

PILOT THEATRE PRESENTS

NOUGHTS

& CROSSES

BY MALORIE BLACKMAN

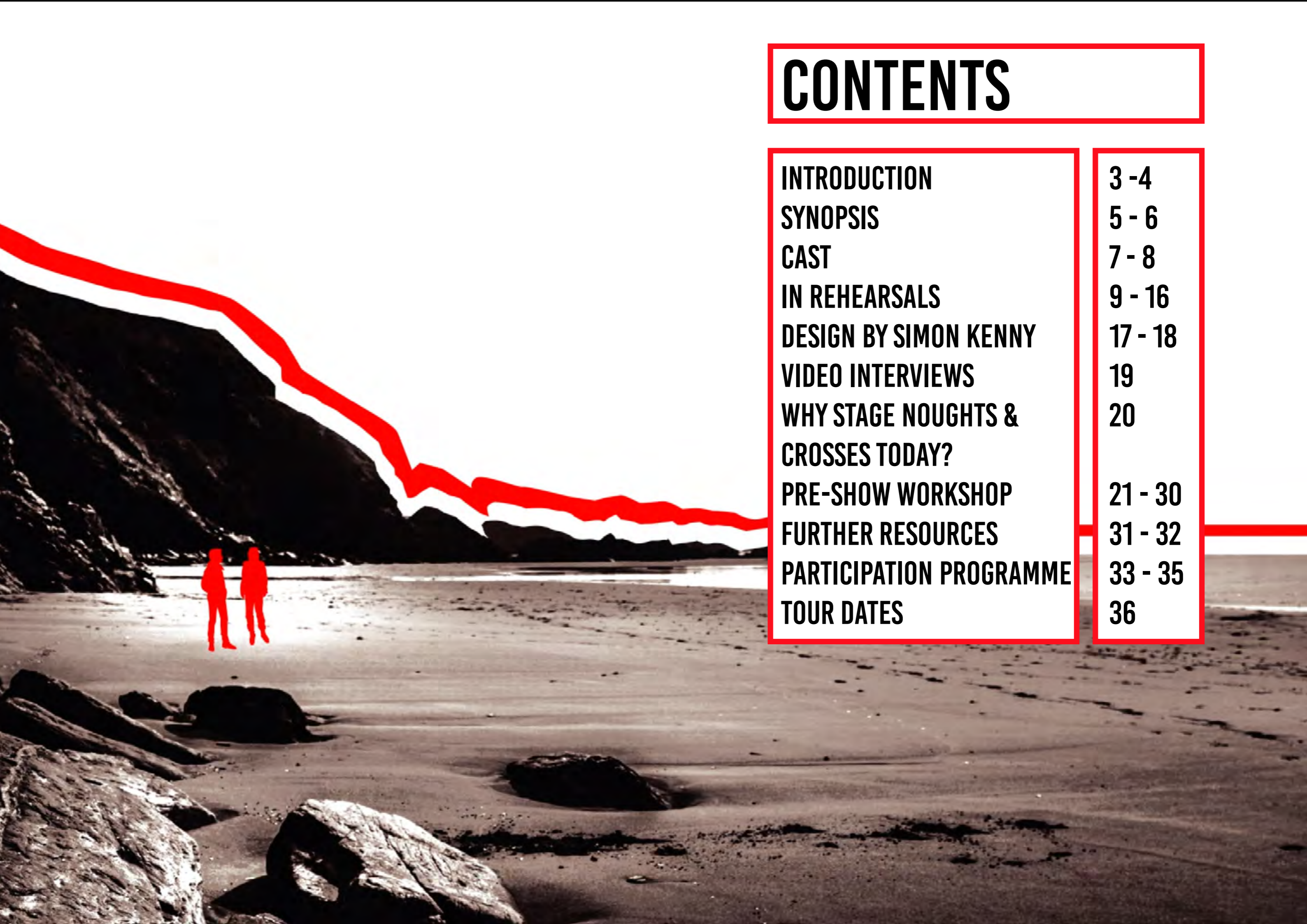
ADAPTED BY SABRINA MAHFOUZ

DIRECTED BY ESTHER RICHARDSON

RESOURCE PACK

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3 - 4
SYNOPSIS	5 - 6
CAST	7 - 8
IN REHEARSALS	9 - 16
DESIGN BY SIMON KENNY	17 - 18
VIDEO INTERVIEWS	19
WHY STAGE NOUGHTS & CROSSES TODAY?	20
PRE-SHOW WORKSHOP	21 - 30
FURTHER RESOURCES	31 - 32
PARTICIPATION PROGRAMME	33 - 35
TOUR DATES	36



INTRODUCTION

*Sephy and Callum sit together on a beach. They are in love.
It is forbidden.
Sephy is a Cross and Callum is a Nought.
Between Noughts and Crosses there are racial and social divides.
A segregated society teeters on a volatile knife edge.*

As violence breaks out, Sephy and Callum draw closer, but this is a romance that will lead them into terrible danger.

