Lyric

# EDUCATION PACK

For Drama GCSE, A Level &
BTEC Performing Arts students

# MINORITY REPORT

# OVERVIEW & CONTENTS

The Lyric Hammersmith Theatre's Young Lyric department are committed to deepening and nurturing young people's understanding of theatre and the arts. We aim to raise the cultural aspirations of young people and make theatre accessible to all. With this in mind, this education pack is designed for teachers of Drama GCSE and BTEC Performing Arts students and is geared towards the live theatre review and practitioner study.

This pack is written from a theatre maker's perspective and we hope it provides some interesting insights into how a production like *Minority Report* is created and staged. You will find information about specific design elements of the production and additional resources to support further exploration of the themes and issues raised within this thought provoking performance.

**Content warning:**
This production contains strong language and violence. The script contains references to murder, death, sex and sexual violence. This production contains flashing and strobe lighting, moving video imagery, theatrical smoke / haze, blood and loud and sudden noises including gunshot.

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# INTRODUCTION

Set in the year 2050, *Minority Report* is a high octane, science fiction roller coaster that forces the audience to question the world that we are creating, where the power to control and potentially remove 'free will' and independent thought through use of technology is already present in our day-to-day lives.

## Dystopian: An imagined place or society where there is injustice and suffering.

What would society be like if we could use Artificial Intelligence (AI) and computer technology to predict crimes and stop them from taking place? Would it create a safer society? Should we as the human race be handing over so much power to technology? Can Artificial Intelligence (AI) predict human behaviour better than we can? In order to live in a 'safer' society, should we give up some of our human rights such as privacy? These are just some of the questions explored in David Haig's adaptation of Philip K Dick's dystopian 1956 novella.

## AI (Artificial Intelligence): computer systems or machines that have some of the qualities that the human brain has.

# MINORITY REPORT ORIGINS

Philip. K. Dick wrote *Minority Report* in 1956 as a short story to be included in an American Science Fiction journal called *Fantastic Universe*. This came seven years after George Orwell's *1984* and three years after Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, all dystopian views of the world where humanity is controlled and free will denied to citizens. The social and political context of these works was post Second World War and the resulting 'Cold War' where fears of the rise of communism and totalitarian states was at an all-time high, along with the threat of nuclear warfare.

In Dick's original text, the protagonist is John Anderton, Head Police Commissioner of the Pre-Crime Division, and he is due to retire. He believes fully in the system of Pre-Crime so is shocked when his name is revealed as a pre-murderer. He sets about to prove his innocence before he is captured by the military. It is revealed that he has in fact been set up by a man, called Kaplan, that wants to discredit Pre-Crime to destroy it.

Dystopian novels have regularly been adapted for film and television. An example is the 2017 series of Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), but there have also been productions produced for theatre audiences, including Robert Ike and Duncan Macmillan's adaptation of George Orwells *1984*, first performed at the Nottingham Playhouse theatre (2013) and *Noughts and Crosses* by Malorie Blackman (2001), adapted by Dominic Cooke and produced by the RSC in 2007, and most recently by Pilot Theatre in 2019 with an adaptation by Sabrina Mahfouz.

# OUR VISION

**"Alongside Nottingham Playhouse and Birmingham Rep, we are delighted to announce David Haig's starkly relevant adaptation of 'Minority Report', based on the short story by Philip K. Dick. Unlike the novella, this innovative new production re-lenses the central character as a leading female neuroscientist, Dame Julia Anderton. Under the direction of Max Webster, this intrepid new version of Minority Report will be an unmissable theatrical experience."**

**Rachel O'Riordan**
**Artistic Director, Lyric Hammersmith Theatre**

The science fiction genre is usually associated with the medium of film and literature, rather than theatre. This production of *Minority Report* aims to change this perception.

Max Webster is at the helm directing a dystopian version of London in the year 2050 that asks many questions, including what role and impact Artificial Intelligence (AI) will have on our society, but also exploring the ethical and moral dilemmas that emerging technology can present.

Webster and Haig's reimagining of *Minority Report* has been updated to resonate with current and contemporary issues and challenges facing us. No longer is the protagonist and head of Pre-Crime a male law enforcement officer. Instead we follow the journey of Dame Julia Anderton, an eminent neuroscientist, as the architect of Pre-Crime and how she becomes ensnared in her own system. The fact that there is a woman at the centre of this story is very conscious decision. With the main premise of *Minority Report* being about crime and how you can use Artificial Intelligence (AI) to prevent it, it was a deliberate choice to put a woman in this role. Unfortunately, violent crimes against women happen on a daily basis around the world and is mirrored in the narrative of this production. Julia's drive to prevent this leads her to make questionable decisions regarding freedoms we currently take for granted.

Although *Minority Report* is about complex themes, this production is designed to entertain and keep the audience engaged through adrenaline fuelled chase scenes and use of imagery via projections to fully become immersed in the fast-paced action. All the design elements from the set, sound, lighting, costume and videography work together to create a dark, dystopian vision of London, inspired by the post-industrial iconography that was popular in science fiction in the 1980s.

