



**FRANTIC³⁰
ASSEMBLY**

LOST ATOMS

WRITTEN BY ANNA JORDAN DIRECTED BY SCOTT GRAHAM

A Frantic Assembly Production,
Co-Produced with Curve,
Mayflower Southampton and
Lyric Hammersmith Theatre

**A Comprehensive Guide for
students (aged 14+), teachers
& arts educationalists**

Written by Scott Graham with
contributions from the cast
and creative team



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Photo credit: Tristram Kenton

Contents

AN INTRODUCTION	3
Why we create this	4
A Writer's Perspective – Anna Jordan	8
A DIFFERENT CASTING PROCESS	13
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT	15
How the play was created	16
COLLABORATION	21
Andrzej Goulding: Set Design - The Vault of Memories	22
Julie Blake: Music Consultant - Their Music vs Our Music	26
Alice McNicholas: Costume Design	29
THE ACTORS	32
REHEARSALS	39
Scenes and their Development	40
Discoveries from the Rehearsal Room	43
Tasks to Take On	44
Discovering the physicality, exploring the bed	45
Bibliography of Inspiration	46

AN INTRODUCTION



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Why we create this

All Frantic Assembly productions are accompanied by a resource pack. The aim here is to bring you into the rehearsal process and understand how a production originated, developed and took form. That involves many people and many wrong turns and blank stares. I cannot stress enough how important it is that our young theatre students and theatre makers understand this. It is unhelpful to be comparing your first steps to the gloss of a finished project. It does not reflect the process behind any piece of work.

I hope that these resource packs present a process that celebrates half formed ideas, doubt, revision, cul-de-sacs and about turns, discovering through trust in yourself and others, listening to other perspectives, and ultimately creating something more than what you sketched on day one.

Within this pack there are contributions from all aspects of a creative process. That includes designers and performers. We may have many conversations but there are always aspects of their process that surprises and inspires me. I hope this insight into collaborative theatre making from different perspectives does the same for you.

You will find some of the exercises I employed in the rehearsal room. Some might have become scenes. Others, as I write, have yet to find their place. That does not mean that they were a waste of time. They still served as vital exploration. It is just important to consider the overall rhythm of a show before you find a place for all the lovely work that you made! Sometimes you must show restraint and not include something you might be very proud of.

The point here is to see any processes as an act of exploration rather than as definitive choreography for a particular moment in the show. An unused section might have offered character insight for the performers that ultimately feeds their performance. A process could be reused elsewhere to unlock something within a different scenario or show.

Hopefully this pack brings insight. What would be even greater is if it could offer inspiration to play and try things.



Photo credit: Ben Hewis

A play about Memory and Love

I wanted to create a show that took the idea that our memories are unreliable as its central theme. I felt that our interactions with people, especially our intimate relationships, shape us into the people we are, whether that is through trauma or inspiration. What if those memories are not so solid? What if our perspective is merely that, and an empirical truth remains evasive? What if our partners do not agree about the moments that made us? Was our relationship what we thought it was? Are we who we thought we were?

A memory is not a hard recording of an event. The process of remembering alters that memory each time. If that is the case, then who we think we are now potentially reshapes a memory. Is it then formed by our egos? Is it reshaped to protect us? While I was interested in this aspect, I did not want to present something quite so cynical. I was just as interested in the fact that being different people taking up different space is enough to offer a different perspective on any event. However close we may feel to someone, we can never inhabit exactly the same space. That simple fact is enough for us to see things fundamentally differently.

The Title

Anna and I had pushed a few titles back and forward to each other. None were really sticking. (To be honest, some were awful!). Anna was drawn to the word Atomic. At that stage it was instinctual. There was not a clear link between the word and what we were exploring. I didn't like it and began calling it Atoms in some petty act of denial. I decided to research a bit more into atoms but found myself quickly googling the concept of 'lost atoms.' Can atoms be lost? The simple answer is no but they can appear to be lost if an experiment contains an error. This made me think about the act of remembering. An event happened. That is certain. But the act of remembering is fallible. Would this offer solace or frustration to our characters as they look back at their love? As the play develops, Jess and Robbie have different feelings about this. For Robbie, the idea of things fading or being lost terrifies him. Jess comes to see it as natural and, with regarding memory, liberating. It does not mean that wonderful things did not happen. For her it just means that the act of remembering should not get in the way of new wonderful experiences. There is also the suggestion that memories must sit within us and are never lost despite them appearing to fade and disappear. They made us and therefore remain 'in every cell.'

Robbie and Jess also suffer an awful trauma that reshapes and defines their relationship. The title also refers to the devastating loss of their child.

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There is also the suggestion that memories must sit within us and are never lost despite them appearing to fade and disappear.

A trilogy?

Yes and no. Mostly no. I was interested in *Lost Atoms* as being the third part of a focus on love that started with *Stockholm* and continued with *Lovesong*. Both of those shows presented very different relationships, but both would be defined from within as love, even if from the outside we could see that *Stockholm* concerned a destructive relationship. (The title refers to Stockholm Syndrome, where a victim connects to their abuser, presenting a scenario within where the roles of victim and abuser can become blurred). I gently invited Anna to look at both plays but was careful not to be prescriptive. I felt *Lost Atoms* could, maybe should, feel like the third part of a love trilogy in its intimacy and scale. I certainly did not want Anna confined by any expectations of conforming to a formula to fit a trilogy.

Inspiration

While developing *Lovesong* I had read Alain De Botton's *Essays in Love* and was fascinated by his charting of a relationship from random encounter, through giddy early days, to comfort, betrayal and pain. It might have suggested that it was an objective study of the shape of a relationship, but the title gave away its subjective take on things. It was not *Essays on Love*. It was *Essays in Love*. That meant the writer/narrator was partial, in thrall to love, blinded, in pain, arrogant, even naïve. (I believe the book was written when he was at university and published when he was 22!)

I presented the book to Anna as a stimulus for our collaboration but rather than an adaptation, Anna was drawn to introducing another perspective to the mix. She was right, of course. As interesting as *Essays in Love* was as a book it risked being theatrically inert. Bringing another perspective opened our themes of the unreliability of memory and the process of remembering.



Photo credits: Ben Hewis

Why Anna Jordan?

Anna has already created *The Unreturning* with Frantic Assembly. I was on the outside of that production, watching a fruitful collaboration between a generous, exciting writer, a talented director Neil Bettles, and wonderfully collaborative creative team. I had seen enough to know that when the opportunity came, I would want to call on Anna.

Finding a time to do so is not easy. She is rightly, hugely in demand but I felt there was something about the rawness and sensitivity of the subject matter that told me Anna was the one for this project. She has a huge emotional intelligence and an infectious enthusiasm for the elements other creatives and performers bring to the story. (More on this distinction between 'performers' and 'creatives' in 'A Different Casting Process')

I have loved working with Anna on this project. There is something utterly truthful about her approach and her work. To say that her characters and dialogue is genuine is not to say that that it is mundane. It is beautifully poetic and insightful, effortlessly funny and heartbreaking. She has a fierce tenacity and an inspiring rigour to her process that simultaneously thrills you and makes you feel you are in safe hands!



Photo credit: Ben Hewis

A Writer's Perspective – Anna Jordan

It's wonderful being asked to write a piece for the resource pack. There's no greater honour for me than my work being seen and studied by young people in schools, colleges and youth theatres. The idea that you might be studying my words as part of your work feels like a great thrill but also a responsibility.

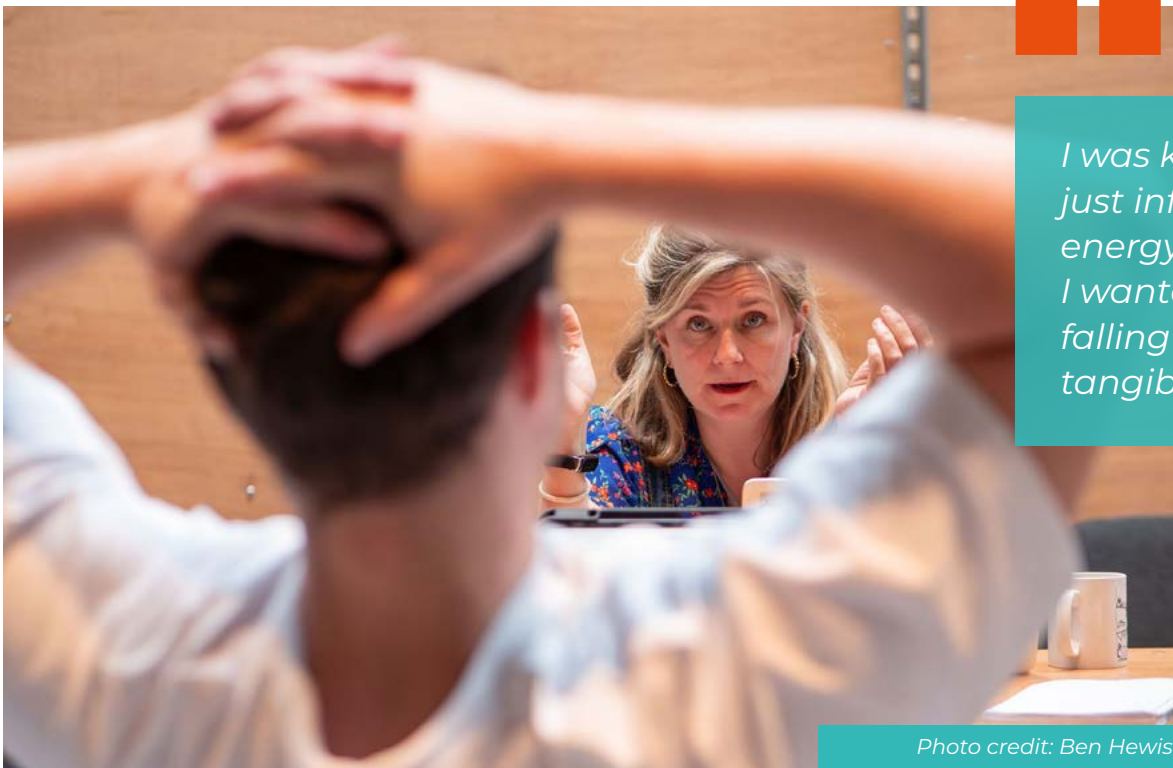
It also gives me a chance to look back over the show we've made, go right back to the beginning and think about what we wanted to do and how we got there. Whether we've achieved what we wanted – or whether the path changed. That's really exciting – and a little bit scary! Did we do what we wanted to?

Collaboration

Making Lost Atoms was very much a collaborative project. Writers are often quite isolated. I write in my little shed at the end of the garden and it can get lonely, but from the get-go this has been a proper group effort. (In the programme I wrote if it takes a village to raise a child it takes a city to make a play.) Scott Graham approached me with the idea of writing something about love and memory. He'd read the book *Essays in Love* by Alain De Botton and was inspired with how it dealt with a life-changing relationship in hindsight. I read the book and was interested in the idea of studying and analysing the life of a relationship – but was aware that we would need to find a way to make it live and dramatic; analysis alone can be dry. I have also been obsessed for a long time with writing about memory – about how our memories can change over time and how to create that on stage.



Photo credit: Ben Hewis



I was keen to create on stage not just information, not just story, but energy and feeling. Most importantly I wanted to create the energy of falling in love! Make it palpable, tangible, so the audience can feel it.

