

Nottingham Playhouse
in association with East Productions
presents

**Nottingham
Playhouse**
education

ON THE WATERFRONT

By Budd Schulberg with Stan Silverman
Directed by Steven Berkoff



Education Resource Pack

Created by Allie Spencer, Matt Cullum and Sarah Stephenson

allies@nottinghamplayhouse.co.uk

This play is especially suitable for KS4 and 5 English, Theatre Studies, Drama and Performing Arts and courses in Media Studies. Please contact us should you have any further queries.

Contents

- Synopsis, cast and production team lists.
- Themes
- Background information
- Steven Berkoff
- Interviews with Directors and Actors.
- Set design and interview with Associate Designer.
- Suggested Pre and post show activities and Script extracts

Synopsis

In 1950s New York, the dock workers' unions are in the stranglehold of the Mob. If you're on the inside then life is sweet- kickbacks, bribes and easy shifts are your rewards. Go against them and your life isn't worth living.

Unwittingly implicated in Joey Doyle's murder, Terry Malloy starts to question where his loyalties lie. When he falls for the dead man's beautiful sister, he has to make some difficult choices –“snitch” and risk the consequences, or live with his nagging conscience and stick to the Waterfront code – remaining “Deaf and Dumb”.

The classic story of the guy who 'coulda been a contender'.

Cast:

Terry Malloy	SIMON MERRELLS
Father Barry	VINCENZO NICOLI
Edie Doyle	CORAL BEED
Johnny Friendly	SAM DOUGLAS
Charlie'the Gent' Malloy	ROBIN KINGSLAND

Ensemble:

ALEXANDER THOMAS, IAN GOFTON, SEAN BUCKLEY, ALEX McSWEENEY, DOMINIC GRANT, IAN DRYSDALE, ALEX GIANNINI

The Ensemble play the following roles:

Glover, Big Mac, Truck, JP Morgan, Specs, Skins, Tommy, 'Pop' Doyle, Mutt, Moose, Jimmy, Barney, Joey, Luke, Runty Nolan

Production Team:

Director-	STEVEN BERKOFF
Assistant Director	MATTHEW CULLUM
Original Set Designer	PATRICK HUGHES
Associate Set Designer and Costume Designer	HELEN FOWNES-DAVIES
Lighting Designer	MIKE ROBERTSON
Musician	MARK GLENTWORTH

Themes/Issues:

Violence
Good and Evil
Class
Family
Loyalty
Unions
McCarthyism
Fairtrade
Religion
Love



L to R: Alexander Thomas, Alex Giannini, Alex McSweeney, Sam Douglas, Ian Drysdale, Dominic Grant

Background information: The Film-The Piers- The Waterfront Crime Commission- The longshoremen-Subpoenas-Father Corrigan-The McCarthy trials

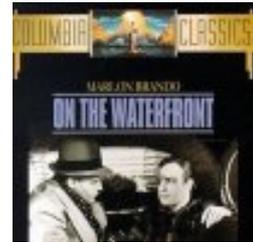
The film

On The Waterfront was originally a film, produced in 1954, directed by Elia Kazan. It starred Marlon Brandon as Terry Malloy and won 8 Oscars.

It was concerned with the problems of trade unionism, corruption and racketeering and was set on New York's oppressive waterfront docks, where dock workers struggled for work, dignity, and to make ends meet under the control of hard-knuckled, mob-run labour unions that would force them to submit to daily 'shape-ups' by cruel hiring bosses.



To add realism, it was filmed over 36 days on-location in Hoboken, New Jersey (in the cargo holds of ships, workers' slum dwellings, the bars, the littered alleys, and on the rooftops). The low-budget film brought a depressing and critical, but much-needed message about



society's ills to the forefront, and was hailed by most critics.

The film's story was based on *New York Sun* newspaper reporter Malcolm Johnson's expose, found in a series of 24 articles called *Crime on the Waterfront*. The series chronicled actual dockside events, labour racketeering in New York's dockyards, and corrupt practices, and won the 1949 Pulitzer Prize for Local Reporting. It revealed rampant bribery, extortions, kickbacks to union officials, payoffs, theft, union-sponsored loan sharks, murder, and the mob's tyrannical influence on New York's waterfront. *On the Waterfront* emphasized the waterfront's strict code of "D and D...Deaf and Dumb" -- keeping quiet instead of 'ratting out' or testifying (as a 'friendly' witness) before a Congressional waterfront crime commission against bullying union boss Johnny Friendly.

Information taken from www.filmsite.org/onth.html

Chelsea Piers, New York City.

This is the location for the play. The time is the 1950s and there is great poverty. Men had to queue for hours at the docks (on the waterfront) to be offered work at low rates. If you were "in" with the right people you stood more chance of getting work.



The Waterfront Crime Commission

The Waterfront Crime Commission wanted to name and shame those involved in the unions (similar to the McCarthy trials) and within the play those testifying to the waterfront crime commission have been treated by the author sympathetically, although each testifier loses his life within the play. The Commission investigated crimes down at the docks and people could be given subpoenas to appear before the commission. They then had to make the decision to appear and testify or to remain “D and D” (Deaf and Dumb).

The Longshoremen

This name is given to the workers loading and unloading the ships. The name comes from “Along the shore men”.

www.history.navy.mil



Subpoena

A summons given to a witness to testify/give evidence. Once issued with a subpoena workers were expected to turn up to the Waterfront Crime Commission and testify against their fellow workers.

The Priest:

Reverend Fr. John M. Corridan (1911-1984) was a Jesuit priest who fought against corruption and organized crime on the New York City waterfront. He was the inspiration for the character of Father Barry.



St Xaviers

Shortly after Fr. Corridan arrived at St Francis Xavier Parish in 1946, he was assigned to work with longshoremen from the nearby Chelsea piers. Fr. Corridan compiled voluminous records on the politics and economics of the waterfront. When investigative reporter Malcolm Johnson of the old *New York Sun* launched an investigation of corruption in the docks in the autumn of 1948, he came to Corridan for help. The resulting series of articles, "Crime on the Waterfront," was a sensation that earned Johnson a Pulitzer. Johnson showed that the piers of New York Harbor were a racket-ridden jungle in which gangsters operated with the cooperation of union officials.