This gripping Romeo and Juliet story is a captivating drama of love, revolution and what it means to grow up in a divided world.

This production will have Pilot's trademark characteristics of innovative design and relevance to young people. As a text it provokes discussion about race, equality and what it feels like to be a young person embarking on life in an adult world.

The play provides a great opportunity for students studying Drama and Performing Arts, or English at GCSE, BTEC or A level. It could be used as a comparative work when studying your set text for English GCSE and as a cultural discussion point linking to school PSHE initiatives. In addition, your Drama department may use this production for their live theatre question on the written paper or as devising stimulus.

Suitable for ages 12+ (year 7 onwards) with tickets available for schools groups. Please check venues' websites or box office for ticket prices and offers.

An updated version of this Resource Pack will be uploaded and available to access for free once the production has begun its tour.

The updated version will include interviews with the Creative Team, production photography, more workshops and video recordings of key scenes.

Resource pack written by Catherine Palmer.
Design by Sam Johnson.
Photography by Robert Day and Sam Johnson.
Filming by Ed Sunman.

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With thanks to the cast, creative, production, and admin teams and a special thanks to the teachers and teaching professionals involved in the consultation of the design and content of this pack. Your feedback has been invaluable in its development.

SYNOPSIS

Noughts & Crosses is set in a dystopian, parallel universe in which people are defined as Noughts and Crosses and there are significant social, economic and racial divides.

This segregated society is run by Crosses who are the dark-skinned ruling class. The Crosses run government, have access to money, good jobs and education while the Noughts are 'colourless' members of the underclass. Noughts are poorer, often working in service roles to Crosses with less access to education. They also have very limited access to basic human rights and there are few laws and protocols in society to protect them from discrimination. Segregation of the two races is actively encouraged and enforced.

Sephy is a Cross and Callum is a Nought, they grow up together as best friends and become completely inseparable. Callum's mum, Meggie McGregor, works for Sephy's mum, Jasmine Hadley, as a housekeeper which allows Sephy and Callum's friendship to grow. When Meggie cannot lie or offer an alibi to Kamal Hadley, Sephy's dad and Home Secretary, about Jasmine's infidelity she is fired. This compromises Callum and Sephy's ability to be together.

The segregated society they live in threatens their relationship until a new policy is introduced for a small number of Noughts to go to Cross schools. Callum passes the gruelling entrance exams to get a place at Heathcroft, Sephy's school, and they imagine this will be their opportunity to be together.

Callum's time at school is difficult, protests start and segregation in school means Callum and Sephy can't be together. This leads to arguments between them as Callum renounces their friendship and Sephy is attacked for having lunch with Callum and the other Noughts.

In this midst of their difficulties at school, Callum and Sephy's personal lives take a turn. Lynny, Callum's sister, is convinced she is a Cross, a repercussion of the trauma experienced in a violent attack on her and her Cross boyfriend by Noughts. When an argument breaks out between Callum, Ryan (Callum's dad) and Jude (Callum's brother) about her, she comes to the realisation she is a Nought and unable to live with this commits suicide.

Jude and Ryan's grief from Lynny's death pushes them to join the Liberation Militia, a terrorist group using violence to fight for the rights of Noughts. Jude reveals to Callum that they have planted a bomb in a shopping centre that Callum and Sephy plan to meet in. Callum rushes to get Sephy out moments before the explosion.

Jude is on the run and Ryan is arrested for his suspected involvement in the shopping centre bombing. A top Cross lawyer has been anonymously hired to defend him. Callum is convinced this is Sephy's doing and becomes more determined to do well at school. When he returns to Heathcroft, the head teacher asks him not to attend school until the case is over. He decides to leave the school completely.

During the court case, a video of Callum and Sephy running from the shopping centre is revealed as evidence. The jury agree on a guilty verdict and Ryan is to be hung. Jasmine reveals to Sephy that she paid for the lawyer.