Photo credit: Ben Hewis

We had lots of interesting conversations early doors about the sort of thing we wanted to make. I was keen to create on stage not just information, not just story, but energy and feeling. Most importantly I wanted to create the energy of falling in love! Make it palpable, tangible, so the audience can feel it. This is my second time of working with Frantic, and I knew they were the right company to create this with, and I was very excited about working with Scott as he is brilliant at this; we speak a common language. I don't just want to think when I go to the theatre, I want to feel.

Lost Atoms was a very special project in many ways, not least because Hannah Sinclair-Robinson and Joe Layton were involved from the very beginning. It's quite rare to develop a show from its very origin with a set of actors and we've been so lucky to have such visionary, talented and intelligent people to work with. They made the play with us over a series of three research and development periods and are very much theatre makers in their own right.

Development

From 2024 – 2025 we met three times for a period of five days each time. The first session was really about talking. We shared stories about our own experiences of falling in and out of love. Scott ran an incredibly safe and warm room; the conversations were personal and intimate and I'm thankful to the whole team for being so open. Trust is really important in rooms like these. We would identify thoughts, memories, moments that interested us and talk them out – expand on them. I like the image of pulling on a thread that might be loose, and you just keep on pulling till your whole jumper or cardi has unravelled.

The biggest challenge for me during this time was storing and processing the brilliant stories and thoughts that were shared. Sometimes information comes so thick and fast that you struggle to get it all down. Part of becoming more experienced as a writer is learning to identify the stuff that interests or excites you and finding an impactful way to record them. (If you're interested in writing, or indeed making any kind of art, I urge you to get good at taking notes and organising and storing them in a way that works for you. It sounds sort of dry and boring – but it makes a huge difference.) You have to trust that your brain can act like a filter, or even a magnet – making sure you're keeping the stuff that sticks. I like to write stuff on index cards; it gets me away from my computer and I can put them up somewhere where everyone can see them. I also like to write in a stream of consciousness, taking an initial idea and writing

around it for a set period of time, not leaving the page. It's a great way of quickly developing ideas to see where they might go and is a big part of my process.

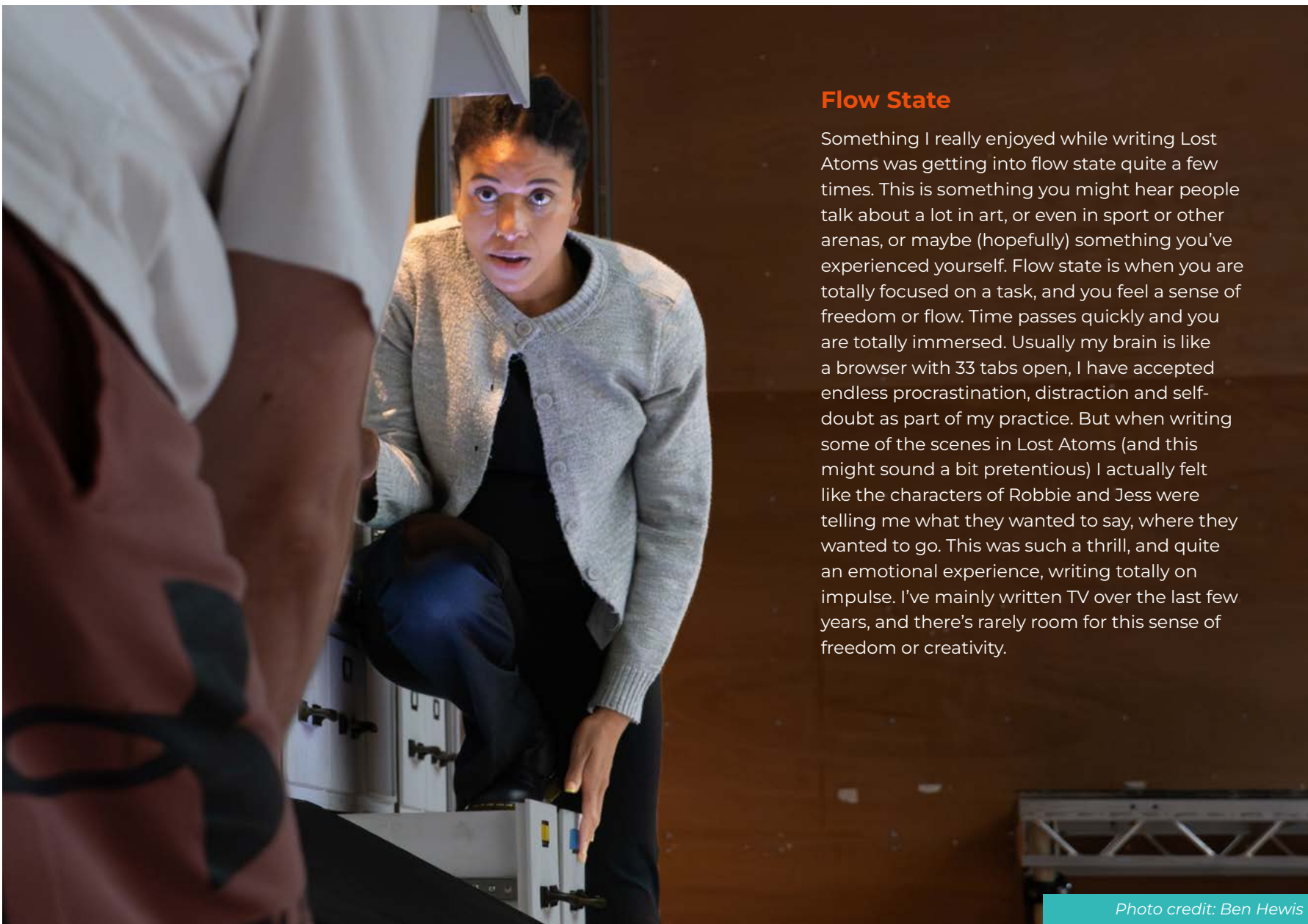
In R&D two, we experimented with stuff formally. This is where we started trying stuff out for No Man's Land (the scenes which acted as a framing device, where we begin to understand that Robbie and Jess have come together in this abstract place to relive their relationship to try to find out how it went wrong.) And also 'The Glitches', which are the moments where Robbie and Jess break out of a scene momentarily to have an exchange in No Man's Land, usually to argue about who's recollection of the scene is correct, or to comment on what is happening. Finding the language for this was probably the most challenging part of the whole process, but I feel like we landed on something which was interesting and insightful, and fun, without it distracting too much from the story.

We also developed the idea of 'Imagined Futures' that they explore in the last section of the play (The Coda.) The actors would be given an imagined future written on an index card (We move up North. We're family people. OR We retrain. Get jobs in finance. Buy a three-bedroom semi in The Burbs.) And then the actors would build on them, adding more detail, more ideas, building the situation. I was interested in the idea of time travel on stage – how can the characters travel years, even decades, before our eyes?

R&D three, I arrived with lots and lots of scenes we called Spine Scenes, which were a collection of moments from Robbie and Jess's relationship which told their story. These scenes formed the basis of the scenes you see in the show. Some of them have changed beyond recognition, some of them are almost exactly the same as when I first wrote them.



I like the image of pulling on a thread that might be loose, and you just keep on pulling till your whole jumper or cardi has unravelled.



Flow State

Something I really enjoyed while writing *Lost Atoms* was getting into flow state quite a few times. This is something you might hear people talk about a lot in art, or even in sport or other arenas, or maybe (hopefully) something you've experienced yourself. Flow state is when you are totally focused on a task, and you feel a sense of freedom or flow. Time passes quickly and you are totally immersed. Usually my brain is like a browser with 33 tabs open, I have accepted endless procrastination, distraction and self-doubt as part of my practice. But when writing some of the scenes in *Lost Atoms* (and this might sound a bit pretentious) I actually felt like the characters of Robbie and Jess were telling me what they wanted to say, where they wanted to go. This was such a thrill, and quite an emotional experience, writing totally on impulse. I've mainly written TV over the last few years, and there's rarely room for this sense of freedom or creativity.

Photo credit: Ben Hewis

The finished show

I'm immensely proud of the show we have made. It is an absolute group effort – words, movement, design, lighting, music, sound, costume . . . There's a huge talented team behind creating a show like this – not least the Stage Management team who keep everything running smoothly and with impact long after the creative team have gone. The show literally could not happen without them. Our associate director, Lucy Wilde has played a huge role during the rehearsal period providing great support for Scott and also for me! The design for the set grew with the play – we talked about the drawers and lights and levels from the very beginning and Andrzej Goulding's incredible set is like its own character.

I think we've achieved what we set out to do: to tell the story of a real relationship on stage. Not a fairy tale – the theme of fairy tales, and how pervasive the idea of HAPPY EVER AFTER is in our society, is present throughout the play. The story of Jess and Robbie's relationship undulates – it goes in fits and starts. Sometimes it flows, sometimes it soars, sometimes it stutters and sometimes it explodes. It's not linear. In fact, I think *Lost Atoms* is a bit of an anti-fairy tale – and I like that.

When developing and rehearsing the play we talked a lot about feeling foolish. About how love makes you behave in ways that are unusual, maybe risky. You make yourself vulnerable; open up and trust. Taking these risks often involves going against values or behaviours we have developed through childhood, or past relationships or trauma. Robbie goes against his default nature – cautious, reserved, solitary – to embrace falling in love with Jess. Jess goes against her default nature – rebellious, non-conformist, wild – to embrace becoming mother and being part of a family. There are many instances of this in the

play, big and small, and we began to refer to them as “Going out on a limb.” The definition of “Going out on a limb” is “do something one strongly believes in even though it is risky and extreme” and the phrase originates from the idea of going out onto a branch when you're climbing a tree – there's a risk it could break under the weight.

It occurred to me that writing, or making any kind of art, is a bit like this. You take a risk, you make yourself vulnerable, you climb out onto the branch. It may be scary – but it's worth it. Going out on a limb shows us we are really alive.



Photo credit: Ben Hewis

A DIFFERENT CASTING PROCESS

Photo credit: Scott Graham

A Different Casting Process

From the very beginning I wanted Joe Layton and Hannah Sinclair-Robinson to be our couple. More than that, I wanted them to create the world of the show with us. This meant they were part of every development session and were invaluable collaborators. They are fantastic actors, but they have been this and so much more in the creation of *Lost Atoms*. Earlier in this resource pack I separated performers and creatives in a sentence and there is usually a number of very good reasons to do this. This rehearsal process has been different, and I would argue that the performers are very much creatives on *Lost Atoms*. They have helped form and develop the characters but have been so much more than that to me. They have helped inform direction and choreography. They have been the source of ideas as well as the sounding board.

Often actors come to the process late and, with respect, do their bit, paying little attention to what is happening around them. There can be a useful purity to this, and many brilliant performances can emerge this way. Having been there from the beginning has created a relationship with the show that is probably more akin to the early days of *Frantic* where all hands were on deck! It has created a highly collaborative room where the best idea wins. This may sound obvious, but the hierarchies and egos of the rehearsal room does not always allow this!



Photo credit: Tristram Kenton



RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Photo credit: Tristram Kenton

How the play was created

Every Inch of the Sofa

I wanted to explore how a couple might spend time on a particular part of their home, in particular how they might use the sofa. I was thinking of a scene that captured all the positions they might hit during their relationship, but I wanted it to be fluid and not simply a series of still images. I did not tell the performers this, though, because that would have negated the value of the exercise. The performers would have edited their choices into a series of naturalistic positions. This is ok but I wanted to find something a little more interesting and less obvious.