Jon Bausor's production design, complete with driverless cars appearing on stage, works in synergy with Nicola. T. Chang's sound design and Jessica Hung Han Yun's lighting design to create a sensory experience that makes the audience feel like it is inside the mainframe of a large computer system controlling the narrative.

Lucy Hind, movement director, has also created moments of pure physical theatre for action sequences, including Julia's frantic escape through a hostile city, that help to visually communicate the tension and peril of her situation.

Max Webster's direction allows the audience to go on a physical journey with Julia and experience her awakening as the true horrors of Pre-Crime are brutally revealed to her as she races to prove that she is not a pre-murderer. The use of pace is effective as action packed car chases and crashes are juxtaposed with quieter moments of reflection where we see Julia's vulnerability.

## About Max Webster Director

Max is an Associate Director at The Donmar Warehouse.

**Theatre credits include:** *Life of Pi* (Broadway, West End & currently on a UK Tour – Winner of five Tony and Olivier Awards); *Henry V* (Donmar Warehouse); Dr. Seuss' The Lorax (Old Vic Theatre / San Diego Old Globe / Minneapolis Children's Theatre); *Antigone*, *Twelfth Night*, *As You Like It* (Regent's Park Open Air Theatre); *The Jungle Book* (Fiery Angel); *Fanny and Alexander*, *Cover My Tracks* (Old Vic Theatre); *The Twits* (Curve Theatre Leicester); *The Winter's Tale* (The Royal Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh); *The Sea of Fertility*, *Mary Stuart* (Parco Productions Tokyo); *Much Ado About Nothing* (Shakespeare's Globe); Shostakovich's *Hamlet* (City of London Sinfonia); *Orlando*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *My Young and Foolish Heart* (Royal Exchange Manchester); *James and the Giant Peach*, *My Generation* (Leeds Playhouse); *Carnival Under the Rainbow*, *Feast Kakulu* (Hilton Festival, South Africa) and *Caucasian Chalk Circle* (Aarohan Theatre, Kathmandu).

**"Sci-fi gets relegated to fiction, and that means people often think it isn't as important,"**

**Max Webster, Director, Financial Times 13/02/24**

# THE TEXT

**"The fear of a dystopian society controlling our minds is a very powerful one. I think there's always room for material that projects into the future to comment on the present."**

**David Haig, Financial Times, 13/02/2024**

Although set over 26 years in the future, Haig's version of *Minority Report* is very much about issues facing us in the present day. Moral and ethical debates about what is acceptable when it comes to law and order are explored, such as what powers and rights can, and should, be given away to protect society as a whole? Is the suffering and potential injustice towards the few justifiable if it is for the benefit of the majority?

**"Not only is it a sci-fi thriller but the play is an interesting portrait of a woman who has to change her mind on a very important premise. She has been through a tragedy herself, which is part of the reason she runs Pre-Crime, but the adventure she goes through changes her profoundly"**

**David Haig,**
**Birmingham What's on, 27/02/24**

This production allows the audience to consider carefully the use of technology to control our minds and think freely. What role will Artificial Intelligence (AI) take in shaping the world of the future, and how far will we allow it to go?

One of David Haig's best known plays is *My Boy Jack*, which is a world away from the science fiction thriller that is *Minority Report*. Although a completely different genre, Haig has created characters that you can empathise with, from Julia herself, driven by a family tragedy that has damaged and consumed her, to Ana, an activist fighting against the system the state has imposed, that has been exploited and abused. Even though the year might be 2050, gender inequality still exists and although Pre-Crime has seemingly made the world a safer place, corruption and hypocrisy still beats at the heart of where the power lies.

## About David Haig
## Writer

David is an Olivier award-winning actor and FIPA award-winning writer.

**Theatre credits include:** *My Boy Jack* which opened at Hampstead Theatre in 1997 and subsequently toured in 2004; *The Good Samaritan* (Hampstead Theatre, 2000) and *Pressure* (a co-production by Royal Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh and Chichester Festival Theatre) which was nominated for Best New Play at the 2014 UK Theatre Awards. The play was revived in 2018. It toured the country, ran at the Park Theatre in Finsbury Park for two months, and then transferred to the West End for a sold out run at the Ambassador's Theatre. *Pressure* enjoyed its North American premiere at the Royal Alexandra Theatre, Toronto in 2023.

# SYNOPSIS

## ! SPOILER ALERT !
## This is a detailed plot synopsis and reveals key moments of the production.

It's the year 2050 and Dame Julia Anderton is celebrating the 10 year anniversary of her pioneering Pre-Crime, a system that allows individuals to be arrested for a crime before they commit it.

Julia explains how a computer chip implanted behind the ear of every citizen, called a nuropin, is constantly scanning the brain to check for any nuro activity that indicates if a person is a potential murderer. These scans are interpreted through an Artificial Intelligence (AI) system that is analysed by three neuroscientists known as Precognisant Interpreters or 'precogs'. When a pre-criminal has been identified, they are tracked down via their nuropin and imprisoned within the 'red circle system'- a physical force field that holds them captive until law enforcement arrive.

