



Education Resources Pre-Production

Sydney Theatre Company in association with Frantic Assembly presents

STOCKHOLM

by **Bryony Lavery**

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Image by Derek Henderson

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KEY



AIM of exercise or section



Extension Exercises



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Drama Exercises



English Exercises

STOCKHOLM

Sydney Theatre Company Education Resources 2010

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ABOUT STC ED

www.sydneytheatre.com.au/stced/about

ABOUT FRANTIC ASSEMBLY

www.franticassembly.co.uk/p105.html

*frantic***assembly**

Frantic Assembly was originally created as Frantic Theatre Company, by current co-Artistic Directors Scott Graham and Steven Hoggett, and then Company Administrator, Vicki Middleton. The three had met at Swansea University in Wales, and formed the company “with a desire to do something different,” but were English Literature graduates with no formal theatre training.

A Guide to Frantic Assembly www.franticassembly.co.uk/images/page/FAgenera.pdf

A Comprehensive Guide to *Stockholm* www.franticassembly.co.uk/images/page/FAgenera.pdf

See also Scott Graham and Steven Hoggett, 2009, *The Frantic Assembly Book of Devising Theatre*, Routledge, UK.

CREATIVE TEAM

Directors and Choreographers –

Scott Graham and Steven Hoggett

Set Designer – Laura Hopkins

Costume Designer – Jennifer Irwin

Lighting Designer – Andy Purves

Sound Designer – Adrienne Quartly

CAST

Todd – Socratis Otto

Kali – Leeanna Walsman



SYNOPSIS

Kali and Todd are a young couple, very much in love. Perhaps too much in love, as they increasingly cut themselves off from their family and friends to have, “hallowed holy sacred ‘us’ time”, (Stockholm, Seven – Happy birthday from your crazy family). Yet ‘us’ is becoming a character separate from the individuals, speaking to them and to the audience, eroding their sense of self and foreshadowing dangerous truths about the relationship. As Kali and Todd cook a birthday dinner, they reveal more of themselves, their shared past, and the emotions they hide from each other. A seemingly simple domestic evening swings between delight and despair, love and hate, sex and brutality, and the audience sees starkly what Kali and Todd cannot: the relationship has consumed the individuals.

THEMES

Stockholm Syndrome, Dangerous Love, Domestic Violence, Narcissism, Co-dependency, Love.

THE PLAYWRIGHT

Bryony Lavery is a British playwright, who was born in Wakefield in 1947 and has gone on to write more than 20 plays. Lavery began her career as an actor, and was the Artistic Director of theatre companies Female Trouble and Gay Sweatshop, and co-founder of Les Oeufs Malades.

Her work is often inspired by reality, and the truth of the human condition, in all its ugly brutality. Her most controversial work is *Frozen* (1998), which was nominated for a Tony Award for Best Play, and was the catalyst for a widespread debate regarding artistic sources of inspiration and plagiarism (see ‘Something Borrowed by Malcolm Gladwell, article published in the New Yorker and available in their online archive, as well as Gladwell’s book, *What the Dog Saw*).

“

BRYONY: Best advice?
Start with the murder –
not what the murderer
had for breakfast ”

Interview with Bryony Lavery by Laura Barnett
The Guardian, 2009 www.guardian.co.uk

Read more: ‘Presence as Performance: Exploring Witnessed Presence’ conference paper
<http://www.xs4all.nl/~nevejan/documents/Presence%20as%20Performance.pdf>

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HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF THE PLAY

“Stockholm was inspired by a real event, namely witnessing people we cared about destroy each other and not being able to intervene”

(A Comprehensive Guide to *Stockholm* www.franticassembly.co.uk/images/page/FAgenera.pdf).

Frantic Assembly’s co-Artistic Directors, Scott Graham and Steven Hoggett were originally inspired by this argument, witnessed in 1999. In 2007, they began work on the project that would become *Stockholm*, enlisting playwright Bryony Lavery as a collaborator.

(A Guide to Frantic Assembly, www.franticassembly.co.uk/images/page/FAgenera.pdf).

