

SIMPLE8, IN ASSOCIATION WITH ROYAL & DERNGATE, NORTHAMPTON
PRESENT

“**BOLD AND BRILLIANT**”

THE TELEGRAPH

**MOBY
DICK**

A NEW ADAPTATION
BASED ON THE BOOK BY
HERMAN MELVILLE



MOBY DICK EDUCATION PACK

Welcome to Simple8's Education Pack for our production of 'Moby Dick'.

This pack has been designed to support you and your students before, during and after your theatre trip. The resources within are relevant for KS2 and KS3 English, GCSE Drama, A Level Drama and Theatre Studies.

In this pack you will find:


- Articles and timelines to provide socio-historical context for both novel and the setting of our play
- Page to stage – text comparisons for novel and script, side by side
- Themes analysis
- Set questions to help students consider use of theatrical conventions, performance space, impact of design on the audience (set, costume, lighting and sound), character relationships and the performer's interpretation of their characters.
- Space for students to jot down their thoughts, observations and assess key moments of their choice from the play
- Interviews with creative team who discuss their creative aims, choices and collaboration
- Character breakdowns from the official casting notice and key quotes by and about each character
- Practical tasks for you to lead in the classroom


We also share the secrets of our four-week rehearsal period, provide an insight into the practicalities of producing a touring show throughout the UK and our Creative Team will give solid advice for pursuing a creative career in the theatre. Please use the links in the contents page to take you directly to the content you wish to explore. We hope you find these resources useful. Let us know what you think using our contacts below. Enjoy the world of MOBY DICK!

Simple8

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 [@simple8theatre](https://twitter.com/simple8theatre)

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 www.simple8.co.uk

ABOUT SIMPLE8

Simple8 was set up in 2004 by six actors and friends: Hannah, Emily, Dudley, Sebastian, Matthew and Christopher – and the same six people still run it today.

We are an award-winning ensemble company who specialise in creating worlds out of nothing – producing innovative, bold new plays that tackle big ideas using large casts.

Focused on the ensemble and using a variety of techniques – physical theatre, mime, live music and song, puppetry and magic – we put on new plays that are inventive, original and daring.

**THE STYLE IS BOLD, THEATRICAL,
FAST AND PHYSICAL**

The ensemble ethos is vital to the way we work. We only produce new plays, and undertake extensive research and development for each project, giving every member of the ensemble creative ownership over each production.

We have produced eight productions to date, all focusing on this unique ethos and all progressing our understanding of how an ensemble works.

We are a leader in environmental policy-making in the theatre world. Simple8's *The Living Unknown Soldier* was London's first ecologically sustainable theatre production. The need to adhere to the principles of ecological sustainability remains central to our work.

Past Productions include:

A Passage To India

National Tour in co-production with Royal & Derngate, Northampton

"An abundance of ingenuity...vibrant, vigorous, vivid and absorbing"

★★★★ THE TIMES

Don't Sleep There Are Snakes

Park Theatre, London

"A comedy of linguistics and misunderstanding... subversive... brilliant"

★★★★ WHATSONSTAGE

The Cabinet Of Dr. Caligari

Arcola Theatre, London

"A haunted accordion of a show that sways and wheezes with its own demented energy"

★★★★ TIME OUT (Critics' Choice)

ROYAL & DERNGATE – our co-producer

Royal & Derngate, Northampton, is the main venue for arts and entertainment in Northamptonshire. As one of the major producing venues in the country, it won Regional Theatre of the Year in The Stage Awards 2011, was nominated again for the same award in 2016 and for Theatre of the Year in 2022. Its production of *The Worst Witch* (one of many London transfers) won the 2020 Olivier Award for Best Family Show. The adapted screenplay from Royal & Derngate's original play commission of *The Pope* was nominated for Best Adapted Screenplay at the Academy Awards as Netflix's *The Two Popes*.

Other recent highlights include *Our Lady of Kibeho*, Ralph Fiennes' world premiere stage adaptation of T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*, the new musical *Gin Craze!*, the world premiere stage adaptation of *Mog The Forgetful Cat*, a national tour of Michael Rosen's *Unexpected Twist* and, most recently, Spymonkey's *The Frogs*.

The venue also presents a diverse range of visiting productions on both the Derngate and Royal stages, featuring musicals, dance, comedy and music.

Royal & Derngate's nationally recognised Creative Learning programme engages with schools, families and communities in Northamptonshire and beyond, and its Generate artistic development programme regularly supports hundreds of regional artists each year.

THE PRODUCTION

**A SWASHBUCKLING NEW
ADAPTATION OF MELVILLE'S
CLASSIC ADVENTURE**
With sea shanties played live on stage

"There she blows!"

October, 1839. The Pequod is due to sail out of Nantucket and her skipper, one Captain Ahab, is in need of a crew. Seeking fortune and adventure, a humble schoolmaster named Ishmael ships aboard, joining a company charged with one task: to wreak revenge on the white whale that lost Ahab his leg – the infamous Moby-Dick.

Melville's wild, seafaring adventure will be brought vividly to life by the award-winning Simple8, in a fun, fast and joyous production that transports you right to the heart of the hunt for the most famous whale on earth.

**Winner of the Peter Brook Ensemble Award
and the WhatsOnStage Best Ensemble Award**

"Memorable, beautiful theatre"
EXEUNT (Shows of the Year)

To listen to some of the beautiful sea shanties in the play please click [HERE](#)



WHAT THE CRITICS SAID

★★★★★ THE INDEPENDENT (Critics' Choice)
"A transporting experience"

★★★★★ Metro (Critics' Choice)
"A taut and ripping sea yarn"

★★★★★ THE DAILY TELEGRAPH (Critics' Choice)
"Bold and brilliant"

★★★★★ THE LONDONIST
"Simple8's production is faultless"

★★★★★ THE UPCOMING
"It's believable, it's impressive, and my god, it's clever"



★★★★★ BARGAIN THEATRELAND
"An unmissable theatrical experience"

★★★★★ EXEUNT
"A spectacular victory"

★★★★★ THE STAGE
"From start to finish it exerts an incredible grip"

★★★★★ WHATSONSTAGE.COM
"This production should put Simple8 in the front rank of companies working in the country today"



WHAT THE AUDIENCE SAID

[@Katey_W](#) Absolutely brilliant

[@Simple8theatre](#) Definitely the best show I've seen this year. Go see

[@AmyELawrence](#)

[@Simple8theatre](#) production of Moby Dick is the best ensemble work and storytelling in London. Go see. Really.

[@ameliaforsbrook](#)

If I love anything more than a hearty sea-shanty, it's [@Simple8theatre's](#) #mobydick. I'd follow that ensemble on here & across the 7 seas...

[@HarrietUsher](#)

[@Simple8theatre](#) congratulations #Mobydick is magical. Beautiful, epic storytelling & a stellar company. Superb theatre.

[@eathackney](#)

MOBY DICK by [@Simple8theatre](#) A few planks were transformed into a whale on stage last night - and it was magic. Go & see!

[@lucypollyfoster](#)

Saw wondrous magnificent play Moby Dick by [@Simple8theatre](#) you must see it.

[@collie_mccarthy](#)

Saw 'Moby Dick' by [@Simple8theatre](#) last night.. genius production, should get the westend recognition it deserves

[@PerryKLambert](#)

Now THAT is what I call theatre! Thank you [@Simple8theatre](#) #MobyDick

[@NickGiles_](#)

[@Simple8theatre](#) Completely brilliant Moby Dick. Lovely ensemble work, strong central perfs & script with real élan. Go see!

[@GarethMalone](#)

I'm just back from a great night at the theatre in Dalston thanks to [@Simple8theatre](#) Ahoy there! #MobyDick

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CHARACTERS

Casting breakdowns and descriptions

This is the authentic casting breakdown sent out to actors, to apply for the roles, plus a key quote said by or about each character.

Cast size: 9

Please send in a submission if you feel you are right for any of the below roles, regardless of gender. And please note that age ranges and descriptions can be adjusted based on the specific interpretation and casting preferences of the production.

We are looking for performers excited and comfortable being part of an ensemble, who are collaborative and positive – and comfortable playing varied roles in a production where everyone is involved throughout.