During her speech Julia is interrupted by Fleming, an angry protester against the Pre-Crime system, on the moral and ethical grounds that it removes free will, and is an unacceptable method of controlling the population and their thoughts. After Fleming is forcibly removed, she welcomes onto the stage her husband George, a leading computer programmer responsible for designing the Pre-Crime AI system. They announce they will demonstrate in 'real time' how the precogs identify a pre-criminal. Julia goes to an old-fashioned printer that produces a print-out with the name of a future murderer. She looks down at the paper and collapses.

Later, in Julia's office, she is still unconscious with a worried George and Ralph, the Government's Home secretary, and old friend of Julia's discussing what has happened.

When Julia regains consciousness, she asks to speak to George in private where she reveals it is her name that has been identified by the precogs. Panicked, she realises George believes the system is infallible and that she is guilty. We learn that Julia had a twin sister called Laura who was murdered, and her death was the catalyst for Pre-Crime.

When Julia is alone she summons David, her personal AI assistant to help her escape before she is arrested. David tells her that she must first remove the nuropin that is in her head, and climb out of a window to escape. She takes a taxi home where she finds Ralph is already there waiting for her. He convinces her that she must turn herself in to clear her name. A law enforcement officer, Harris, arrives and arrests Julia.

During their journey, their car is involved in a crash, orchestrated by Fleming, allowing Julia to escape from Harris and steel his gun. She is taken to a safe house where she meets Ana, another activist fighting against Pre-Crime. Fleming states that the only reason he is assisting her is to ensure that Pre-Crime is discredited.

Ana shares her story about being a teen mother, trafficked by her boyfriend into a life of prostitution before escaping. She reveals she is 'off grid' as her nuropin is fake, and how she could have been arrested as a pre- criminal for having thoughts about wanting to harm her ex-boyfriend.

Julia, asks Ana to help her access her brain scans to understand why she was identified as a pre-criminal. They meet Fleming who uses his nuropin to access her scans from the Pre-Crime mainframe. Two of them show how she is a pre-murderer, but the other one shows 'normal' brain activity. On this scan the letters 'MR' are printed over the top. David works out that this stands for Minority Report, a report that is different to the majority consensus, meaning one of the precogs disagrees with the others, indicating a fault in the system.

George manages to track her down through David, via Julia's nuropin that is in his possession. He begs her to turn herself in, but she asks him instead to take her to the precogs. He is reluctant at first and asks why she has never wanted to meet them before, explaining that she might not like the reality of how the Pre-Crime system works.

When they arrive at Pre-Crime HQ, George takes Julia to an underground laboratory deep within the building. Julia is confronted with the reality and cruelty of the Pre-Crime system she has created. The precogs are three former scientists that agreed to be part of the Pre-Crime experiment, but are now prisoners of it. Attached to a giant computer mainframe their brains are feeding the computer data – and as a result they are losing neurons from their brains. George explains that this is necessary so that the computer system is able to feel human emotion for it to be accurate identifying pre-criminals. Julia recognises one of the precogs as a former student of hers, Christina. Shocked and horrified at the treatment of the precogs, Julia demands they are released immediately.

Christina reveals it was her that created the minority report, two minutes after the other precogs' initial scans showed her murderous intentions – demonstrating that Julia had the capacity to change her mind, proving the Pre-Crime system is flawed.

Shocked and disturbed by the revelations she has witnessed, and ultimately been responsible for, Julia heads to her office with George to retrieve an iWatch that had belonged to her sister. As Julia is holding it, Ralph enters and refers to it as 'Laura's watch'. Julia takes out Harris's gun and aims it at Ralph. George reveals that only he and Julia knew about Laura's watch as it was given to her hours before she was murdered, implicating Ralph in her death.

Ralph admits to Julia that his nuropin is actually a fake and how Laura walked in on him unexpectedly and saw it. Disgusted at his hypocrisy and threatening to tell Julia what she had seen, Laura was murdered by Ralph to silence her. Julia threatens to kill him, but ultimately cannot go through with it. Distracted, Ralph is able to take the gun from her hands and aim it at her instead. George runs at Ralph to disarm him, but Ralph is able to attack him grabbing a statue from the desk and hitting him violently with it. Julia is able to grab the gun back again and shoots Ralph killing him.

# DESIGN ELEMENTS

## Set Design – Jon Bausor

The set design for this production has a post- industrial quality, and a deliberately masculine feel to it. It has been designed for the audience to feel like the action is taking place inside a perspective grid, symbolising a computer mainframe.

The show jumps from scene to scene and the set has been designed for the action to move quickly between locations, for example Julia's office which is created using Perspex sliders, giving a glass panelling effect. Mid stage there are tracks laid on the floor, so that items of scenery and props, like desks and kitchen worktops, can be trucked in and out. These items are sleek and modern in design with clean lines and a minimalist look.