Of course, anyone invited to use a sofa might simply sit in it and face forward. I wanted to use the exercise to help the performers break free from that and ultimately help create more interesting choreography.

The task was simply to cover every inch of the sofa with their bodies. (We had two low cushioned chairs pushed together creating a big arm rest in the middle. Not strictly a sofa but, hey!) Could they get their shoulders into the crevice between cushion and backing? Can they run their back along the top of the chair? Can they invert themselves to the point of achieving a headstand on the chair?

Having found a few of these moves can they link them and fluidly move from one to the other?

Having played with these extremities we then returned to a naturalistic start. Simply sitting on the sofa together. From here I could ask them to move to a new position, but they now automatically had that fluidity of movement explored previously. There was no sense of still image or start and stop to the movement. They were engaged and connected to each other and the sofa. They were using all their body to connect with each other and the sofa. It was an entirely different quality to simply sitting and connecting only with bottoms and hands.

The task developed into taking turns at leading, pulling, pushing your partner into a new position. This might mean following or it could mean separating. Without too much thought we created a basic string of material moving over, around and through a sofa.

This was then finessed into a final version, but this approach allows for moments of naturalism to appear from fluid, and much more interesting, movement. We still get the sense of time passing and relationship played out, but it is not a series of still images shouting their meaning at us.

As ever, we will probably only use a small section of this in the finished show. What will be cut will go on the 'things we loved but had to sacrifice for the greater good' pile.



Setting up the Room (how I remember it)

This simple exercise involved some chairs and a couple of tables to represent a café that two characters met in. The task was for each to remember the details differently and try to set up the room as they saw it. For the sake of the exercise, we allowed them to have three versions of the set-up of the café each. We kept it nice and simple, but it is up to you how much detail you want to go into. Do you have cutlery or other props? Of course, you could start simple and add complexity.

They took turns at placing the items in the room. When they were finished the other came in and adjusted to their version.

The important thing here is to simply get on with the task. Don't play frustration with the other person. That kills any sense of choreography and everything becomes very literal.

You could begin to overlap them. That might present accidental and potentially much more exciting choreography. Look out for this. Film it if you can because the initial runs will be random and may be difficult to remember. Also, the outside observer (you and the camera) can see moments of inspiration, connection and meaning that the performers cannot. That is why it is important to strip any sense of performance or attitude from them. Just keep it functional.

The next stage might be to get them to try to do their moves at nearly the same time.

They must not argue or fight over items. Choreography can be adjusted to make it look seamless. It might create a couple lost in a loop where nothing seems certain.

Once you have the choreography you can then find moments for the characters to connect or disagree. Do this sparingly though.

This exercise served as an introduction for the performers to the idea of different perspectives having a profound impact on the telling of a story, even if at first those details seem mundane.

This choreography never got to the final show, but it served its purpose. That is probably an important thing to remember about choreographic tasks. Sometimes they become integral to the telling of the story and sit firmly within the show. At other times they can inform character and lead to a better understanding of the story for the performers and creative team but do not necessarily need to be shared within the production.

So, it joins elements of Every Inch of the Sofa in that special pile!

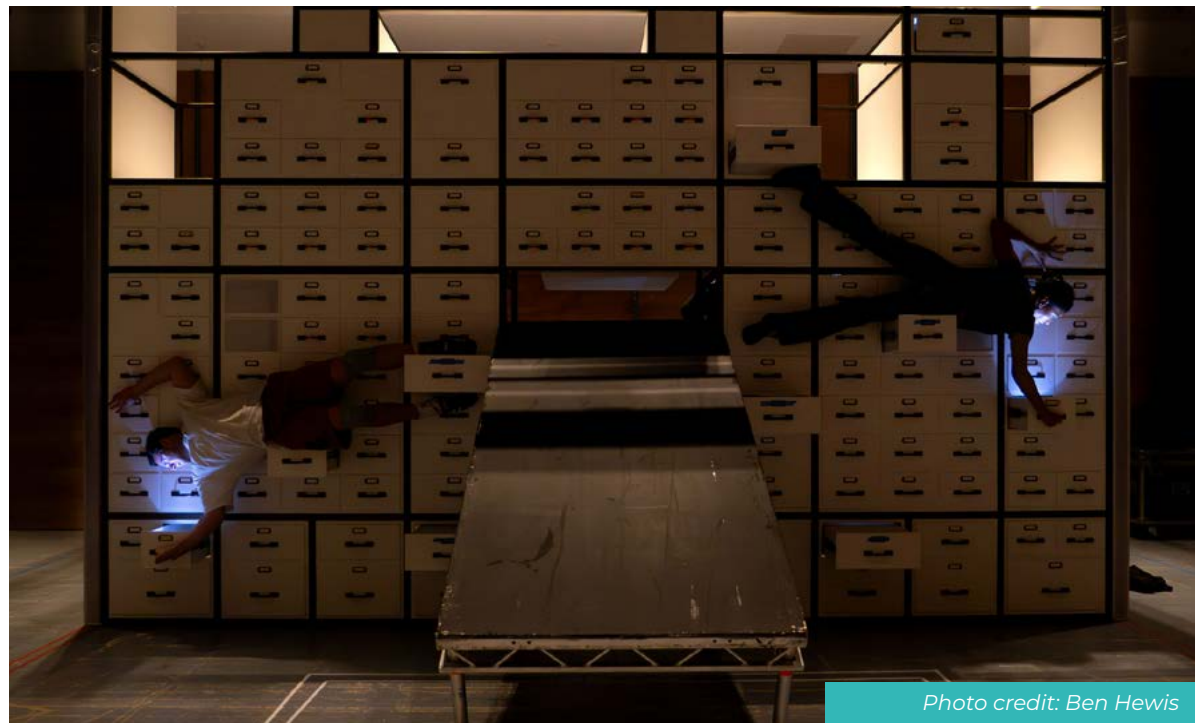


Photo credit: Ben Hewis

Are You Sure You Want To Do This?

This phrase came from a development session where I had set up a task for both performers to construct a room of furniture how they wanted. Each was to have their own version and then the other would come in and change everything, imposing their version. It was a simple representation of remembering the details of a room differently.

The resulting scene was fun and quirky but there was something a little smug about it. There was no risk or danger in changing someone else's version of events. Showing someone what one character believed was the truth did not risk devastating the other. Versions of events competed but the game simply continued without lasting effect.

I wanted to raise the emotional stakes. If this was a couple coming together to explore and make sense of their past then they must be putting their version of events, what they held to be true, at risk.

I asked the performers to meet in the space with all the furniture around them. Before one of them set out the room as they thought it should be I had them ask the other, 'are you sure you want to do this?'

Immediately the danger of the task became clear. It became a powerful way to begin raking over the past. The phrase itself can be delivered in many ways, economically opening many possibilities. It can be aggressive, suggesting that the speaker has information that could destroy the other. It can be incredibly caring and protective of the other. It can be terrified and vulnerable. It can be seeking validation and support for what might be a traumatic endeavour. It gives power to the information that is to be uncovered.



Photo credit: Ben Hewis

The phrase 'Are you sure you want to do this?' became a spine of the production. We highlighted all the moments when it could be said between them as they work their way through their relationship. Having done that we then decided it could be said at the beginning and then towards the end, otherwise it would begin to feel contrived and lose its power.

It is an important thing to remember about Lost Atoms. The characters must not simply begin unpacking their relationship in front of us. They must have much to lose and much to gain from the process, otherwise we will be asking why they are doing it and the whole play loses its power.

I would encourage you to explore what a simple phrase might conjure. Just two people meeting in a space and just that simple phrase. Even something as simple as 'Can we begin?' said between two people might throw up fascinating permutations. Explore all the different emphasis and consider all the different histories it might suggest. It could betray an anger. It could be a fear. It could suggest 'do we dare begin this?' All these options immediately suggest a world and history outside the moment.

Try this with students. Get the rest of the class to comment on what they think is going on. The performers just need to make a clear choice about emphasis. They do not need to make choices about that history. That is for the observers. The exercise is about the simplicity of language and the power of engaging an audience in conjuring a complex situation.

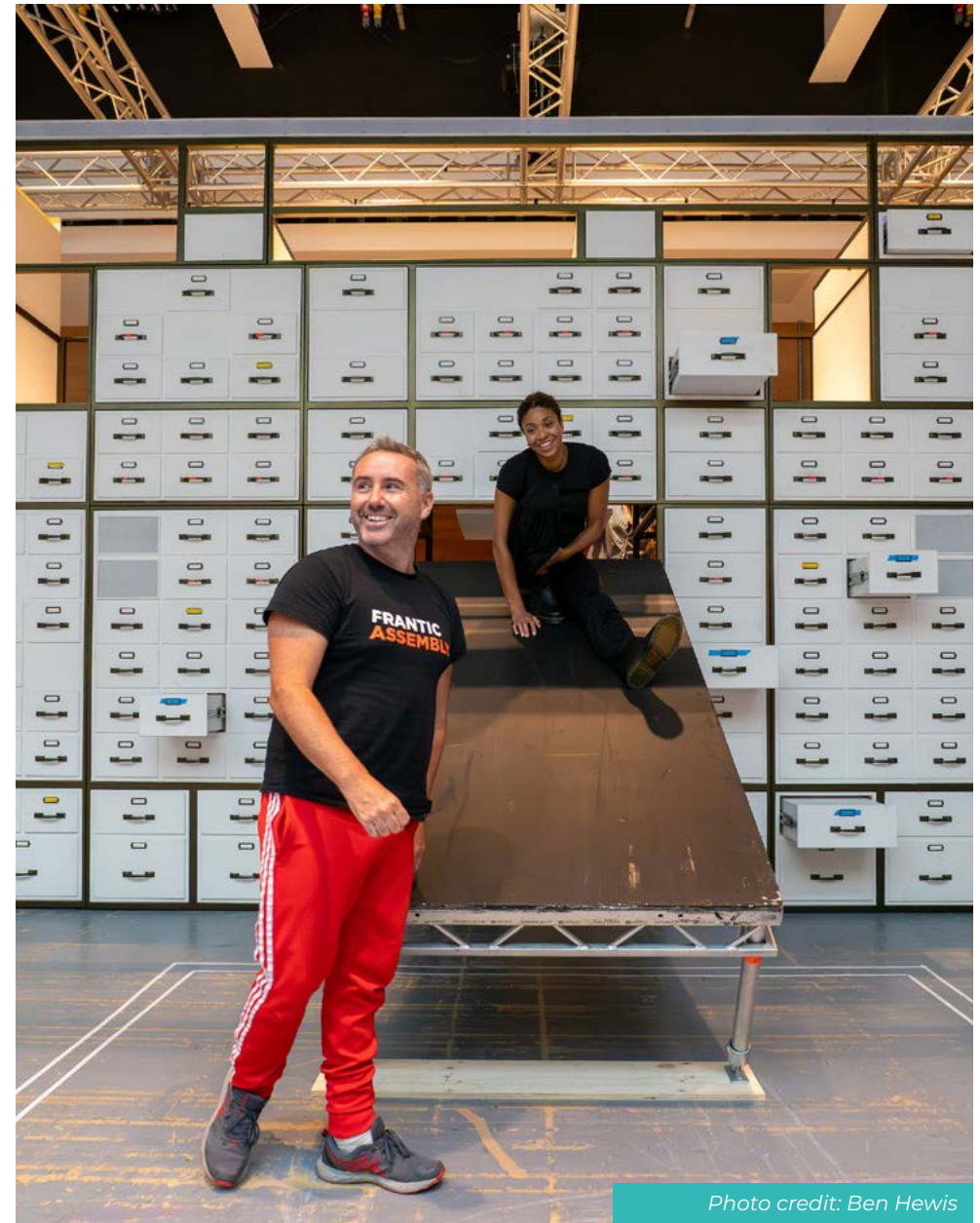


Photo credit: Ben Hewis

Memory of Events - Remembering Things Differently – Things Fade – The Invention of Memories

SPOILER ALERT!