“The heart of the matter is the system of hiring along the waterfront,” says Fr. John Corridan in a 1955 book by New York Times reporter Allen Raymond. “Men are hired as if they were beasts of burden, part of the slave market of a pagan era.”

Schulberg met with Corridan regularly during the planning and writing of the film. He described Father Corridan as a “tall, youthful, balding, energetic, ruddy-faced Irishman whose speech was a fascinating blend of Hell's Kitchen jargon, baseball slang, the facts and figures of a master in economics and the undeniable humanity of Christ.” Corridan served as adviser on the film and provided the filmmakers with his speeches and writings on waterfront conditions, including his famous "Christ is on the waterfront" speech.

Father Corridan left the waterfront in 1957 to teach economics at Le Moyne College in Syracuse. He later taught theology at Saint Peter's College in Jersey City and served as a hospital chaplain in Brooklyn.

Information from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_M._Corridan and “The Priest Who Made Budd Schulberg Run: On the Waterfront and Jesuit Social Action” Fordham online



Joseph McCarthy

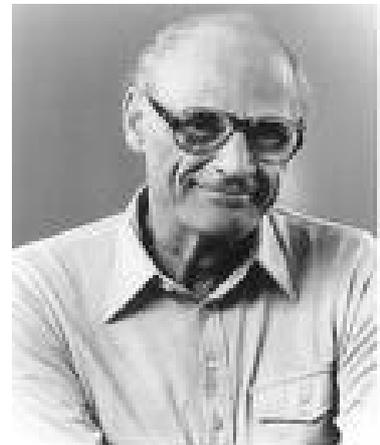
The McCarthy Trials and the “unofficial” blacklists

Named after Senator Joseph McCarthy who was heavily involved, these trials were held to find Communists and others deemed to be a risk to American society. Trials weren't always fair and those implicated with communism and often union involvement risked losing their jobs and some even faced imprisonment. Compared to the Salem witch trials of the 1600s people were expected to testify or be testified against. Those refusing to testify were often imprisoned themselves.

The Waterfront Crime Commission appeared to work in a similar way.

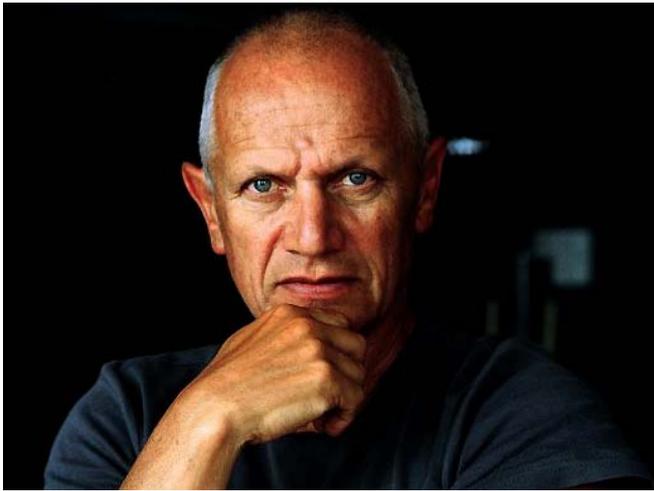
Arthur Miller wrote *The Crucible* as a response to the McCarthy trials. He was supposed to be involved in the writing of *On the waterfront* (originally titled “The Hook”) but his blacklisting through the McCarthy trials and the work of the HUAC (House Un American Activities Committee) caused him to be withdrawn from the creative process and the film became pro McCarthyism and “dobbing” rather than anti it! Arthur Miller then wrote *A View from the Bridge*, dealing with the same issues from an alternative point of view.

Miller was one of over 300 artists on the unofficial Hollywood blacklists. These “unofficial” blacklists extended to schools, colleges, workplaces and even to the docks. A port security programme initiated by the Coast Guard shortly after the start of the Korean War required a review of every maritime worker who loaded or worked aboard any American ship, regardless of cargo or destination. As was typical of these types of trials and reviews, the identities of any accusers and even the nature of any accusations were typically kept secret from the accused. Nearly 3,000 seamen and longshoremen lost their jobs as a consequence.



Arthur Miller

Steven Berkoff



Steven Berkoff was born in Stepney, London 1937. He studied Drama in London and Paris. Performed with repertory companies before forming the London Theatre Group (L.T.G.) in 1968. Their first professional production was *In the Penal Colony*, an adaptation of a short story by Kafka. Berkoff's first original stage play *East*, was presented at the Edinburgh Festival in 1975.

Other original plays include *West*, *Decadence*, *Greek*, *Kvetch*, *Acapulco*, *Harry's Christmas*, *Lunch*, *Sink the Belgrano*, *Massage*, *Sturm und Drang*, *Brighton Beach Scumbags*, *The Secret Love Life of Ophelia*, *Bow of Ulysses*, *Ritual in Blood* and *Messiah*.

Berkoff's production of *Ritual in Blood* features an ensemble, - a theatrical device also used in *On the Waterfront*



Metamorphosis

Among the many adaptations Steven Berkoff has created for the stage, directed and toured are Kafka's *Metamorphosis* (see photo) and *The Trial*, *Agamemnon* (after Aeschylus) and Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher*. His plays and adaptations have been performed in many countries and many languages. He has also directed and toured productions of *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* and Oscar Wilde's *Salome*. He has directed his plays and adaptations in Japan, Germany and Los Angeles as well as *Richard II* and *Coriolanus* for the New York Shakespeare Festival.

His one-man show has toured Britain, the USA, South Africa, Finland, Italy, Singapore and Australia. He directed and played the title role in Coriolanus at the West Yorkshire Playhouse in 1995 and at the Mermaid Theatre London in 1996.

In 1997 he directed and performed the American premiere of *Massage* at the Odyssey Theatre in Los Angeles. This performance earned him a nomination for Best Actor in the L.A. Weekly Theatre Awards. Steven then brought *Massage* to the Everyman Theatre in Liverpool in preparation for its UK premiere at the Edinburgh Festival in August 1997. He was honoured with a Total Theatre Lifetime Achievement Award at the Festival.



