

AN IMITATING THE DOG AND LEEDS PLAYHOUSE CO-PRODUCTION

DRACULA

THE UNTOLD STORY PROGRAMME



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Dracula has been on our 'to do' list for some time now. Originally our idea was to come to the story through one of the well-known adaptations for the cinema and F.W. Murnau's 1922 film **Nosferatu** was to be our starting point. However, having just staged a shot-by-shot live staging of George A. Romero's **Night of the Living Dead** we decided that our exploration of Dracula shouldn't be defined by a pre-existing film, and this took us directly back to Bram Stoker's novel.

What really caught our attention on returning to the novel was the figure of Mina Harker. Not only what happens to her in the fiction, how Dracula is apparently foiled in his attempt to convert her into a vampire, but also by the fact that she's the novel's secret storyteller. It's Mina who puts all the strands of evidence together – the diaries, the newspaper articles, transcriptions of recordings, vampire lore and so forth – that make up the fabric of the novel.

This got us thinking about how much we could trust Mina. What might she have left out or deliberately altered? Had the killing of Dracula stopped her becoming a vampire? But perhaps more importantly, how had the experience of her confrontation with Dracula changed her? What kind of person did she become and what sort of life did she live in her twenties, thirties and beyond?

So, our version of Dracula is really Mina's story – but then, it always was.

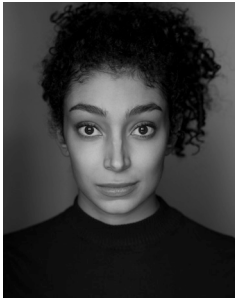
We have staged *Dracula: The Untold Story* as a live graphic novel. Graphic novels have acted as source material for our work for many years, certainly since our production of *Kellerman* in 2009. Of course, like in the cinema, the figure of the vampire features heavily in the graphic novel form, so our staging has often felt like a natural fit for exploring this figure from the horror genre that has occupied so much space within twentieth century fiction making. Graphic novels are often brash, able to fuse large ideas and storytelling with an audacity that would not be tolerated in the cinema or in literature. And we have found this very exciting and liberating in our rehearsals and development of the project over the last year, which, like in everyone's lives, have been affected by the Covid 19 pandemic. This piece has been made under the restrictions imposed by the pandemic – always maintaining two metres distance and so forth. But interestingly, our staging and the live exploration of the graphic novel has really helped us. We have kept people apart on the stage and created intimacy on the screen through camera and projection technologies. These are approaches forced on to us by circumstances, but these circumstances have forced us to be creative and dynamic in new and interesting ways.

At the heart of this version is an examination of what happens when you attempt to confront evil head on and it poses the question: *when you attempt to destroy monsters, do you in turn become monstrous?* The work also examines ideas around responsibility, what constitutes the truth, the role of history, the dynamics and the politics of resistance. Once again, these themes are common in the graphic novel form, and we hope that our exploration of these ideas will make them alive on the stage. It's been the challenge we set ourselves from the beginning. It hasn't always been easy, but we have really enjoyed the process and we hope this pleasure filters through to you, the audience. Thanks so much for watching.

Andrew Quick, Pete Brooks and Simon Wainwright
Co-Artistic Directors: imitating the dog



ON STAGE



RIANA DUCE | MINA HARKER

Riana is an actor from Bradford. She is very excited to be joining imitating the dog for the first time.

Her recent theatre work includes: **Cinderella: A Fairytale** (The Dukes Lancaster); **The D Road** (Claybody Theatre); **Unsung** (Unsung Collective); **Thank You For Doing Nothing** (Silent Uproar); **Rapunzel** (Wrongsemble/tutti frutti productions).

Riana's recent screen work includes: **Emmerdale** (ITV); **The Good Book** (Slung Low); **The Search** (UFA Fiction); a series of films for BBC Bitesize English (Brickwall); **Whodunnit at the Coliseum?** (Oldham Coliseum/Front Room Productions); **Aladdin and the Stolen Stories** (Wrongsemble).