The production requires a variety of actors and actor-musicians with a variety of skills, including singing, movement, musical instrument playing, and puppetry skills. Please note the ensemble will all sing sea shanties live on stage. We encourage performers from all racial and cultural groups, classes and backgrounds, and welcome submissions from anyone suitable, in particular those underrepresented on our stages including migrant actors and those who speak English as an additional language, D/deaf and disabled performers and transgender artists.

ISHMAEL

Description: A country schoolmaster, slightly pompous and self-important, yet easily impressed and probably slightly gullible. Ishmael is eager for adventure and new experience.

Age: 20s-30s

A key quote: *"Call me Ishmael"*

CAPTAIN AHAB

Description: Captain of the Pequod. Single-minded, quick tempered, comfortable with silence and his own company. Ahab is an amputee, having lost a leg to the whale, Moby Dick. Ahab is desperate to understand and work things out.

Age: 20s-40s

A key quote: *"Are you game for Moby Dick?"*

PETER COFFIN

Description: The landlord of The Spouter Inn, a straightforward and practical character.

Age: 40s-60s

Key quote: *"I'll fill to the penny-mark and that's all."*

ELIJAH

Description: Superstitious and doom-filled sailor who does not board The Pequod.

Age: 30s-50s

A key quote: *"A whale can do anything. He's the mightiest beast."*

QUEEQUEG

Description: Skilled harpooner, large, tattooed, from a fictional island in the South Pacific.

Age: 20s-40s

A key quote: *"Then we be family. You sabbee?"*

CAPTAIN PELEG

Description: Co-owner of The Pequod, jovial and approachable.

Age: 50s-70s

A key quote: *"Can't ye see the world from exactly where ye stand?"*

CAPTAIN BILDAD

Description: Co-owner of The Pequod, stern, grumpy, and distrustful of newcomers.

Age: 50s-70s

A key quote: *"Thy conscience is a leaky one Peleg. It is that which will sink it."*

STARBUCK

Description: First mate of The Pequod, calm and rational, with a desperate longing to return to their wife and son.

Age: 30s-50s

A key quote: *"Let Ahab beware Ahab, Captain."*

STUB

Description: Second mate of The Pequod, fun-loving and relaxed approach to sailing, strong singer.

Age: 20s-40s

A key quote: *"And I shall have whale steak for supper!"*

FLASK

Description: Third mate of The Pequod, brash, hot-headed, and short-tempered.

Age: 20s-40s

A key quote: *"A hump like a snow hill!"*

MANX

Description: Older harpooner aboard The Pequod, full of reverence towards Ahab and fear of Moby Dick.

Age: 50s-70s

A key quote: *"Why if the white whale could talk, he'd talk like Captain Ahab."*

CAPTAIN BOOMER

Description: Captain of The Samuel Enderby, who lost their arm to Moby Dick.

Age: 40s-60s

A key quote: *"His blood's at boiling point. Is your captain mad?"*

CAPTAIN GARDINER

Description: Captain of The Rachel, recently lost their son in a clash with Moby Dick.

Age: 40s-60s

A key quote: *"My boy! My own boy is on that boat! For god's sake, I beg you!"*

Question – casting choices

Why do you think the creators of the stage play made these casting choices?

Think about:

- Age
- Gender
- Appearance
- Ethnicity
- Character description

Would you have changed any of the casting choices? Do you think the actors met these casting choices? Do you think the director or actors modified the characterisation from the original casting notice? Why (not)? What do the key quotes say about the character? Can you find a key quote about each of the characters from the original novel which you think describes them?

Think of a favourite book or one you have read recently. Using the same format as the character descriptions on the previous pages, try to create a casting breakdown for a play based on it. What kind of person would play each part? What ages and appearance? Would you change anything from the novel such as change the gender of one of the characters or add a new character? Put your ideas in a similar format to:

Name:

Quick description (age/gender):

Detailed character description:

Name:

Quick description (age/gender)

Detailed character description:

PLOT

Moby Dick Plot Synopsis – Scene by scene

ACT 1

Prologue

The performers establish that they are going to put on a show.

Loomings

Ishmael introduces himself and explains why he likes to go to sea.

The Carpet-Bag

Ishmael arrives in Nantucket and finds a place to stay.

The Spouter Inn

Ishmael learns he will have to share a room and first hears of Captain Ahab.

Queequeg

Ishmael meets his roommate, Queequeg.

A Bosom Friend

Ishmael and Queequeg decide to find a whale ship together.

The Ship

Ishmael and Queequeg choose the Pequod.

His Mark

Ishmael and Queequeg sign the contract to sail with the Pequod under the command of Captain Ahab.

The Prophet

Ishmael and Queequeg are warned against sailing on the Pequod because something is awry with Captain Ahab, something to do with something called Moby-Dick.

Setting Sail

Ishmael and Queequeg set sail aboard The Pequod.

Knights and Squires

Ishmael introduces the Pequod's mates - Starbuck, Stubb and Flask.

The Pipe

The crew try to sleep as Captain Ahab patrols the deck above them.

Queen Mab

Stubb narrates a dream he had about Ahab beating him.

The Quarter-Deck

Ahab presents himself to the crew and tells them that their mission is to hunt and kill the white whale that took his leg, Moby-Dick. He offers gold as a reward to the man who spots Moby-Dick, and makes them all swear to join him on this quest for revenge.

The Cabin-Table and Moby-Dick

As Starbuck and Ahab dine in silence, the crew, below deck, tell tales of Moby-Dick.

The Advocate

The crew loosely discuss the morality of the whaling industry.

The First Lowering

They spot a whale and lower a whale boat.

Stubb Kills A Whale

A whale-boat chases down a whale and Stubb harpoons it.

ACT 2

Stubb's Supper

Ishmael ruminates on his first kill and Stubb eats a whale steak as the crew start the process of cutting up the dead whale.

Cetology

Ishmael delivers an anatomical lecture about whales.

The Chart

Ahab has a special map on which he's been plotting the movement of whales, in particular Moby-Dick. Starbuck counsels him against the pursuit of one single whale, but Ahab won't listen.

The Pequod Meets The Samuel Enderby

Ahab entertains Captain Boomer, who too has lost a limb to Moby-Dick. Thrilled that Moby-Dick might be close by Ahab ejects Boomer from the Pequod.

Fast-fish and Loose-fish

The crew debate the nature of possession.

The Doubloon

Ahab reminds the crew of the gold on offer to them for the capture of Moby-Dick

The Leak

The whale oil is leaking. Ahab wishes to continue without fixing the problem. Starbuck convinces Ahab that they should.

The Pequod Meets The Rachel

Captain Gardiner boards wishing to commandeer the Pequod in order to look for a whale-boat that has been lost while pursuing a white whale. His son is aboard the whale-boat. Ahab refuses to help, and stops the process of fixing the leak, in order to continue the hunt for Moby-Dick.

The Storm

A storm hits the Pequod.

Death of Queequeg

Queequeg dies in the storm.

Queequeg's Burial

They bury Queequeg. Starbuck tries to recruit Stubb to mutiny, but Ahab interrupts them and reminds the crew of the oath they swore.

The Symphony

Ahab considers stopping his quest for revenge.

There She Blows

Ishmael spots Moby-Dick. They start the chase.

Breaching

They think they've lost him. But he surfaces and they lower the whale-boats.

The Chase

They chase Moby-Dick. Moby-Dick sinks The Pequod.

Epilogue

Ishmael is revealed as the only survivor.

THEMES IN MOBY DICK

Below are some of the many themes that the book and the play share. At the end of each section there are some questions that may be useful discussion starters.

Loneliness and isolation

Ishmael is lonely. He is a single man, an orphan, who yearns for stimulation beyond his life as a schoolmaster. His 'cure' is to go to sea. There he is isolated, of course not alone - he has a ship full of sailors for company - but collectively they are isolated from society, a crucible of cultures, races, beliefs and dilemmas. Each shipmate is lonely and isolated in their own way, by age or race or from detachment from family, and each manage the problem in different ways. It's worth considering how their loneliness and isolation turn them to do things that they wouldn't otherwise do? And it's worth wondering how we react to loneliness and isolation, both individually and as societies, particularly given the lockdowns and social distancing that everyone underwent during Covid 19 restrictions.

