



## Harnessing the Magic of the Gig: The *Electrolyte* Interview

### [00:00:19] INTRO

**Duška Radosavljević:** Hello, welcome to the Gallery!

Gig theatre is often seen as a rousing, explosive and politically charged form of contemporary performance, and all of these epithets have been used in relation to Wildcard's *Electrolyte* too. However, what distinguished *Electrolyte* when it turned up at the Pleasance Courtyard for the Edinburgh Fringe 2018 was its choice of subject matter, for which the company won the Mental Health Fringe Award for that year. As we find out in the interview that follows, Wildcard emerged out of the Oxford School of Drama, and *Electrolyte* was their fourth show, made in collaboration with the Olivier-winning theatre director Donnacadh O'Briain.

Unusually, in the Gallery today we take an in-depth look at one show and we meet with Donnacadh O'Briain as well as the Artistic Director of Wildcard James Meteyard and Resident Composer Maimuna Memon, who are respectively the writer and composer of this piece. We examine their individual and collective journeys towards the making of this work and towards gig theatre as a form, and we find out about their particular ethos of diversity, inclusion and search for authenticity that determined both *Electrolyte*'s subject matter and its musical identity.

This interview took place on Zoom on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

### [00:01:50] BEFORE *ELECTROLYTE*

**Duška Radosavljević:** We have James Meteyard, Maimuna Memon, Donnacadh O'Briain and Duška Radosavljević. So welcome, and thank you for coming together to talk about *Electrolyte*, the show that you made in 2018. That was the premiere, wasn't it, at the Edinburgh Fringe?

**James Meteyard:** Yeah.

**Maimuna Memon:** It was.

**DR:** And it won a whole string of awards that year, sold out completely and then came back again last year and toured all over the place. It significantly won the Mental Health Award in 2018 and has just been streamed in lockdown as part of the Mental Health Week. So I'd be interested to hear a bit about how this show came about, and in this story, I'm also interested in where you guys have individually come from as makers. What training you might have had that has in a way led you to be thinking about making performance like this or maybe making performance like this was a way of reacting against any training you've had before, or it may be that you brought in specific cultural influences that you might have grown up with. I mean, I know that Donnacadh came from Ireland, for example, so I'd be interested to hear how any specific cultural heritage as well as your formative years as artists might have influenced the way in which you think about what theatre should be and how stories should be told. So I understand that a lot of you met at The Oxford School of Drama. Is that right?

**James Meteyard:** Yeah, so Maimuna and I were at The Oxford School of Drama together from 2012 to 2015, we were both in the same class, on the acting course.

**DR:** And then Donnacadh came in later as a director who was hired to do the show. Okay, so let's maybe start in that chronology of how the idea was born and how first of all you met and found each other as compatible artists that you wanted to work with each other in this way.

**JM:** Maimuna and I met at the Oxford School of Drama, and there we collaborated on a number of different shows as performers and actors.

**MM:** During that time when we did plays at school, drama school, I think that's where I started to investigate composing music for theatre because I often wrote music for the shows we did, or MD-ed some of the shows we did. So I think that's how I kind of discovered that I really enjoyed that side of it.



**DR:** Maimuna, you were training as an actor at The Oxford School of Drama.

**MM:** Indeed, yeah.

**DR:** But you had been making music prior to that, that was a hobby or something you'd done in parallel?

**MM:** When I decided that I wanted to go into the arts or to train in the arts, I was kind of stuck between whether wanting to study music or acting because I loved them both in equal measure. I don't know why I chose acting – I love them both the same, but I decided to do that because I loved performing and you know I'd done a lot of musicals during secondary school, and all that kind of thing. And so I decided to do that. I've been playing music since I was four, my mum is a fiddle player. She's Irish and she's a fiddle player and so violin was my first instrument, and then I think because violin is such a difficult instrument, it gave me the tools really to be able to teach myself many other instruments and gave me the ability to have an acute sense of melody, I think, because there are no frets on a violin and so you have to be very aware of exactly how things sound. I think that is what got me into music and I've always written music and I started doing singer-songwriter stuff from the age of 15 really, I was writing stuff. I've lived all over the place, but my kind of most influential years were probably up north, north west, a town called Darwin, as you can hear from my Lancashire accent! That's where I spent most of my time, but my last three years of education were in Australia; I came back to the UK to go to drama school. And so I continued to gig during drama school, I used to gig at several pubs in Oxford, and everyone in my class was really supportive of that, and used to come along and stuff like that.

**DR:** James, I'd be interested to hear how you came into that particular environment and what your primary interests were. Could you summarise briefly, what was the sort of training you received at The Oxford School of Drama as actors?

**JM:** Yeah, it was a very classical training, perhaps slightly too much so really. It was very text-focused and language-focused. Movement definitely felt slightly separate to the course – it wasn't quite as integrated despite the hard work of some fantastic movement teachers, the focus of the school definitely landed on text and there was a big voice focus as well. We studied a lot of Shakespeare, we studied a lot of classics, and the contemporary stuff, new plays, new writing was left until right at the very end of our training. For better or for worse, I don't know. But yeah, it was definitely a very classically-led training, I'd say.

**MM:** Language was a big, big thing. And like James said, even though I think we probably could have done with a bit more of the contemporary texts a bit earlier on in our training, I do think that that emphasis on language has been invaluable to us moving forward. I think it has given us a real appreciation for words and what those words can evoke, and it has given us the tools, even in audition processes, I think, to look at a piece of text and go: 'I know what I can do with that.'

**JM:** And there was a lot of slightly left-field approach I think from early on in terms of a lot of self-poetry and talking from the self, and this idea that characters share themselves, and that's kind of the power of theatre, and a good performance would be that a character can honestly share themselves in a moment. So we did a lot of kind of soul-searching and self-sharing from ourselves as individuals, which was slightly traumatic, but we got over it! And then language being the vehicle for that, for sharing that.

**DR:** Was that a particular teacher that promoted that way of working, or was it just something that was in the school as a whole?

**JM:** It was the Principal, it was definitely the Principal's school of thought. He was George Peck – it was definitely him who spearheaded that in terms of what he believed to be the way to access a good performance in any production or as an actor. The rest of the training was sort of branched out from that and there was always an emphasis on bringing it back to it feeling unified and I think there was lots of discussion behind closed doors by teachers on how to not sound contradictory.