**Truck: a platform on wheels which scenery can be mounted on and moved on and off the stage. Some theatres also use a track system.**

While on the run Julia goes into a safe house, an 'off grid' location, spending time in an attic room with lots of monitors. The monitors along with florescent strip lighting and the aluminium covered walls give this room a futuristic feeling. There are items in the room that are recognisable as contemporary objects, such as an old style electric fan mounted near the ceiling and old computer components stacked against a wall. This room is a total contrast to Julia's sleek and polished home and where she starts to reflect on her life's work.

The floor is painted with a high gloss finish to reflect the use of projection throughout the performance.

The set for *Minority Report* is a dark metallic world with hard edges and surfaces. The design works with three static towers placed on the stage covered in a steel material that acts as a scrim, so that strategically placed projectors in the auditorium can project images onto them, depicting different locations like busy city streets.

There is nothing natural in Bausor's vision of the future, everything we see is man-made materials like metal and concrete- there is no softness or curves, just hard lines and edges.

The set has been created to include some large-scale props, including a driverless car that moves around the stage. In an interview with Seamus Benson, Head of Production at the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre on page 20 he reveals how the set works on stage.

**Scrim: Material, usually a thin fabric mesh, that can be used as a screen. Depending on how light is used it can appear both opaque or transparent. Images can be projected onto it.**

# COSTUME

## Costume – Jon Bausor

The costume design for *Minority Report* reflects the look and feel of the set. The colour pallet used is also masculine with dark blues, greys and black featuring heavily, blending in with the metal and concreate aesthetic of the set. The costumes are minimalist and blocks of colour are used effectively to create a sense of the time period being futuristic, but with recognisable elements, such as Ralph's pin stripe suit, reflective of his position as Home Secretary.

## About Jon Bausor
## Production Designer

Jon studied Music at Oxford University and Royal Academy of Music before retraining on the Motley Theatre Design Course. He designed the opening ceremony of the London 2012 Paralympic Games and was recently nominated for an Emmy Award for his Production Design on the Redbull film Human Pinball. As an Associate Artist of the RSC Jon has designed numerous productions including *Hamlet*, *The Winter's Tale*
and the entire 2012 season.

**Theatre credits include:** *Bat Out of Hell* (West End / Broadway / Paris Theatre, Las Vegas); *Into The Woods* (Bath Theatre Royal); *Spirited Away* (Imperial Theatre, Tokyo / International tour); *The Grinning Man* (UK Theatre Award for Best Design); *King Lear* (West End); *The James Plays* (National Theatre / National Theatre Scotland / International tour); *Mametz* (National Theatre Wales, UK Theatre Award and Wales Theatre Award for Best Design); *I am Yusuf* (ShiberHur, Palestine / Young Vic) *Cold War*, *They Drink It In The Congo* (Almeida).

# DAME JULIA ANDERTON

Julia's costume changes within the production at the moment she find herself on the run. During her presentation at the start of the performance she is wearing confident, bright bold colours. Her red pencil skirt and matching high heels have a feminine feel juxtaposed with the more masculine shoulder padded jacket. The fabric of her skirt is a shiny satin that reflects light, as does her jacket that shimmers.

**Costume 1:**

- Colours – Red – confident, passionate
- Cut – Sharp tailoring. 1980's silhouette with shoulder padded jacket. Clean lines with the skirt length mid calf, but a slit to give a feminine feel, whilst also being practical to allow the actor easier movement.
- Fabric - Sleek, luxurious satin fabric indicates high status.
- Fit – Tight and well fitting – this has been made to measure for the character, again indicating high status.

This costume is smart and sophisticated – perfect for a woman in the prime of her career. She is confident in her mission and this outfit is being worn at an event that is celebrating her success.

# DAME JULIA ANDERTON

Once Julia is on the run her costume dramatically alters. Gone are the bright and shiny fabrics, replaced by dark purple trousers, a black leather jacket and flat black boots. This is an entirely practical ensemble for our protagonist as she needs to be able to run and hide from capture.

**Costume 2**

- Colours – Dark purple and black – she needs to be unrecognisable and blend in with the surroundings
- Cut – Tailored trousers
- Fabric – leather jacket
- Fit - The trousers are tailored, but looser fitting at the top – a more relaxed fit. The jacket is still close fitting, but the silhouette is altered and the structure does not have shoulder pads.

This is a practical outfit for a fugitive on the run. The flat boots and looser fit trousers allow the character to be able to escape car chases, run on the top of buildings and blend into the crowded streets of a big city.

# DAVID

The only costume within the production that is vastly different in terms of style is that of David – Julia's AI Companion – due partly to the fact that David is not human, but a hologram image. David wears a structured costume that is tight fitting, with panels that reflect projections to make the fabric look computer generated. It is plain white in colour and has a futuristic look that does not have any specific gender elements as David is an AI creation.

# RALPH

Ralph is in a position of power and influence as the Home Secretary and his costume is traditional in terms of the pin stripe fabric that has been chosen to make his suit. It is recognisable as a symbol of the establishment along with the pocket handkerchief, shirt and tie.