This is not a Happy Ever After fairy story. But that does not mean that it is about a failed relationship. We were very keen to explore a relationship that did not last long but one where the participants had a profound effect upon each other.

Robbie fears that memories fade. He fears losing what he was once connected to. Jess concludes that we are created and shaped by our interactions. Corrosion and fading are natural and although our memories will dissolve, our relationships with the people we have loved remains 'in every cell.'

The final moment of the play can seem cruel in the way Jess suggests a future where she looks at a photo of them both from many years before, feel all the feels, but realises she does not remember his name. What she is saying is that it does not matter. Things WILL fade. But he will remain in every cell of her being.

We always talked about the last moment being a gift from Jess to Robbie. She does not take an imagined future away from him. By getting him to understand that the corrosion of every possible version of them is inevitable he can free himself from the fear of losing someone and find new futures with different people, knowing that whatever he cherishes about their past love will remain in every cell.

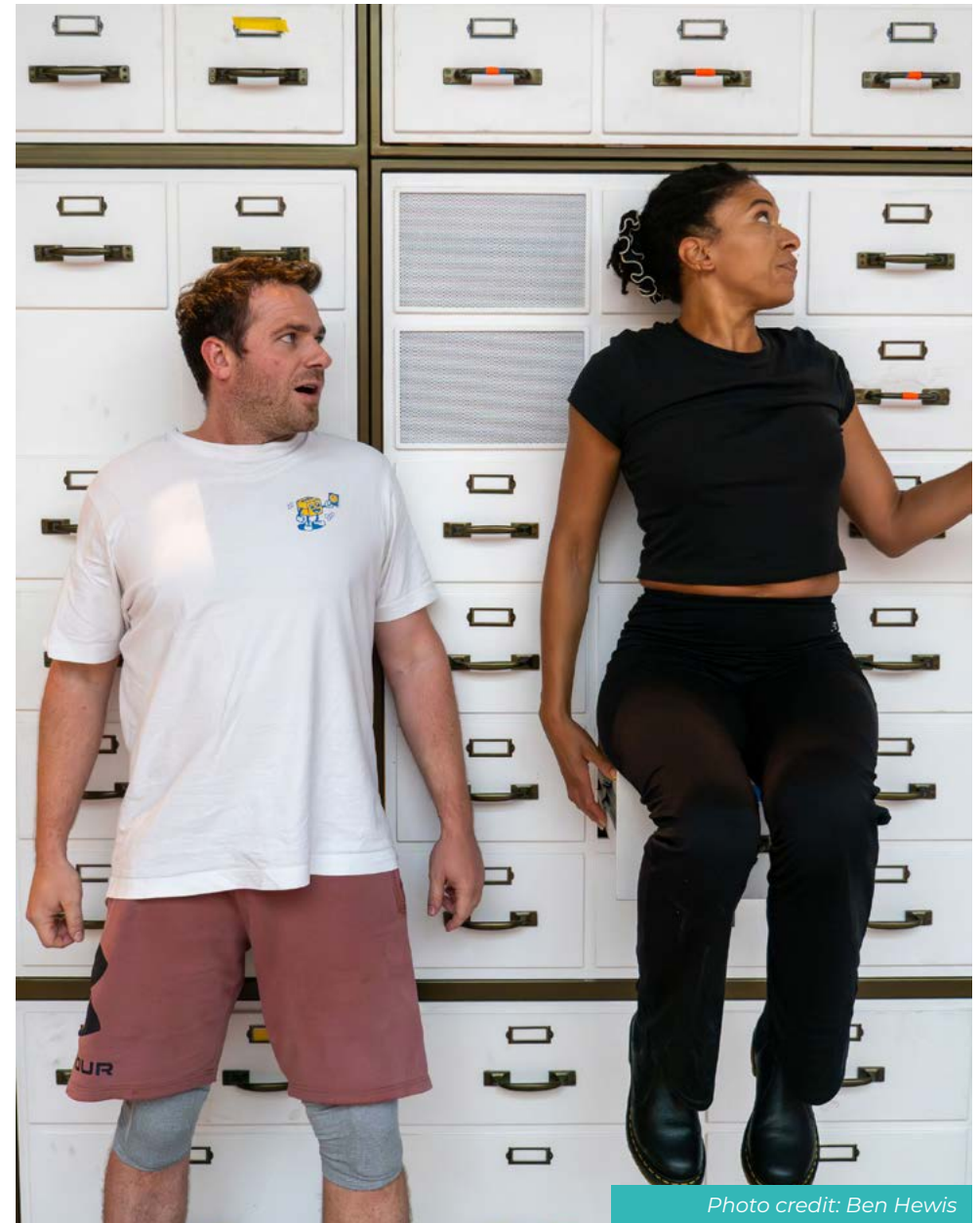


Photo credit: Ben Hewis

COLLABORATION



Photo credit: Scott Graham

Andrzej Goulding: Set Design - The Vault of Memories

My name is Andrzej Goulding, and I am the Set Designer for Lost Atoms.

I'm responsible for coming up with a visual language for the show and creating a spatial design for the characters to exist within, which can then be augmented by other members of the design team such as Simi, the Lighting Designer.



THE JOURNEY - ideas, decisions, and pathways:

The set design for the piece was created alongside the script and so existed before there was a fully finished script. This process of design means that the space becomes more of a playground for a whole host of potential scenes and sequences rather than being specific to a series of locales. I knew early on that the piece was going to be about memory and how memories can fade and change over time, so that was my starting point for any thoughts and ideas of space.

The first idea, and the one that went through to completion of the design, was of characters existing within a memory vault; a space where all their memories are stored, where they could find them, where they could literally take memories out, look at them and re-experience them together. Very quickly I landed on the idea of memories as light and that these memories would emit a sound. With the idea of a vault, I started looking into things like bank vaults and timeless spaces that could have been around forever. I wanted the space to have age to it and for the memories to have different ages. With the idea of drawers that I finally landed on, I wanted some to be missing as if those memories used to be there but have now gone (but with some there is a ghosting of these drawers still on the wall).

I needed to make this into a physical space that could be a practical set, that could (in the Frantic way) become a space to be climbed on and used in a physical way. So, using the idea of a vault I started to look at shelves and drawers and cabinets and cupboards and boxes, anything that could be used to contain a light source. I also landed on the idea that these light sources/memories could be carried around and be exchanged between the characters. I wanted the idea that we are seeing just the base of this structure and that it could have potentially stretched up higher, but those memories have faded away . . .

Throughout this design process I would have conversations with Scott (Director) and Anna (writer) so that we could bounce back and forth as to what could potentially work with the script that was developing. Anna created the idea of a “void”, where the characters are discussing memories before jumping into another one. There was also an idea of standing on the edge of a precipice with a void below.

And finally, an image of the two characters in a bed floating in a void with just a crack of light. Both these ideas I then take and see if they can be incorporated into the set design which in the end became the LED strip floor and wall elements and the bed/platform.



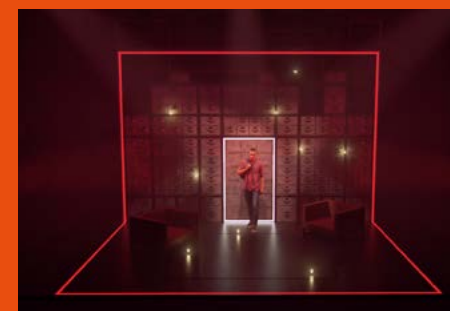
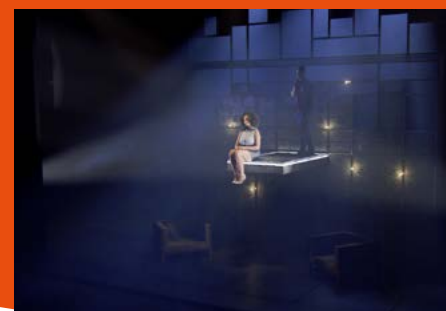
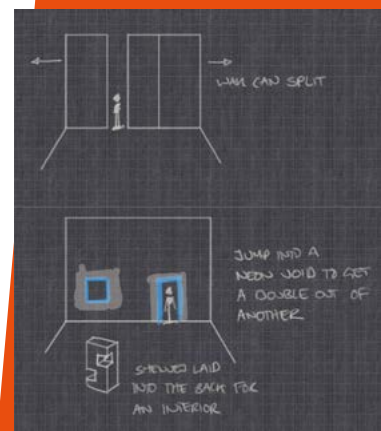
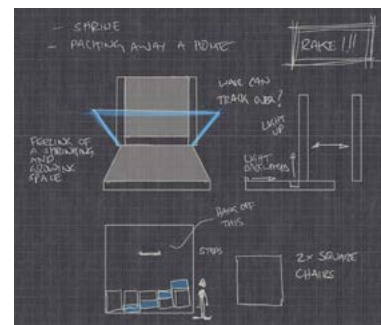
THE PROCESS:

It's a very fluid process but the set had to be finalised earlier than the script to be built in time for rehearsals, so those early conversations were key to getting as many ideas in as possible, while giving the piece enough freedom to use the set in a multitude of ways.

I wanted the set to 'disappear' when we desired, which is why the finish of the set needed to be very dark but with elements that we can pull out. Practical lighting is a great way to do this so I designed a lot of that to be set inside drawers and in the floor, whilst making sure we had the space for unobstructed sidelight and some lovely big backlight statements that could go through the set itself.

A show with few actors onstage is always a challenge as you need to give the piece a journey and the space needs enough different tricks and ways to use things, so one of the joys is thinking up all the different things you can do.

For my process I start with doodles on my iPad, usually in a script and then onto procreate (drawing and animation app) for more detail. I do all my designs in full 3D so that we can look at things realistically at scale and know there are enough good angles for lights. I love designing sets that can be lit through and use very specific angles so I always want to make sure that I'm not coming up with ideas that can't be achieved. There are lots of ways now to render out ideas and try things. The newest is to create a 3D model, then use the computer to texture it in lots of weird and wonderful ways to see what strange things can be created (as you never know what might happen by accident).



THE CHALLENGES. THE LOVE:

I love happy accidents and they only come about by playing and trying anything you can think of. I'm a video designer and that is how I treat a lot of that too - I play around for fun and come up with new ideas and techniques that you wouldn't necessarily think of if you are just trying to fulfil a specific brief. It might not all work, but it might work for another project down the line, and you've already got that idea floating around then in your head.

The most challenging aspect of the process is to design something alongside a script being written. However, that is also a joy, as it frees you of those common restraints you can get with other shows. It's a very collaborative space working on a Frantic show and there are ideas from everyone in the room so it's really fun getting all that to coalesce together and create a final product.