Moments before Ryan is about to be hung, Kamal changes the sentence to life imprisonment. However, Ryan is killed soon after attempting to escape prison. Sephy tells Callum she is going to boarding school. She begs Callum to run away with her and start a new life. He doesn't reach her in time before she leaves.

Callum and Sephy live apart for three years. In this time, Callum joins the Liberation Militia reconnecting with Jude and Sephy is at boarding school. On returning home, Callum leaves a note for Sephy asking her to meet him. When they do, he (with the Liberation Militia) kidnap her.

In the hideaway, the Liberation Militia put out a series of demands including for Kamal to step down as Home Secretary. Callum is left in charge of Sephy as the other members go to reveal the rest of their demands in different locations.

Callum and Sephy talk, he reveals he came to run away with her but she had already left. Callum tells Sephy that he loves her and they have sex. Jude returns, all the Liberation Militia members have been arrested or killed. He argues with Callum assuming he has raped Sephy and during the argument Sephy escapes from the hideaway.

Sephy is pregnant. Eventually, it is leaked in the media as Callum's baby and he comes to visit. Again, they make plans to leave when guards surround them and Callum is arrested.

Despite pressure from her family, Sephy makes a public statement to say she was not raped. Kamal visits Callum in prison and attempts to make a deal with him. He says if Callum makes a public statement that he raped Sephy, he will get a reduced prison sentence.

Callum doesn't agree to the deal and is hung. Sephy gives birth to their child, Callie Rose McGregor, a symbol of hope for a less divided and more just world.

THE HADLEY FAMILY



Sephy:
Heather Agyepong



Minerva:
Kimisha Lewis



Kamal:
Chris Jack



Jasmine:
Doreene Blackstock

THE MCGREGOR FAMILY



Callum:
Billy Harris



Jude:
Jack Condon



Ryan:
Daniel Copeland



Meggie:
Lisa Howard

IN REHEARSALS





Credit: Sam Johnson



Credit: Robert Day



Credit: Sam Johnson



Credit: Robert Day



Credit: Robert Day 14



Credit: Sam Johnson



DESIGN BY SIMON KENNY



Credit: Vicente Muñoz



“In her brilliant book **Noughts & Crosses**, Malorie Blackman offers us a vision of a world that looks a lot like the one we live in, but with a crucial social difference – it’s recognisable but strange, familiar but different. It could be now, but it’s not quite. This became key in designing the world onstage – I wanted to create a world that we absolutely recognise and understand, but somehow isn’t quite what we expect.

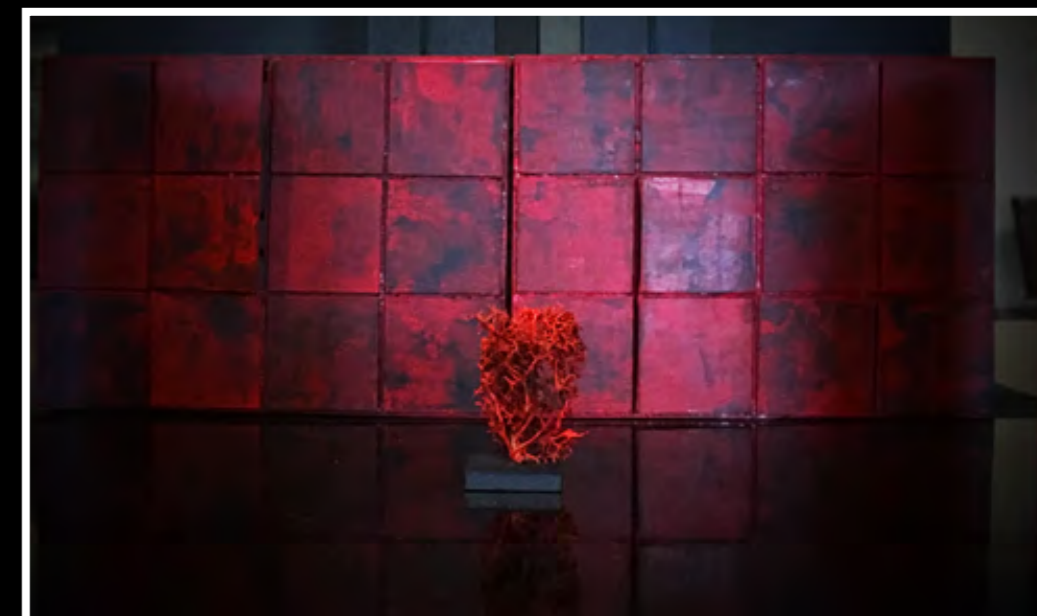
While researching online, we came across some extraordinary and strange pictures created by artists working with infrared photography. These uncanny photos of modern cities around the world seem completely normal apart from one thing – all the greenery is captured as red. The sky is blue, the buildings are made of bricks, the bridges of metal, but the trees are red. This became our way into the world of the play – familiar, but different.