Environmental destruction

Whaling was a huge industry for a brief period of the late 19th and early 20th centuries - it provided oil to create light pre-electricity, as well as lubricating and cleaning products. Humans hunted and killed whales relentlessly in order to profit and drove the species to the brink of extinction. It's worth asking what has changed in human's attitude towards nature since the events of the book? And it's also worth examining how the story of Moby-Dick measures the cost on those who battle and exploit their environment.

Power

The Pequod operates under a rigid power structure. How does that rigidity serve the good of the ship? How does it lead to abuse of power and disadvantage for all? And how closely does it reflect human society?

Race

The Pequod is a multi-cultural soup of race. What has changed since the late 19th century about attitudes and behaviour towards those in a minority? Is a text written by a white man in the 19th century inherently racist and unfit for modern consumption or can the racism be viewed and analysed in the context of time and character?

Obsession

Ahab is obsessed with Moby-Dick. Ishmael is obsessed with the sea and with learning. The novel itself is obsessed with meaning - trying to work out what things mean, from Queequeg's tattoos, to the dreams of Stubb, to the gold of the doubloon. Again, it's worth asking what is the cost of obsession and how useful is obsession in getting to the heart of that upon which one is obsessed.

Fear of the unknown

Moby-Dick, the whale, hangs over the entire crew as a terrifying unknown existential threat. Within the claustrophobic intensity of the ship the crew are driven to the edge. Recently the world reacted to an unknown, fearful existential threat from the Covid-19 pandemic and a lot of places implemented restrictions that isolated pockets of people. The virus became an antagonist, just as Moby-Dick becomes the target for The Pequod. What can we learn from the novel's depiction of this fear, and the actions it provokes?

The sea

Elements within the novel can be read as metaphors and allegories for many things. What can the sea represent? Spiritually water is a symbol of baptism, of the route to the afterlife; biologically it sustains us, but is uninhabitable by us; scientifically it can be traversed but not completely mapped. Consider the depths of meaning to which the novel dives.

FROM PAGE TO STAGE

Adapting a classic piece of literature for the stage, to appeal to a contemporary audience, comes with its challenges and rewards. Here our writer Sebastian Armesto explains his process of adapting MOBY DICK.

I ask myself two questions when adapting a text for the stage: How will it benefit the story to be on stage? And how can an adaptation sit alongside and be in dialogue with the original text?

In the case of Moby-Dick, and the first question, I thought that firstly it's about the pursuit of an unknown threat - they all imagine the whale, they endlessly discuss what makes a whale, what a whale is used for, whale behaviour, swap stories of Moby-Dick etcetera, but they don't ever see him until the last few pages. So the suspension of disbelief that is inherent in theatre is directly within the fabric of the novel. Secondly, making Drama is a collaborative medium, it has to involve more than one person (at the very least someone acting and someone to watch...) Much of what I love about watching theatre in particular over other media is the delight I feel when watching lots of people collectively work to create something. Whaling voyages were also collective endeavours. In many ways Moby-Dick is about how the crew act and react together and how the external pressures affect them. So there's ripe synergy between the medium and the subject matter. And to push a little deeper on that thought: the

adaptation is written for an ensemble theatre company who specialise in 'poor theatre', where the emphasis is on the performers who conjure everything with limited means, playing multiple roles - the performers have to give themselves up to the demands of telling the story. That story-telling necessity mirrors the situation in which the crew of The Pequod find themselves. And it's a window into the question how do individuals function within in a society? A question the novel explores. So it is another synergy between medium and subject matter.

To answer the second question in relation to Moby-Dick: two things govern this, the first an unfortunate accident since I originally wrote the adaptation in 2013 - Covid 19. Now the story of Moby-Dick resonates particularly strongly because of the existential fear and threat of the virus and the confinement and isolation that restrictions forced on people. Secondly, there are questions to be asked about changes in attitudes and behaviour between the 19th century and now - about the environment, race and multiculturalism.

Lastly, whenever doing something for stage, I want it to be well-paced. The novel is gigantic. So I tried to select only what was really relevant to the things I've talked about above. If there's a character or a sequence that's been cut it will be either because it was extraneous to the purposes of the stage version, or was repetitive.

Questions – adapting a book for the stage

Can you think of one of your favourite books that you'd like to see on stage?

Why do you think it would work dramatically?

What are the key elements you'd keep in your adaptation and what would you not keep? Can you think of a moment in the book that would work particularly well on stage? How would you stage it?

Think of the set, lighting, music and the actors you'd need for example.

SIDE BY SIDE EXCERPTS

Look at how the writer adapted the following pages of the novel. What did they keep? What did they change? What elements of the novel are represented by the performance or staging, not the script? Would you have done anything differently?

Page to stage extract (play)

The Quarter-Deck.

Sailor. The Captain's out.

Everyone starts to try and do things as casually as possible. We hear: Ahab's voice. Mr. Starbuck!

Starbuck scurries off down behind the raised level.

Starbuck's voice. Sir?

Ahab's voice. Send everybody aft.

Starbuck's voice. (it's a very unusual request) Sir?

Ahab's voice. Send everybody aft. Mast-heads there! Come down!

Starbuck ushers the crew to the back (maybe where the audience are) with a bit of kaffuffle. They murmur to each other about what the captain might want. A hush falls as they hear Ahab's footfall. All eyes turn in the direction of the noise.

Ahab appears. (The tap of his leg is done by members of the company). He looks at them steadily for a while, then:

Ahab. What do you do when you see a whale, men? *No one quite wants to speak. He glares at Ishmael.*

Ahab. What do you do?

Ishmael. Sing out for him.

Ahab. Good! And what do you do next?

Grizzly Manxman. Lower away, and after him! Ahab. And what tune is it you pull to?

A Couple of Sailors. 'A dead whale or a stove-boat'!

Ahab. Good!

All you mast-headers now hear me. You're to look for a white whale. A whale as white as wool after shearing.

Do you see this Spanish gold ounce (*he holds out a coin*)? It's a doubloon. D'you see it?

Mr. Starbuck, hand me yon top-maul.

While Starbuck fetches a hammer:

Ahab. Whosoever raises me a white-headed whale with a wrinkled brow and a crooked jaw; whosoever raises me that same white whale, he shall have this gold ounce!

The sailors cheer as Ahab nails the coin to the mast-head.

Ahab. How will you spot him you all ask?... He's white. And you might spy that he fan-tails a little curious before he goes down.

Grizzly Manxman puts up his hand.

Grizzly Manxman. Captain?

Ahab. Sailor?

Grizzly Manxman. Does he blow a curious spout sir?

Ahab. That's right!

Grizzly Manxman. A big one?

Ahab. Vast.

Queequeg raises his hand.

Queequeg. Captain?

Ahab. Sailor.

Queequeg. And he have many, many irons in his hide?

Ahab. He does.

Queequeg. All twiskee.

Ahab. That's right! Then you know of him. Death, men. It's Moby-Dick.

Murmurs shoot round the crew. Manxman raises his hand.

Grizzly Manxman. Captain?

Ahab. Speak sailor.

Grizzly Manxman. (*timid*) Captain Ahab sir.. was it not Moby-Dick that took your leg?

Ahab. That is true.

Know men that it was Moby-Dick that dismasted me; Moby-Dick that brought me to this dead lump I stand on.

And know too men that I'll follow him round the Horn, round Good Hope and round perdition's flames. This is what you've shipped for! To chase that white whale on both sides of land, across the earth, until he spouts black blood and rolls fin out.

What say ye? I think you do look brave. Will you splice hands on it?

There are some mutterings.

Ahab. Are you game for Moby-Dick?

Bigger cheers.

Ahab. We'll drink to it. Stubb go draw a crate measure of rum! Mariners, now ring me in! Let us revive a noble custom of our fisherman forefathers.

Stubb rushes back with a jug brimming with rum and hands it to Ahab.

Ahab. The measure! Drink and pass! Say 'I swear'!

He hands it to the sailors and they pass it around crying 'I swear' after drinking.

Ahab. Round, round, quick drafts!

Cheers as the last one swears.

Ahab. Well drained! Mates, cross your hands!

The mates obey Ahab.

Ahab. *(grabbing them, intensely)* Let me touch the axis. That same lightning that struck me I now strike into thee.

Can you feel it? Does it burn?

Stubb and Flask nod enthusiastically, Starbuck less so.

Ahab. God hunt us all, if we do not hunt Moby-Dick to his death! Death to Moby-Dick!