I love my job as it's always different, you get to use your imagination and there are always problems to solve. Sometimes it's hard, sometimes it's easier, but it's always rewarding. And you get to meet so many amazing people along the way.



vimeo

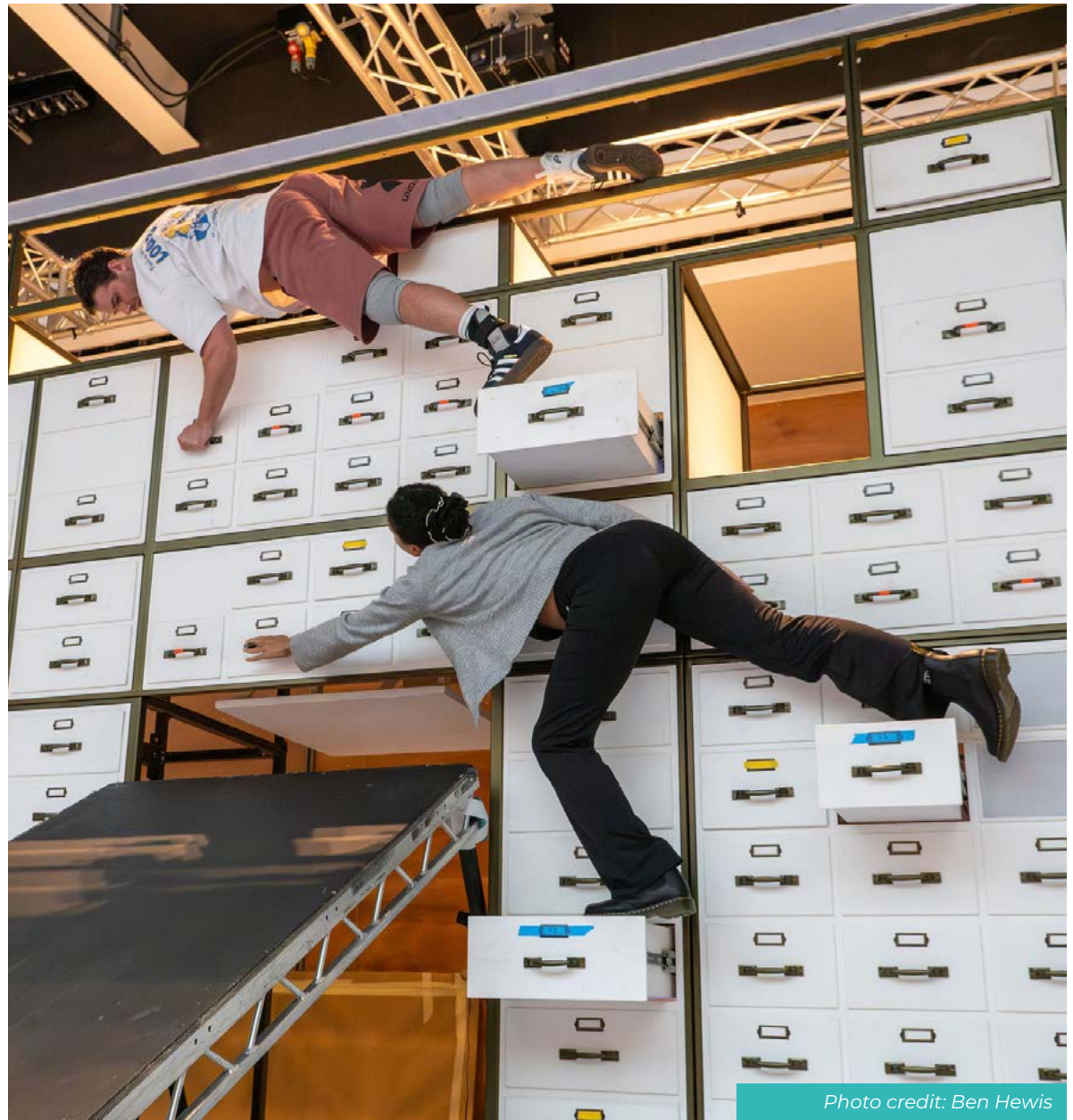


Photo credit: Ben Hewis

Julie Blake: Music Consultant - Their Music vs Our Music

ROLE AND PROCESS

I am Julie Blake, Music Supervisor for Lost Atoms

A Music Supervisor is responsible for suggesting songs and composers to help underscore the narrative in a visual production. The first part of the job is creative curation to search for music with an appropriate tone and style.

That process often starts with reading a script and identifying places where music might be needed, and what sort of songs might help augment the emotional impact of the scenes. I like to make an audio “mood board” which is basically a playlist of songs and artists that capture the feeling and style of the project overall, thinking about what instrumentation, genres, and tempos might help set the right tone, and create a unique soundtrack.

A music supervisor also negotiates the rights to use the music and arranges for the clearance and permissions to use the songs. They may also agree on fees and terms with a composer who makes original music specifically for the project. This part of the job involves some legal work and contracts, as well as being able to manage a budget and understand the total cost of using musical copyrights in different contexts.



Photo credit: Tristram Kenton

CO-COLLABORATORS – who does a music supervisor work closely with?

On Lost Atoms, I have been collaborating closely with the director and the sound designer for about ten months now.

The director is overseeing the wider creative vision, so we have regularly discussed music options and how the music can help enhance the storytelling. The direction for the music and sound has been in constant evolution throughout the rehearsal process, and the song selections were guided in part by what worked best with the movement sequences.

There is an overlap in many of the elements of sound and music, so I have also worked closely with the sound designer on creating custom edits of musical works to build a specific sound world for the show. For example, we looped sections of songs and applied effects to the music to help create the hazy world of memory that the characters are moving through.

With some of the songs in the show, we have requested the stem tracks from musicians (meaning the individual recorded parts) so that we could manipulate those specific elements, or use only one part of the song (e.g. the drums or guitars) to create unique soundscapes.



selecting music is always a very personal, subjective and idiosyncratic process

FRANTIC'S RELATIONSHIP WITH MUSIC – choices made, challenges faced:

This is my first time working with Frantic, but having seen some of the productions, I had a rough sense that Frantic music was usually a unique blend of cinematic instrumentals and high-octane electronic music. I also knew how important it would be to try something unexpected which is why I proposed songs featuring electric guitar melodies, when a softer approach might have been the natural choice for the romantic plotline.

I know (from reading the Frantic Assembly Book Of Devising Theatre) that Frantic likes to play with tempo, and at the outset of our work, the director and I talked about the need for the music to help keep up the pace. There are driving beats used in a few of the scene transitions, but the characters are also “suspended in time” so this needed to be reflected in the music choices. We played with this concept by looping and warping music to slow it down and repeat certain elements. Even the songs that aren't looped have a circular, hypnotic quality which was an intentional choice.

As the Frantic book itself says, “selecting music is always a very personal, subjective and idiosyncratic process” and “we have no restrictions when it comes to sourcing musical ideas”. I'd say that pretty much sums up what is challenging about quickly whittling down infinite musical possibilities into a cohesive musical language that resonates with everyone on the team, and somehow feels both fresh and timeless.



Photo credit: Tristram Kenton

MUSIC FIRST, SCRIPT LATER – the reality:

Funnily enough, Anna Jordan wrote a specific song into the opening of the script on the very same day I put it on my mood playlist, but it never ended up in the show. It was a piece from the 1950's that perfectly captured the warm, fuzzy feeling of falling in love, but in the end we decided it was too nostalgic so we gravitated back towards more abstract music choices that would keep our audience grounded in the story.

Before the R&D started, there were a couple of books shared as very loose inspiration (James Joyce's *The Dead*, and *Essays In Love* by Alain de Botton). Just from reading those, I was already capturing the mood of the music, and I kept picturing a minstrel playing guitar under a window. I can't really explain why, but guitar strings seemed so essential - it was a gut feeling - and that concept has had staying power as the soundtrack took shape. The notion of being "lost" in memory also influenced the spacious, cavernous quality of the songs that were chosen.

It's been an exhilarating process to piece together a soundtrack at the same time that the show was being written and choreographed. There have been hundreds of different song ideas bouncing around over the last year: in the script, on playlists, and in the rehearsal room. There was a nice reciprocity, where some songs inspired the movement sequences, and some movement sequences inspired the songs we chose. It was a process of experimentation and gradual refinement, and a collaborative effort that led us to the end result.

Alice McNicholas: Costume Design

My name is Alice McNicholas, and I am costume designer, primarily for theatre.

I have worked across a variety of plays, musicals, and opera, but mainly now work on shows that include music and movement - I do a lot of musical theatre, but this also includes physical theatre, like *Lost Atoms*. I have pretty much always known I wanted to be a costume designer - I loved theatre and art at school and was introduced to the concept of costume design fairly early on and never looked back! I trained in Performance Design at Central, and since then have worked in loads of different roles involving scenic art, costume making, dressing, wardrobe jobs, illustrating for TV & Film, which then turned into design work for both set & costume, to now when I am able to specialise doing mainly costume design for shows that really drive and inspire me.

Initial Ideas & Process

I always start with the text, and look for any physical details that are mentioned about what the characters might look like, as well as all the different markers of their personality which will inform the clothes they wear. Things like time period, location, how many months/years the story takes place over can also usually be found in the text. I also put together what we call a 'costume plot' to track how the costumes will change throughout the show. From there I put together colour palettes and mood boards, and start doing costume drawings mainly to use to build a plot to follow as we move through tech and piecing the show together.



COSTUME DEVELOPMENT – changes? What stories do they tell?

The costumes have changed a lot during rehearsals, because that is where the ideas about the characters and what they would wear need to match up with what is physically possible during the show. Both Hannah & Joe are on stage for the majority of Lost Atoms, which means that any costume changes need to be thought about from a practical perspective - what can be added on stage, what can be changed in fleeting moments in the wings, what costume pieces are essential to telling the story? There are a few moments that the costumes are an important part of moving the story forward, so we have had to work out clever ways of integrating them in the action and the set.

Costume is definitely a collaboration between lots of people, so I do try and keep an eye on how characters are developing because two people can interpret one character completely differently, so it is about making sure they align. Early in the process I went to some of the R&D days, which gave me an insight into how the cast, Anna and Scott had imagined these characters, which all informed their costume. Frantic Assembly do a lot of script work at this stage, and every discussion that I listened to about the characters and their motivations all adds up to fleshing out a full backstory for these people and that helps to make every small decision that goes into building them a wardrobe.



ACT 1 - JESS

Prologue	Cafe-Elecunty	Drop it like its hotspot	Crazy Golf	East London Panic	Greasy Spoon/ Kebab Shop	Scratch Card / Seaside

Bed Boat	Road to Hell	The Matriarch	Road from Hell to the Overground	Yes	Open Heart Surgery

A FRANTIC WORLD – what is it like working with Frantic Assembly?

I have loved working with Frantic Assembly. As a company they definitely push against the boundaries of traditional theatre making, and that is so exciting to be part of. The rehearsal room is always a lot of fun to be in, and seems to be the perfect mix of hard work and digging into the text, and a playfulness and willingness to try new things and ideas.

THE CHALLENGES

The physical nature of Frantic's work definitely comes into it, and it is something that is right there from the beginning of the costume design process - there is no point in designing something that can't be moved in, and in this case that they can't scale a wall in! So much of a Frantic Assembly show happens in the room, and I think the challenge with that for costume is that you have to be really reactive to changes right up until the last moment. With a lot of shows that I do, the costume design is decided and locked before rehearsals even start, and that way of working just isn't practical for this kind of show, where so much of it develops and grows as you move through rehearsals. It is a challenge but definitely exciting and keeps me on my toes!

WHY COSTUME DESIGN?