Films

He has acted in films such as: *A Clockwork Orange*, *Barry Lyndon*, *The Passenger*, *McVicar*, *Outland*, *Octopussy*, *Beverly Hills Cop*, *Rambo*, *Underworld*, *Revolution*, *Under the Cherry Moon*, *Absolute Beginners*, *Prisoner of Rio*, *The Krays*, *Fair Game*, *Flynn*, *Another 9 1/2 weeks* and *Rancid Aluminium*. He directed and co-starred with Joan Collins in the film version of *Decadence* (see photo).

Television

Television productions include *West*, *Metamorphosis*, *Harry's Christmas*, *Silent Night*, a reworking of *Harry's Christmas* and *The Tell Tale Heart*.

Other television credits include: *Sins*, *Beloved Family*, *Knife Edge*, *The Professionals*, *War and Remembrance*, *Michelangelo - Season of Giants*, *Star Trek - Deep Space Nine*, *La Femme Nikita* and *Jonathan Creek*.

Writing

He has published a variety of books such as *Gross Intrusion* and *Graft* - collections of short stories; *I Am Hamlet* and *Meditations on Metamorphosis*, *Coriolanus in Deutschland*, *A Prisoner in Rio* - all production journals; *The Theatre of Steven Berkoff* - a photographic history of his productions over the last two decades; *America and Overview* - both travel writing and poetry collections; and his autobiography *Free Association*.

Voiceover

Steven Berkoff has done a variety of voice over work and books on tape including *Kafka's Metamorphosis* and *The Trial* for Penguin Audiobooks. Radio productions include the title role in *Macbeth* and his musical debut as the MC in *Cabaret*. He recently recorded *An Actor's Tale*, a selection of his short stories, for Radio 4. He can also be heard on the single by the dance group N-Trance... *The Mind of the Machine*.

Information and photographs taken from <http://www.stevenberkoff.com>

Steven Berkoff and *On the Waterfront*

It was announced in 2007 that Berkoff intended to direct a stage version of *On The Waterfront*. Having workshopped the play in Hackney and having discovered the play can be physicalised to the extent of the actors recreating the waterfront, the play is now about to open at Nottingham Playhouse.

So what does Berkoff say about it?

"It is a difficult and yet intriguing project, because we have the great shadow of the film hanging over us, of course. But after three minutes in the theatre, in the hands of the right actor, the audience will have completely forgotten Brando in the film.

"I knew we would have to devise a method of telling the story that would be unique and theatrical. We would have to recreate it as something radically new. The actors become the waterfront, they are the cranes and the nets and they enact the battle scenes in the dock. I am always trying to find the key to the safe. This play really challenged me to find it."

The Observer, Vanessa Thorpe and Kevin Mitchell, 22 July 2007

"It's such a stimulating and inspiring film, with a heroic message that spoke to and continues to speak to audiences. It finds a tremendous raw and rich poetry in the language of the common man, and the battle it depicts between good and evil is almost Greek in its power.

"What makes the story so interesting for a modern theatre audience is that there are no heroes in modern plays. They're all about neurosis or dysfunctionality or sexuality. But stories about heroes are necessary in our society. They wash us, somehow, give us a shining example to live by."

The Evening Standard Nick Curtis 10 August 2007



What the papers say! The cast in rehearsal

In Rehearsal with Steven Berkoff

Steven took time out from rehearsals in London to give us some more thoughts on the production:

Why have you chosen to direct this play?

On The Waterfront is an iconic piece of theatre that is about the common man finding his voice and beating oppression. This interests me as a director, a writer and a performer and all theatre should ultimately be this vibrant and vital.

What is/has been the most exciting and challenging part of the play to direct? Why?

The work that Kazan and Brando are known for within *On the Waterfront* is exciting and daunting. They created an amazing piece of cinematic history and now we are re-creating it for the stage. But the more we have worked on it, the more I've realised that theatre is a natural home for this story. The way we are telling the story keeps the urgency and beauty of the film but transfers it to a live theatricality that may be even better than the film.



Steven Berkoff in rehearsal with the cast



How do you see the relevance of the play to today's society, especially within the city of Nottingham?

This is the study of one man finding his voice – an outcast who is forced to stand up for what he believes in. This man is within all of us – we all need to find our voice and make ourselves heard. Terry Malloy represents us and therefore he will always be relevant. Guts and self-belief lift him from his poverty to an almost messianic status.

Have you any message you would like the audience to go home with?

That theatre can still be a vibrant force – it is a way for us to realise our own potentials, our power to lift ourselves from the humdrum of reality and reach for greatness. Terry does this for us as does Edie and Father Barry. They inspire us to reach for our own greatness.

Alex McSweeney and Robin Kingsland

Matt Cullum, Assistant Director

What is your role within the production?

I am the assistant director on this production. This means that I work closely with Steven on all aspects of the show. I help the actors with their physicality and ensemble movement as well as making sure that they are all up to date with any changes in the script or choreography. I guess the easiest way to describe it is that Steven works on the big picture and I deal with a lot of the minutiae and details for the actors, the musician and the production team.



L to R: Robin Kinsland, Ian Goffon, Simon Merrells, Alex Giannini, Dominic Grant, Alexander Thomas

The play has been written in a narrative realistic style yet much of Berkoff's work is stylised, often using a chorus and physical theatre. How are you marrying the two?

The entire world of the play is created by the actors and a few chairs; the docks, the bar, the church, rooftops, streets and even pigeons are created through movement, music and physicality. We also bend time to suit us – using both slow and fast motion rather than just naturalistic rhythms to create our world. Although the text is 'realistic' the layers that form each scene develop the sense of chorus and physical theatre that Steven is so well known for. For example a simple scene between two actors may take place in a lone pool of light – but to this Steven will add slow motion figures moving in the background to add a layer of menace, as well as underscored music to lift the 'reality' into a 'hyper-reality'. The scene changes are also as important as the scenes themselves – blending and blurring the action from location to location and forcing the audience to look at certain moments that we feel are important to the narrative drive through the use of stillness and freezes.