The cut and tailoring of the suit jacket gives the impression of being of a futuristic time period as there is no collar and the button fastenings are not traditional for a contemporary suit.

# GEORGE

The costume for George is made up of neutral colours, browns and grey and the elements are very minimalist. He is a computer programmer and the roll neck jumper was a staple wardrobe item of Silicon Valley and Apple entrepreneur Steve Jobs, although George's is beige, not the iconic black.

# LIGHTING DESIGN

## Jessica Hung Han Yun

Lighting is vital as it works on so many levels to achieve the look and feel of the entire production. The way the set has been designed means that lighting and projection are integral for the show to transport the audience into the world envisioned by David Haig and Max Webster.

### Lighting

Although the production looks incredibly high tech, traditional lighting is used including lanterns such as flood lights, moving spots and Frenels. The lighting works to create the dark atmosphere but there are also moments where harsh florescent lighting is used as a contrast, and to also give a futuristic feel to the production and support the objective of the audience feeling like they are inside a computer mainframe. Cold colours like blues are used to represent the metallic and post-industrial feel of the world where Pre-Crime can exist.

The use of LED lights implanted on the floor are effective to create the 'red circle', a system that detects a pre-criminal through use of the their nuropin and traps them in a force field prison.

### Projection

The set was designed with projection in mind through use of the PepPerScrim materials. One example is how Julia goes online to check her brainscans and first discovers the minority report, that indicates she is in fact innocent of being a pre-criminal. Here an effect is created on stage of what looks like a virtual computer screen in mid air- where images are being projected and we can see Julia behind it.

There is also the use of video running through the production and this is also projected directly onto the set.

## About Jessica Hung Han Yun Lighting Designer

**Theatre credits include:** *Lyonesse* (Harold Pinter Theatre); *Once on This Island* (Regent's Park Open Air Theatre); *My Neighbour Totoro* (RSC / Barbican); *The Good Person of Szechwan* (Sheffield Crucible); *Straight Line Crazy* (The Shed, New York / The Bridge Theatre); *The Glow*, *Seven Methods of Killing Kylie Jenner* (also Public Theatre, New York / Woolly Mammoth, Washington DC), *Living Newspaper Edition 7*, *Pah-La* (Royal Court); *The Mirror and the Light* (RSC in the West End); *Anna X* (The Lowry and West End); *Marys Seacole*, *Blindness* (Donmar Warehouse); *Out West* (Lyric Hammersmith); *Inside* (Orange Tree); *The Band Plays On*, *She Loves Me* (Sheffield); *Dick Whittington* (National Theatre); *Rockets and Blue Lights* (Royal Exchange Manchester); *Faces in the Crowd*, *Mephisto*, *Dear Elizabeth*, *The Human Voice* (The Gate); *Equus* (Theatre Royal Stratford East / ETT / Trafalgar Studios / UK Tour); *Armadillo* (The Yard); *Reasons To Stay Alive* (Sheffield Theatres / ETT / UK Tour); *One* (Home / UK Tour / International Tour); *Forgotten* (Moongate / New Earth / Arcola / Theatre Royal, Plymouth) and *Hive City Legacy* (Hot Brown Honey / Roundhouse).

# MUSIC & SOUND DESIGN

## Nicola T. Chang

The use of sound in the production helps transport the audience to the year 2050, but also create a sense of tension and drama.

**Underscoring – the use of music underneath dialogue to help create an atmosphere or to convey a theme.**

**Diegetic sounds**
Within *Minority Report* there are many sound effects that are featured to immerse the audience into Julia's frantic journey including gun shots, high speed car chases and crashes, along with computerised sounds of the AI technology. There are recognisable sounds of current technology, but also imagined sound effects of AI companions appearing and hand print operated door locks.

**Diegetic – These are the sounds and music that the characters within a performance can hear. This is mainly sound effects to support the action that is taking place on stage.**

**Non Diegetic sounds**
The use of music and underscoring takes place throughout the entire production to create atmosphere and to support the action of key moments, such as Julia's frantic escape across London. The underscoring in the production uses synthesised sounds with staccato beeps and computer electronic sounds overlapping a melodic tracks – reminiscent of 1980's Sci-fi films. The music has been made to sound deliberately like it has been created through use of machines and technology.

During the high octane moments like the car chase and subsequent crash, the fast tempo music foreshadows moments of action and allow for the use of physical theatre, choreography and movement coordinated by Movement and Intimacy Director Lucy Hinds.

**Non Diegetic – Sound that exists outside the world of the play. The audience can hear the sound but the characters cannot.**

## About Nicola T. Chang Music & Sound Designer

Nicola T. Chang is a composer and sound designer for stage and screen. She was the composer/ sound designer on the 2020/21 Old Vic 12 cohort and a current

BAFTA Connect Member (Film Composer). She was a co-winner of the 2021 Evening Standard Future Theatre Fund (Audio Design).