I absolutely love being a costume designer, and I feel so lucky that I get to do it! Every day is different, so I am never bored, and there is so much fun to be had in theatre, and so much space to be silly and playful as well as being part of sometimes really important and hard-hitting storytelling.

Costume design is a combination of creativity, problem solving, and dressing up, which is such a wonderful way to spend my all time!





THE ACTORS

Photo credit: Tristram Kenton



Joe Layton
Robbie

interview

You were involved from day one of the R&D process – as an actor, what involvement did you have with the early development of the show?

Being in the room from the very beginning was priceless. From the very beginning I was in the room as we played with the themes and explored how memory could exist on stage. The initial conversations were all deeply personal, it was a special room to be a part of, and I think everyone's openness to share their experiences is reflected in the play. It's meant that as an actor I wasn't just responding to a finished piece of writing, but actually helping to shape the DNA of the show.

The title and themes existed before the script was written – what impact did this have on character creation?

Knowing the show was called Lost Atoms and that it was about memory and a relationship gave us a foundation before there were any lines on the page. Robbie is broken and has been for a while and Jess opened up a different way of existing. He's someone who struggles to move on. The theme of memory being unreliable or subjective shaped his psychology very early. He clings to moments, often replaying them differently in his head, which is both comforting and destructive.



Photo credit: Ben Hewis

Impact of the script – did the script change any pre-conceived ideas or feelings you had about your character? What were those feelings?

In the R&D, I thought of Robbie as “steady” and contained, almost defined by what he doesn’t say, he has an economy to what he verbally expresses. Anna really captured that vulnerability beautifully and how he navigates his emotions and grows through the relationship. It’s been incredible to bring him off the page.

Character discovery & development – how has your character evolved through rehearsals? How recognisable are they from earlier on in the process (R&D days)?

He’s recognisable, but he’s deepened massively. In the R&D days Robbie was an outline: introverted, defined by loss, awkward in love. In rehearsals he’s become a whole human being, with contradictions and rhythms, physicality. What’s developed most is how he interacts with Jess in the way we’ve charted the relationship, at times puppy-like in his devotion, at times suffocating, at times scorned and withdrawn. The rehearsals have unlocked that ebb and flow, the push and pull, in a way that feels much more alive.

Key character moment – can you introduce us to a key moment/scene for your character within the show, and feedback on why it’s so key for them?

One of Robbie’s key moments is when he blurts out to Jess, “I think I’m depressed.” Up to that point he’s resisted labels, resisted therapy, resisted the idea of naming his feelings. For him to say that is terrifying, it’s him exposing the softest part of himself. It’s key because it shows both the possibility of transformation and the risk of it. Jess has pushed him to open up, but when he finally does, it’s almost too much for her, a paradox defines their relationship.



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Plotting the arc of the journey through the relationship has been really interesting, how physical intimacy and proximity develop and how masks can be removed, layers peeled back

Photo credit: Scott Graham

How have you explored your character physically?

Working with Frantic, the physical life of the character is as important as the text. With Robbie, I started from the idea that he doesn't want to take up space, introverted, steady, contained. His physicality is often about small gestures or repeated fixations, held breath, awkward distance. Plotting the arc of the journey through the relationship has been really interesting, how physical intimacy and proximity develop and how masks can be removed, layers peeled back.

It's an intense two-hander and you're never off stage – your experience as an actor on this particular show?

It's relentless, in the best way. You can't drift off for a second, because the play only exists in the space between the two of us on stage. The intensity demands absolute trust between me and Hannah, and that makes it incredibly rewarding. Physically and mentally, it's demanding, we've had to really consider how we manage our energy and try to look after ourselves as much as we can. It's also rare to get the chance to live with a character so continuously without a break. It feels like running a marathon every night, but with the thrill of being completely inside the story.

Your experience being in a Frantic Assembly rehearsal room.

A Frantic rehearsal room is unique. You're not just handed a script and told to stand here and say this. You're encouraged to get up, to try things, to fail, to discover. That environment can be challenging, it asks a lot of you physically and emotionally, but it's also hugely liberating and rewarding. You're building the show together, and everyone in that room has their fingerprints all over the show. There's a generosity and bravery expected in the room, and that makes the work feel very special.

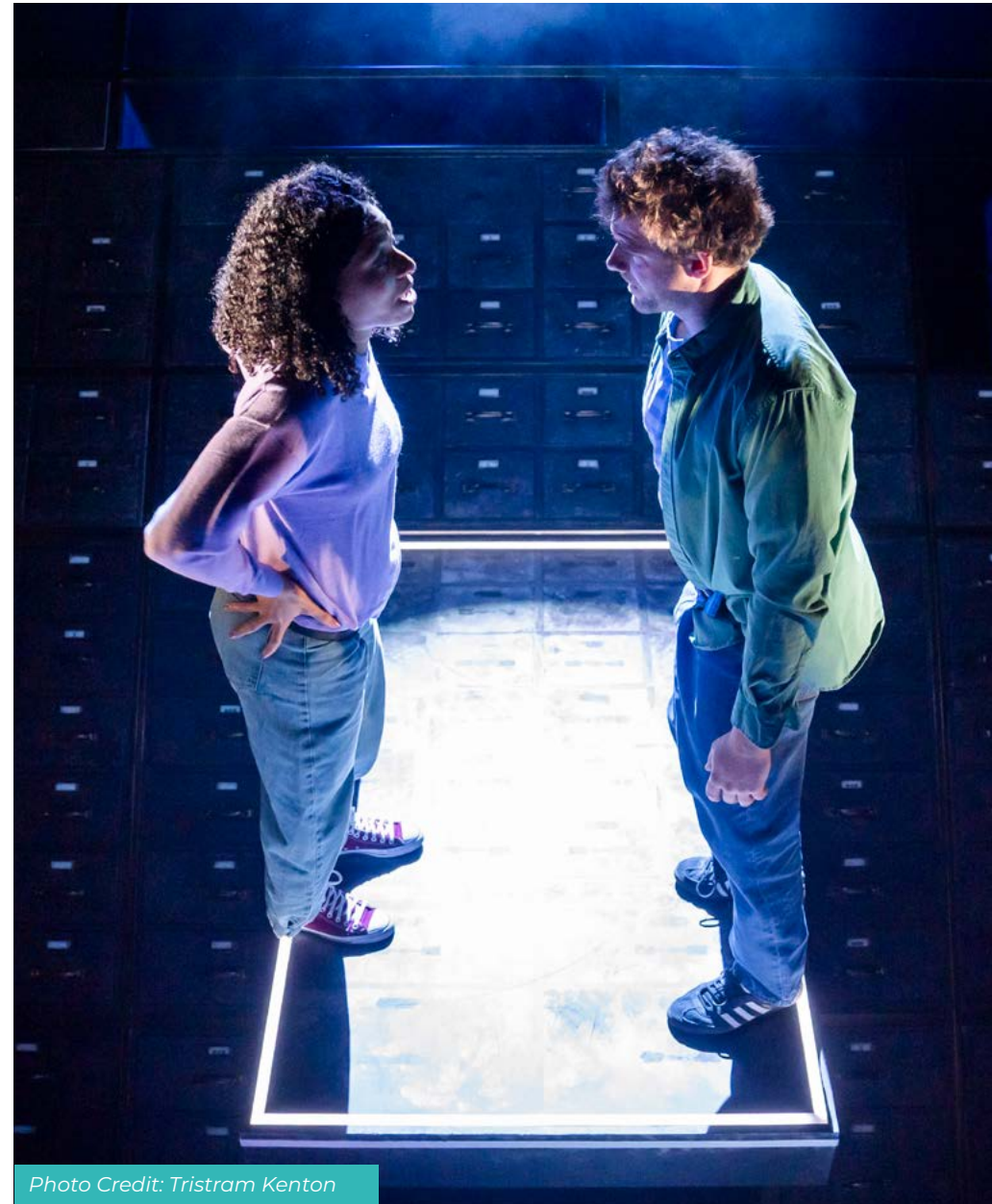


Photo Credit: Tristram Kenton



Hannah Sinclair-Robinson

Jess

You were involved from day one of the R&D process - as an actor, what involvement did you have with the early development of the show?

It was such a privilege to have been involved from day one of the R&D's for this show. As an actor, it's such a gift to be able to offer insight on elements of the script from a character perspective and be completely involved in character creation and development from the very start. It really feels like our fingerprints are all over these characters and we've grown with them over the months.

The title and themes existed before the script was written – what impact did this have on character creation?

Having the title and themes exist before we even got in the room, gave me a solid starting point and foundation for my character creation. I focused on the elements or events in Jess' life that would most impact her views of love and how she expresses it. I thought about all kinds of relationships she may have had in her life - romantic, platonic, familial that would impact how she shows up in this play about love and memory. Having this information from the very beginning of the R&D's meant that I had clear boundaries to work within and in turn gave me more freedom to play with her worldview.



Photo credit: Ben Hewis

Impact of the script – did the script change any pre-conceived ideas or feelings you had about your character? What were those feelings?

When I first started developing Jess as a character, I initially felt she was this super confident, fun-loving character. She's a YES person. Bold and unashamed and she moves through life with ease, and her troubles are 'like water off a duck's back' which to an extent still hold true. However, once we had the full two acts of the script, I saw that - yes, she is those things on the outside but all of that is just covering up someone who feels directionless and is lacking deep and meaningful connection. The script showed me she has insecurities, like we all do and all it takes is someone to truly see you and give you the space to feel safe enough to be completely yourself. And actually, all of Jess' partying and wild adventures were a facade.

Character discovery & development – how has your character evolved through rehearsals? How recognizable are they from earlier on in the process (R&D days)?

Jess really hasn't changed a huge amount from the R&D days. From the start she was the one in the couple that has a sense of ease around people and is comfortable in her own skin even if she doesn't quite know what she wants to do with her life. But throughout the rehearsal process her wants and needs as a person have become more distilled and focussed. An important part of her evolution for me, was making sure that she wasn't wholly unlikeable, honestly. Jess is a very emotional and reactive character and some of her actions are not the nicest, so it was important in rehearsals to dig in and reveal why she does the things she does.

Key character moment – can you introduce us to a key moment/scene for your character within the show, and feedback on why it's so key for them?

There are quite a few key character moments for Jess in this show as we cover the length of their entire relationship. But if I had to choose, it would be the two moments in the play where Jess feels truly seen by Robbie and in those moments, he accepts her for who she is and still chooses to, not only be with her but to progress in their relationship. The first place I think that happens is in 'Greasy Spoon, Kebab Shop' when Jess says "Because-because actually I really like you! [...] And I think you might be disappointed" and Robbie replies with "I really, really doubt that Jess" I think this is the first time in her life, someone has made her feel like she is enough and that's massive for her. She is so vulnerable in that moment, and he gives her a reassurance that she's not used and that is also quite scary and overwhelming for her, which is why she reacts in the way that she does. The second moment I feel this happens for Jess is in 'Road from Hell to the Overground' after they've been to meet her parents. In the previous scene Robbie has borne witness to the parts of Jess that come out around her mother, the parts of herself she hates. But in the drive home he proposes she moves in with him, and again this is massive for Jess because even after he's seen an unpleasant side to her, he still wants to be with her. He is ready and willing to take on all of her familial baggage and all the parts of her that she doesn't like, and thought would scare him off. It's these moments in their relationship that make Jess fall deeper in love with Robbie because he really sees her and holds space for all of her and I think that's pivotal for Jess.