ADELA RAJNOVIĆ | WPC WILLIAMS

Adela trained at Central Saint Martins where she specialised in performance and devising. This is Adela's third time working with ITD, having recently performed in **Night of the Living Dead - Remix** and **Airlock** for The Space/BBC. She works in theatre, live art, film and contemporary music. Adela has collaborated with several established artists including Lea Anderson, Matthew Shlomowitz, and players from The London Sinfonietta.

Other most recent credits include **Shit Show** (Her-Pee's: The Clinic); **Who They Were** (Etcetera Theatre); and **The House of Clytemnestra** (Pleasance Theatre).



MATT PRENDERGAST | DS DONALDSON

Theatre credits include **Heart Of Darkness**, **Dr Blood's Old Travelling Show**, **The Zero Hour** (imitating the dog); *Pericles* (National Theatre); **World Cup Final 1966** (Beggarsbelief).

Film credits include **Guardians** and **I Am Lonely** (Brainehownd Films). Matt trained at Guildhall School of Music and Drama. More of the old dog at mattprendergast.com



CREATIVE TEAM

ANDREW QUICK | **imitating the dog** Co-Artistic Director / Co-Writer and Director

Andrew is a founder member of **imitating the dog** and, with Pete Brooks, he has written and directed **Hotel Methuselah** (2006), **Kellerman** (2008), **Six Degrees Below the Horizon** (2011), **The Zero Hour** (2012), **A Farewell to Arms** (2014), **The Train** (2016), **Nocturnes** (2017), **Heart of Darkness** (2018), **Night of the Living Dead - Remix** (2020) and **Dr Blood's Old Travelling Show** (2020).

Andrew is also Professor of Theatre and Performance at the Lancaster Institute for the Contemporary Arts (LICA) at Lancaster University.

PETER BROOKS | **imitating the dog** Co-Artistic Director / Co-Writer and Director

After graduating from Leeds University, Pete founded the ground-breaking Impact Theatre Cooperative. Notable productions include **The Carrier Frequency** (1984). Pete has directed several award-winning productions including **Imitation of Life** (1987) with Claire Macdonald and **L'Ascensore** (1992), **Clair de Luz** (1993) and **Peepshow** (1997).

In 2004 Pete began working with **imitating the dog**, initially as a collaborator on a single project, **Hotel Methuselah**, and subsequently as one of the Artistic Directors. In 2012 Pete co-wrote/devised **Soul Sister** with John Miller (nominated for an Olivier Award for Best New Musical). More recently, he has directed opera for Teatro delle Muse, Ancona.

Pete also teaches Performance Design and Practice at Central St.Martin's, London.

SIMON WAINWRIGHT | **imitating the dog** Co-Artistic Director / Projection and Video Design

Simon is a theatre maker, musician, visual artist and one of **imitating the dog's** three artistic directors. He formed the company after leaving Lancaster University and has been centrally involved in every production since, specialising in the last ten years as a video and sound designer. As a freelance designer he has worked on many productions including **Derren Brown's Miracle and Showman, Lanark** at the Citizen's Theatre, the touring musical **Chitty Chitty Bang Bang** and Complicité's **The Kid Stays in the Picture** at the Royal Court.

As a musician he is a member of **Hope and Social**, a band who define themselves by their inclusive community projects. They have released six studio albums and tour extensively.

LAURA HOPKINS | Designer

Laura is an associate practitioner with **imitating the dog**, and has been collaborating with director Pete Brooks for many years.

Laura's most recent design is for **Rockets and Blue Lights** at the National Theatre, previously at the Royal Exchange. She is currently developing an original performance, **Brutal Arithmetic**, in collaboration with photographer Jim Mortram.

ANDREW CROFTS | Lighting Designer and Touring Technical Manager

Andrew is a lighting and video designer who works with theatre, dance and mixed media companies. He has worked with **imitating the dog** since 2005.