Death to Moby-Dick! Say it!

All. Death to Moby-Dick!

Ahab. Louder!

All. Death to Moby-Dick! Death to Moby-Dick!

Ahab. Let him hear!

All. Death to Moby-Dick! Death to Moby-Dick! Death to Moby-Dick!

The crew cheer.

Whilst in a book everything must be explicit to the reader, on stage so much is communicated between lines, in the looks and expressions of the actors.

Page to stage extract (book)

CHAPTER 36

The Quarter-Deck

(Enter Ahab: Then, all)

It was not a great while after the affair of the pipe, that one morning shortly after breakfast, Ahab, as was his wont, ascended the cabin-gangway to the deck. There most sea-captains usually walk at that hour, as country gentlemen, after the same meal, take a few turns in the garden.

Soon his steady, ivory stride was heard, as to and fro he paced his old rounds, upon planks so familiar to his tread, that they were all over dented, like geological stones, with the peculiar mark of his walk. Did you fixedly gaze, too, upon that ribbed and dented brow; there also, you would see still stranger foot-prints—the foot-prints of his one unsleeping, ever-pacing thought.

But on the occasion in question, those dents looked deeper, even as his nervous step that morning left a deeper mark. And, so full of his thought was Ahab, that at every uniform turn that he made, now at the main-mast and now at the binnacle, you could

almost see that thought turn in him as he turned, and pace in him as he paced; so completely possessing him, indeed, that it all but seemed the inward mould of every outer movement.

"D'ye mark him, Flask?" whispered Stubb; "the chick that's in him pecks the shell. 'Twill soon be out."

The hours wore on;—Ahab now shut up within his cabin; anon, pacing the deck, with the same intense bigotry of purpose in his aspect.

It drew near the close of day. Suddenly he came to a halt by the bulwarks, and inserting his bone leg into the auger-hole there, and with one hand grasping a shroud, he ordered Starbuck to send everybody aft.

"Sir!" said the mate, astonished at an order seldom or never given on ship-board except in some extraordinary case.

"Send everybody aft," repeated Ahab. "Mast-heads, there! come down!"

When the entire ship's company were assembled, and with curious and not wholly unapprehensive faces, were eyeing him, for he looked not unlike the weather horizon when a storm is coming up, Ahab, after rapidly glancing over the bulwarks, and then darting his eyes among the crew, started from his standpoint; and as though not a soul were nigh him resumed his heavy turns upon the deck. With bent head and half-slouched hat he continued to pace, unmindful of the wondering whispering among the men; till Stubb cautiously whispered to Flask, that Ahab must have summoned them there for the purpose of witnessing a pedestrian feat. But this did not last long. Vehemently pausing, he cried:—

"What do ye do when ye see a whale, men?"

"Sing out for him!" was the impulsive rejoinder from a score of clubbed voices.

"Good!" cried Ahab, with a wild approval in his tones; observing the hearty animation into which his unexpected question had so magnetically thrown them.

"And what do ye next, men?"

"Lower away, and after him!"

"And what tune is it ye pull to, men?"

"A dead whale or a stove boat!"

More and more strangely and fiercely glad and approving, grew the countenance of the old man at every shout; while the mariners began to gaze curiously at each other, as if marvelling how it was that they themselves became so excited at such seemingly

purposeless questions.

But, they were all eagerness again, as Ahab, now half-revolving in his pivot-hole, with one hand reaching high up a shroud, and tightly, almost convulsively grasping it, addressed them thus:—

“All ye mast-headers have before now heard me give orders about a white whale. Look ye! d’ye see this Spanish ounce of gold?”—holding up a broad bright coin to the sun—“it is a sixteen dollar piece, men. D’ye see it? Mr. Starbuck, hand me yon top-maul.”

While the mate was getting the hammer, Ahab, without speaking, was slowly rubbing the gold piece against the skirts of his jacket, as if to heighten its lustre, and without using any words was meanwhile lowly humming to himself, producing a sound so strangely muffled and inarticulate that it seemed the mechanical humming of the wheels of his vitality in him.

Receiving the top-maul from Starbuck, he advanced towards the main-mast with the hammer uplifted in one hand, exhibiting the gold with the other, and with a high raised voice exclaiming: “Whosoever of ye raises me a white-headed whale with a wrinkled brow and a crooked jaw; whosoever of ye raises me that white-headed whale, with three holes punctured in his starboard fluke—look ye, whosoever of ye raises me that same white whale, he shall have this gold ounce, my boys!”

“Huzza! huzza!” cried the seamen, as with swinging tarpaulins they hailed the act of nailing the gold to the mast.

“It’s a white whale, I say,” resumed Ahab, as he threw down the top-maul: “a white whale. Skin your eyes for him, men; look sharp for white water; if ye see but a bubble, sing out.”

All this while Tashtego, Daggoo, and Queequeg had looked on with even more intense interest and surprise than the rest, and at the mention of the wrinkled brow and crooked jaw they had started as if each was separately touched by some specific recollection.

“Captain Ahab,” said Tashtego, “that white whale must be the same that some call Moby Dick.”

“Moby Dick?” shouted Ahab. “Do ye know the white whale then, Tash?”

“Does he fan-tail a little curious, sir, before he goes down?” said the Gay-Header deliberately.

“And has he a curious spout, too,” said Daggoo, “very bushy, even for a parmacetty, and mighty quick, Captain Ahab?”

“And he have one, two, tree—oh! good many iron in him hide, too, Captain,” cried Queequeg disjointedly, “all twiske-tee be-twisk, like him—him—” faltering hard for a word,

and screwing his hand round and round as though uncorking a bottle—"like him—him—"

"Corkscrew!" cried Ahab, "aye, Queequeg, the harpoons lie all twisted and wrenched in him; aye, Daggoo, his spout is a big one, like a whole shock of wheat, and white as a pile of our Nantucket wool after the great annual sheep-shearing; aye, Tashtego, and he fan-tails like a split jib in a squall. Death and devils! men, it is Moby Dick ye have seen— Moby Dick—Moby Dick!"

"Captain Ahab," said Starbuck, who, with Stubb and Flask, had thus far been eyeing his superior with increasing surprise, but at last seemed struck with a thought which somewhat explained all the wonder. "Captain Ahab, I have heard of Moby Dick—but it was not Moby Dick that took off thy leg?"

"Who told thee that?" cried Ahab; then pausing, "Aye, Starbuck; aye, my hearties all round; it was Moby Dick that dismasted me; Moby Dick that brought me to this dead stump I stand on now. Aye, aye," he shouted with a terrific, loud, animal sob, like that of a heart-stricken moose; "Aye, aye! it was that accursed white whale that razeed me; made a poor pegging lubber of me for ever and a day!" Then tossing both arms, with measureless imprecations he shouted out: "Aye, aye! and I'll chase him round Good Hope, and round the Horn, and round the Norway Maelstrom, and round perdition's flames before I give him up. And this is what ye have shipped for, men! to chase that white whale on both sides of land, and over all sides of earth, till he spouts black blood and rolls fin out. What say ye, men, will ye splice hands on it, now? I think ye do look brave."

"Aye, aye!" shouted the harpooners and seamen, running closer to the excited old man: "A sharp eye for the White Whale; a sharp lance for Moby Dick!"

Exercise – creating a scene

Thinking about how the director approached adapting the novel for this play, use the text below to create a scene.

*Decide on the setting of the scene and describe it briefly at the top of the page

*Decide if you are going to include voice over or an on stage narrator or monologue to share the thoughts of Ishmael. Or will you leave them to subtext?

*Include dialogue between the characters

*Which paragraphs can you turn into stage directions?

*Will you suggest using any devices to move the action along? Tableau?

*How will you show the passage of time/the journey/the weather?

You could expand this task by choosing a completely different setting and era.

THE CREATIVE TEAM

Behind every successful production is a melting pot of creative ideas, talent, negotiation and collaboration.

THE CREATIVE TEAM

Writer | Herman Melville

Adaptor | Sebastian Armesto

Director | Jesse Jones

Designer | Kate Bunce

Lighting Designer | Johanna Town

Assistant Director | Lau Batty

Company Stage Manager | Matthew Harper

Deputy Stage Manager | Lottie McLarin

Assistant Stage Manager | Alexandra Kewley

Marketing | Jane Morgan

Press & PR | Cliona Roberts

Producer | Dudley Hinton for Simple8

Over the next few pages some of our creative team share the processes and ideas behind this production of 'Moby Dick'... and some top career tips.