Jess is a very emotional and reactive character and some of her actions are not the nicest, so it was important in rehearsals to dig in and reveal why she does the things she does.

How have you explored your character physically?

Outwardly Jess is a confident and liberated person. Quirky but assertive and a little bit cheeky. Internally however she is a little insecure and uses fun, quirky Jess as a shield. So, I started there and built bold and confident movements on that foundation. Then as she falls in love with Robbie and allows him to truly see her, much of that boldness falls away and she can be herself, which is more understated and calmer, especially in their moments of togetherness. I always use music to explore a character's physicality and see how they move and occupy a space. So, I compiled a playlist of 'Jess' music and a lot of the time I would listen to it before rehearsals and just move around a space embodying her characteristics.

It's an intense two-hander and you're never off stage - your experience as an actor on this particular show? You experience being in a Frantic Assembly rehearsal room.

This is, by far, one of the hardest things I've ever done. With a two-hander we're both onstage ALL the time, so it's very intense and you're constantly spinning a lot of plates. But it's by far been the most rewarding experience of my career. It's been the most collaborative and exciting place to be, where everyone can make an offer and work together to problem solve and create interesting work. And to get to do this again with Joe and Frantic Assembly whom I trust so much, is so great. One of the best things about Frantic Assembly I always say, is how they instil confidence in everyone they work with.

A lot is asked of you in a Frantic show and there were many times in this process where I felt I couldn't do something or was putting limitations on myself and what Frantic do is show you that anything is possible. There is a lot of patience in the rehearsal room, and time and care and energy is invested in you as a performer to help you not only achieve the things you thought you couldn't do physically but help you believe that you can do those things again, and again, going forward. It's also great because you leave the rehearsal room much fitter than when you came in due to those legendary warmups.

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This is by far one of the hardest things I've ever done. With a two-hander we're both onstage ALL the time, so it's very intense and you're constantly spinning a lot of plates.



Photo credit: Scott Graham

REHEARSALS



Photo credit: Scott Graham

Scenes and their Development

The Matriarch

Early in development sessions when we were developing the play and exploring who these characters might be we felt it would be interesting to only see interactions with other people from their perspective. They would have conversations with others but we would only hear one side of the conversation. This was a difficult challenge to a writer and performers. The trick appears to be to leave some room for what the other person might say but not as much as would exist naturalistically, otherwise the scene dies. We identified three moments where they speak to others.

1. The Matriarch (meeting her parents)
2. Open Heart Surgery (meeting his parents and getting close to the source of his trauma about the loss of his Mother)
3. After (talking to a doctor about what has happened to the pregnancy)

The second and third interactions are obviously traumatic. I wanted to see if the first could be absurd. I wanted Robbie to enter the world of her parents thinking he could instantly (but not arrogantly) charm them only to find a whole new level of awkwardness that even surprises Jess.

We used some steel deck on scaffolding to create a slope that the performers would sit at the bottom of. I wanted an environment that would always make them uncomfortable and would not allow for them to escape. Everytime they tried to get away they would slide back to the bottom.

Of course, we did not talk about this kind of detail to begin with. We just played. I asked them to create strings of material where they might try to climb and are then pulled back down by a partner. How might they change places on this slope? What quality of movement does it invite? What can we do here that we could not do if we were stuck in arm chairs?

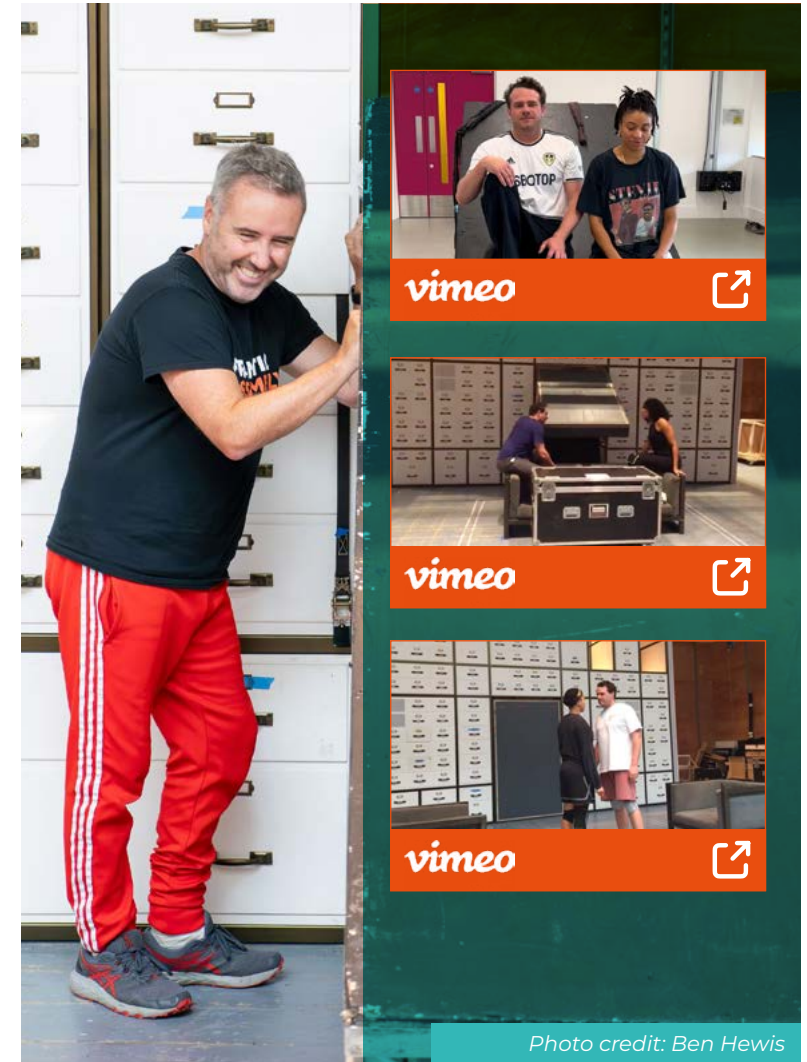


Photo credit: Ben Hewis

Then we began playing with the idea of shifting our attention to people either side of us. Throwing focus or attention to that imaginary person might give us the impetus to move towards them and in doing so provoke our partner to move.

Once we had made several unconnected strings of material we then looked at the text, placing those movement strings underneath it. We did not think about it too much. This allows for interesting accidents and surprises to emerge as words begin to inform action and vice versa.

That is not to say it is not a nightmare for the actors to learn! It was horrible! The key is to have plenty of rehearsal of the separate elements. Just the moves one day. Just the words the next. Trying to put both together too soon or taking on more than bite sized chunks at a time can be devastating for confidence. The brain gets oversaturated, and the task seems insurmountable. Remember that the Frantic Method aims to make sure that things progress at a manageable rate. Break your ambitions down into Building Blocks.

I hope the result offers an element of comic relief but also presents the importance of their Bubble to them. They talk about protecting it. Only they understand their world and everybody on the outside is absurd. It is a classic stage of love and is most beautifully captured by the poet John Donne in his poem, The Sun Rises, which became the inspiration for the scene on the bed where they lose a whole day due to their indulgence in only each other! (The scene is called Bed Boat/ Death of Love in the play)

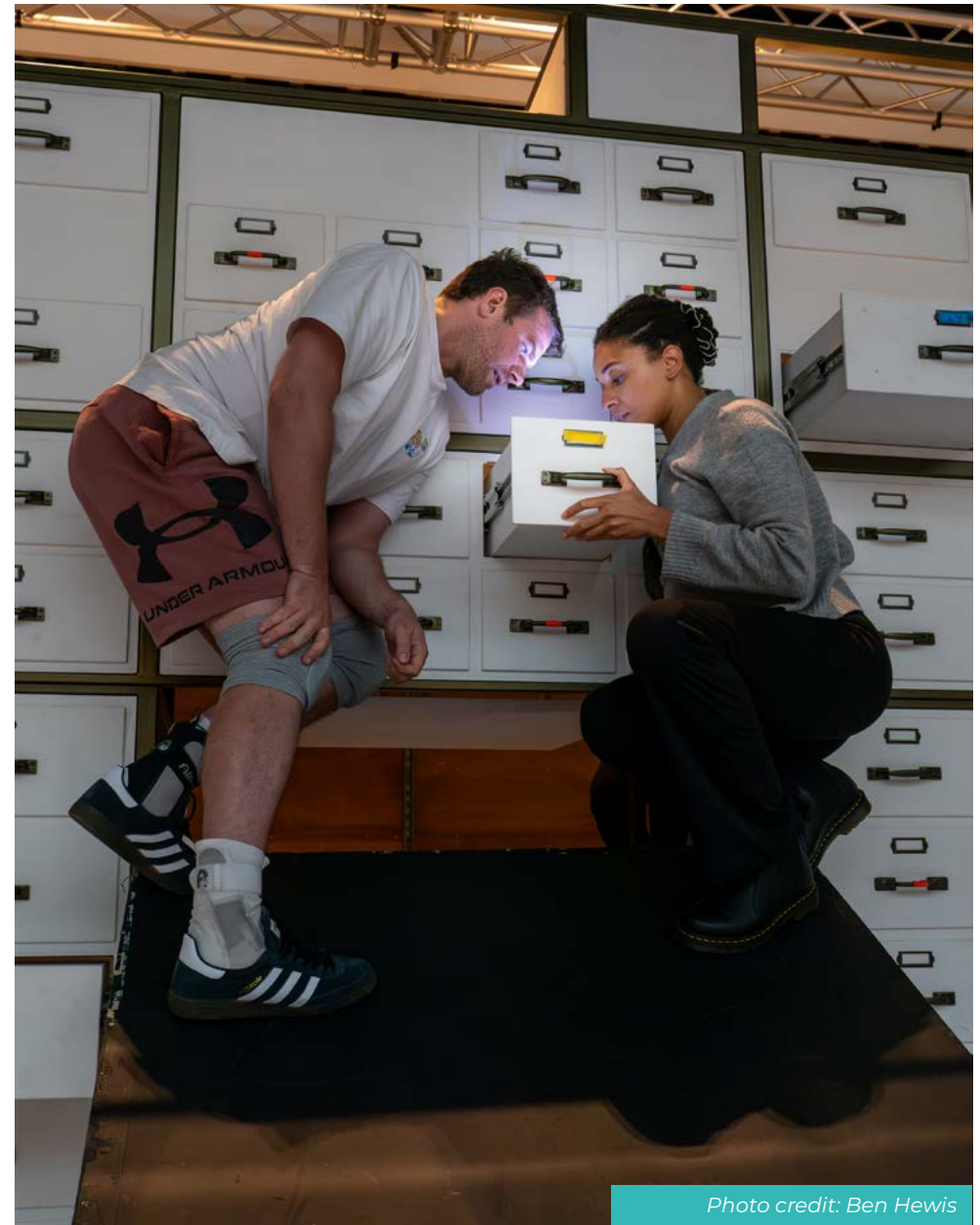


Photo credit: Ben Hewis

No Man's Land

The play is a meeting between two people who have been in a relationship. They embark upon a series of memories trying to get an understanding about why it ended and what futures await them. We wanted them to not necessarily agree on each moment as it felt their different perspectives and willingness to remember would dictate that. For them to comment on these memories they needed to be able to embark and return to a setting.

We talked about it as No Man's Land. It could easily have been a real setting. A café. A park bench. We opted for a non-literal space that they could return to with instant theatrical efficiency. More of a space that suggests a connection or a power they still have over each other.