Coral Beed as Edie Doyle (Far right: Sean Buckley as Pop Doyle)

What are the challenges of the production and how have you overcome some of these?

The film is so iconic that there are times when you are not sure whether to embrace it or ignore it. You have to consider the expectations of the audience and decide whether to pander to them or work against them – these decisions are vital to the success of the production as both a separate entity to the film but that embraces the iconography and notoriety that it represents. There are also a huge number of locations for us to create – and this must be done seamlessly, simply but also with that Berkoff flair and humour that we all know so well – a definite challenge, but an exciting and demanding one!

How do you see the relevance of the play to today's society, especially within the city of Nottingham?



It is easy to view this as a historical play – a piece of Americana from a bygone age. But the themes really do tell a different story. Gang culture, peer pressure and 'doing the right thing' seem more relevant today than ever before. This play examines the need for us to take difficult choices – whether for good or bad – and how these affect our survival, morality and ultimate happiness.

The cast in rehearsal

The conviction that if we see something bad we should just walk away is drummed into us at an early age. When a young girl gets shot on the streets of Nottingham and no-one talks – how different is this to the longshoremen remaining 'D'n'D' (deaf and dumb) within *On the Waterfront*? The similarities are frightening. This play teaches us to take pity on each other, to help each other and to re-discover our conscience – a valuable lesson for the 21st century.

Is Berkoff's rehearsal process very different to other directors you have worked with?

Steven truly empowers actors by forcing them to act. He asks the actor to take bold decisions – to play the emotion and beliefs of their characters to the maximum possible and then to allow him to pull them back and shape them should he need to. There is little discussion as to themes and 'emotional journeys' instead Steven may use a single image or a rhythm to set the tempo and feeling for a scene. The actors then take this on and just dive in head first! It is refreshing and unique – but for many actors it is very scary – something like walking a high wire with no safety net – but this method inspires magnificently committed performances and daring decisions that may never be tried if they were ever discussed! Berkoff is a unique director and his process is his alone.



L to R: Alex McSweeney, Alexander Thomas, Ian Gofton, Simon Merrells, Dominic Grant, Sean Buckley, Ian Drysdale, Mark Glentworth (musician)

Meet the cast

Simon Merrells plays Terry Malloy...

What is the most challenging part of the play for you?

The biggest challenge for me is creating a character which is absolutely real and 'believable' within the context of this piece of theatre and the stylised techniques that it uses. I have had to really work on developing the 'thuggish' side of Terry and to create someone who has a history of being a professional boxer. This has been a huge challenge and a huge learning curve for me.



What preparation have you had to do to understand the role you are playing?

I have had to learn about the history of America throughout the forties and fifties in New York and on the docks. This has been through research on the web, books and specifically using the novel of *On the Waterfront* to gain more insight into Budd Schulbergs thoughts behind the characters. I felt that I had to connect absolutely with the film and Brando's performance in it but then to let go of it completely and not allow it to dictate or affect my own decisions for the character. We also 'workshopped' the production twice before coming to Nottingham – this allowed me a very safe environment to try out ideas without worrying about the pressure of 'performance' – This has been massively beneficial to developing the whole production.

Why do you think this play is relevant today?

I think the power of seeing a character that is completely beyond redemption - yet still finding their redemption a powerful and timeless theme. We all face a crisis of conscience at some point in our lives and seeing how one man deals with that is a vital human trait.



Simon Merrells & Vincenzo Nicoli

What has been the most exciting part of the rehearsal process so far for you?

Getting to play the 'contender' scene – Wow – It's so iconic and those are words that everyone knows but few have ever had the chance to say! Also I've now worked with three different actresses playing Edie – and I got to kiss all of them!!

Alex McSweeney plays Joey Doyle, Specs, Tommy & Jimmy...



What is the most challenging part of the play for you?

This play requires a lot of concentration – both physically and mentally. There is never a moment when you can relax or rely on someone else to remember things for you. The rehearsals are exhausting and you go home every day with an aching body and a sore brain!

How do you distinguish between the roles you are playing?

Hats – Different hats! Other than some minimal costume changes, however, I also rely on using different physical and vocal rhythms for each character. I focus on speed of delivery of dialogue, altering my physicality and sense of weight as well as my characters differing attitude to other characters within the piece.

What preparation have you had to do to understand the roles you are playing?

I have used hundreds of images from the period that we are focused on to gain an understanding of the look and feel of life for these men. I also read the novel and of course watched the film. These all help to allow you to make ‘educated guesses’ as to the types of decisions your character might make.



L to R: Alex Giannini, Simon Merrells, Robin Kingsland, Ian Goffon, Alex McSweeney, Alexander Thomas, Dominic Grant

Why do you think this play is relevant today?

This piece has very strong lines drawn between good and evil – and that is always relevant. The idea of whether or not to ‘rat’ on your peers is also of strong relevance today.

What has been the most exciting part of the rehearsal process so far for you?

It is very exciting to be part of a process that thrives on team work and camaraderie. We are able to pool our ideas and everyone’s view is taken as we create the world of the play.

Dominic Grant plays Runty Nolan & Skins...

What is the most challenging part of the play for you?

Definitely the physicality. You have to use your whole body all the time, right down to your fingertips. You have to think in a different way to a normal play as you use your whole body to convey emotion, narrative and your surroundings. The other challenge with this play is remembering the chronology (the order of events) as we cut from scene to scene really quickly and fluidly – there is no time to come off stage, have a sit down and take a look at your script!



How do you distinguish between the roles you are playing?

Again physicality is very important here, but I also use my voice (intonation, rhythm and accent) to heighten the distinction between my characters. I also use status as a great way of distinguishing. Runty has quite a high status within the longshoremen, however Skins is much lower down the ladder within Johnny's gang and that affects greatly how they react to other characters and whether they take the lead in situations or not.

What preparation have you had to do to understand the roles you are playing?

A lifetime of oppression! I feel really suited to both my characters as they both represent very strong facets of me. Runty is the jester, always joking and smiling – whereas Skins has a darker, more brooding sense of bitterness about him – both things I can relate to. I have also worked a lot within the American genre so was able to bring a lot of experience of their life perspective to my roles.