When not with 'the dog', Andrew has worked with other companies including Jasmin Vardimon, Blast Theory, Belarus Free Theatre, Streetwise Opera and Invisible Flock as well as solo artists including Cheryl Martin, Keisha Thompson and Bridget Fiske. He's also worked on projects for Art Angel, Manchester International Festival and Light Up Lancaster.

Andrew is a founding member of pervasive gaming company The Larks.

JAMES HAMILTON | Composer

James is a composer, arranger, trumpet player and educator. He studied jazz performance and composition at Leeds College of Music. Winner of the 2008 Dankworth Prize, a 2010 British Composers Award and nominated for a 2019 Ivor Novello, his works span multiple genres. He has worked with companies including Invisible Flock, Figit Theatre and Singapore Repertory Theatre. He is a member of Leeds based bands Hope and Social and Back Chat Brass.

James is an associate practitioner with **imitating the dog** and has worked as a composer and musical director on various site-specific works and theatre productions for the company.

MATTHEW TULLY | Models and Animation

Matthew Studied MA Performance design at Leeds University. His past projects have included video works, live performance and installation. He has also worked with many exhibiting fine artists, as a technical designer and maker.

Matthew made and operated models on **imitating the dog's** critically acclaimed production **Night of the Living Dead – Remix** (2020). This is Matthew's third time working with **imitating the dog**.

RORY HOWSON | Sound Designer & Operator

Rory is a Sound Designer and Engineer working in theatre, music and festivals and has previously designed **The Train** and **A Storm From Paradise** for **imitating the dog**.

Rory's credits include Sound No1 for **Singin' In The Rain** with the Octagon Theatre, **A Midsummer Night's Dream** and **Sleeping Beauty** with The Watermill Theatre, Production Manager & Sound Engineer for Lemon Bucket Orkestra and their production **Counting Sheep**. He continues to work with 2b Theatre Company, as Engineer on **Old Stock: A Refugee Love Story** and Sound Engineer with polyphonic eastern european folk group Blisk.

Rory has also worked on a variety of festivals including Manchester International Festival, Festival No6, Kendal Calling and SummerWorks.

OFF STAGE

Richard Herrick
Denise Body
Alan Cox
Steve Jackson
David Callanan
Kirsty Blades
Duncan Clarke PR
Ed Waring
Henrietta Duckworth
Tricia Coleman
Hannah Shreeves
Simon Fletcher
Nicole Raymond (NikNak)
Leeds Playhouse Scenic Workshops
Sodium Films
(Phil Barber, Tom Box,
Denmarc Creary, Oli Jameson)

Production Manager
Stage Manager
Video Systems Advisor
Video Engineer
Associate Video Designer
Wardrobe Supervisor
Tour PR Manager
Production Photographer
Tour Consultant
Producing Support
Captions
Sound Programming & Operations Technician
Trainee Sound Designer
Set Construction & Scenic Art
Production Filming

Executive Director ITD
Learning & Access Officer, ITD
Associate Practitioner & Company Producer, ITD

Special Thanks to

The **Dracula: The Untold Story** company for script and show development in rehearsals.

Laura Atherton, Morven Macbeth, Keicha Greenidge, Morgan Bailey, Matt Prendergast, Adam Steed and Andrew Crofts for research and development work on the production.

Jake Mehew for additional sounds.

All the staff at Leeds Playhouse for their contribution to the creation and running of Dracula, The Untold Story during a challenging period for performing arts.

For translations: David Quick (Italian), Ciara Tuennessen (German), Hanna Dodgson (French), Darja Kopylova (Russian) and Hannah Shreeves (Spanish) and Marianna Lepetyukh (Russian).