**MM:** There's one more thing I wanted to mention, which was James talking about self-poetry and this is kind of like legend of Oxford that every first year has to do something called 'self-song.' I don't know if the new Principal has continued that legacy, but we used to have to sing a song at the end of first term of first year – we used to have to write a song about ourselves and our life and sing it for the whole school. It was bloody terrifying! And I don't know, what I think about it, still, but I do know that it forced



us to write, and to write about ourselves, which I think in itself is a very difficult thing to do. So I think that was a big thing for us as well.

**DR:** Thank you, actually, that's really interesting and relevant to what we're talking about. So James, did you know that you wanted to be a writer when you decided to train as an actor, or you discovered that in the course of training?

**JM:** I was awful at English at school – I'm really dyslexic, so I really struggled to write, but I enjoyed creative writing a little bit, but I was quite disruptive and I didn't pay much attention at college either which wasn't useful and not advisable really. I studied English at college as well. But I knew I wanted to be an actor, and I knew that you didn't need college grades to get into drama school, so I didn't pay much attention and didn't get very good grades. But then when I went to first year at drama school I was quite lazy and quite complacent I think, and that got kicked out of me very quickly. In fact, the Principal at Oxford said to me in our first year, he called me out after a class and said: 'There are some people in your class who are good. There are some people in your class who are okay. There are some people in your class who are not so good. And then there's you – do better or you're out.' And that was in response to me not having prepped a monologue, and so the point was, you know: 'You're not even on the spectrum of good if you don't prepare.' You know, it was valid if not a little harsh. It could have gone on one of two ways, I could have been, like: 'Screw you, I'm out of here' or – but it did the opposite, it gave me a kick up the arse I think and really galvanised me to kind of re-evaluate and reassess. And over those three years I learnt a lot about myself and I tapped into a work ethic that I don't think I'd ever really tapped into before because acting was always something that I wanted to do, it was always a dream, and actually I realised, 'Oh I'm here doing it now, and actually the reason why I've been sort of lazy and complacent up until now is because I wasn't doing what I love doing. And actually, now I'm about to throw away an opportunity, where I'm about to take those steps into what I want to do.' I beatbox as well, so before I went to drama school, I was busking a lot in London, and that was basically how I was earning my money. And I was also playing around with kind of looping systems with beatboxing. But I'm not very good singer so it's quite limited if you can only be percussive and do bass sounds and that kind of stuff. You're kind of limited to a kind of vocal take on electronic music realistically, and some slightly percussive drums that you can add to guitars or whatever, if you're playing with other people, but it was limiting so at drama school, I definitely sought out people who were musical as well. My housemate Mikey at the time was an amazing guitarist and we played a lot and looped a lot of his guitar stuff, we put stuff behind it and we made up a band, and I also played with a guy called Eddie King as well who's an amazing vocalist, and he would sing and loop. And Maimuna and I collaborated on *Children of the Sun*, which is where we met a guy called Nick Chambers, Hal Chambers by directing trade, and he was a fantastic director, who directed us both at drama school in our second year. And we collaborated on the music for that and did a lot of looping, put some beatboxing in and some lovely violin and some amazing vocal kind of loops as well, very atmospheric stuff. And it was actually Hal who introduced us, post-drama school, to Donnacadh and we set up Wildcard in our third year at drama school. We had a really awful showcase basically; we were literally told straight afterwards by agents that it was the worst showcase they'd ever seen.

**MM:** I think three people got signed–

**JM:** Three out of 19.

**MM:** –after our showcase, yeah.

**JM:** And it was a shame because we had a really talented year, and actually everybody's gone on to do really brilliant things. So it sort of does go to show that the showcase isn't the be all and end all and having an agent isn't the be all and end all because so much extraordinary stuff has come for our year. But what did come out of that was this idea that we were 'wild cards' and this casting director came in to do a talk and said – we asked, would you bring in an unsigned actor, and she said: 'Yeah, yeah, I'd bring in a wild card I'd bring in a wild card, sure.' And so we sort of decided to take this idea of being a wild card and own it and say look wild cards have a lot to offer. And so yeah, Wildcard was kind of born! And one of the strands of that, we really wanted to do workshops as a way of kind of people honing their craft at a price that doesn't break the bank is the kind of tagline that we wanted to do. And Donnacadh came in and did a workshop and then following this workshop I approached Donnacadh



about another play that I was writing, we went for a chat, and in the process of that we were currently creating *Electrolyte* – me and Maimuna and Liv and a guy called Ben Simon at the time, I think that's how far we'd got in the kind of process of it – Donnacadh was like: 'How are you, what are you doing?' And I was just: 'Oh, we're making this kind of thing and doing this thing', and just explained this kind of show, because at that point I think I was going to direct it, not really thinking about what I was saying, just sort of talking, thinking we were going to get on to the business stuff after that, which is this other play that I was writing and at the end of it Donnacadh said: 'Oh, that's really good, that sounds really great, I would really like to direct that.' And then I was like: 'Oh well, I had this other play – oh okay then, well, fine!' [Laughter.] We took a moment, kind of went back and then messaged Donnacadh back and said: 'We'd absolutely love to have you on board, your work's really brilliant', and actually it was probably one of the best decisions, creative decisions throughout the process, because I think we would have been a bit a lost.

**MM:** It's so hard to look outside of – it literally feels like you're in this bubble of sound and words and Donnacadh just really, really brought a lot of clarity to the process.

## **[00:14:48] THE FOUNDATIONS OF WILDCARD**

**DR:** By that time, you were all based in London, I guess?

**MM:** Yes, maybe we should preface is a little bit with: Wildcard was formed in our third year and James was a huge advocate for pushing forward even when things were really like sticky and tough and I think it's really easy to just disintegrate when you feel like nothing's happening. And James and Joey who are the managers and two artistic directors of Wildcard, were grinding away in the background for a long, long time: we got set up as a charity, we registered with Equity and all this kind of stuff, and they worked extremely, extremely hard to build up the foundations of Wildcard. And me and James collaborated on *Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Brockley Jack Theatre, and that's how we began to work professionally together – James directed *Midsummer Night's Dream*, I wrote music for it, and a lot of the Wildcard people and OSD graduates were in that show. Essentially what we are so lucky with is that there are now ten core members of Wildcard, and I think we're very rare in the sense that we are extremely close as a cohort, as a graduating year. We have managed to use our different skills to just kind of branch out in as many different places as possible.