Alex Giannini & Dominic Grant

Why do you think this play is relevant today?

The issues tackled here are as old as time, universal and hugely important.

What has been the most exciting part of the rehearsal process so far for you?

When we opened the workshop production to an audience in Hackney last year! It was the first time we had shared any of the work with an audience – Exciting and terrifying!

Meet Helen Fownes Davies, Associate Set Designer and Costume Designer

What is the role of associate set designer?

On this occasion the role is to mainly interpret and facilitate the intention of the conceptual idea of the designer (fine artist). By transforming a vision into an actual three dimensional workable set, a space that uses the vision but also is technically proportioned within its space, can be accessed by the actors and has entrances, is also safe and looks good. This is produced by creating a clear scheme of work that can then be interpreted by the production team through drawings and models, to an accurate scale and with a knowledge of materials, textures and dialogue needed to make this happen.

When designing the costumes what considerations did you have to make?

This production requires costumes that are recognisably in period (1950's) but as it is mainly an ensemble piece, each actor needs to perform a number of different characters seamlessly. This requires quick subtle costume changes to give the sense of the different groups or characters. This could be simply a change of jacket or hat. Therefore the main focus is simplicity, a sense of perceived period costume of the time and an overall colour scheme that compliments each other in a large group. Continuity is always a strong consideration for the designer; this can be considered successfully through colour by keeping a relatively tight palette, so nothing stands out too much.

How much discussion do you need to have with the director before you go away and design the costumes?

Usually a clear vision from the director is needed to understand what their intention is and how they see each character or grouping on stage, on this occasion there has been very little dialogue at the early stage so therefore, as designer it is important to clearly present what your intention is to them and see if you are both in agreement. An element of flexibility is needed to keep refining the ideas especially if the rehearsal period starts to impact with changes and new ideas. Sometimes directors have a clear vision and sometimes they will rely on you the designer to propose a scheme and then they will react to it. Good research and a clear set of drawings will often sell your ideas.

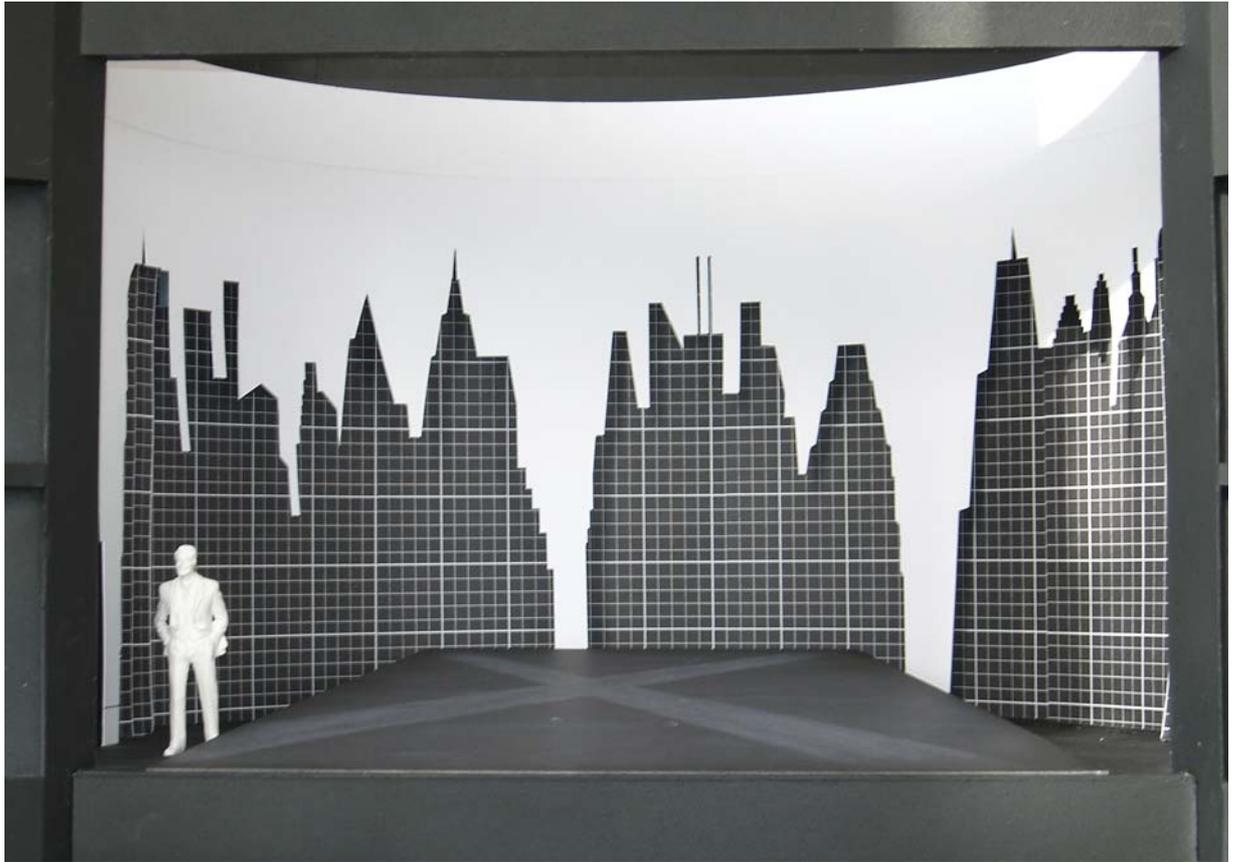
What has been the biggest challenge of this production for you?

Working with a director and majority of cast who have all developed this piece before, getting a feel therefore for what visually is required to compliment and enhance the work and, as it is an ensemble piece, to some extent working around the devising rehearsal process rather than a tightly scripted piece. Also costume wise, trying to create the authenticity of the characters by using as much period costume as possible, which can often be difficult to track down as sizing can be a problem.

What advice would you have for anyone considering design as a career?

A good design course in theatre design, prefaced by a foundation in art and design possibly in sculpture would help. As much experience of the theatre environment through placements or work is a good idea to see how all the different facets come together and how the role of the designer works in this collaborative process.