ABOUT IMITATING THE DOG

"a company at the forefront of testing the nature of theatre"

The Guardian

imitating the dog has been creating and touring original performance work since 1998. Pete Brooks, Andrew Quick and Simon Wainwright are the Artistic Directors and their work has built a company with a unique reputation in the UK, Europe and internationally.

imitating the dog tell stories. They make highly innovative narrative performance that interweaves beautiful imagery with important ideas. The work aims to move audiences intellectually and emotionally and set new standards for the integration of live performance and digital technology. The company's work is often driven by personal experiences as well as wider political and social concerns, which increasingly demand our attention.

Learning is at the heart of the company's ethos. The company initiates, tests and shares its creative process and technological expertise with students, practitioners and community groups through its focused education programme.

imitating the dog productions have toured throughout the UK. The company has also performed at the Made in Britain Festival in Saint-Etienne, France, and also toured to Germany, Poland, Italy, Bulgaria, Armenia, Ukraine, Georgia, Lebanon, Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Indonesia and Brazil. The British Council has showcased the company's work at the Edinburgh Festival in 2011, 2013 and 2017.

imitating the dog also create projection and video-mapping work for festivals and events. Recent site-specific projects have included Light Up Lancaster Festival, Lakes Alive and Urban Legends, Hull.

imitating the dog is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation.

Imitatingthedog.co.uk

@imitatingthedog

Artistic Directors Andrew Quick, Pete Brooks, Simon Wainwright

Executive Director Julie Brown

Chair of the Board David Dolan Martin

PREVIOUS IMITATING THE DOG SHOWS



Dr Blood's Old Travelling Show 2020



Night of the Living Dead - Remix 2020



Heart of Darkness 2019



Nocturnes 2018



A Farewell to Arms 2014

ABOUT LEEDS PLAYHOUSE

Leeds Playhouse is a theatre that has existed in the heart of Yorkshire for 50 years. Its half century anniversary is being marked through a series of new productions tracing stories from across the decades as well as celebrating the many wonderful artists, participants and audience members who have shared this journey with the Playhouse. As a registered charity (No. 255460) the Playhouse seeks out the best companies to create work which is pioneering and relevant. **Leeds Playhouse** recently underwent a £16m transformation which includes improved access to and around the theatre, a new city-facing entrance and the addition of a new studio theatre, the Bramall Rock Void.

A dedicated collaborator, **Leeds Playhouse** works with distinctive, original voices from across the UK. Its Artistic Development programme, Furnace, discovers, nurtures and supports new voices, while developing work with established practitioners. It provides a creative space for writers, directors, companies and individual theatre-makers to refine their practice at all stages of their careers.

The sector-leading Creative Engagement team works with more than 12,000 people aged 4–95 every year connecting with refugee communities, young people, teachers and students, older people and people with learning disabilities, including working in specific areas of the city. The Playhouse pioneered Relaxed Performances ten years ago and more recently have developed Dementia-Friendly performances both of which are becoming the norm across the industry. **Leeds Playhouse** is proud to be the first ever Theatre of Sanctuary for Refugees and People Seeking Asylum.

The Playhouse relies on support from many partners to make great things happen. The organisation is especially grateful for the continued support from funders including Arts Council England, Leeds City Council, The Liz and Terry Bramall Foundation, as well as many charitable trusts, business partners and individuals.

leedsplayhouse.org.uk

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Artistic Director James Brining

Executive Director Robin Hawkes

Chair of the Board Rozina Breen

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DRACULA AND HISTORY

Professor Catherine Spooner, Lancaster University

Bram Stoker's **Dracula**, published in 1897, is a novel on the cusp between two centuries. It is also a novel that marks a crossroads in Gothic fiction. On the one hand it looks back to the traditional Gothic novel, in its heyday between 1760-1820, and its familiar apparatus of ominous castles, persecuted heroines, tyrannical villains, and ever-present supernatural threat. On the other, it is, as its first narrator Jonathan Harker states, '*up-to-date with a vengeance*', looking ahead to a new era in which cinema (invented the previous year) would make its titular character an immediately recognisable household icon. This tension between past and present is the driving force of the novel, as the ancient threat embodied by the vampire is countered by relentlessly modern people who take tourist snaps with portable Kodak cameras, record their voices on phonographs, consult trans-European train timetables, discuss the latest medical theories, and most importantly, type up their notes.