**Theatre credits include:** *My Neighbour Totoro*, *All Mirth and No Matter* (RSC); *For Black Boys Who Have Considered Suicide When the Hue Gets Too Heavy* (West End / Royal Court / New Diorama); *Kerry Jackson* (National Theatre); *Garden of Words* (Park Theatre); *The Real and Imagined History of the Elephant Man* (Nottingham Playhouse / Blackpool Grand / Belgrade); *TRIBE, Of the Cut* (Young Vic); *Derren Brown's Unbelievable* (West End / Mercury Colchester / Manchester Palace); *The Ministry of Lesbian Affairs* (Soho Theatre); *The Swell* (Orange Tree); *Little Baby Jesus* (Orange Tree, JMK 2019); *Top Girls* (Liverpool Everyman); *NEST* (LEEDS 2023); *Macbeth* (Leeds Playhouse); *Dziady* (Almeida); *White Pearl* (Royal Court); *Miss Julie* (Chester Storyhouse); *The Death of Ophelia* (Shakespeare's Globe).

# OUR PROCESS

## Interview with Seamus Benson, Head of Production, Lyric Hammersmith Theatre

> "The truth is that most tech on stage is actually quite old-fashioned,"
>
> Max Webster, Director, Financial Times 13/02/24

Creating the futuristic world of *Minority Report* is very much a team effort. Production Designer Jon Bausor has created a set that transports the audience into the future that is full of imagery and takes us on a journey as we follow Julia and her race against time to save herself from her own Pre-Crime system

Seamus Benson, Head of Production, Lyric Hammersmith Theatre along with the rest of the production team have the huge task of actually ensuring this dystopian vision is seamlessly created within the space of the main house at the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre.

Seamus reveals some of the ways the incredible effects are created on stage to allow the audience to become immersed in this world where humanity has allowed Artificial Intelligence (AI) to take over and witness driverless cars along with holographic AI companions appearing to float in mid-air. He shares some of the secrets behind the scenes, where the world of 2050 is actually created by some techniques first used at the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre when it first opened in 1895.

**Minority Report is set in the future, does that mean the technology used on stage to create the production is also very futuristic?**
Surprisingly no, it's actually using a lot of existing technology, although some of it has obviously improved over the years. It ranges from manually operated winches, which move equipment around the stage, to high-end projectors for all the imagery used in the show. These are all things that we use regularly in shows that you would see typically in the West End and in other theatres around the country.

**Can you explain some of the theatrical techniques that are used in this production to create the futuristic world of 2050?**
Interestingly, there are actually some traditional magic show effects that are used, in fact we even employed the services of an illusionist on the show, Richard Pinner, who we have worked with before. He is an extremely accomplished performer and member of the Magic Circle. An example of how he has helped is with regards to the character of David, Julia's hologram AI companion. This character has to appear and disappear like a holographic image and some old style illusion tricks have been used to do this. One way has been the use of a black velour cloth that the actor physically holds up in front of them. As they lower the cloth, it reveals more of their body and looks like they are appearing out of thin air. David's costume is also made from a white reflective fabric that acts like a screen and can have light projected onto it to make it look like a computer-generated image.

Other ways of creating the illusion of people and items appearing and disappearing is the use of specially designed pieces of set that have gaps and spaces built into them for actors to physically hide in. The use of mirrors is also a very old fashioned way of creating the illusion of items and people floating in mid-air. You can hide peoples' feet as the mirrors reflecting the surroundings, and it looks like the person is floating. The actors have to build in misdirection for the audience and the lighting and mirrors all help to create the magic effect on stage.

**The use of projection is extremely important in this production to create a high tech world of the future. How is this equipment used in this production?**

Three main projectors are placed in the back of the auditorium so they are front facing, projecting images straight onto the stage. Each of the projectors can be programmed individually to point in specific places at a specific point in time. The projectors will be able to create both small and large images. The largest part of the set that is being projected onto consist of three main towers (approx. six meters in height) at the side of the stage. These are static, so they don't ever move, and they are covered in a perforated steel like material that gives you the ability to point light and images at it to make it look solid, but also to be able to light them from within for it to appear transparent. These towers are used to create the bulk of the set with other items moving in and out.

Down stage there are four panels that are tracked on, two of which are covered with the steel material and the other two are covered in a material called PepperScrim, this is a very fine material or mesh that allows you to create a more 3D, holographic effect with projection, so it give you a slightly different feel and look to the steel panels.

There is an amazing scene which looks like Julia is using floating computer screens. To create this effect the actor is literally standing behind one of the PepperScrim screens so we can see her behind the images that are being projected onto it. She is carefully lit from behind so that you can see her, as if she is behind a glass screen that the images are appearing on.