Finding the logic of this or knowing how to write or play this was tricky. At times it felt tricky. If each return to No Man's Land is merely a comment that reminds the audience that it exists, then I felt it was pretty redundant. It had to comment on how the characters feel about embarking on this series of memories. It was never going to be a simple stroll down memory lane. There are memories that still hurt. There are some that are remembered differently. There are some that one might want to avoid yet are propelled to face by the other. The No Man's Land could comment upon this developing tension as well as being where the play begins and ends.

As we are approaching our first preview we are still learning about the No Man's Land and are making changes. This is nothing to panic about. We always felt that they would have a greater sense of them once we, like the characters, have made our way through the memories. It is a case of holding our collective nerve and learning about the show we are making.

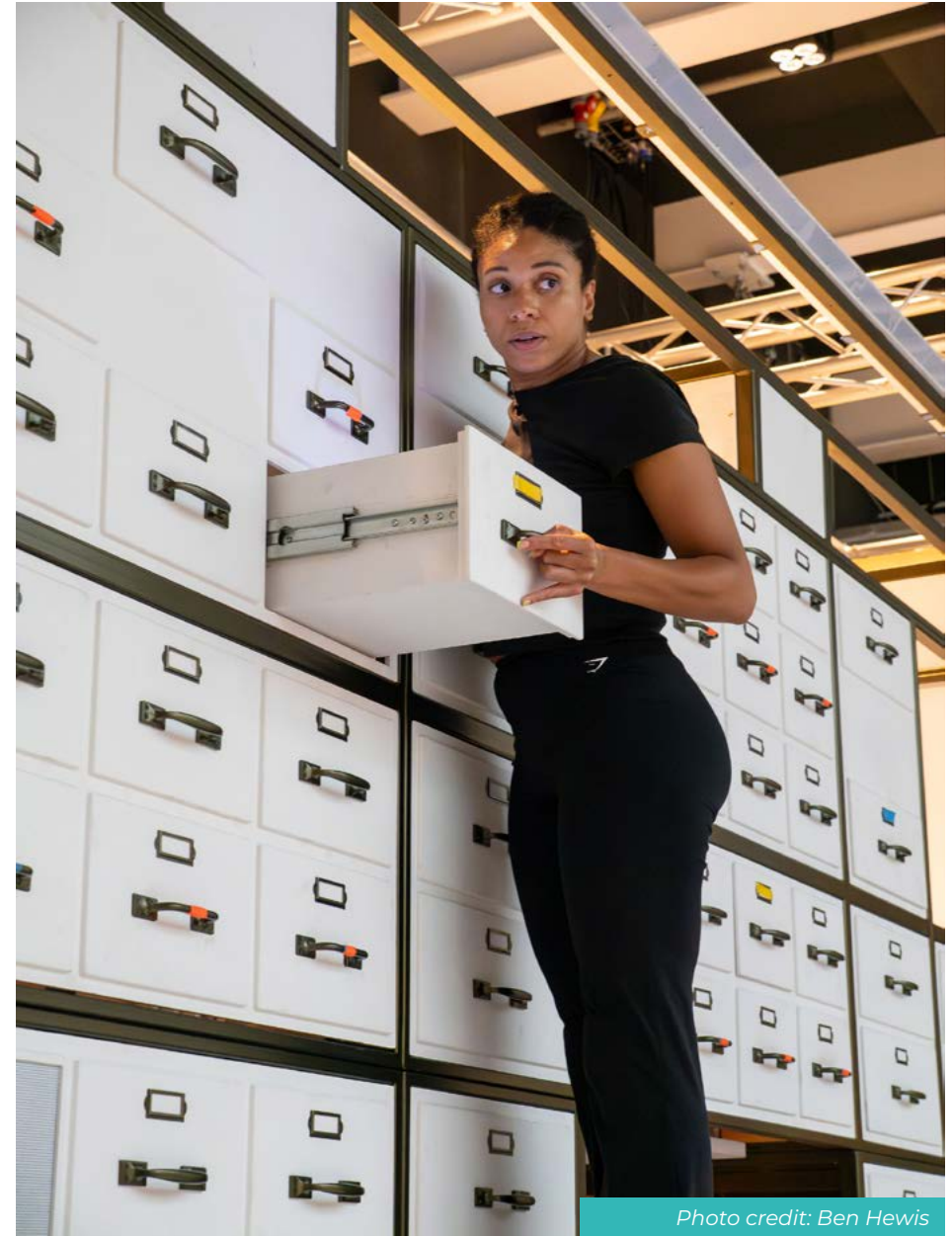


Photo credit: Ben Hewis

Discoveries from the Rehearsal Room

Associate Director Lucy Wild's notes

Lucy Wild kept notes of some of the exercises used in the early days of rehearsal. Below is a section direct from her scribblings. I seldom write things down so often don't capture the building blocks used to explore.



TASK (WEEK 1 - DAY 3)

Working on your own, explore all the parts of your body you can touch without using your hands, explore using/connecting different body parts, explore creating journeys, explore keeping connected, explore changing connections

Now think of a sequence, where does it start – where does it go

- Find 7 little journeys
- Do it standing up, it may bend but don't go to the floor at this stage
- Focus on what it feels like not what it looks like
- Once you have a sequence perform them at the same time as the other person
- Repeat and do sequence while looking at each other
- Slowly move towards each other while doing sequence and still looking at each other
- Think of these as shared memories, the eye contact can say "remember this"
- Begin to enact those touches/your moves on the other person
- Don't be afraid to give each other weight
- Keep it slow
- Begin to separate
- Play/improv = Hannah in the space does sequence on repeat within a square space, not looking at Joe, Joe just watching her from the outside of the space
- Hannah can vary speed and intensity
- Hannah become aware that these are memories of touches
- They can enter or leave the space, be aware of each other, both looking at each other
- Joe starts with – these are happy memories, then - this is Jess with Pierre, then - exploring the jealousy of seeing this flirtation

Duet:

Create one sequence combining the two individual sequences so we will have a duet
Play =

Building Block 1 - speed

- > Work out where the moments of contact are so you aren't going two different speeds
- > Focus on each other and the moments of contact

Building Block 2 - give it some weight

- > Giving weight is active and not passive

Building Block 3 - add lifts

- > Could be shifts/pushes or pulls of weight if that feels right

Question in reflection – When going through the sequence were there any new places that were touched? = Those moments of contact actually become the more interesting moments

What happens if we lean into each other more?

Tasks to Take On

100 Touches

I wanted to find choreography that could suggest any moment in their history. By that I mean it contains moments of joy, moments of rage, consolation, lust, affection, etc. presented fleetingly before our eyes. I called it 100 touches. Again, Lucy Wild captures the process in her notes.



Photo credit: Ben Hewis

TASK (WEEK 2 – DAY 1):

Work individually to start. Think of 8 touches or embraces each using the words:

- Explore
- Don't leave
- Sex
- Make-up
- Listen to me
- Get off me
- Come with me
- You will be ok
- Stop it
- You are outrageous
- I need a hug
- Come here
- It's ok



Whatever shape or touch these works/phrases suggest to you. Can be really quick/small. Don't think about acting it out. Don't need to link the moves/moments. Put both people together. These are touches instigated by you (not a reaction to another person's touch)

Assign each person as A and B. Create a random sequence/order of As and B order for all the moves, 16 in total, 8 each (e.g A,B,A,A,B,A,B,B etc). Combine together and work through the sequence assigning moves. Assign words to moves to help with memory. Practice and learn. Building Blocks = try working in a smaller space. Try different paces of sequence. Try it moving around the space (it becomes a strange dance!). Try it really fast. Make each moment really sharp and efficient. A split second for each move.

Ultimate aim: To eventually create a 10 second blast with lots of moments, flashing through those moments from their relationship. A strobe effect.

Currently there is no place for this scene in the show despite it being a cast favourite

Discovering the physicality, exploring the bed

Without too many words taking up space, shared here are three moments that capture different stages of physical exploration, all centred around 'the bed'.

The first moment, top right, shows the raw (slightly less glamorous!) nature of R&D from earlier in the year. It's a very literal depiction of Joe and Hannah finding their feet.

The second and third moments record further exploration, from later in the creative process. By this point, the Lyric Hammersmith was 'home', and our five-week rehearsal period was well underway.



Photo credit: Scott Graham



Bibliography of Inspiration

Essays In Love - book by Alain De Botton

The original inspiration. A fascinating book charting the rise and fall of a relationship with a particular focus on philosophy and art. It is better than it sounds.

Poltergeist - film by Tobe Hooper

There is a moment where multiple ghosts are caught on camera, drifting through a room. This was how I described how I wanted the sound of the memories to appear as they opened the drawers or looked in photo albums. Sound designer Carolyn Downing knew exactly what to do!

The Sun Rising - poem by John Donne

Nothing captures the early, timeless moments of young love like this poem. It captures a time when nothing else matters. A blissful arrogance. It became the inspiration for the scene where Jess and Robbie lose a day

I Only Have Eyes For You - song by The Flamingoes

Strangely, this was the song that both Anna and I had on our minds when we first started the project. We both said there was something that fascinates us about the song. We thought it might present a central theme for the show, taking elements of it apart and placing them throughout, but it didn't develop. Save it for another show!

Dubliners - book by James Joyce

Specifically the last story in the collection, The Dead. It is a stunningly beautiful work where a man's understanding of his wife, their relationship and their love gets turned on its head in the final moments. It leaves him feeling foolish and insignificant.

Various songs by Adrienne Lenker

Beautifully delicate. It felt that it could be exactly the music they would spend their time listening to in those many lost hours in bed. In fact early drafts actually referenced her and her work. It sounded a little like an advert and was a bit too specific. We opted for something a bit more ethereal for the bed scene.

Scenes from A Marriage - TV series by Hagai Levi. HBO

Anna was a little obsessed with this series. I never saw it. I should have. I said I would. But I didn't. I am only admitting that now. Sorry Anna.

Truly Madly Deeply (Film)

In particular reference to scene one, in the coffee shop.

The Bloody Chambers (Book) – Angela Carter

About the reimagining of fairy tales.

 **The Music of
Lost Atoms**



Marina Abramovic meeting her husband

The moment they meet, they walk together and stand facing, we don't know if they are going to kiss or hit each other.

The Breakfast Club

The moment where someone asks her what's wrong with her parents "did they hurt you?" . . . "worse, they ignored me" - for Jess's relationship with her parents.

Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad (short novella)

About someone who experiences something, sees it, then goes back to normality.

Frida Khalo

Used trauma to become famous artists – wondered if this is Jess's story?

Life is sweet – Spike Lee (film)

One of the characters has a massive breakthrough, "I just want to talk to you"

There is a light that never goes out

Song lyrics – The Smiths

Matt Stone/Trey Parker from Southpark's theory on writing

There should always be a "but" or "and" otherwise what is the purpose?

Inspiration and references for Anna Jordan (writer):

- Hazel Florez (artist)
- News article (by Nicholas Carolan)

<https://graziamagazine.com/articles/fairy-tales-transformed/>

Below is a questionnaire that Anna put out to Lost Atoms creatives, anonymously:

1. As a child / young person, where did you get your ideas of what romantic love would look and feel like? Films? TV? The internet? Songs? Books? People in your life? Specificity is useful and brilliant.
2. When (if) you experienced romantic love for the first time - how did it differ from these expectations?
3. What is the biggest surprise about being in love?
4. Please finish the sentence. Love is . . .

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Photo credit: Tristram Kenton