Rather than a series of rooms, we have a simple, abstract space and minimal furniture which we can use to represent any location we need – a canvas against which we can portray an epic sweep of drama, poetry and movement. As the story unfolds and reveals itself, so too does the set.”

Simon Kenny, Designer



“ a canvas against which we can portray an epic sweep of drama, poetry and movement. ”

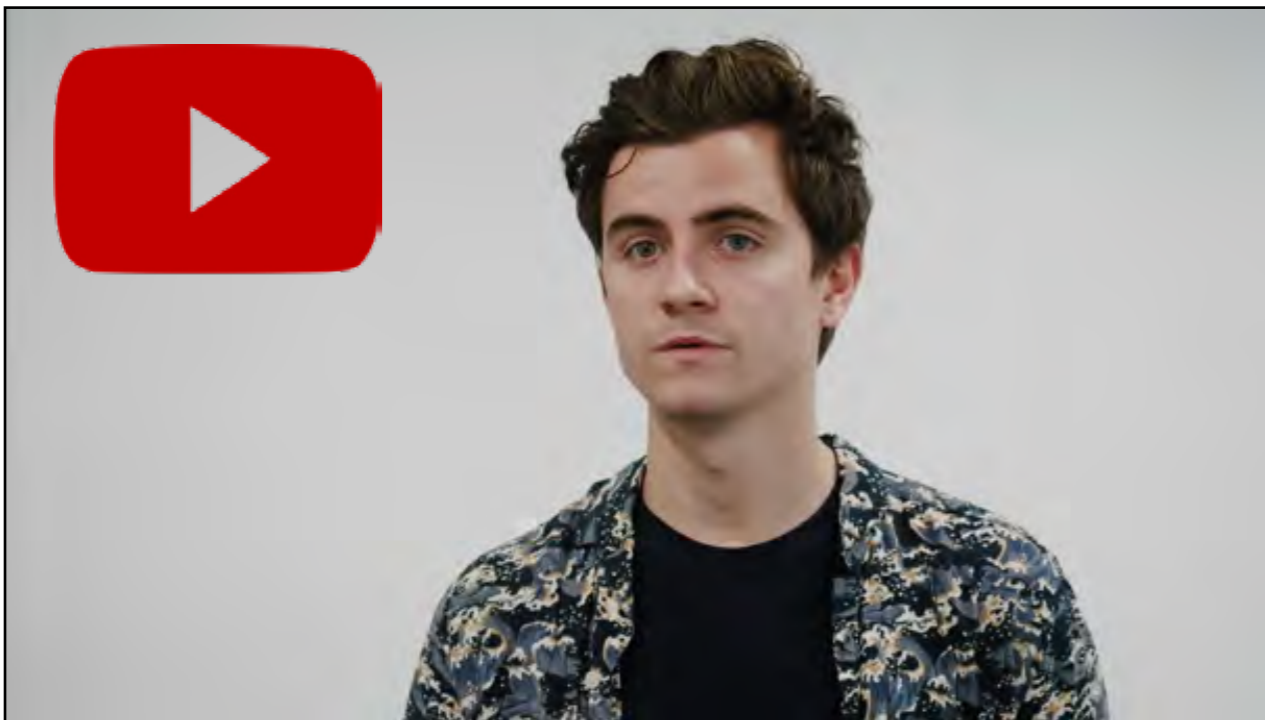


INTERVIEWS

HEATHER AGYEPONG



BILLY HARRIS



WHY STAGE NOUGHTS & CROSSES TODAY?

As part of our educational programme we're working with a group of young people from our consortium venues.

The role of these Young Creatives is to find innovative ways to interact with audiences beyond the production. In order to achieve this, Young Creatives have access to the workshop and rehearsal period for Noughts & Crosses and training to create a pre-show and post-show event at their partner venue.

In November, a week of pre-rehearsal workshops took place at Theatre Peckham, London. During this week, the Young Creatives worked together and with the Noughts & Crosses cast and Creative Team to discuss the themes and relevance of the story for audiences today.

Watch the video below to see their responses.