***Minority Report* is a fast paced production with quick scene changes and transitions to a variety of different locations. How is the set able to change seamlessly and at speed?**

There are several locations in the play including Julia's office. This particular location is achieved by tracking on a screen mid-stage. It is made of acrylic so it looks like a glass window and a desk is trucked on. In addition the ceiling on stage lowers to make it feel more like an office environment. We also have a rooftop scene and a set change where the location becomes a safe house in what looks like an attic of a house – this is where the ceiling pieces are lowered to reveal the scenery above it. The ceiling is quite big and raised and lowered by six electric winches. These are programmable, to allow you to raise and lower the ceiling, but to also change the angle so you can create slopes. It is formed of two sections, the down stage larger section that has the attic built on top of it, and then you have the slightly smaller up stage section, and they are both operated in different ways. Down stage uses the programmable electric winches whereas the upstage section is flown in, in a much more traditional way using a counterweighted flying bar – these are operated by two members of staff based in the fly tower of the theatre. Over the stage you have a bar that is attached by cables into the roof and run across the stage to what we call a cradle. In that cradle you add weight to counterbalance the weight of the piece scenery hanging on the bar. Once those pieces are equal you can pull either up or down on a rope to physically move the piece of set in or out – this is done manually by hand and is a very old fashioned way of theatre production – so a show that is set in 2050 is using theatre productions methods from over 100 years ago.

Parts of the set will have wheels attached to it and they will be tracked on and off – through use of the winches – both automated and manually by hand.

**One of the most visually exciting aspects of the show is the driverless car, how does that work?**

The car was actually made by a prop maker that made a lot of the original props for the Star Wars films. It moves around the stage in two directions, from the back of the stage to the front of the stage – so up and down but it also moves across the stage from left to right on a centre track. To move it up and down it uses an automated system, but to move it across the stage we use a winch that is turned manually by hand. The car is always placed on the track back stage out of sight until its ready to be moved on to appear. It never leaves the stage so it will also be masked when not in view meaning the audience won't be able to see it.

**The use of lighting is an extremely important design element in *Minority Report*. What are some of the lighting techniques used in this production?**

Most of the time this show uses standard light fittings that we use regularly in most of our other shows. In this production we use a programmable moving spotlight along with traditional flood lights to light the stage. To create that slightly futuristic look we are also using florescent tubes – not the old

type, but ones that have LED tapes inside that mean we can vary the colours we use. We also have LEDs embedded into the floor that creates two concentric circles which provide the setting for a force filed cage to trap a pre-criminal. In addition we also use a laser to create a 3D cage of light- so it is not just relying on use of lights projecting down onto the stage. We also use a haze machine to generate a light smoke effect that you can shine light through to make interesting shapes – using the laser you create that force field effect on stage.

**The production has been created to work across three separate venues. How does that work when the set has to fit theatres that are all different dimensions?**

It's actually fairly common for this to be the case that a production will move to different venues. *Minority Report* is a co-production between Nottingham Playhouse, Birmingham Rep and the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre. At the start of the process, the team in Nottingham are provided with all the technical specifications of each theatre and they have to build the show with that information in mind, so that they are able to dismantle it into its component parts ready to be transported to the next venue. Interestingly, our stage here at the Lyric is not as deep as the ones at Nottingham and Birmingham, so this means we have to factor in less space around the set on the stage. The stage management team will need to re-think how some of the scene changes will work here. The main footprint of the show, however, has been made to fit on all three stages.

For this particular show there will be at least five extra technical staff employed on top of the team of three that we would usually have working on a show in lighting, sound and stage.

**Sustainability and the environment is really important. How do you ensure that any production at the Lyric is as environmentally friendly as possible?**

It's something that the Lyric has always done – we have always been sustainable in terms of reusing materials, because things are expensive and as a producing theatre you often don't have huge budgets. It is sensible to reuse set, props and materials where you can and I feel this industry is very well aware of its impact on the environment and the climate crisis we are currently facing. It's not always possible to be completely carbon natural, but we always work to be as sustainable as possible. The majority of materials we use can be recycled and once a show has reached the end of its life, lots of the component parts of that production are recycled responsibly. We will break down the sets and elements of the scenery from wheels to fixtures and fittings such as door handles – anything can usually be used again. Larger pieces of scenery that might be made up of a steel framework can be reused or sent away for recycling. There are also number of places where we can offer used scenery to other small theatres and amateur groups to use for their productions. We must continue to be mindful of the footprint we are creating, but use of lighting such as LEDs is now much more energy efficient, which again is helping us become as sustainable as possible.

# EDUCATION RESOURCES

## Questions and Themes within Minority Report

*Minority Report* raises many questions about a number of themes and issues. Here are a series of questions that you might want to pose to your students as the basis of discussions around their interpretation of the production, or as a way to generate ideas for devising and creating drama.

- How much influence should we allow Artificial Intelligence (AI) to have on our lives?
- If you could prevent all criminal activity through use of AI, but you had to give up your right to free thought would it be worth it?
- Would it be ethical to punish someone for a crime before they have committed it?
- How do you think technology will influence our lives by the year 2050?

## Devising Theatre

The power and influence of technology is very much one of the main themes within *Minority Report* and is an issue that is incredibly rich when it comes to opening up discussion and debate. Here are some stimulus ideas and resources that would be interesting to explore with pupils as a starting point for devising theatre based around themes of what our future will look like in 50 years' time, and how technology and in particular AI will impact our lives.