**JM:** We initially started to make things by committee which is the worst way to make anything! It was very slow and very painful and then gradually, people kind of drifted away and as Muna said, Joey and I kind of drove that through. And then, as there was more for people to do, more people slotted into the roles to be able to support that and amplify that. But sorry, I realise that you asked me where the writing came from as well and that was totally out of the blue: I graduated from drama school, I decided I wanted to write a play because I didn't have an agent, I didn't have any prospects, I'd been told by the Principal that I was the worst in the class, so I decided – I was like: 'Well screw this, I've spent my whole life waiting for this, I want to create, I want to make, I want to meet people!' So I wrote a play called *After Party*, and I based it on Arthur Miller's *All My Sons*, that we did in our third year with Lisa Spirling who was an amazing director and was really, really instrumental in my training, and I think a lot of people's training as well. And based it on that but modernised it and it was fine. I mean, it wasn't the greatest thing–

**MM:** It was great, it wasn't just fine! It was considered. If that was your first play, I mean, yeah, it was great.

**JM:** Thank you – but it was a really good exercise in kind of just getting something done and knowing that's what I wanted to do. And that's where I met Olivia Sweeney. She did first – she plays a character called Bethany and was really, really, really brilliant and I knew I wanted to write something for her. I wrote ten pages of it, and then I thought it was rubbish, and so I put it away and then a couple of months later she said: 'Well, what happened to that thing that you were writing?' And I said: 'Ah, it's rubbish.' And she said: 'Well, can I read it?' So I read it to her and then she was like: 'It's really good, it's really, really good, you know, carry on.' And so, I wrote bit more and I put it away again, thought it was crap again, and she did the same thing. And that happened two or three times where actually she really, really had to push me to carry on with it because I thought it was quite self-indulgent and I was a bit





nervous about writing about mental health because a close family member of mine had gone through a kind of episode of psychosis, and I knew I wanted to write about the experience of her with her friends and family and this unit that kind of came around her. I felt like it was a bit naff what I was writing, which is why I kept putting it away, and maybe a bit insensitive. And I also knew I really wanted to write a piece of gig theatre. I'd been playing with beatboxing and looping and all that kind of stuff for years and tried to make a couple of pieces of gig theatre, which were awful and never got anywhere, mainly because I didn't really know what I was doing. And I'd seen kind of a lot of the work of Middle Child and a bit of work of Nabokov and this kind of vibrant feeling of the live event – and this vibrancy, this music that was happening but I really knew I wanted to take that form and play with it and expand on where I felt it could be expanded on and what I felt was what was exciting about it and what enabled it. That's when *Electrolyte* started to really gain momentum.

[00:18:57 to 00:22:02] 'City Lights' from *Electrolyte* (2018)

### [00:22:03] THE DRAMATURGY OF LISTENING

**DR:** I'd be interested in knowing what were those early bits of *Electrolyte* that you were writing in the early stages before you started to actually envisage it as a full performance?

**JM:** The way I write is very linear, and so it was just the beginning, quite literally. With *After Party*, because I was less experienced, I think I tried to write the whole play in 20 pages, and then I realised that I had another 60 pages to write. And so I had to – once I got to the end, I certainly picked bits up and lifted them and put them around, but with *Electrolyte* it was a lot more linear. Maybe something to do with the poetry. But certainly, the first draft was just written chronologically, you know, from the beginning right through to the end. The way I write and the way I try to write is that I don't redraft until I've finished the first draft, so I just write loads. So, when we went back, I think we realised that we had, there was one section where there was about five pages of Jessie just having a shower, in which no action happened at all! [*Laughter.*] And then, kind of realised there was only one moment that came out where she suddenly had this thought that really could have happened in one line but for some reason, I needed to go through five pages of her having a shower to get to that one line. So that's kind of my philosophy with writing: just write everything. And sometimes I'll sit there, and I'll be like: this is so crap, but I know I have to write it in order to get from A to B. A big part of our process with Donnacadh early on before we got into rehearsals was dramaturgical – and he was really brilliant with that and we spent about three sessions just talking about the play, and he didn't really – well, maybe for about two sessions – didn't really seem to have an opinion on anything, and I remember coming away from the second session of being like: 'Is he going to actually say anything about the play?' And then came back to the third session, and we read it through, and then he went: 'Right, okay, I think I get where you're coming from now', and went bam! And it was kind of – it was a really amazing process because he clearly just listened and was trying to understand, because I think certainly where the play had come from for me was a very personal place. With hindsight, it was really important that that was respected and Donnacadh respected that really well because the way I am, and the way this play is built, it wouldn't have worked, somebody just coming in and telling me how to have written it, it needed to be a case of working with somebody to expand on what was already there, and that was really brilliant. Multiple sessions after that we unlocked some really important kind of things in this first draft and then spent about, we were in Leeds for about nearly an hour, I think. And actually, Donnacadh kept saying: 'We need to get to London faster, we need to get to London faster, we need to get to London faster because that's where everything happens.' And actually, the expansion needed to happen the other side of that. So it was things like that which really were invaluable.

**DR:** So Donnacadh, you come to this story from a completely different sort of background. Let's just retrace your footsteps. I am aware that you went to the Central School of Speech and Drama. I'm not sure what course you did? And then you were at the RSC for a while. But then what happened? Just tell us in your own words, your journey.

**DOB:** It's a nice question, what brings you to this show, aside from the, you know, the accidents of meeting people, which are fundamental to it actually. But I trained as an actor in Dublin, and I started directing before I even graduated – I directed my first show in the summer before third year. That was



Shakespeare – that was a Shakespeare play which I kind of adapted using some of the dramaturgies of Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, and also I worked with a composer so live music – live, original music was fundamental. So there's two things about that show which I think are important for this show: one is that it's interested in dramaturgy, new dramaturgy, interested in live music performed live, and also interested in the immediacy of theatre and the shared space. That show was performed in the round with no lighting effects until we got to Pyramus and Thisbe, and then we started using some lighting effects, but before that it was an open lighting, an audience in the round and the actors performed in all spaces and were very present with the audience and–