Questions for Dudley Hinton, Simple8 Producer

Before you read this interview, have a look at the questions from it.

What do you think the answers will be?

1. What does a typical working day for a producer look like?
2. Who else on the creative team do you collaborate with to be able to perform your role effectively?
3. What aspects of rehearsal and performance are you accountable for to ensure the production is a success?
4. Can you provide a snapshot of the process of producing a tour? (i.e from seeking venues to opening night at the first venue)
5. What skills does a theatre producer need?
6. Do you need to obtain performance rights to produce an adaptation from a novel?
7. What appealed to you about telling this particular story to audiences across the country?
8. What are your top tips for keeping a production on time and on budget?
9. Do you have any advice for students who are keen to pursue Theatre Producer as a career path?

Answers

1. The honest truth is there's no such thing as a typical day, and that's one of the great things about the job – each day is different and you're often working with new and interesting people. I often liken a producer's role to organising a fantastic party – you're in overall charge but you need lots of people to help, you need a venue and you need for people to hear about it and want to come. Sometimes you have to find the money to pay for it, you generally need to find various people to play the music or make the food, and you have to do your best to ensure everyone has a brilliant time.
2. Everyone. The Producer is generally the connecting point for all the teams and the departments on a show, from the creative team to the stage management and cast, to the production team and also the teams in each venue. And collaboration is definitely the right word – it's always a case of everyone working together to achieve the best result.
3. Ultimately the producer is accountable for the overall production, but the main part of the role is delegating to a team of talented people who will deliver individual and interspersed parts of a show – it's a large and diverse team under one umbrella. For example, the Director oversees the overall creative vision, and as part of that the Lighting Designer is responsible for the lighting, the Designer for the set and costumes. The Production Manager oversees all the technical aspects and departments, and works closely with both the creative and technical teams.
4. The first thing is to have an idea of a show. Then you need to understand what that show is, what size venue it can perform in, and how much it costs. MOBY DICK is a midscale show which means it is best suited to mid-scale venues (anywhere between 350 and 1000 seats). About one to one and half years before a possible tour, the producer will approach venues – ideally ones which like to programme similar shows – and try to book in dates, while bearing in mind where the venues are geographically and how easy it is for the show to travel to each one. If that large and ever moving jigsaw comes together, ideally the tour would be booked 9-12 months before opening night, and go on sale about 6 months beforehand.
5. I think above all a producer needs to be problem solving, positive, cheerful, proactive, adaptable, resilient and kind. It also helps if you like spreadsheets!
6. In the UK, you generally need to obtain rights if the author of the novel has died within the last 70 years. For MOBY DICK, we did not need rights as Melville died in 1891.
7. A few things. First, I think it's a universal story which everyone can enjoy and relate to – a brilliant adventure. Second, I love the sea and share the feelings of Ishmael when he says there is some mystical magnetism about it. And third, the challenge of condensing an epic novel into 2 hours of stage time is an enticing one.
8. Three main tips here –
First, be as organised as possible as early as possible.
Second, pre-empt problems wherever you can.
Third, work with brilliant people and trust them to get on with their jobs.

9. Being a producer is a great job – if you're passionate about theatre, enjoy organising things, and want to work with creative people, it might well be something for you. I'd recommend getting work experience with a producer, a venue or a theatre company to get an idea of what's involved (please do feel free to email me if you're keen to do that). One of the great things about the theatre industry is people are generally very happy to help, collaborate and support – so don't be afraid to ask. Or if you have a play you want to put on, go for it – speak to people, get some like-minded people together and make it happen. I learnt to be a producer first by putting on plays in a pub theatre in London – making lots of mistakes along the way but learning a lot at the same time. It's also worth looking at Stage One, who support new producers.

Questions for Kate Bunce, Designer

Before you read this interview, have a look at the questions from it. What do you think the answers will be?

1. How do the colours and textures of your designs help establish the world of Moby Dick?
2. What do the costumes communicate to the audience about the characters in this production?
3. What practical considerations do you need to think of when designing for actors who are touring and also multi-rolling?
4. What practicalities do you need to think about when designing a set which will be fitted in a different venues with different sized stages?
5. Who do you collaborate with in the creative team to do your job?
6. There is an inevitable impact on the environment linked to touring, but the use of materials for the set and costume helps to combat this. Can you tell us more about the sustainability of this set?
7. Do you use a particular piece of software for your designs?
8. What 3 adjectives would you use to describe the mood of the Moby Dick set?

Answers

1. I researched the period Moby Dick was written and created mood image boards. I looked at the ships, the riggings, the docks. I looked at the colours, shapes and textures, the blues, browns, and greys, the weathering of the crew clothing, the changing sea and sky images, the natural tones of the wooden deck, rough rope and course cloth on the ships. These images all informed the final design.

The different depths of colour and textures can establish various moods from warm and cosy to calm and airy, calm to brooding and tense.

2. This stage version of Moby Dick is quite timeless. The audience will see a group of actors sharing the story of Moby Dick through various set and prop items found backstage at the theatre – I wanted the costume to reflect this concept.

At the beginning of the show the actors wear simple trousers and shirts. During the show, actors become the different characters in the story of Moby Dick, they grab waistcoats, jackets and hats hung around the stage. We meet the captain and crew, the various roles and ranks on ship

depicted by their clothing. These costume additions help support the character personalities and mood and stature, a jacket with sleeves pushed up or a hat worn at an angle or a dirty worn apron are indicators of their character.

3. At the beginning of the design process, the producer, wardrobe team, designer and production manager carefully go through the practical implications of the costume throughout the tour.

For multi-rolling in this show, the actors have a base costume and simply add jackets, hats or waistcoats to become another character. I look forward to seeing this on stage. Even with a very small quick costume change plus the actor embodying a different character they will transform – it is so clever!

Consideration is taken into how many shows are performed each day, the time between each venue on tour, washing facilities and costume maintenance support at each venue. The time taken to wash, dry, press, maintain and store the costume.

Occasionally special coats or outerwear need to be dry cleaned or a special spray is used to keep fresh rather than machine washed.

Moby Dick is slightly different to a lot of shows as the costumes are always meant to look dirty and worn with dyes, paints and fraying.

The actors will need multiples of the same costume as they may wear one whilst others are being washed so they always have a clean costume to head on stage with.

This is a very physical show – the costume needs to be quite robust and strong to withstand the physicality of the show but also some items need to look quite worn and fragile like an old shipmate's jacket. They also need to be very comfortable for the actors to move around easily, climb, jump around and crawl.

The wardrobe team consider how the costumes will be toured – special labelled rails or in boxes or big bags. Each costume is carefully labelled with each actor's name

There is a lot of thought and planning to make it all look brilliant but also comfortable and fresh and clean and long lasting for the long tour (even if the costume looks very dirty and worn). This all helps support the actors and their performance.

4. I'm just doing that now! Each theatre venue has a different size stage and doors to get the set into. Our wooden stage floor is separated into many pieces and put together like a jigsaw in each venue. The production manager, workshop team and I are discussing whether the scaffold part of the set can tour as one piece or needs to be able to be taken apart and built on stage or whether parts of it can fit through the doors.

Some venues have an enormous door several metres wide and tall but others have doors similar to a school size door.

The challenge is to design a set that will look good in all the different venues and with the help of the production team make sure it fits in every venue!

5. Everyone! Theatre is very collaborative. The director and the designer work closely discussing concepts, ideas and sketches through to the final model and costume designs. Each creative aspect of the show informs each other and complement each other, they all go hand in hand. The direction, design and lighting and sound, the entire production team work so creatively to make it all happen, the actors playing with the set and props in rehearsals discovering all sorts of ways to bring it all to life.

Every single aspect evolves and adds to the final piece we will enjoy on stage.

This show is designed under the theatre green book – an initiative for theatre to work sustainably. The wooden stage floor already existed and was used for another show. This has been repurposed by the workshop team and re painted by the scenic artist. The scaffold has been used many times and will also have a life after this show. The many metres of rope has been used many times before this on the stage.

The majority of costumes will be from the storage and second hand and altered or dyed, to suit this show.