PRE-SHOW WORKSHOP

This workshop is two hours long or parts of it can be pulled out on their own to be explored in the classroom. If you have any questions about the content of this workshop or how to lead certain parts of it, please contact:

catherine@pilot-theatre.com

Time: 2 hours

Age range: Year 7 onwards

Suitable for: This workshop is particularly apt for groups that will be attending Pilot Theatre's production of Noughts & Crosses but could also be adapted for those who are studying the production and/or text.

Subjects: Drama and Performing Arts, English, Citizenship, PSHE

Warm up (10 minutes): Bottle Game (with added corruption)

- Split the group into two even teams and number each member of the team.
- Place a bottle in the middle of the two teams.
- Call a number out, when your number is called, those participants will run to the middle and try and grab the bottle and get back to their team. If they are successful, they will receive a point.
- However, if the other person manages to tap them before they get back to their team. They and the other team will receive the point.
- The first team to 10 points wins.
- For the first few points, play the game fairly giving points as and when a team gets them. After this, start to add in elements that privileges one team over the other. For example, move the bottle closer to them so it's easier, find justifications for giving them extra points or not giving the other team a point when they get the bottle. This can start as something quite subtle and then develop further as the game continues.
- At the end of the game, open up a discussion with the group. What happened during this game? How did it make you feel? Was the game fair? This game is a practical way to highlight privilege and start discussions with your group about this. You could apply this to many team-based games adapting the rules to privilege one team.

Exercises: Exploration of inequality and equality

Defining inequality and equality (5 mins):

In small groups, ask them to discuss: what does inequality mean? What does equality mean? Ask each group to prepare an idea for each question to feedback.

Open up the discussion (10 mins):

Ask each group to feedback their ideas and open up a discussion. You may want to write these down if you think a visual prompt will be useful.

Questions to develop the discussion might include:

- What can determine whether a person is treated equally?
- What groups of people in society now are not treated fairly?
- How is their experience or treatment in society different?
- How could society be more equal and fairer? What can we do to make this happen?

Still images (15 mins): What does inequality and equality look and feel like?

- In their groups, ask them to take the idea they shared with the group and create a still image that shows an audience what inequality looks and feels like.
- You could give the suggestion that the images don't have to be literal representations of a real-life situation. They could instead focus on how someone may feel etc.
- Share these images back. Discuss with the group: What did we notice about the images? How did they make us feel?
- Back in their groups, ask them to create another still image using the idea they shared in the discussion that shows an audience what equality looks and feels like.
- Share these images back. Discuss with the group: What did we notice about the images? How are the second images different to the first images? You could offer them prompts to think about how they are different in terms of space, gestures, openness etc.

Scene work (20 mins)

- Ask the groups to use their images to create a short scene. The scene should start with their image of inequality and end on their image of equality.
- The action of the scene should explore an experience of inequality, in which one or multiple characters are not treated fairly. There should then be an intervention which overcomes or highlights the inequality shown and brings us to the equality image at the end.
- Share these scenes and discuss forms of inequality highlighted, types of social action and resolutions shown.

Staging the prologue from Noughts & Crosses (30 minutes)

As a group read the prologue from Pilot's adaptation of Noughts & Crosses:

PROLOGUE – THE NURSERY

A baby is crying. The ensemble enter.

Grown up Sephy and Callum watch as:-

Meggie picks up Sephy from her cradle to console her.
Two year old Callum sleeps nearby.

Jasmine appears in the room– she watches Meggie for a beat.

ENSEMBLE:
When a newborn baby cries
it means there's life
and with new life there's new hope,
right?

MEGGIE:
She's perfect, Mrs Hadley. Persephone, such a pretty name.

JASMINE:
Thank you, Meggie. I'm sure her and your Callum will be ...great friends.

MEGGIE:
He'll be the luckiest boy in the world if they are, Mrs Hadley.

Meggie passes Sephy to Jasmine, deferentially but lovingly.

SEPHY:
And we were friends. Best friends.

CALLUM:
And I was the luckiest boy in the world.

CALLUM/SEPHY:
I remember –

SEPHY:
Leapfrogging over rocks, sleeping in trees

CALLUM:
Sneaking in and out of sand dune dens

SEPHY:
Toes tickled by the cold sea
even though we weren't supposed to be by the water

CALLUM:
Not supposed to be anywhere we couldn't be seen,
but we were always

SEPHY:
Hiding

CALLUM:
Smiling

SEPHY:
Climbing

CALLUM:
Laughing...