**DR:** What was that piece called?

**DOB:** It was called *A Midsummer Night's Dream: Six Characters in Search of an Audience*.

**DR:** Another *Midsummer Night's Dream* in this story. Okay, interesting.

**DOB:** Yeah, everyone's got *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the closet.

**DR:** Yeah! [*Laughing.*]

**DOB:** So yeah, that was my first show and I think there's a lot of links even from very early on. The next few shows I directed, they all had composers who I worked with on that as well. Very early on I learned how music can be part of live theatre, I suppose. Or I don't know how much I learned, but at least I was learning. I came to London, I did an MA at Central – it was Classical Acting as a directing student, which was a one-year only experiment, they never repeated it after I left – I did a lot of classes with the Advanced Theatre Practice course as well. And then I did a couple more new writing projects that went to Edinburgh. So I kind of began my relationship with Edinburgh then as well just after that – *Electrolyte* was maybe Edinburgh number seven or something. So having begun with Shakespeare I then started doing new plays with writers. The first time I worked on a new play with a writer was only really a year after I finished drama school. Within a year, I think I'd done two new plays working with writers, one of which I commissioned myself and one of which I was approached to direct; both of which I was quite involved in dramaturgically. I don't think I was necessarily very good at it that point, but I was involved. One thing I do think – just to reference what James was saying generously about how we work together – from early on, I had a sense that writing was magical in some way, magical and special and kind of mysterious. I think that was quite useful because I didn't approach writers and plays with this idea that: 'Well, it's just bricks and mortar and I can just come in and rearrange everything and make it better, bish bash bosh.' There was a real respect for it, don't quite know why, or where that comes from, but I did have a real respect for it, and I was careful from early on with writers and their work. That's something I think I've taken on and got better at in a more kind of strategic way, but the early instinct was somewhat in awe of: 'How do you do that, how have you done that? Where does that come from?', and in a way kind of accepting that I would never really know, but that what I did know is that whatever is there is something that mustn't be broken or damaged about this process of bringing something forth, without question, and the same applies to music. Language for me has always been a fascination: I was an early lover of Beckett as well, it's a very different type of language but very important, and I was thinking of novelists like Virginia Woolf and Elfriede Jelinek who use language in really fascinating, dense, complex and interesting ways. And then, I guess, more contemporary writers like Eimear McBride, there's always been a real fascination with language for me. I was also really bad at English at school, like James, it was my worst mark in my Leaving Cert and I also have always thought of myself as lazy – interesting, another thing we have in common – which maybe is something I like James worked against in a way, but still fundamentally believed to be true!

**DR:** What was it that drew you to it actually? That's the expression I heard earlier, I think. What was it that actually you felt you really wanted, why you wanted to work on this project when you kind of volunteered your involvement?

**DOB:** The first two things I was aware of: one was James talking about it, so there was James's – it was what I got from listening to him talk about the piece. So there was taking excitement from his excitement. And then the second thing was reading the script, because actually I think, you know, in James's version of the story, the only small difference I would say was I said: 'Can I read it?'

**JM:** Yeah, that's true, I think I brought you in too quickly, too strong didn't I, yeah? [*Laughter.*]



**DOB:** I mean, you're right, I was like: that sounds really good, do you have a director? I was quite upfront about it, but I mean I definitely went and read it first! And before I then said: 'Look, I think this is really good, I'm really interested in it.' I just thought there was a real vibrancy in the language, there was a real momentum to it, I instantly connected to the protagonists. But it's fascinating in a way because I knew I was really interested in the piece at that point, but I had no idea what Liv as a performer would be bringing to that, and how incredible that would be; and I had no idea of any of Muna's music and what a huge, huge element that was going to be; and also then the ensemble that they'd already been putting together – and there's all these other characteristics that were present that I didn't know anything about which I guess in some way was perhaps coming through James's excitement, which was the first thing that interested me, you know? The way he spoke about it, I got the feeling there was something going on here that was special. I think it took me weeks and weeks, actually, maybe even a couple of months later before I actually was in a room with them playing the music, before I discovered suddenly that whole side of it.

**DR:** But you knew that they were envisaging it as a gig theatre piece in the way that James was–

**DOB:** Yeah, yes, I did. Yeah.

**DR:** And Maimuna, at what point did you start writing music for this piece? How was that journey of the music developing alongside this journey of the text finding its director and so on?

**MM:** It happened very gradually at the beginning. I think there are six or seven songs, standalone songs in the show which Allie, who I played in Edinburgh, sings – she's a singer-songwriter character. And James and I met in a cafe in Covent Garden, I think, and he told me about the show and asked me if I would write music for it. I mean, I was like: 'Yeah!', because I love James's work and also we worked really well on [A] *Midsummer Night's Dream* together and at drama school, and also I feel like we have a rare thing where we can be very honest with each other and not take offence by it. Of course, sometimes you get into heated debate, as with any creative partnership, but I think we were very good at just going: 'Alright, I don't agree with that', or maybe 'You're pissing me off there', or maybe 'I totally agree with that.' But the good thing is that I think most of the time we always took time to listen to each other and we respected each other's opinion on things and so I was really, really grateful for that and for the straightforward approach of opinion and of collaboration.

**JM:** And I think also – sorry to cut you off but also on that when we met – it was both wanting Muna to write the music, but also Allie as well was very much written with Muna in mind, and with this idea that Jessie was crafted very much around Liv and with Liv's involvement in the story. And then by the time we got to the first draft – it was actually called *Touch* for a long time, *Electrolyte*; and it was going to be about Jessie's obsession with Allie and then the kind of psychosis that came out that was going to be about: 'Is Allie real or not?' Allie was always crafted as this kind of ethereal character that brought this musical world in and Muna was very much the vehicle for that. I always imagined Muna being a vehicle for that music, both as a performer, but also as a composer. So when we sat in that cafe, I said, you know: 'Do you want to write it?', and also 'Do you want to be in it and make it?' So sorry, yeah, I just wanted to add that point because I think it's an important one.

**MM:** Yeah. And just to mention that I'm not ethereal in real life at all! [Laughter.] It was a great compliment to have been asked to be 'the ethereal part of the show', that was lovely! So, yeah most of the songs I wrote specifically for the show. There was one song which was already written, which was 'City Lights', which kind of comes in the middle of the show when Jessie is remembering her mum, but what was amazing about putting that song into the show was that I very much had an idea of the arrangement already for that but putting James's words into that in between just somehow – just created this magic. It kind of comes out of nowhere in the show and all of a sudden, putting James's words in with that song just did something to all of us, I think. And it was just – I remember workshoping that song at the Watermill Theatre, and the Watermill Theatre had been a huge part of our journey and Paul [Hart] was extremely kind, he gave us our first phase for R&D, he gave us accommodation in kind, and he also lent us a keyboard. And we had, for the first time ever, a space to be able to be as loud as we wanted, and just as a group of people. So at that time it was Liv, James, myself, Ben Simon and Chris, and we had a girl called Danielle who at the time was helping us workshop Donna's character, and, you know, it was the first time we had space to like really just let the music come alive. 'Hurricane'