Set Design and associated activities



Set Design: Patrick Hughes Associate Set Designer: Helen Fownes Davies

Questions for student discussion:

If you have already read the film or play how do you feel this design reflects the themes for the play?

If you haven't already read the film or play what impressions do you think the designer is trying to give us about the content of the play?

Why might the New York skyline have been designed the way it has?

Why do you think there is a cross on the stage?

Why might the play have a raked stage? Can you think of any other plays that have raked stages?

Why do you think the set is in black and white?

What do you think the relevance of the white figure is?

How would you design the set differently?

If you were directing this play what would your initial challenges be when presented with this set design?

Suggested Classroom Activities based around the themes of *On the Waterfront*

The following pages contain five script extracts with suggested written and /or practical activities.

Extract one: Fair trade? (Issues)

Extract two: To snitch or not to snitch, that is the question!(Issues)

Extract three: Speaking out (Issues)

Extract four: A Level Commentary and analysis

Extract five: Mimic the master - Berkoff and Physical theatre

Extract one: Fair trade?

The following scene reveals the unfairness of the selection process at the docks. Do you think the Waterfront Crime Commission had a right to interfere? Can you think of any situations in the 21st century where workers are treated unfairly?



A WHISTLE SHRILLS as MAC, the hiring boss, mounts a crate (like a slave-auction block), an open cigar-box in hand.

MAC I got tabs here fer a hunnerd banana carriers.!

RUNTY (to POP; over groans from OTHERS) Bananas. Bananas! One o' these days me ship's comin' in from Ireland, God love 'er, loaded to the gunnels with sweet Irish whiskey!

POP Runty me boy, ye 're dreamin' again.

They all laugh companionably . MAC blows his whistle again. RUNTY and POP join the surge around MAC. Now, as MAC announces his assignments, FR.BARRY enters with EDIE.

MAC The following men report to the loft -- Malloy --(TERRY steps forward)-- Hendricks — Krajowski.(two "LONGSHOREMEN" – one decrepit, the other flabby step forward)Now a hunnerd banana carriers.

LONGSHOREMEN surge desperately around MAC, AD-LIBBING pleas for work. EDIE looks questioningly at FR. BARRY who grows increasingly disturbed.

MAC (continuing)Don't crowd me! Stand back!

MOOSE Mac -- I'll give four bucks for the job!

MAC No shovin'! Or nobody gets nuthin'!

FR. BARRY Hey -- what's going on here?

LUKE C'mon, Mac, gimme a break -- I need a day bad. Real bad!

MAC Back off, Sambo!

FR. BARRY What did you call him? Who do you think you are?

MAC You're off-limits, padre.

FR. BARRY Am I? Am I?

MAC Damn right!

EDIE What have you got in that box?

MAC (sarcastically)Work tabs, Nosy. (shaking box, producing RATTLING sound)You wanna work, ya gotta have one of these. No tickee, no washee.

FR . BARRY And you have a tab for every man here?

MAC You crazy?

FR. BARRY Then who decides who gets one?

MAC You're lookin' at 'im, padre. Now go back to ya church. You run your show -- I run mine!

He turns back to the MEN, who "mob" him.

MAC (continuing)Back ya fuckers – back!

Thrusting MOOSE back, MAC is jostled and almost knocked off his crate.

MAC (continuing)Take em you animals!

The MEN scramble for the tabs on the ground. RUNTY, a tab in his hand, starts to get up from the ground when a big LONGSHOREMAN swings a vicious punch at him. With old-time boxing skill, RUNTY "slips" the punch by the fraction of an' inch. Meantime, MOOSE is about to pick up a tab when a heavy shoe steps on his hand and the tab is snatched away.

At the same time, POP is battling at the edge of the free-for-all, in view of EDIE and FR. BARRY. POP is about to pick up a tab when a younger, bigger MAN punches him in the nose. POP retaliates with a looping punch that knocks the MAN back. At this moment:

TOMMY (calling over)Hey, Terry -- grab one for me!

TERRY reaches for the tab POP was after, and -- blocking POP off with his leg -- is about to pass it to TOMMY when POP swings at TERRY.

POP Hey, gimme that!

TERRY holds it out of reach. Just then, LUKE sees a tab on the ground behind POP and hurls himself toward it, carrying POP with him back to the melee.

Extract two: To snitch or not to snitch, that is the question!

Both *On the Waterfront* and *A View from the Bridge* are based around the theme of snitching or “ratting” on someone. In both plays, those who snitch end up dead.

For discussion:

If you were Terry Malloy, what would you do? Would you hand in your brother and his gang, or would you stay silent?

Split into groups to discuss the pros and cons of his dilemma.

Can you think of similar situations today where people might go through the same dilemmas?

Compare the character of Terry Malloy to Eddie in *A View from the Bridge*.

The following scene is when Terry’s brother Charley visits Terry to persuade him not to testify. How would you build up the tension in this scene?

How would you perform this scene using physical theatre and an ensemble?

CHARLEY (from within car) Relax, kid. It's me.

TERRY gets in the back of the car next to CHARLEY. The driver pulls away and they drive briefly.

TERRY (going to him) Gee, Charley, I'm sure glad ya wanted to see me. I needed to talk t' ya. What's it they say about blood, it's --

CHARLEY (coldly) Thicker than water. You wanna talk to me? -- First I wanna talk to you. (carefully) The grapevine says you picked up a subpoena.

TERRY (sullenly) That's right.

CHARLEY (as before) Of course the boys know you too well to take you for a cheese-eater.

TERRY Mmm-hmmm.

CHARLEY You know, they're gettin' rather interested' in your future.

TERRY Mmm-hmmm.

CHARLEY They think you shouldn't be on the outside so much. They want you a little more on the inside. They think it's time you had a few little things goin' for you on the docks.

TERRY A steady job an' a few extra bucks -- that's all I want.

CHARLEY Sure, that's all right when you're a kid -- but you're getting on. You're pushing thirty pretty soon, slugger. Time you got a little ambition.