Beat

SEPHY:
Then, there was so much shouting.

And the scene suddenly shifts.
Callum and Sephy are kids running around Jasmine and Meggie.
But the two women are still and tense.
Something has obviously just been said that has shocked Meggie.

Kamal enters.

Has my wife been here with you?
Are you not my housekeeper? Will you not answer me?
Must I roar even more, even louder?

KAMAL:
Is it true?
Is it true?
Has my wife been here with you?
Are you not my housekeeper? Will you not answer me?
Must I roar even more, even louder?

JASMINE:
Meggie, just tell Mr Hadley – tell him
we were in the house with the children all last night.

Beat

KAMAL: Meggie, you will speak.

Beat

MEGGIE:
Mr Hadley I respect you as my boss and your wife,
dare I say it, as my friend.
Even so, sir,
us Noughts have to find dignity where we can
and... I find it in truth.

KAMAL:
So what is it then, your dignifying truth?

Beat

MEGGIE:
I...I can't give you the answer I wish I could, sir. Sorry –

Meggie's 'sorry' is drowned out by Jasmine's screams
of 'get out get out' to Meggie as Kamal roars, the kids run away and we are left
with Jasmine and Meggie on their own on opposite sides of the stage. Maybe
teenage Callum and Sephy emerge from behind their mothers. And begin their
new reality:

CALLUM:
We didn't understand what had happened.

SEPHY:
But we knew our games had to change now.

CALLUM:
Mum was fired, so no more everyday playing
in Sephy's family grounds.

SEPHY:
No more pretending Callum was ever going to invite me round
to his for supper.

CALLUM:
Secret meets on Sephy's beach as we wondered if our mums would ever speak
again.

SEPHY:
They knew we were still speaking, they couldn't stop us, nobody could, we
were partners in crime, two of a kind.

CALLUM:
Biding our time til we had an excuse to be together in the open every day
again. Til there'd be a way for a Nought kid and a Cross kid to be equals in a
room, nobody staring -

SEPHY:
Nobody caring -

CALLUM:
Nobody concerning themselves with how we could be friends

SEPHY:
Until one day my father made our dreams possible –

CALLUM:
Cross schools to let in a small number of exceptional Nought students,
including – me.

SEPHY:
Finally, me and Callum would be together every day. I was so excited –

CALLUM / SEPHY:
My heart burst from my chest.

SEPHY:
Everything from now on would be perfect –

Beat

CALLUM:
Wouldn't it?