was the first song I wrote specifically for the show – I come from a very folky, jazzy background. Just quickly going into my cultural background, because I know you wanted to talk about that: I'm half Pakistani, half Irish so I feel like my vocabulary of music has been very broad growing up. My dad used to play me a lot of bhangra music, qawwali music, but also like rock music, Deep Purple, Jimi Hendrix, all that kind of thing. My mum used to expose me to a lot of kind of like jazzy stuff, but specifically kind of traditional Irish stuff, which I feel is a big part of my music, that folky side of my music which I kind of, I think, put into all of my music now. But 'Hurricane' came from the jazz part of me and I remember writing that on the guitar and then us going into – I think it was just James and myself and Ben at the time – going into Arch Studios in Stamford Brook. Arch Studios is loads of studios where musicians go in to play, and we spent a lot of time in there. But James has got the kind of electronic background, the drum and bass, the trap, the grime, all that kind of thing. So we had a really great conversation about where that song could go, and you know I had no experience with electronic music. And so it was really fun for James to go: 'What about this beat? What about this beat?', and it ended up being a drum and bass song. The other songs that I kind of wrote, I guess like month by month, when it was all going quite slowly, and I'd send them to James and sometimes we'd have a chance to workshop it – and so in terms of the songs, they were the easier part of the process, in a way. It was still difficult to get them to where we wanted to get them to, as is anything when you're writing something, but the thing that was the most challenging was the underscore, and that's where the whole company comes in. So we did first ten minutes of the whole show – underscore, songs – at Arch Studios with James, Ben and myself. But we had this fundraising night, I think it was Christmas 2017, at the Other Palace, and we wanted to showcase ten minutes of *Electrolyte*. And so we busted our ass to do that, and we made kind of ten minutes of rough draft and underscore and we had 'Hurricane' in there, and Ben played a huge part in that.

[00:37:55 to 00:41:02] 'Hurricane' from *Electrolyte* (2018)

## [00:41:01] FINDING THE GENRE

**MM:** There was such a love for the piece and a passion for the piece from the beginning and so many people put their time in for free – and we will forever be grateful for that, because without them we wouldn't be here at all. And then the next stage of musical experience, shall we say, was at the Watermill where we managed to make 30-35 minutes of accumulative music and underscore. And I remember us kind of going back to the little flat we were living in the evening and talking about: 'Okay, so tomorrow we're working on this piece of text and what kind of vibe do we want from this?' – and I think with a lot of musicals, the genre of music is kept very much to one kind of vibe, or one kind of feeling, and James talked a lot about how he wanted the music to reflect the feeling of Jessie at that time. And so we had such a vast amount of opportunity to just create any kind of genre, any kind of feeling, any kind of arrangement and–

**JM:** That conversation came a lot out of the reflection after seeing a lot of gig theatre around, and seeing people taking one genre of music and making a play around it and feeling that what limited them, often, was that the genre of music sometimes was not an extension of what the characters were going through – it was just placed on top of the story. And so when we were discussing so much, it was always that you know in life you come across so many genres of music, such an eclectic genre just naturally in day to day, that if you limit yourself to one genre, you are limiting something of life. And gig theatre has the magic, music has the magic of being able to access us in an amazingly emotional way that words just can't do sometimes. So finding what the right music is for that extension of experience was so fundamental to our earlier conversations and that creation. Then of course my immediate go-to is electronic and quite heavy stuff and Muna's having this amazing kind of soft, but sort of jazzy, folky, classical background just really shaped those earlier things in a way in which I don't think I could have ever imagined. Yeah. I kept saying: 'We can't go too heavy too early', so you know: 'Folk is Leeds, folk is Leeds, folk is Leeds!', or whatever – 'Folk is the mum, or folk is...' Then actually 'Jazz is – this is jazzy, this has that kind of feel to it.' And there were all these bizarre words that kept coming out like: 'Oh, we need to just feel that kind of sadness' – I don't know, the sadness through some kind of noise or whatever. 'We need to have like a 'j-j-j-j' sound here when you feel that wow, wow, wow, wow.'





**MM:** It's so funny, I don't have the vocabulary for like electronic sounds, I'd be like: 'James, I want it to sound like a really gentle drip', and he'd be like: 'Er, okay, how about this sound?' I'd be like: 'Er no, let's try something else!' And it was really great because what James brought in his electronic background I could counteract with folk, jazz, classical stuff. I think one of my favourite bits of underscore in the whole show actually is this kind of jazzy bit when Jessie wakes up from a hangover and we had like, I can't explain, you know what I mean, though, James, it was just a bit jazzy and like—

**JM:** Yeah, literally, it had that kind of jazzy feeling, but we spoke a lot about that feeling of your stomach sinking when you wake up and just having to drag your — and now it's this kind of boom, boom...

**MM:** We had like the saxophone like piercing through her head because she was really hungover and—

**JM:** And this cymbal — kind of tapping of a cymbal when she said 'I'm going to go have a shower', it was like this 'shhhhhh' kind of feeling of — 'How do we share the world, literally, through sound?' was this massive discussion, and through music. But how do we kind of keep that within the context of a score as well. Maybe a couple of moments there are that like when she actually taps on the metal door it's a bit like 't, t, t', but you know, it was never kind of completely descriptive. It was always—

**DOB:** I think that moment, for example, with the 'tap, tap, tap' on the door, that's part of the internal — or at least it is in the production which at that point that's where we were at, we were in the detail of the thing. And that's very much part of the world of the characters, that moment where she taps on the door and Jim does it and then he does it again, it's part of their world it makes sense. Actually just before you said that I was thinking that it's a real strength of the piece and a real discipline that you didn't allow it to go down the road of indicative or the music never was responsible for narrating stuff like: 'I'm walking down the street.' That's so important because those kind of decisions could have easily really flattened and taken magic and poetry out of that part of the world. With the best will in the world, you know, with the simplest of intentions, without any meaning to do it, it's an easy line to cross. And then the music is deferring in some way, rather than elevating.

**MM:** Also, we wanted a very different texture between Leeds and London. So Leeds was a bit more earthy really, and London felt more built up, more electronic, more oppressive.

**JM:** Steely. We kept saying 'steely' was a good word that came out.

**MM:** Yeah. And so when James referred to the kind of tapping on the window, you know, she's walking to this warehouse past skyscraping, grey tall buildings and we really wanted to get that more synthetic sound into that world.

