend public money on Merseyside, to let the region 'decline'. The play deals with themes of working class identity and of what it means to 'get out', making this period particularly relevant.

CONTENT WARNINGS

Alcohol use, strong language, references to sex, mild violence, sexism.

AUDITIONS

Auditions will be held on 29/11 from 11:00 - 17:00 in Magdalene College. Room TBC - I will email all auditionees when I find out.

Strawpoll link:

<https://strawpoll.com/bVg8BzKBByY>

The self-tape deadline will be at 23:59 on 6/12.

NOTE ON CASTING

A crucial part of why I wanted to do this play was to open up the world of Cambridge theatre to actors who identify as class act. Whilst I encourage everyone to audition, this is a play about working-class individuals, and I would like the cast to reflect that. Therefore, I will be holding drop-in sessions specifically for people who identify as class act, where we can have a chat and then work through the extracts together in a way that feels comfortable and informal. This will be on 30/11 in Magdalene JCR from 12:30-2:30. There is no need to book an audition slot for this.

I also *strongly* encourage BME actors to audition - again, it is my aim to reflect the nature of the place I am trying to depict. Liverpool is, and always has been, a diverse city. I very much want the cast to reflect this.

Feel free to audition for any character that floats your boat - regardless of specified gender. All I ask is that you have loads of fun with it!

NOTE ON ACCENTS

Whilst I would encourage everyone to try and do a Scouse accent in the audition, please do not worry about it too much as it is 100% something that can be worked on and improved over time. Again, just have fun with the extracts!

CAST

The 'Girls':

Linda - *The Bride*

The bride-to-be. Thoughtful, anxious, and increasingly unsure about her upcoming marriage. Torn between loyalty to Dave and the nagging feeling that she's settling for a life she doesn't truly want.

Bernadette - *The Dictator*

Older, sharper, and more experienced than the rest. Protective of Linda and openly critical of Dave and the lads. Strong-willed and not afraid to confront anyone, especially Linda.

Maureen - *The Drunken Cry-Baby*

Hilarious character - well-meaning but often frazzled. She spends most of the night dealing with self-inflicted mishaps (like locking herself in the loo). Adds comic chaos rather than drama. Cries a lot.

Frances - *The Best Friend*

Observant, serious, and often the voice of reason. She cuts through the nonsense and supports Linda with calm practicality.

Carol - *The Work Colleague*

Sarcastic, fed up with men, and constantly complaining—but in an entertaining way. Provides a running commentary on the night's madness.

The 'Boys':

Peter - *The Musician*

Linda's ex-boyfriend who unexpectedly turns up. Successful, confident, and more worldly than Dave's crowd. His arrival forces Linda to confront old feelings and the choices she has made.

Eddy - *The Violent Best-Man*

One of Dave's mates. Loud, crude, and quick to stir up trouble. Represents the more aggressive, macho side of the stag group. Can turn quite nasty.

Kav - *The Piss-Artist*

A joker with a certain kind of clueless charm - Kav provides a lot of the comic relief throughout the play. He acts as a contrast to Eddy's dominant and aggressive personality.

Robbie - *The Ladies Man*

Robbie is the most easygoing and quietly thoughtful member of the stag group - he tends to hang back, observe, and avoid unnecessary conflict, representing the more reasonable, decent side of the group

Billy - *The Oddball*

Billy goes along with the group's plans but isn't as aggressive as Eddie or as silly as Kev. He often sits somewhere in the middle - going along with the drama without necessarily creating it.

Dave - *The Groom*

This is a non-speaking role. All you will have to do is act like you're bevvied beyond belief.

EXTRACTS

Linda / Peter Extract (p. 57-59)

LINDA: (*shaking her head as she takes in his appearance*) What happened to you?

PETER: What *didn't* happen to you?

LINDA: Don't start!

PETER: Me?

LINDA: Yeh! (*Shaking her head and laughing again; beat*) So how long have you been with this lot then?