NOTES

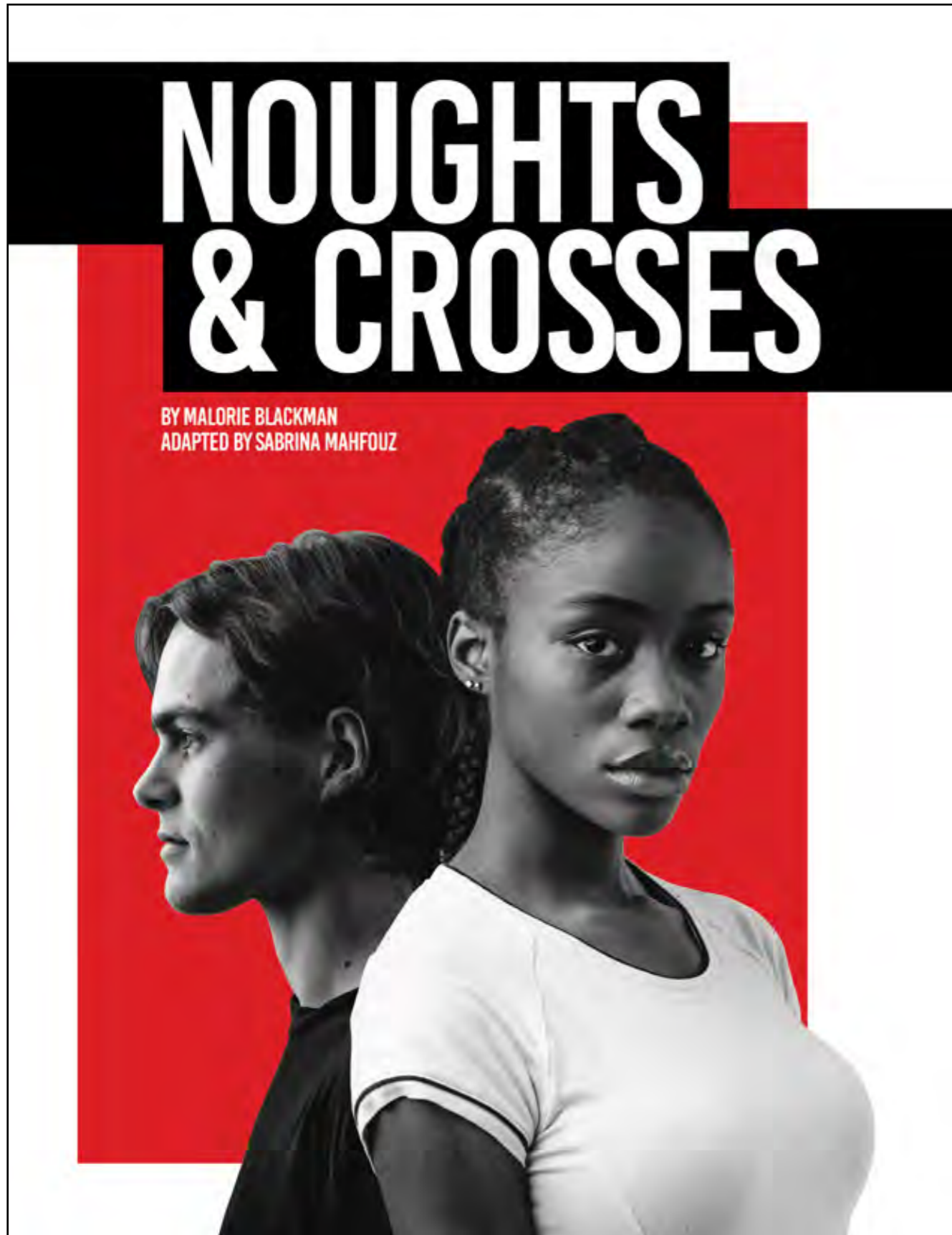
- In groups, ask them to stage the prologue in a style of their choice. They can use all of the text or focus on one section. They are welcome to add music, movement and props available to them in the room they are in.
- Ask them to create three rules that exist in the world of the scene. E.g. Crosses must always be higher than Noughts, therefore, if Crosses sit on chairs then Noughts must sit on the floor. Or Noughts cannot make eye contact with Crosses. Or certain words in the text provoke a certain action or pause etc.
- Perform these scenes and discuss them. What stood out to you? What did you enjoy? How could the scene be developed further?

The world of Noughts & Crosses (15 mins)

- Drawing again on the prologue, ask the group what they learn about the world of the play through this piece of text. You may also want to use the first paragraph of the synopsis to support this. Ask them to discuss what is similar and what is different in the world of the play compared to our world now.
- In smaller groups, ask them to discuss and decide how this world was created. How did the Crosses take control of society? What is the history of the Noughts & Crosses? Did they once live together peacefully? Did something in society act as a catalyst for segregation (this could be politically, socially, economically etc).
- Ask them to create a sequence of three still images physicalising this history. You may want to add music to support this.
- Ask each group to perform their sequence and share what they discussed and decided about the history of the world.

Coming to the production (10 mins)

- Ask the group to look at the poster and trailer for Pilot Theatre's production of Noughts & Crosses.



- In small groups, ask them to discuss their expectations for the show based on these materials. You may want to split groups into different elements of the production e.g. design, acting, costume, sound etc. They could discuss something they are looking forward to, something they hope might happen in the production, something they feel confident they will see and why.
- In their groups, ask young people to discuss the following question: why stage Noughts & Crosses today.
- Ask each group to share their ideas back in a group discussion.

Reflection (5 mins)

- In a circle, summarise what has happened in this workshop. Go around the room and ask each person to describe the workshop in one word or with one action.

FURTHER RESOURCES

POETRY AND BOOKS

- Anthony Anaxogorou, *A Difficult Place to be Human* (London: Outspoken Press, 2013)
- Raymond Antrobus, *To Sweeten Bitter* (London: Outspoken Press, 2017)
- Malorie Blackman, *Noughts & Crosses* (London: Corgi, 2006)
- Renni Eddo-Lodge, *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People about Race* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017)

WEBSITES

- [Q&A with Malorie Blackman](#)
- [Observer interview with Sabrina Mahfouz](#)
- [Interview with Esther Richardson](#)
- [Malorie Blackman and Sabrina Mahfouz interviewed by Graham Norton on BBC Radio 2](#)
- [Heather Agyepong and Kimisha Lewis on BBC Radio Derby](#)
- [British Theatre Guide podcast with Esther, Billy and Heather](#)