TERRY I always figured I'd live longer without it.

CHARLEY (pointedly) May-be. (as TERRY looks at him, hard) Look, kid -- there's a slot for a boss loader on a new pier in Baltimore. I c'n fix it.

TERRY (interested) Boss loader?

CHARLEY Ten cents a hundred pounds on everything that moves in or out. And you don't have to lift a finger. It's five, six hundred a week just for openers.

TERRY An' for all that dough, what do I haveta do?

CHARLEY Absolutely nothing. You do nothing and you say nothing. You understand, don't you, kid?

TERRY (struggling with old loyaltiesand his new-found conscience)Yeah -- yeah - - I guess I do... But there's a lot more to this than I thought, Charley. I'm telling you. A lot more.

CHARLEY (sharply)Terry -- I hope you're not trying to tell me you're thinking of testifying against -- (turns a thumb in toward himself)Kid, I hope you're not telling me that.

TERRY I don't know -- I don't know. I tell ya I ain't made up my mind yet. That's what I wanted t' talk t' ya about.

CHARLEY Listen, Terry -- these piers we control through the local -- you know how much they ' re. worth to us ...

TERRY I know. I know.

CHARLEY Then you also know Cousin Johnny isn't going to jeopardize a setup like that for one rubber-lipped ex-tanker –

TERRY (overlapping)Don't say that!

CHARLEY-- Who's walking on his heels!

TERRY Don't say that!

CHARLEY (startled at TERRY's passion)What the hell..?

TERRY I coulda been better!

CHARLEY That's not the point --

TERRY I coulda been a lot better, Charley!

CHARLEY (forcefully)The point is -- we don't have much time.

TERRY (desperately)I tell you, Charley -- I haven't made up my mind!

CHARLEY Make up your mind, kid! Please. Please! You think I want to take you to Three-thirty-three River Street?

TERRY (stunned)Three-thirty-three — isn't that where Danny D..? (as CHARLEY nods grimly)Charley... you wouldn't hand me over to Danny D.. ?

CHARLEY stares at him, unable to deny it. TERRY stares back, incredulous.

CHARLEY (producing gun from pocket)Terry!

TERRY checks himself, turns -- and is stunned to see the gun.

CHARLEY (continuing)For the last time, take the job in Baltimore. Please, kid. For God's sake, I don't want to hurt you!

Extract three: Mimic the master- Physical theatre Berkoff style

The stage set is an empty stage where the actors create the environment themselves. The ensemble also use slow and fast motion mime. In groups, work as an ensemble to create the setting for the waterfront, the pub and the church.

Try performing the following section of text where an ensemble can work physically alongside the main action. Can you think of a section of text from another play where you can apply the same techniques?

TERRY's rooftop -- later that evening. TERRY, inside the coop, is examining his pigeons. Peering in is his hero-worshipping protege, JIMMY CONROY, in his "Golden Warriors" windbreaker.

JIMMY They're lookin' sharp now, huh Terry?

TERRY (indulgently)Ya been takin' good care of 'em, matooze. Real good.

JIMMY (delighted)Ya mean it?

TERRY I called ya "matooze," din' I? When Johnny Friendly calls ya "matooze," ye're in like Flynn.

JIMMY (impressed)Johnny Friendly -- that's what he calls you?(as TERRY nods)Wow. Hey -- what's he say if he don't like a fella too good?

TERRY You don' wanna hear that, ever. No sir!

JIMMY C'mon -- what's he say?

TERRY He says "schlagoom" -- an' then that fella might as well be dead.

JIMMY "Schlagoom"?

TERRY Don't ya ever say that word around me, kid!

JIMMY OK, OK...

TERRY steps out of the coop, carefully closing the door behind him.

TERRY (wistfully, mostly to himself)Those little bastards really got it made. Eat all they want, fly around like crazy, sleep together every night, 'n' raise gobs of squabs.

JIMMY You ain't got it so bad yaself. A big in with Johnny Friendly an' a free ticket when ya take in the fights. An' all the broads in the neighborhood puttin' out fer ya because yer name was up in lights at the Garden...

TERRY Once.

JIMMY What's the diff? The broads alia time wantin' t'feel ya muscle,(making a grabbing gesture for TERRY'S .crotch)You ain't got it so bad.

TERRY cuffs JIMMY playfully, but hard.

Extract four: On The Waterfront A Level Commentary and Analysis Exercise

ACT ONE

On full width of curtain: a painting suggesting New York Harbor -- ocean liner moving downriver; tug hauling string of barges, etc. HARBOUR SOUNDS: ships' whistles... fog-horns... water lapping against wharves, etc. AT RISE: a suggestion of a riverfront street; a four-story, turn-of-the-century tenement, its windows dark on this late Spring night; and a neighborhood bar.

Enter TERRY MALLOY -- a wiry, jaunty waterfront hanger-on in his late 20's, in turtleneck sweater, windbreaker, work pants, and cap -- moving with much of the physical grace and power he owned, a few years earlier, as a promising fighter. He pauses, puts fingers to his mouth, and produces a piercing WHISTLE. Then:

TERRY (hands to mouth; shouting) Hey Joey!

No response from tenement.

TERRY Hey Joey! Joey Doyle!

A third-floor window opens, and JOEY DOYLE pokes his head out. He's about 25 -- a clean-cut, apple-cheeked longshoreman.

JOEY Hey, Terry!(a little suspicious) What do you want?

TERRY Look —(reaching into his windbreaker as if to draw a gun, he produces a racing pigeon; the bird tries to escape but he subdues it expertly and holds it up to JOEY) He's one o' yers. I c'd tell from the band.

JOEY Yeah? Must be Danny Boy. I was just over in the coop lookin' for 'im again. Lost 'im in the last race.

TERRY He followed my birds into my coop. I figured you'd want 'im back.

JOEY I sure do. He's one of my best.

TERRY Yeah, he's a nice bird.(holding up the bird again) wanna come down 'n' get im?

JOEY (hesitating) Well, I don't know if ya heard, but I'm in a little hot water right now. Gotta watch myself with certain people -- I guess you know who.

TERRY Look, ya want yer bird back or don't you?