Scott and Steven wanted to investigate relationships, particularly the difference between the objective view of a relationship from those external to it, and the all-consuming denial of the couple inside it. This led them to research Stockholm Syndrome, which, briefly, is the emotional bonding that occurs between a victim and their abuser, such as the emotional connection felt by hostages towards their captors. The term Stockholm Syndrome dates from 23 August 1973, when two bank robbers held three women and one man hostage for five days in a bank in Stockholm, Sweden. Over this time, the hostages bonded with their captors, so that they feared the law enforcement personnel who came to their rescue, and made it clear in subsequent media interviews that they supported their captors. One woman became engaged to one of the robbers, and another established a fund to financially aid their legal defence.

While this bonding may seem just as inconceivable as the battered woman who refuses to leave her abusive husband, Scott and Steven decided to focus on the belief and commitment of the people inside the relationship, blind to the objective perspective of those around them:

“We have always talked about Stockholm as a love story that simply requires a wider definition of 'love'” (A Comprehensive Guide to *Stockholm* www.franticassembly.co.uk/images/page/FAgenera.pdf).



In *Stockholm*, dance is a metaphor for power relations where power and control issues, dynamics of oppression, gender/sexual relations are played out.

Read more on Physical Theatre practice from a performer's point of view, Royona Mitra, 2005, 'Cerebrality: rewriting corporeality of a transcultural dancer', *Digitalcultures*. <http://www.digitalcultures.org/Library/Mitra.pdf>



AIM: To introduce and explore *Stockholm's* themes of power and control in relationships.



PUPPETS (also known as BODY SCULPTURES)

Person A is the active sculptor, moving Person B into various positions.

Person B is passive, and must not resist or add any movement.

Both are silent.

The focus for Person A is to control, sculpt and physically manipulate Person B.

For Person B, the focus is surrendering, allowing themselves to be moved.

Swap partners and roles.



Determine specific power relationships and create appropriate sculptures. For example, teacher/student, parent/child, friend/friend, male/female.

Discuss:

1. How did it feel to be in control?
2. How did it feel to be controlled?
3. Do you have a preference? Why?
4. Did you find it easier or harder to establish a new dynamic when you were Person A or Person B?
5. Did you notice if you transferred some of the patterns of behaviour that you established with your first partner into your second relationship?

“ At times the choreography became too obviously choreographed... We had to break it apart and remind the performers of the story that needs to be told within it.

A Comprehensive Guide to Stockholm ”



AIM: To introduce principles of narrative point of view (POV) and direct address narration.



NARRATIVE VOICE

Person A tells Person B a story, titled 'My most embarrassing moment'.

Person B tells Person A their own story, of the same title.

Person A retells Person B's story, but from the first person point of view, 'I', to the rest of the group.

Person B retells Person A's story, but from the first person point of view, to the rest of the group.

Discuss:

1. How did it feel having your story told by someone else?
2. What were the differences in your original version and the retold version?

+ **Write** the story you were told as a monologue or short story that shifts between first person (I), second person (you) and third person (he, she) narration.

Use a different tense for each narrative voice. For example, the first person is in the past, the second person is in the present and the third person is in the future.

Share your rewritten story with your original partner.

Discuss the effect of shifting between first and third person narration and tenses.



AIM: To develop observation and non-verbal language techniques of physical theatre.



MIRROR ACTION (refer to Augusto Boal's *Games For Actors and Non-Actors* 2002)

Two players stand close together, facing each other.

Person A is the subject in the mirror, and leader of the action.

Person B is Person A's reflection, and mirrors their action exactly.

Both move slowly, maintaining eye contact, with no speaking.

Reverse roles.

Incorporate the possibility of hands touching.

Maintain the level of connection, but begin travelling through the space.

Advance to leader and follower roles becoming interchangeable, but without verbal negotiation.



Devise a mirror scene based on a specific theme. For example, jealousy, love, friendship, escape.

Find a moment of interruption, where the mirror action 'breaks'.

Incorporate text, both verbal and non-verbal (meaningful gestures), into the scene.