VIDEOS

Interview with Malorie Blackman:



New Black Math by Suzan-Lori Parks (Theatre Journal, Vol. 57, No. 4, pp. 576-583), read by Jennifer Nelson



Raymond Antrobus performing 'Jamaican British' in *To Sweeten Bitter*



PARTICIPATION PROGRAMME

This is the first production in a four year programme of work by the consortium (Pilot Theatre, Derby Theatre, Belgrade Theatre Coventry, Mercury Theatre Colchester, and York Theatre Royal) to create and tour inspiring new work for younger audiences so we have the opportunity to really develop our engagement and participation work with schools and young people over an extended period.

SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

During the tour of Noughts & Crosses, five sustained schools engagement projects will be delivered at: Theatre Royal Stratford East, York Theatre Royal, Mercury Theatre Colchester, Belgrade Theatre Coventry and Derby Theatre.

N&C SCHOOLS FESTIVAL AT THEATRE ROYAL STRATFORD EAST

In partnership with TRSE, Young & Talented are producing a schools festival supported by Pilot Theatre inspired by Noughts & Crosses. 10 schools from London and Essex will create devised response pieces to Noughts & Crosses to be performed at Stratford East.

N&C SCHOOLS FILM FESTIVAL AT YORK THEATRE ROYAL

Pilot Theatre and York Theatre Royal have put together a film project for schools and colleges to accompany Noughts & Crosses. Schools will work with professional directors/theatre-makers in workshops in their school using the themes and script from Noughts & Crosses. They will then work with a professional filmmaker to translate their ideas into a 5 minute film response. The films will be screened in a Noughts & Crosses School's Film Festival in early April at York Theatre Royal.

N&C CREATIVE WRITING FESTIVAL AT MERCURY THEATRE

Pilot Theatre and Mercury Theatre Colchester are delivering a creative writing project to schools in Essex. Schools will work with artists to develop pieces of creative writing and perform them a devised piece in the studio space at the Mercury.

WORKSHOPS

The workshop opportunities that accompany the production are:

Devising: a practical workshop exploring devising techniques using the themes of Noughts & Crosses as a stimulus.

Exploring the text: a practical workshop exploring language, structure and characterisation, including vocal and physical interpretation of character.

Conveying meaning: a practical workshop considering how meaning is communicated to audiences through form and style. This includes exploration of the use of movement and space and/or sound and design.

From page to stage: a practical workshop exploring Pilot Theatre's rehearsal techniques in moving from extracts of the novel to the play text.

Workshops cost from £200 for a half day and from £300 for a full day.

On stage with Noughts & Crosses (Northern Stage and Theatre Royal Brighton)

These events will take place in the theatre on stage for 2 hours for teachers and students to attend prior to seeing the production. This is a semi-practical workshops for schools to engage in and enhance their knowledge of the production.



FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

NOUGHTS & CROSSES YOUTH

Noughts & Crosses Youth is our collaboration with Associate Artist Young & Talented (Y&T). Young people will create productions with a professional creative team responding to Noughts & Crosses and performed in theatres in London.

For more information see: www.youngandtalented.co.uk

Digital Creatives

The Digital Creatives are three students from each branch of Y&T interested in the digital arts. The role of the Digital Creative is to use film and animation to document all the stages of the Noughts & Crosses Youth project. They will create a short film of the project to be screened at the beginning of each of the final productions.

Young Creatives

The role of the Young Creative is to find innovative ways to interact with audiences beyond the production. In order to achieve this, Young Creatives have access to the workshop and rehearsal period for Noughts & Crosses and training to create a pre-show and post-show event at their partner venue.

Get involved: For more information on any of our projects or to share your feedback with us.

Please get in touch: catherine@pilot-theatre.com



NOUGHTS & CROSSES

TOURING 2019

Derby Theatre 1 Feb -16 Feb

Theatr Clwyd 19 Feb -23 Feb

The Lowry, Salford 26 Feb -2 Mar

Mercury Theatre Colchester 5 Mar -9 Mar

Bristol Old Vic 12 Mar -16 Mar

Theatre Royal Brighton 19 Mar -23 Mar

Belgrade Theatre Coventry 26 Mar -30 Mar

York Theatre Royal 2 Apr -6 Apr

Theatre Royal Stratford East 24 Apr - 4 May

Northern Stage 7 May -11 May

#NoughtsandCrosses

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