**JM:** The metal, the metallic quality of London, you know. Although Leeds is a city — and that's part of the story actually when writing because Liv is from Huddersfield — but it was really important not to be a small town to a big city because that wasn't what the story was about. She was going to London for a totally different purpose — yes, she was feeling disenchanted with her life in Leeds, but that wasn't because Leeds is a town, do you know what I mean? I didn't, we didn't want to make that point. But there was something again, something about arriving in this massive industrial place, whereas Leeds represented this kind of place of comfort and nurture and growing up that she'd actually lost touch with. So there was lots of real deep and in many ways really abstract conversations about the music that started with Maimuna and I, and then would be kind of fully collaborative, and then also introducing so much about rhythm as well in terms of the way that Liv was speaking, and the way that — do we choose to fit the music to the text, i.e. like rhythmically? But we always wanted it to be led by the text and led by Liv in that sense, and always be kind of a supportive quality to paint that picture. And then that was something that Maimuna was very good at doing was bringing in this kind of backing thing to amplify what was going on in Liv's experience. And I think having that collaborative beginning of Leeds that went on to tell the story — i.e. Maimuna and Liv — just gave it a sense of power in the ownership of the piece. These people who are fronting it, who had led that creative process and therefore understood all of the decisions made and what they were doing and those had come from an organic and quite emotional and felt place which I think contributed to the overall power of the final thing.

**[00:48:30 to 00:51:20] Warehouse scene from *Electrolyte* (2018)**

**MM:** I don't think any of us realised what we were creating until we put it all together. Like for so long, as with any rehearsal process, it feels like there's just bits everywhere. It's like: 'How are we going to



bring this together?’ And when we finally did, I just was like: ‘I don’t really care what anyone else thinks at this point!’ It was just kind of like: we’ve done this amazing thing together, we all feel this thing together. But also with the fact that we underscored, we wanted to underscore the whole piece, it just meant that when there was silence, and there was no music, that was very intentional. I heard people say to us: ‘I forgot the music was there until it stopped.’ That was a really important thing to us, that. I think it always takes a few minutes for people to understand the language of a show when they come in, but then people got used to that language of music and text being synonymous – they were one thing and that’s what James spoke about when he approached me and what we really, really wanted to achieve which was that that world is text and music and we don’t need to justify it – that’s just what it is, they are together as one. There was a lot of conversation with Donnacadh about when things were on mic, when things weren’t on mic, and when there were bits of silence, or when there was that scene with Jessie and Donna at the end where Jessie is talking about the letter and it’s heart-breaking, because you realise that her whole world is just shattered, in that moment. Eventually we came to the conclusion that that is the one moment where Jessie is off mic, and that too was very powerful, I think.

### **[00:53:00] CHISELLING THE CONCEPT**

**DR:** What you’ve just shared with us was this incredible richness of material, the richness of your own ensemble relationships with each other that you’ve built up over the years. Also in terms of the subject matter – on the one hand, it is a piece about mental illness and psychosis, on the other hand, it is also about this sort of rite of passage, and the North and the South, and the move from one place to another, and I’m just interested in Donnacadh’s perspective on this. Like, when you entered this process, Donnacadh, what did you feel was your main role in terms of the decisions that needed to be made and how the piece needed to be communicated to the audience?

**DOB:** I think at the beginning, the kind of initial pitch if you like, when James and I were talking about it – I think, this still relates to how it was made and how James initially was imagining himself either directing or working with someone as a director, there was kind of various options in there – the initial conversation was around there’s this leading performer who has an absolute tonne of text and needs some help, and then there’s all these other people that have some acting to do but a huge amount of music to do. So initially, I think the idea was that a big part of my job would be to help Liv. And then of course obviously, we went: ‘Well, in the end you just make the show together and something else happens!’ But I think one of the things that was key for me picking up something that James said there, was about how fundamental people in the show had been to creating it – particularly Liv and Muna, but also the other people, Ben, particularly he’d been there from very early on, also Chris; it was only Meg really who’d come in quite late in terms of the cast. One of the things that was apparent for me early on was that there was an incredible power in the room, in the bodies of these performers, partly related to the level and the scale of ownership and the immediacy of their relationship to the material and what they were doing. I think quite early on, it was apparent to me that there was a magic available in the harnessing of that quality in the room and something quite special and unusual. Something I think – I’d had experience of making autobiographical work with Bella Heesom, we have a company called All About You, we’d made one show and we were in development of a second show at this point. And that was kind of very much in the post-dramatic tradition, which I’d worked in before and so I had a sense of what is possible when there’s something which is true or has a lot of truth within it on stage in the body of someone who is all also a very accomplished performer. I think that’s the kind of lens that I brought to the process that took a little bit of time to become clear and evolve in the room because actually it was very difficult. I mean, that was kind of unexplainable, I couldn’t kind of like stand in front of everyone on the first day of rehearsals and say this is what I think because it was something that I had to see and feel my way into. And also, as James has already suggested, I had to do that carefully. Partly, because I always try to be careful, but there were also a lot of authors in the room, it wasn’t just: ‘Okay I’ve done my work with the writer and now this is the cast’. I mean, the playwright was in the piece, the composer was in the piece, Liv who’d created the role as it were, was in the piece. I don’t mean that I was intimidated by that, it’s not about that, but just about respecting the amount of listening and learning that is available from that, and I suppose how much better I could make my work if I really learned what was in the room. So there was a carefulness but also, yeah I did, from very early on I had



a sniff that there was something in authenticity and in the truth of where the world came from in the bodies of the performers. And that really is the root then of what became the dramaturgy of the production in which, it became clear to me, at all points I wanted it to feel like this was a real event: a real event happening, and an actual group of friends. And that the way of creating that required us to abandon a lot of the conventional tools of plays I suppose. Of course that was supported by a very straightforward element to the dramaturgy which is: this is gig theatre. So for me it was the easy route to go: 'Okay, well, then all the aesthetics of this need to be the aesthetics of a gig, they mustn't be the aesthetics of a play and they mustn't really, particularly be the aesthetics of theatre, at least in the performing of it.' And so, the way that I judged I guess authenticity, immediacy and truth was very different than if I was doing an Arthur Miller play where I would judge those things through a very different lens. And so, the way the language we developed in the room around to put it really simply what the actors did and how they did it all came from that lens. And I think it took us a while because there were like little moments in the play where they are kind of scenes where you might imagine them having a little bit more of the conventional tropes of a play. And so it took a long time to figure out how to serve that writing and make sure those little fragments of moments, were living, but that they weren't undermining this kind of core, immediate aesthetic, which really pushed away any sense of artifice or pretence. I feel that comes from a working-class tradition. I think for me, my impulse, my connection to that – I come from a working-class family, place and education as does the protagonist, Jessie – and in some way there was something about the aesthetic that comes from that, relates to that. I guess it just takes me back to this idea that getting up and pretending is just pissing about, it's kind of stupid. It's just, you know, acting is kind of stupid in some way, just from my childhood, from my youth. And so, I didn't really allow any acting in a sense, so we had to try and somehow create a production where at no point did it feel like anyone was acting, and of course the way to do that wasn't to make sure nobody was ever acting – I mean, everyone was acting all the time – but it just, yeah, as I say, it was the lens which all the decisions, all the acting decisions were made via. And it's a very particular and unusual lens.