The props are mostly from the stores or bought from Ebay or second hand shops or been used in the theatre before. They also may be re sewn or painted to suit Moby Dick.

Great effort, planning and care is taken to ensure that this show has as little environment impact as possible.

It is so satisfying to see part of the set and costume being used again and again but completely unrecognizable from the time before.

6. I used SolidWorks for my technical drawings and create a 3D model on screen, however, I like using pencil, paint and paper and make a scale model of the set often from reusing packaging like cereal boxes or card envelopes - the tiny 1;25 scale lanterns on this model are made from my daughters old necklace – I asked first!

It's nice to mix both software, technology, and traditional art materials but I also believe a pencil and paper are easily accessible and often all you need to communicate the wonderful ideas you have. No matter how you draw, its about the ideas!

7. Full of possibility – not adjectives but describes the set!
Deceptive, raw, changeable, intriguing (that's 4!).



Questions for Jesse Jones, Director

Before you read this interview, have a look at the questions from it. What do you think the answers will be?

1. What do you love about theatre directing?
2. What makes a good director?
3. How do you approach casting for a production?
4. Why do you believe theatre is still relevant and exciting to audiences in 2024?
5. What career advice would you give to anyone interested in going into directing?

Answers

1. What I love about theatre directing is the ability to bring a team of people together to interrogate a story and to think about the best way to tell that story – and the joy really comes when you start to see all the conversations you've had with people come to light, whether it's working with actors to deliver incredible performances or designers to think about the world of the play. Now where that gets really exciting is in the technical rehearsals when you see all the elements come together to create a glorious world that the audience can get lost in.
2. There are many different things that make a good director. Probably the most important is being a good listener, being empathetic. Then having clarity around how you communicate with all the teams in a production, while being open and collaborative – crucially open to other people's ideas being better than yours. You should always be going into a room having an idea you would like to execute but a bad director won't listen to a room and their collaborators in how the ideas are fully executed. The really exciting thing for a director is watching the seed that you plant within a company of actors and creative teams flower into something you could never have imagined or dreamt up yourself.
3. When thinking about casting for a production I often think that bringing a team of people together who are extraordinarily talented is the obvious part of the job – then it's thinking about how that group of people might interact with each other, how they might interact with the source material, and what other skills they bring to the table. Often, when casting a production, you might think you have the perfect idea of what you want the actor to deliver in the audition process - and then allowing yourself to be surprised and challenged by other people's ideas of what that character might be is really exciting. And I think when auditioning, making sure you have people in the room with you to have open conversations about what the play, production and ensemble need is also vital.
4. At its heart theatre is about telling stories, and that's something human beings have always done. In 2024 those stories still need to be told – and what we find is there are many different forms and mediums in how to tell them. But what theatre can offer is live experience, for people to come together and be involved and to listen and to interrogate. That live experience is a very special one, that the world is as excited by as it has ever been. Yes, there's more competition for how to tell the story but the goose bumps you get on the back of your neck from being in the same space as the people telling the story will never become irrelevant in my opinion.

5. My main piece of advice is to learn your craft, to practice, to get into a room and to experiment with people while the world is not watching – so find a group of friends, a group of people you want to tell stories with, and think about who you want to tell the stories to, and how you want to tell them, and then be free to play around, to be excited, to be silly, to not overthink things, to jump in and give it a go. And know that you'll make mistakes, as you will in every element of your life, but learn from those mistakes and put that learning into practice. On top of this I'd advise immersing yourself in the world of directing – watch lots of plays, read lots of plays. Allow yourself to be consumed by the artform and then think about how you might deliver that artform. And think about the people who inspire you, watch their shows and make contact with them. Whatever it is, don't be scared to jump in and get involved.

REHEARSALS

The 4-week rehearsal process

Simple8 producer and Moby Dick cast member Hannah Emanuel will give a behind the scenes insight into the rehearsal room, in the four week period leading up to opening night. Rehearsals start on 7 March 2024 and you will be able to read Hannah's rehearsal blog [HERE](#).

Speaking the lines: Characters and points of view

Exercise – oracy and debate

Using two lines from the below scene between Ahab and Starbuck – Students should line up in two columns, one a line of Ahab's, one a line of Starbuck's. Each Starbuck should face an Ahab opposite. Cue all Ahab's to deliver the line below in unison, on the count of 3, looking into the eyes of the Starbuck opposite.

Line 1 (Ahab)

Are you game for Moby-Dick?

Then cue the Starbuck's to speak the lines below together, looking directly at the Starbuck opposite.

Line 2 (Starbuck)

You have nothing to fear from Starbuck. Let Ahab beware Ahab, Captain.

Repeat a few times, giving the direction to imagine different settings which change the delivery of the line, for example; whisper, like you don't want to be overheard, but are having a heated discussion/having a chat in a crowded café/like a barrister presenting argument to a jury in court. Print out copies of the extract below or present it on a white board. Make sure each student can see or has a copy of the script. Split the room into team Starbuck's and team Ahab's, then split the 2 groups into smaller groups of 3 or 4. Using the extract below as a starting point, groups should summarise their characters point of view and as team create an argument, building from Starbuck or Ahab's point of view to persuade the listener:

Debate topic 1 – world of the play

Starbuck; their argument

Or Ahab: their argument

Debate topic 2 – current real world examples

Each group choose from a real world example: Pursuit of power at the expense of all else
– agree or disagree?

Scene excerpt

Ahab is hunched over the table studying a large manuscript.

Starbuck. Captain.

Ahab. Starbuck.

Starbuck. 74 barrels Captain, and some fine bone and ivory.

Ahab. Good work.

Starbuck. It's late. We should turn in.

Ahab. Sleep? My bed is a coffin.

Pause

Ahab. How's the wind?

Starbuck. Nor nor east and steady.

Ahab. We'll make the most of it. I do not wish to linger on this ground.

Starbuck. There's hunting to be had here sir.

Ahab. I wish you to plot a course north by east for the Pacific

Starbuck. But –

Ahab. Pick up the Guinea current

Starbuck. Aye, aye sir.

Starbuck pauses

Ahab. Mr. Starbuck, did you ever ponder the movements of whales?

Starbuck. I know that they appear at certain feeding grounds in certain seasons.

Ahab. Look here.

Ahab smooths out the chart on the table

Ahab. Logbooks dating from the time Nantucket men first went whaling helped me draw this chart. It is my own creation. It divides the ocean into areas – five degrees of latitude by five of longitude – here the months of the years, here the ships that passed, how long they lingered, the whales they saw – what size, what colour, how many, where heading –

Starbuck. I never saw the like!

Ahab. – this way the humpbacks go, the blue, the spermacetty, sea mile by sea mile, I know their hidden journeys as I know the veins in my arm.

Starbuck. So you can foretell their movements?

Ahab. Like the blood pumping in my veins, from heart to hand.

Starbuck. So, so we can follow along with the herds, killing as we go, fill our hold in record time.

Ahab. So we shall, Mr. Starbuck. Once we've attended to him.

Pause. Starbuck draws away from the chart.

Ahab. He now swims in the waters of Good Hope and all the Indian Ocean lies before him. Next month he cruises the Bengal Bay, March the China Seas running east to the Pacific. I shall be waiting for him here, at the new moon, in April.

Pause

Starbuck. I must give the helmsman our course.

Starbuck starts to leave

Ahab. Turn about Starbuck.

Starbuck obeys

Ahab. Are you not game for Moby-Dick?

Starbuck. Captain, I am game for any kind of death if it comes in the way of the business we follow. But I came here to hunt whales. Not to have your vengeance. many barrels of sperm oil will that vengeance yield?

Ahab. Rest assured, you shall fill this ship with as many barrels as she'll fit.

Starbuck. But how long? At what cost?

Ahab. Money's not the measure man. It will fetch me a great premium here (he taps his heart).

Starbuck. Not money Captain. Cost of life. Vengeance on a dumb brute that simply smote you in blind instinct – to be enraged with a dumb thing, sir, that's blasphemous!

Ahab. Speak not to me of blasphemy Starbuck. I would strike the sun if it insulted me. The whale tasks me. He heaps me. He has imprisoned me. How can a prisoner reach outside except by smashing at the wall? To me, the white whale is that wall. Sometimes I think there's nought beyond. You have a family Starbuck?

Starbuck. (nods) A wife and a boy. (his hand strays to his breast)

Ahab. You're a family man?