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© Street Art News

Creator: Ralph | Credit: Gratis Graphics

## Debate and Discussion

Here are some links to articles that focus on themes linked to *Minority Report* that could spark debate and discussion:

**BBC News: 26 January 2024, Should AI play an ever-growing role in tackling crime?**

**The Nation: 17 July 2023, 'The Future of AI is War'**

**Mirage News: 25 June 2023, The Use of AI in Predicting and Preventing Crime**

**BBC News: 30 May 2020, Coronavirus: Bill Gates 'microchip' conspiracy theory and other vaccine claims fact-checked**

## Analysis of performance – Live Theatre Review

You might want to write about this production as part of a live theatre review and here is an example of how you might analyse performance elements. You are required to combine detailed descriptions of performance skills, vocal, physical, space and interaction, using precise details to explain what this is communicating, whilst analysing and evaluating the effect created for the audience.

*One of the most dramatic moments within the performance is when Julia discovers that her own pre-crime system has identified her as a potential murderer. After her collapse on stage she is in her office anxious and worried. She sits on a chair with her shoulders hunched over, in contrast to her previous straight and confident posture when she was presenting to an audience. Her arms are tense and she is clutching her hands on her lap, again communicating that she is stressed. Her face is tense, with a slight frown, her eyes staring out as she tries to understand the situation. Her jaw is tight and her mouth slightly open.*

*When she delivers the line "I want everybody to leave. I need to talk to you. NOW." She uses a higher pitch than we have heard before and the volume is raised to be assertive. When she turns to George and says the word 'now', there has been a slight pause before she emphasises it by lowering the pitch and elongating it by slowing the tempo.*

*McNee's use of both vocal and physical theatrical skills effectively communicate the emotions Julia is feeling at this moment in time where she is about to embark on the fight for not only her reputation, but her life.*

# Theatre Design

Challenge your pupils to consider the design elements of *Minority Report* and how it supports the narrative of the story and the themes and issues explored within the piece.

# Box set project

Set your pupils the challenge to create a box set design for a futuristic world. They just need a card board box e.g a shoe box turned on its side. They can create backdrops and props out of basic materials like card, cocktail sticks and paper. Here is a link to a **video about box sets.**

Here are some links about theatre design from BBC Bitezise to support students understand more about theatre design:

**Set Design**

**Sound Design**

**Lighting Design**:

**Costume Design**

Below:
Library Theatre Manchester, Model box for the first kitchen

Above and below:
images by Margaret Maloney

**Credits and Acknowledgments**
*Minority Report* is a Lyric Hammersmith Theatre, Nottingham Playhouse and Birmingham Rep co-production In association with Simon Friend Entertainment and by arrangement with Electric Shepherd Productions.

This education pack was created by Natalie Jim, Education Producer at the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre.
Designed by Hannah Yates.
Photos by Marc Brenner.

For more information on our education work and to download, other teaching resources please visit **lyric.co.uk/young-lyric/education**

## Cast

Christina
**Chrissy Brooke**
Michelle
**Xeona Campbell-Leggister**
Sergeant Harris
**Ricardo Castro**
Fleming
**Danny Collins**
George
**Nick Fletcher**
Ana
**Roseanna Frascona**
Julia
**Jodie McNee**
Ralph
**Nicholas Rowe**
David
**Tanvi Virami**

## Creative Team

Writer
**David Haig**
Director
**Max Webster**
Production Designer
**Jon Bausor**
Video Designer
**Tal Rosner**
Lighting Designer
**Jessica Hung Han Yun**
Composer and Sound Designer
**Nicola T. Chang**
Movement Director
**Lucy Hind**
Casting Director
**Lotte Hines CDG**
Illusions Designer
**Richard Pinner**
Associate Director
**Blythe Stewart**
Associate Sound Designer
**Christopher Reid**
Dramaturg
**Jack Bradley**
Dialect Coach
**Salvatore Sorce**
Voice Coach
**Barbara Houseman**

lyric

h&f
hammersmith & fulham

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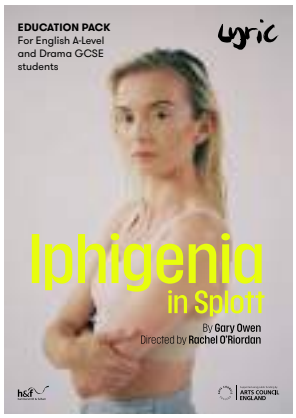
**Take a look at some of our previous Education Packs:**



NOTTINGHAM PLAYHOUSE

Simon Friend ENTERTAINMENT

the Rep

The Lyric Hammersmith Theatre produces bold and relevant world-class theatre from the heart of Hammersmith, the theatre's home for more than 125 years. Under the leadership of Artistic Director and CEO Rachel O'Riordan and Executive Director Amy Belson, it is committed to being vital to, and representative of, the local community. A major force in London and UK theatre, the Lyric produces adventurous and acclaimed theatrical work that tells the stories that matter.