**DR:** And in terms of what Maimuna just said about the mic, what does the mic mean for you in this mise en scène, this world that you were creating?

**DOB:** One of the early decisions that we happened upon that we stuck with was that even in scenes, everyone would speak into a microphone. Even though speaking into a microphone would completely ruin any idea that they were in a flat, and that the microphone wasn't in a position where they would be sitting on the sofa. The microphones allowed us – were part of the decision to completely eschew representational aesthetics. So in no way did it look like they were in a flat. There was movement and there was dynamics, but those dynamics were coming from the live performance and in some way they're a kind of playful re-enactment of something.

**JM:** There's something on that as well – just to touch upon before it drifts into something else – something that Donnacadh kept saying which has always stuck with me and was always actually a really, really brilliant kind of realisation, and it was the physical language of the gig. How can you tell the story through the language of a gig? Okay, so we need to be in a flat, what's available to us? A shitload of instruments and mics. What vehicle of what's available to us can we tell this story in? It was always just coming back to that language of the gig, I've always thought, Donnacadh – I just wanted to throw that in there – that for me felt really brilliant and really simple, but actually really brilliant in a way.

**MM:** And also the fact that what Donnacadh suggested was that we are telling the story retrospectively. So we were a group of musicians and Jessie was the lead lady, retelling the story of what happened, but in that retelling it becomes a real thing. And at first, I was like: 'I don't, aaah, this is like so confusing to me.' But then it made so much sense because if you think about these artists on stage in gigs who are storytellers, you know – like, to add a reference from *Electrolyte*, Joni Mitchell – they are reliving that moment through that music, and they are telling that story. And even though it's not happening there and then, it is a reimagining and a retelling of what happened, and it's in their soul at that time. And so what that allowed us to do was not have to go: 'Well, I have to be in a house right now.' It was: 'Well, we are as a group of friends telling the story to you, in the medium of a gig.'

**DR:** This decision that, James, you spoke about as being one of the first decisions in making the piece, that it was going to be a piece of gig theatre, why was that so important to you? What does gig theatre



allow you? What did you feel at the beginning when you made that decision gig theatre would allow you to do that made you commit to that particular genre, if you like?

**JM:** The initial gig theatre element, it came from having watched shows and just loving the energy of the storytelling and feeling like the music was used – I saw a piece where music was used to transport us to different time periods. So it was kind of nostalgic, and so there was three different time periods throughout the play, and it represented each time period, we knew exactly where we were by hearing the first few chords. I saw a piece where, it was a very particular genre of music, UK garage and that transported to a very particular location and time period, you know, London, late '90s, early '00s, where this garage scene was massive, and warehouse raves were huge, and so the music transported me because it's a scene that I spent a lot of time in as well. It immediately transported to my own experiences of that music and that song, and they were similar to the characters' experiences. I just always felt there was something that I wanted to explore, which was: 'How can the extension of the characters' experience be reflected in the music?' And I always knew I didn't have maybe the musicality to always get there. But I always kept coming away from it going: 'Okay, the first 30 minutes of that show I was so in it, and the last 20 minutes I was so in it, but in the middle I was actually, I kind of got that same garage beat over and over again.' I was a bit like: 'Okay, fine, you know, I love these songs. I'm lucky I love this music, but if I didn't love this music I think I'd probably be pretty sick of it by now', and how can you create something that's kind of universally accessible to everybody? And how can the music go that one step further than just being either a time period or a location or a vibe or nostalgic? How can it go that step further and actually be a part of the experience of the story, in the sense of the characters' emotions and the characters' emotional journey? So then when I started to write – I tried to write some locations and some moments within the story, which would allow for music that would evoke that feeling. For example, at the beginning of the show, you want to be having a great time, you want the beginning to blast us through into like a really wonderful place of energy and opening of the show, so put her at a gig and she gets to meet this character, where this massive song happens and it's an extraordinary moment. But then also, she's on a train and she's going to London, and she's feeling all these emotions about excitement to meet her mum, but she's still up from the night before, so she's feeling a bit out of it and a bit dazed and so she listens to Allie's music, which is always kind of this ethereal quality, and how can that share the experience of that moment? It's a softer moment. And then the mum having a song which was initially just Jessie singing, but then it made more sense for it to be the mum, and that being 'City Lights' and Muna kind of offering that up as a suggestion – well, what's the sharing of that moment? It's this kind of nostalgic remembering of something which maybe sparks this psychotic journey. Trying to find these moments which would allow for, within the story, there to be music that's justified to be there – which can then be brought as an extension of that character's experience. And then I think the most obvious one is the massive rave at the end where she's at full psychosis and actually, you are in a huge rave. And so you have this noise and lights and all these horrific scary kind of things, realistically, which are amazing when you're in the right mindset, but because of where she's at with the play, it allows the play to go to a place of its absolute extremity because she's at her absolute extremity, and that was really important to try and mark those moments and articulate those moments in the story and then discuss loads with Muna about bringing those out. And then Donnacadh brought this fantastic quality at the end, which was just the simplicity of storytelling that enabled the play to kind of go to a place without you even realising it. Whereas actually I think initially when we were first making it, we wanted to start with: 'Gig theatre! We're going to kick over microphones!' And then Donnacadh kind of came in and was like actually: 'No, what about this as an offer: you know, we're live in the space', and it's a lot more humble in a way, it has the feeling – I think we were tossing around the feeling of a student band or whatever and there's a humility in that storytelling, which allowed the audience to get drawn in before being taken kind of without really realising to this absolute extremity of lights and sound and noise and then eventually of course the whole speaking system gets kicked over. And everything's brought back.

### **[01:07:10] DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF GIG THEATRE**

**DR:** You made an interesting distinction, Maimuna, between musicals which are single genre and gig theatre, which can combine a lot of different musical traditions and influences. What else represents for you the distinctive features of gig theatre? You, James, seem to think that actually it's about this





sort of like taking an audience on a slightly different journey maybe, using music to transport them. Can we think a little bit about that – and maybe this will bring us back to that question Donnacadh was trying to answer earlier about what microphones give you, and how you use them and do they have a particular sort of role in terms of putting across that element of storytelling you were trying to communicate, Donnacadh. And actually, I was really interested in what you said about how this was sort of a post-dramatic, a form of post-dramatic theatre as well.