Starbuck. I am.

Ahab. But with the face of a sailor. All visible objects are but pasteboard masks and their true selves hide behind those masks. Even the whale is a mask. And it's the thing behind his mask I chiefly hate – the malignant thing that has plagued and frightened men, that mauls and mutilates our race, not killing us outright but letting us live on with half a heart and half a lung.

Starbuck. (murmuring) God help us all!

Ahab stares down at the chart.

Ahab. The crew stands with me Starbuck. You heard them swear. Where do you stand?

Starbuck. Sir...

Ahab. Are you game for Moby-Dick?

Starbuck. You have nothing to fear from Starbuck. Let Ahab beware Ahab, Captain.

STILLS

Exercise – scene stills

Every photo tells a story. Here are photographic stills from our production (from the original 2013 version). For each scene:

- A. Guess what is happening – where in the action of the story is this scene taking place?
- B. Who do you think the characters on stage are? Do the costumes give you any hints?
- C. Look closely at the space between the characters, what does their positioning on the stage suggest to you about the relationship between the characters?



ENVIRONMENT

At Simple8 we try to be a green theatre company and aim to engage with sustainability issues where possible. In 2007 we produced London's first sustainable theatre production (THE LIVING UNKNOWN SOLDIER) with Arcola and Julie's Bicycle, and worked with Julie's Bicycle on subsequent shows to measure the impact of our activities.

What does sustainability mean to us? Essentially, living within our means – or “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (*The Brundtland report, 1987*).

We aim to reduce the environmental impact of our work where we can. For Moby Dick we aim to:

1. Measure the impact of the production by the Theatre Greenbook intermediate standards (advanced where possible).

A copy of the Theatre Greenbook for Sustainable Productions is [HERE](#).

2. Explore how we can affect change in:
 - Value chain emissions from companies/suppliers Simple8 works with, including audiences
 - Direct materials use, including using recycled and reclaimed materials wherever possible
 - Behaviour of those involved including the company and audiences
3. Encourage a single-use plastic free workplace
4. Engage audiences in the environmental destruction aspects of the story of MOBY DICK and whaling.

Question – Greening your production

If you're working on a play or a project at school, what can you do to reduce the environmental impact? Maybe you can use only recycled materials? Maybe you can encourage audience members to travel without using a car?

If you have time, read some of the Theatre Greenbook. Do you think you can meet baseline, intermediate or advanced standards in any areas?

Are you able to measure the environmental impact of your play or project? Can you think of ways to reduce this impact in the future?

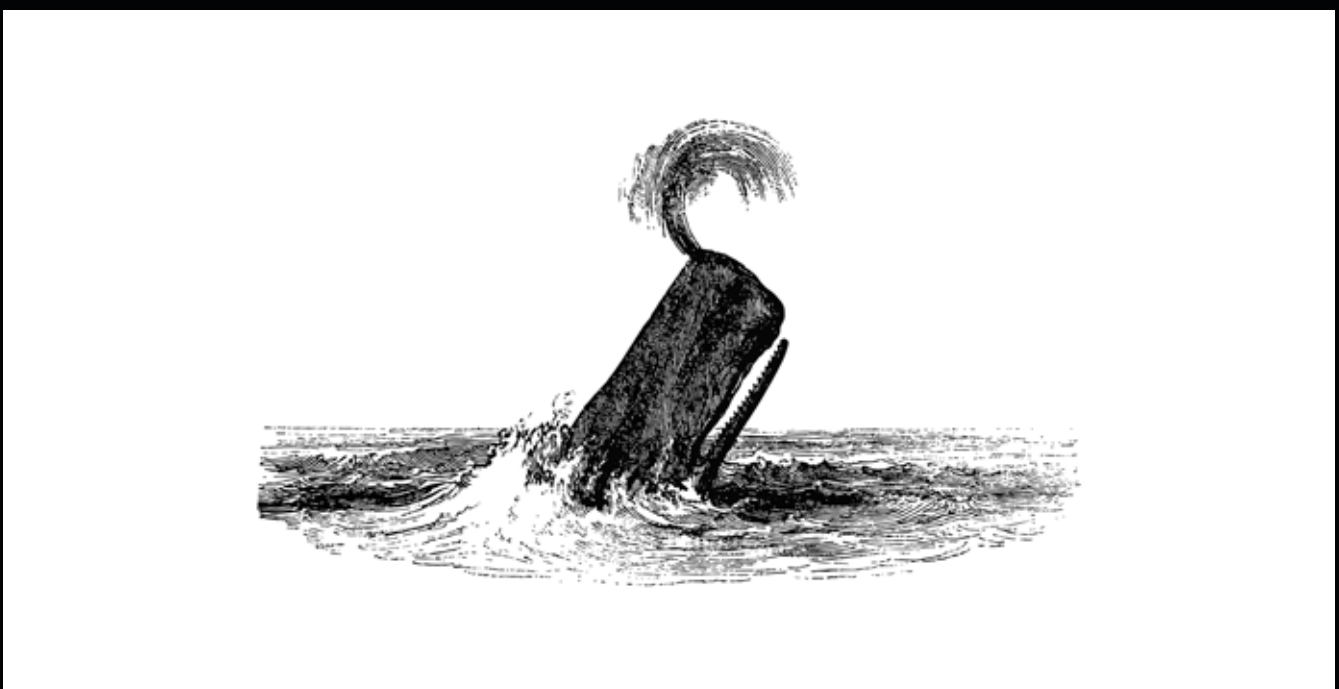
Whaling and Environmental Protection

MOBY DICK is a play about a time when human beings hunted and killed whales for oil to use in lamps and lighting. Whaling was one of the world's first international businesses, involving exports and imports across multiple countries and continents, earning some of the people involved fortunes. From the 1700's through to the mid-1800's, oil extracted from the blubber of whales gave

light to much of the Western world. Whaling was the fifth-largest industry in the United States, with a whaling fleet that peaked in 1846 with 735 ships out of 900 in the world. Fortunately for whales and the natural world, the discovery of petroleum in the mid-1800's provided an alternative source for lamp oil, and whaling declined from that point onwards.

Environmental destruction is still an issue in the modern world however, and one more pressing than ever. Marine preservation is of particular importance to us and our partners [Surfers Against Sewage](#) . Please take a look at their website for extensive resources on how to support the world's oceans, seas and rivers.

The [New Bedford Whaling Museum](#) is a fantastic resource for more information about whaling.



Challenge – Clean

A challenge for MOBY DICK is to organise a "clean" in blue, green or city spaces in each of the towns and cities we visit, as part of the Surfer's Against Sewage Clean campaign.

Would you like to take part?

You can organise your own clean, or take part in one that is already happening. Please visit the SAS website to find out more [HERE](#).

If you are keen to take part, please let us know and we will spread the word.

THE TOUR

Question – different places

Moby Dick is going to 10 venues in England and Scotland. Do you think audiences will respond to the play differently in different parts of the country? Why?



Question – different venues

All the venues are different – below are two examples. How do you think the production might need to be changed for each venue.



GLOSSARYS

Moby Dick Glossary

Aft – The rear of the ship

Bowsprit – A pole extending forward from the ship's prow from which to attach a sail.

Capstan – A vertical-axled rotating machine, essentially a wheel, to wind ropes, cables and hawsers in and out.

Cetology – The branch of marine mammal science that studies the approximately eighty species of whales, dolphins and porpoise.

Davit Tackles – The fixings on the small cranes that project over the side of a ship and are used to hoist boats, anchors and cargo.

The Essex – In 1820 the Essex, of Nantucket, was cruising in the Pacific. Spying a shoal of sperm whale it lowered her boats and gave chase. Suddenly a very large whale left the shoal and bore down on the Essex. Dashing its forehead against her hull it so stove her that the Essex sank within ten minutes. None of the ship survived though some of her crew escaped to tell the tale.

Fan-Tails – The way a whale flourishes her tail in the air before diving.

Fluke – The tapered bit of an anchor or whale-fin, but was used colloquially as a term of abuse or affection.

Fo' c'stle – An abbreviation of Forecastle – the upper deck of a sailing ship.

Keelstones – Very large blocks of a special magnetized kind of stone that are set within the very centre of the bottom of the ship.