As a result of this positioning on a historical cusp between one century and another, the book is unusually self-conscious of the porous borders between history and fiction. A statement at the beginning of *Dracula*, attributed to the figure of the author himself, claims the tale's accuracy as a historical document:

All needless matters have been eliminated, so that a history almost at variance with the possibilities of latter-day belief may stand forth as simple fact. There is throughout no statement of past things wherein memory may err, for all the records chosen are exactly contemporary, given from the standpoints and within the range of knowledge of those who made them.

Although the novel does not present itself as a legal case – for what legal case could be brought against a supernatural being? – it is indebted for its epistolary structure to Wilkie Collins's **The Woman in White** (1859-60), in which accounts from a wide variety of characters are compiled for precisely this purpose. *Dracula* asks us to read it as evidence, as a series of witness statements. It also, however, asks us to question the veracity of such a document. At the end of the novel, Jonathan Harker discovers that among the papers recording its events '*there is hardly one authentic document; nothing but a mass of typewriting*'. This is a moment of radical textual instability that suggests the fundamental unreliability of historical narrative and its status as writing. If history is written, it may also potentially be rewritten.

The character responsible for collating the records that make up the story of *Dracula* and typing them into a single document is Mina Harker, who is therefore in a sense the uncredited editor of the text. It is through Mina that the story of *Dracula* is preserved and passed on. Mina has a curious unacknowledged power in the novel. Underestimated and patronised by her male peers, she is not simply an amanuensis or the persecuted maiden of the traditional Gothic novel. For most readers it is Mina, rather than her insipid husband or the band of conventional men who surround her, who commands our attention.

In her influential book **Our Vampires, Ourselves**, Nina Auerbach proposed that the reason *Dracula* continues to fascinate us is that in the novel, we never hear the vampire's unfiltered perspective – and so we are free to imagine it for ourselves. There are certainly many adaptations and rewritings of *Dracula* that do just that. But although Mina does have a voice in the book, the tidy ending in which she goes on to become a conventional wife and mother also seems to leave something untold. Professor Van Helsing's closing words anticipate a future when her adult son will appreciate '*what a brave and gallant woman his mother is*'. This begs the question: how would Mina experience the twentieth century and its horrors? How would she write its history if she could?



TOUR

25 Sept – 9 Oct
Leeds Playhouse
www.leedsplayhouse.org.uk

12-16 Oct
Liverpool Playhouse
www.everymanplayhouse.com

19-23 Oct
Derby Theatre
www.derbytheatre.co.uk

29 & 30 Oct
The Dukes, Lancaster
www.dukeslancaster.org

2-6 Nov
Watford Palace Theatre
www.watfordpalacetheatre.co.uk

9 & 10 Nov
Mercury Theatre, Colchester
www.mercurytheatre.co.uk

12 & 13 Nov
The Lowry, Salford
www.thelowry.com

23 Nov
Theater Winterthur, Switzerland
www.theaterwinterthur.ch

25 Nov
Stadttheater Schaffhausen, Switzerland
www.stadttheater-sh.ch

VIDEO ON DEMAND

In addition to the live tour, this production will be available as a Video On Demand later this autumn. Produced by Sodium Films, the Video On Demand gives audiences an opportunity to watch the production from home.


Look out for announcements about the Video On Demand at the website and on our social media channels. Or sign up for our e-news, for monthly updates about all company activities, straight to your inbox.

Sign up here <http://www.imitatingthedog.co.uk/>

We value your feedback. Please tell us what you think on social media, or email

thedog@imitatingthedog.co.uk

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