PETER: We formed just after I got to London. (*Beat*) Did you know we were playin' here tonight?

LINDA: No.

PETER: What - you just out for a dance?

LINDA: Yeh - sort of.

PETER: I'd have thought you'd have given up comin' to this kind of place by now.

LINDA: Oh, would you? Well what I do - or don't do - is no concern of yours!

PETER: How long is it since we last - met?

LINDA: I dunno. (*She does; beat*)

PETER: A long time?

LINDA: Yeh.

PETER: So don't you think we could - observe a bit of a truce! Start again? (*He looks*) Hello Linda. It's nice to see you again. You look really lovely.

LINDA: Oh fuck off!

PETER: Come here.

They embrace - laughing as they do.

FRANCES appears in corridor.

FRANCES clocks them as LINDA pulls away from the embrace. FRANCES pulls open the door to the Ladies and, once it's closed, leans back on it.

PETER: Isn't that... What's she called, your friend?

LINDA: Frankie - Frances.

PETER: Frankie, that's right. How is she?

LINDA: She's all right.

PETER: *(beat)* It really is great to see you y'know.

LINDA: It's great to see you. I suppose.

PETER: I'll go an' tune up if y'like - say tarar now!

LINDA: Go on then.

PETER: *(beat)* So you don't fancy a dance then?

LINDA: With you?

PETER: Well - in the absence of - John Travolta - yeh, me!

LINDA: *(beat)* Okay. Do you think you'll be able to dance - wearing boots like that?

PETER: Do you like them?

LINDA: Where the hell did you get them from?

PETER: There's this brilliant shop, just beyond Chelsea - fantastic gear - you'd love it.

Eddy / Kav Extract (p. 48-50)

EDDY: (*swiftly grabbing KAV*) Who the fuck d' y' think you're talking to? (He glares him into submission) Y' don't get autographs from people lik ehim! He's just a fuckin no-mark! You don't wanna waste y' time Kav. See, it's people like you Kav, runnin' around after pricks like him - that's what makes them what they are. You're as good as he is! But did he ask you for your autograph? Did he?

KAV: (*quietly*) No.

EDDY: No! You wanna keep hold of your dignity you do, Kav. You're as good as him. You could do that, what he does if you wanted to. You can do anythin'. We all can. We can do anythin' we want to do, anythin'. He's nothin' special, so don;t you belittle y'self beggin' for a scawlin on a piece of og paper. We can all write our names y'know. Here, here, give me that pen. Give it me!

KAV does so.

Look, look it's dead easy y'know. You want an autograph? I'll give y' a fuckin' autograph... Here.

EDDY writes his name on the wall.

KAV: It was great meetin' him though. Wasn't it Robbie?

ROBBIE: It was all right. He's nothin' special, though - is he? He's no one really - anyone could do what he does.

KAV: Oh! Yeh. Anyone could do it, Robbie. An' that's why - later on, whilst he's stood up on the stage with all the coloured spotlights on him, you'll be down on the floor, just like the rest of us dancin' through the dark with all the other no-marks.

EDDY: (*angrily snatching the felt-tip from ROBBIE*) Give me that. (To KAV) Put your name up there.

KAV: What for?

EDDY: Put y'name up.

KAV: (*Beat*) I don't wanna put my name up,

EDDY: Why not?

KAV: There's no point, is there?

EDDY: The *point* is that our names are up there. Where's yours?

KAV *shrugs*.

It's got t' be there.

KAVE: Why?

EDDY: So that all our names can be seen, that's why. So that everyone'll know we've been here.

KAV: They'll only paint it out. They always do.

Bernadette Extract (p. 76-77)

LINDA: I thought you'd be out on the floor Berni - there's not a lot of single fellers left y'know.

BERNADETTE: I hope you are thoroughly ashamed of y'self.

LINDA: Oh Christ Berni - leave it out, it doesn't matter. Come on...

BERNADETTE: It doesn't matter?! You just listen to me for a minute.

LINDA: *(standing to attention)* Yes miss!