**MM:** Yeah, I think the genre of gig theatre is an interesting one. It is very new – I mean, it has been going for, maybe, I don't know, maybe a bit more, but I think everyone's trying to discover for themselves what gig theatre is, and in that way, it can constantly be improved upon and constantly be redefined. But I think for me, and I think James would agree with this, gig theatre for us – and I'm only speaking for us – is that it is a piece of theatre that is framed within the setting of a gig. And I think you've got actor/musician shows where there are actors playing and acting and singing and, I wouldn't say that's gig theatre. But I think perhaps sometimes that can be confused with gig theatre. I think specifically gig theatre is that live gig feel to a show. And I think actually gig theatre, actor/musician theatre, I do really think they're all strands of musical theatre. And I think unfortunately, there are still these ideas that musical theatre is all jazz hands and sparkly dresses, but actually there are people who are really trying hard to move musical theatre forward, to redefine musical theatre and make it more accessible to everybody, the everyman, and that's specifically what I really want to do with my music moving forward. I think, New York, America are a lot more progressive in that way, but I think that's because there are people with money, who are more willing to invest in those new shows, which is why people like Dave Malloy, for example, his writing is unbelievable! And you know, Lin Manuel Miranda, Jared O'Hanson – it all started there! And I think what I'm really kind of vocal about and what I'm urging people with money, and producers with money, to do is to invest in new musicals, such as *Electrolyte*, such as other things where they're not commercial, they are new, interesting gritty stuff that can be successful, that people will love. But it's just about people taking that risk and going: 'You know what, I'm going to invest in you.' Because I think in New York, there is Joe's Pub, places like that where there is such an appetite for new, provocative, interesting musical theatre, and I would hope that in the next ten years Britain will follow suit. There's just, I think, a slight reticence here still to really invest in that, and I'm so passionate about trying to make theatre – as I'm sure James is and Donnacadh – to just break down those barriers and allow everyone from every background to enjoy music in theatre.

**DR:** Great! Thank you! Donnacadh, can we come back to you?

**DOB:** Something that's fundamental for me is something about authenticity and immediacy and directness. And I guess when I go to a gig, if I feel like the artist on stage isn't present with me, I feel like they're not talking to me, if I feel like they're somewhere else, or they're putting on some kind of performance which isn't honest – that's not to say not a performance, because there are very extravagant performers out there, but they take you with them and at no point are they pretending that that's who they are, it's performance, it's fun, it's joy, it's celebration, in that more theatrical version. But in obviously a lot of versions, there is less theatricality, less immediacy. So for me, that's fundamental, and I suppose really a fourth wall is almost impossible in gig theatre. Except that there is a fourth wall moment in *Electrolyte* and that's the climactic moment when we go off mic for four minutes, and for four minutes we go into – without flagging it up or anyone expecting it – we go into fourth wall naturalism, and we go into fourth wall naturalism in a completely open white light aesthetic with no beauty or artifice or theatricality. Yeah, so we do it in a very particular way. I think from our perspective, this word 'gig theatre' – not using the conventional tricks that we all know about because we're trained in theatre and at least as adults anyway, we've been brought up in the theatrical traditions which are actually not known by most people, and they're not conventions that most people understand deeply or connect to – so gig theatre has to be very careful about just willy-nilly using those conventions that might be normal for us, but actually really aren't. So that's again something we really worked on with this to not accidentally allow any convention to find its way into the show without going: 'Is that an honest convention? Is that a convention that really belongs here, or is that just something we know about and we've done loads of times because we work in theatre?' So for me I think that distinction, that was something that guided us.



**DR:** James, is there anything else, a final – because this sounds like these are beautiful potential endings to our conversation – is there anything else to say about it?

**JM:** The journey of gig theatre for me – I've learned so much from exploring this piece about what gig theatre is. And our perspectives have all kind of met, without realising, without sitting down, we never sat down and went: 'What is gig theatre?' We all came at it from very different places, I think. Live event, I think, is what it is for me. Something which we discovered towards the end, and Donnacadh kind of suggested it as the way to open the piece, was actually I think the best way of capturing that, which was the pre-show – which was just setting up for the gig, you know, being in the space with the audience as they're coming in, setting up our instruments, tuning, having a chat with each other, and having a chat with the audience, and that in itself is a live event. It's a gig, it's part of the gig, it's the preparation for, it's that waiting, it's that moment where you go and get a drink, it's that moment where you stand and you wait for that artist to come on stage that you paid that ticket to see. And that captures that live event, being in the room, so brilliantly – because when you're in that room waiting for that performer or that artist or that band, whether you know them or not, there is a unique energy which doesn't normally exist in theatre. The energy of waiting to see a play is very different to waiting to see a gig. And actually, once we captured that, then the rest kind of fell into place. And as we played with the show with a live audience, more and more that moment got better and better and better, and more, more lived in and more real. And actually, that moment of live event, and being present with the audience, then started to get stronger and stronger and stronger throughout the play. And there were some particular moments that Donnacadh put in, but there are other moments of that feeling of just being there, you know, the acknowledgments of, you know: 'That was a really good little riff you just did there, mate', or whatever it is, or just the enjoyment of them playing and music, or if somebody mucked up a bit, the enjoyment of that live thing, of somebody messing up. And that is exciting for an audience. There might be other forms that allow you to achieve that, but for me it can only be achieved in gig theatre in that way.

**DR:** Okay. Well, thank you very much for this amazing conversation, which, in the spirit of your piece, is extremely rich and exciting and engaging. So, thank you very, very much.

Transcription by Samantha McAtear

## Clips Summary

[00:18:57 to 00:22:02] 'City Lights from *Electrolyte* (2018)

[00:37:55 to 00:41:02] 'Hurricane' from *Electrolyte* (2018)

[00:48:30 to 00:51:19] Warehouse scene from *Electrolyte* (2018)

## Works Cited

Radosavljević, Duška (2019) 'Edinburgh Fringe Review: Electrolyte by Wildcard', *Exeunt* review of *Electrolyte* here: <http://exeuntmagazine.com/reviews/edinburgh-fringe-review-electrolyte/>.

Audio available at <https://www.auralia.space/gallery4-wildcard/>.

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