JOEY Sure, only I'm not comin' down to get 'im. I'm stayin' off the streets these days, know what I mean?

TERRY OK, so why don't I bring 'im up to yer coop?

JOEY Yeah, I been checkin' on the little buggers an' there's nobody around. Thanks, Terry. See ya up here!

Questions:

What do you see as being the important elements in this scene?

What advice would you give to the actors playing these roles?

How would you establish Terry's character in this opening scene?

How would you build the tension in the scene?

What challenges does this scene present for a designer? How would you overcome these?

This play has been adapted from a screenplay. Would you take this into consideration when directing the following scene? If so how and why? If not, why not?

Extract five: Standing up to the masses

What situations can you think of where you need to stand up for others?

What other world famous speeches can you think of when a person is standing up for what they believe in? Can you see any similarities between the speeches?

Is there an issue that you are passionate about? Create a monologue dealing with that issue.

Father Barry's speech, adapted from a real speech by Father John Corridan

FR BARRY OK, boys. Some people think the Crucifixion only took place on Calvary. They better wise up. Taking Joey Doyle's life to stop him from testifying, that's a crucifixion. Dropping a sling on Runty Nolan because he was ready to spill his guts to the Crime Commission in public -- that's a crucifixion. Every time the mob puts the crusher on a good man -- tries to stop him from doing his duty as a union man and a citizen -- it's a crucifixion.

LUKE Speak, brother – speak!

FR. BARRY And anybody who lets this happen --(gesturing fiercely to the tarpaulin)-- anybody who keeps silent about something evil he knows about -- shares the guilt of it just as much as the Roman soldier who pierced the flesh of Our Lord to see if He was dead.

TERRY winces. JOHNNY exchanges a cynical, arrogant glance with the thinly smiling CHARLEY.

MAC (calling down) G'wan back to yer church, Father!

FR. BARRY Pal, I'm learnin' every minute this is my church! I took a vow to follow Christ. And boys, if you don't think He's down here on this waterfront, you've got another guess coming! And who do you think He lines up with --

MAC (as he reaches into a box of bananas and flings one down)Get ahta there, Father!

The banana splatters FR. BARRY. He wipes the mess from his face and cassock.

FR. BARRY I'll tell you who He doesn't line up with -- He doesn't line up with hired guns!

Through this, TERRY shoulders his way to MAC, just as the goon is about to throw another banana, and grabs him by the shirt-front.

TERRY Let 'im finish!

MAC Johnny ain't gonna like this...

TERRY Let 'im finish!

He thrusts TRUCK away and steps back, bumping into EDIE. She nods approvingly; he looks away, embarrassed. CHARLEY scowls; JOHNNY FRIENDLY glowers.

FR. BARRY Every morning when the hiring boss blows his whistle for the shape-up, Jesus stands beside you.

Various GOONS let fly with bananas and other refuse -- some of it hitting FR. BARRY -- but he keeps right on.

FR. BARRY (continuing)He sees why some of you get picked and some of you get passed over.

TOMMY Tell 'em why, Father!

LUKE Lay it on 'em!

FR. BARRY Chances are, He gets passed over Himself because He won't kick back - So Christ is left standing in the street with the other rejects. And how do you think He feels when He sees them, His fellow-workers, selling their souls to the mob for a day's pay?

The pelting continues -- along with AD-LIB JEERS and CURSES from the GOONS: "Drop Dead!.... Get Lost!.... Shaddup!"

SPECS God damn you, Father!

FR. BARRY That's a venial sin... but --(looking at Runty's body)Murder is a mortal sin!JOHNNY nods to BARNEY, drinking beer from a can. BARNEY hurls the can down into the hold. It strikes FR. BARRY (and draws blood).

POP (brandishing a fist upwards)By Christ, the next bum who throws somethin' deals with me! I don't care if he's twice my size!

CHORUS You tell 'em Pop!

FR. BARRY (as OTHERS mutter approval) And what does Christ think of His respectable followers, the shipping executives and the city officials who drop a fin in and then encourage and condone the goons who learned their stevedore technique at Sing Sing and Danne-mora? How does He feel about bloodsuckers picking up a longshoreman's work-tab and grabbing twenty percent interest at the end of the week?

MORGAN (indignantly)Keep yer nose outa my business, Father!

FR. BARRY What does Christ think of the easy-money boys who pose as your union leaders, and sell you out every day in the week and twice on Sunday? And wear custom-tailored suits and diamond rings --on your union dues, your vacation fund, your kickback money? And how does He --who spoke up without fear against every evil -- feel about your silence?

MAC How about some silence from you, shit-lips?

He reaches into the box for another banana. But as he straightens up to throw it, TERRY surges toward him and throws a short hard right that flattens the goon as promised.

BARNEY (to JOHNNY)You see that?

JOHNNY (nods grimly; then, to CHARLEY:)Did you, Charley?

FR. BARRY You want to know what's wrong with our waterfront? It's love of a lousy buck. It's making love of a buck -- the cushy job, the wholesale stealing -- more important than the love of man. It's forgetting that every fellow down here is your brother -- yes, your brother in Christ.(voice rising)But remember this, fellows: Christ is always with you -- Christ is in the shape-up, He's in the hatch, He's in the union hall, He's kneeling here beside Runty Nolan.(fervently)Believe me, boys -- what they did to Joey, what they did to Runty, they're doing to you. And you. And you. All of you! And only you, with God's help, have the power to knock 'em off for good!(turning to the corpse) OK, Runty?(looking up; harshly)Amen.

FR. BARRY exits

MAC OK – Back to work!



Vincenzo Nicoli plays Father Barry

We hope this pack has been useful and will enhance your enjoyment of *On the Waterfront* . If you would like to give us feedback please contact us at:

Nottingham Playhouse Education
Wellington Circus
Nottingham
NG1 5AF
Tel:0115 947 4361
allies@nottinghamplayhouse.co.uk

Many thanks to the cast, production team and Nottingham Playhouse staff for their assistance in the creation of this pack.

All rehearsal photographs are courtesy of Matt Cullum, Assistant Director for *On The Waterfront*.