Lay – Whalers operated on a profit share scheme. Each sailor was awarded a percentage – a lay – depending on their skill and ability.

Windward and Leeward – Windward is the direction upwind from the point of reference. Leeward is the direction downwind from the point of reference.

Parmacetty – Another word for spermacetty (Sperm Whale) sometimes spelt with an 'i' rather than 'y'.

Scud – A formation of low fractostratus clouds driven by a strong wind beneath rain-bearing clouds.

Spanker – A type of sail that is rigged perpendicular to the mainsails and catches cross wind.

Stove – Crushed, broken or wrecked.

Stuns'l boom – An abbreviation of studsail – a sail used to increase the sail area of a square rigged vessel. They are essentially extra sails that poke out over the ship's sides.

Squall – A sudden, sharp increase in wind speed which is usually associated with active weather, such as rain showers, thunderstorms or heavy snow.

Theatre Glossary

Director

A director is responsible for the overall creative vision of the show. They have to bring the different elements of the production together to produce a cohesive final production, having meetings with the design team at various stages during a production. They will also direct the performers and help them develop their characters in *rehearsals* ahead of the final performance.

Performers

A performer might be an actor, singer or dancer, whose job is to perform within a production. They will usually *audition* in front of the director and a casting director to get their part. They begin their work in the rehearsal room with the director, before performing on stage in front of an audience. They must ensure to maintain a high-quality performance each night, during the run of the show.

Designers

The design team are often brought together by the director of a production and will work closely together to help deliver the director's artistic vision. Some of their work may be done in advance of *rehearsals*, but they will often continue to work on a show until it opens.

Set designer

A set designer is responsible for designing the set, working closely with the director and the design team to create the world of the show. They may begin by providing the director with a *concept*, before moving on to the *technical drawing* stage. Once the design is complete, the set is constructed and completed by various departments that specialise in materials such as metal, wood and paint.

Costume designer

A costume designer is responsible for designing the costume, hair and make-up for a production, working closely with the design team to ensure that the costumes match the style of the show. They will often create designs ahead of the production being cast and can then make changes once they have met the performers. The costume designer works closely with the costume department, who are responsible for making the outfits and wigs.

Lighting designer

A lighting designer is responsible for designing the lighting within a production, working closely with the director and the design team to create lighting states for atmosphere and mood on stage. The lighting designer will often have an initial idea about how the lighting will look for a show and will then make adjustments during the rehearsal process. Once their design work is complete, *technicians* will rig and *programme* the lights.

Sound designer

A sound designer is responsible for designing the use of sound within a production, eg *sound effects* or music, working with the director to create and develop sound that enhances a production. They will also advise the director on whether the production requires microphones and other technical equipment.

Puppet designer

A puppet designer is specifically responsible for designing puppets within a production. They must ensure that puppets match the set and costume design and general *aesthetic* of the show. They must also ensure that the puppets work efficiently when operated.

Playwright

A *playwright* is responsible for writing a play. Some are *commissioned* by theatre companies or producers and others write plays and submit them speculatively. Usually they will have written the play well in advance of *rehearsals*, but small changes can be made as the show develops. Occasionally, playwrights are present during the entire rehearsal process and they watch the performers work with the director to develop ideas, making notes and writing the script organically.

Understudy

An *understudy* is a performer who learns the lines and *blocking* of a regular performer in a production, so that if the regular performer is ever unable to perform, eg due to illness or injury, the understudy can cover their part. Sometimes, they may take a smaller role within a production, while covering one of the lead roles. When an understudy goes on to perform a lead role, a performer called a *swing* will cover the understudy's part.

Stage manager

A stage manager is responsible for *backstage* during a production. They usually lead a stage management team of a deputy stage manager, assistant stage managers and a company stage manager, and they are involved from before the first rehearsal until after the show has finished. They organise the rehearsal schedule and sit in the rehearsal room making notes that need to be passed onto the design team. During the run of a show, they are responsible for organisational aspects, such as setting props and *calling the show*.

Technician

There are many different types of *technicians* involved in theatre. They may be involved in *rigging* the lighting, sound equipment and set. They may also operate technical equipment during a show, controlling lighting, sound or other aspects of the set, eg *trucks*.

Theatre manager

A theatre manager is responsible for the *front of house* team and is usually a permanent employee of a theatre building. They ensure the smooth running of a performance by looking after the audience.

OBSERVATIONS

Observations – from the performance

1. Choose an actor from the cast and reflect on their interpretation of the character they played:

What was their posture like?

What speed did they move at?

What dynamic quality did their physical gestures have? Fast and sharp? Slow and deliberate?

Graceful and flowing? What impact did this have on the audience? What did the physicality tell you about the character?

2. How did the actor change their voice for each character they portrayed?

Accent -Pitch of voice (loud, soft, hard)

Enunciation - were they clear and crisp and easy to hear? Did they talk quickly?

Intonation - did they bring energy to their voice? Was it dull and all one note?

Pace - (fast, slow, stilted?)

What did the change of voice tell you about the character?

3. Was the movement quality of the ensemble natural or stylised?

Observations – genre and setting

1. What genre would you describe this production as?
2. How did the director use the space to indicate a change of time or location?
3. This production of 'Moby Dick' is set at the time the novel was written, in the mid 1800s. What other era would you have chosen to set it in? How do you think a change in setting would impact the themes of the play?
4. Can you identify the themes in this production? How were the themes represented in the production?
5. Was there a moment in the play that really stood out to you? Jot it down if so.
6. How do you think the audience around you felt when they left the auditorium?
7. How did the production make you feel?

Observations – staging, costume and set design

1. What staging configuration was used for the staging of this production? Proscenium Arch? In The Round?
2. Could levels have been used on the set? How could that have helped mark out the different action in the story?
3. How are the costumes designed so that actors can have the flexibility to move?
4. Describe a costume you can remember in detail. Did it evoke a particular time in history?
5. How did the set make you feel as an audience member?
6. Did the spacing between the characters help you to understand their relationships with each other? Can you write down an example?
7. Thinking about the conventions used in this production, were you reminded of the work of a particular theatre practitioner who may have influenced the work?

WORKSHOPS

We offer a range of workshops to accompany Moby Dick. These would be delivered by two Simple8 practitioners, one of whom is in the cast of Moby Dick. We are happy to discuss individual requirements but as an example:

Devising

Bringing together our rehearsal methods with our skills and experience in workshop facilitation, these sessions are aimed specifically at students to give them the opportunity to explore the process of creating theatre from nothing.

Where possible, we relate any given workshop to the current Simple8 production and rehearsal process – with MOBY DICK, we have taken on the challenge of putting this epic story onto the stage.

At the heart of each workshop, regardless of the material used, is a dynamic, practical session, leaving the students with a set of skills, which they can confidently use to create theatre pieces of their own. Our devising process combines research, improvisation, collaboration, character exploration, imagination, and whatever we can find in the room!

Bespoke

Workshops can also be tailored to look at material specifically chosen by the staff or students taking part, including plays the students are working on or rehearsing.

Workshop structure

Workshop sessions are among the most exciting and enjoyable parts of our professional work, and we transmit that excitement to the students. Our workshops are carefully structured.

They include:

- A physical and vocal warm-up
- Games to build confidence
- Initial devising sequences
- The creation of objects using props and the ensemble
- Building characters
- Structured scenarios
- Building the world of the piece
- A challenge to stage “the unstageable” using the ensemble
- Musical scoring and soundscapes
- A de-brief with questions

“The workshop with simple8 was innovative, original and hugely appropriate and tailored for students with their specific devising of theatre in mind. Workshop leaders were knowledgeable and energetic whilst also very much part of the company itself, giving my students a real insight into the industry and effective and interesting ways of interpreting ways to use objects and physicality in the devising of theatre.”

Andy Austin, Head of Performing Arts, Lincoln Christ’s Hospital School, UK

“Just to say: a huge thank you for your workshop. The students got so much out of all that you imparted to them and were buzzing with ideas (both for future plans and more immediate, school-based ones!) in the following lesson. I look forward to seeing what Simple8 are up to next; let me know.”

Juliet Fehr, Head of Drama at Highgate School, London

"Simple8 have indeed created an ensemble"

THE TIMES

"In past productions, the company has created fluid spectacles on a bare stage, conjuring particular worlds through the movement and ingenuity of the actors, not expensive design."

TIME OUT