CAROL: Well don't listen Linda - carry on ignorin' your mates.

BERNADETTE: An' bein' a selfish bitch!

LINDA: *(making the effort - deep breath)* All right. Okay. Go on - I'm listenin'.

BERNADETTE: I've been married, Linda, for some years now. You're forgettin' that I've already been through what's happenin' to you. An' I understand, Linda, I do.

LINDA: Okay.

BERNADETTE: D'you think you're the first woman to have a few doubts the night before she gets married?

LINDA: Berni - you don't have to worry because...

BERNADETTE: Don't interrupt me Linda! Every woman has doubts. But that's all they are - doubts. Y' don't act on feelings like that. Just because y' feel a bit nervous about everythin' doesn't mean y' can go rushin' into the arms of some ex-boyfriend an' then disappear with him...

LINDA: *(warning)* Berni...

BERNADETTE: What would happen if every other woman did the same thing an' acted on her feelings? Who the bleedin' hell would ever get married if we all took notice of how we feel?

Maureen Extract (p. 28)

MAUREEN: Oh God Lind' - I'd feel naked goin' out there without any make-up. Do y'know, I was dead late for work once an' I rushed out the house forgettin' to put my eye shadow an' lippy on. An' all the way to work I felt dead weird without knowin' why - I kept thinkin' I'd come out without putting any knickers on, But when I got to work an' looked in the mirror I saw it was my eye shadow and lippy that was missin' - that's what was makin' me feel so undressed. I had to borrow some make-up from Pauline Golightly - shot to the bathroom an' lashed some on. An' I was fine then. It was only when I was walkin' back across the yard I realised - I didn't have any knickers on! So that shows y' doesn't it?

Robbie / Billy Extract (p. 10)

ROBBIE: Total fuckin' disaster for you.

BILLY: Y' won't get rid of a stain like that y'know Robbie. Y' see that's a puke stain. A curry puke stain. An' curried puke stain is the worst kind of stain y'get!

ROBBIE: (*staring at BILLY; witheringly*) What the fuck are y doin', stood there?

BILLY: I'm holdin' the door for y' - like y' said.

ROBBIE: (*to BILLY as he enters*) But we're in now - bollock brain! This is all your fuckin' fault gettin' everyone to go for an Indian before we start drinkin' instead of after. This is down to you!

BILLY: No. No, Robbie, y'see because I said we should have a curry first because that puts a linin' on y' stomach.

ROBBIE: Yeh. Right! Only now it's put a linin' all down the front of my kecks as well!

BILLY: I didn't know Robbie. I didn't know he'd start drinking that Asti Spumante after he'd been on double Southern Comforts. Y'see, the grape an' the grain - they should never be mixed.

ROBBIE: I'll fuckin' mix you if y' don't shut up!

Carol / Frances Extract (p. 59-61)

CAROL: Are they gonna move on somewhere else?

FRANCES: No. No, they're stayin' here they said.

BERNADETTE: The selfish bastards!

FRANCES: It doesn't matter anyway.

CAROL: Apart from the fact that we've gotta find somewhere else to go now.

FRANCES: I think it might be too late anyway.

MAUREEN: Oh God, oh God - has she seen Dave already?

FRANCES: No, not Dave. You know there's a group on here tonight? Guess whose group.

BERNADETTE: What?

FRANCES: Peter McGeegan - it's his group.

CAROL: They're never as good as the records - groups.

BERNADETTE: Peter who?

FRANCES: McGeegan - yeh. Linda's ex.

MAUREEN: Oh my God.

CAROL: He's here tonight?

FRANCES: They're right outside there, top of the stairs - all over each other!

CAROL: I wondered why she was so keen to come to a dump like this!

FRANCES: Hold on - we can't be sure that she knew who -

BERNADETTE: - Oh come off it Frankie.

CAROL: How long was she goin' with hom?

FRANCES: A couple of years.

CAROL: If she went out with him for that long she's bound to know what he's up to these days.

THANK YOU<3







