National Theatre

Environmental Impact Report

London Tide

Lyttelton Theatre

Press night: 17th April 2024

Photograph of Final Model Box

Introduction

At of the end of 2023 and early 2024 the National theatre began contracting their Artists to commit to deliver a show that meets the Theatre Greenbook baseline standard. These reports are intended to capture anecdotal data that will feed into future practice and process when making large scale theatre to eventually deliver Advanced Greenbook standard as common practice. These reports are a documentation of both successes and challenges and are to be used as a tool for organisational learning and change – most importantly it will reflect the shared sense of environmental responsibility.

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Principal Artistic and Production Team

Director -	Ian Rickson
Writer -	Ben Power
Set & Costume Designer –	Bunny Christie
Lighting Designer –	Jack Knowles
Sound Designer –	Christopher Shutt and Ting Ying Dong
Producer –	Christine Gettins
Production Manager –	Mekel Edwards

Show Summary

A storm rages and, in the darkest part of the night, a body is pulled from the swirling Thames.

Across the city, two young women confront an uncertain future. In Limehouse, Lizzie Hexam struggles to break free of the river and its dark secrets. On the other side of town, Bella Wilfer mourns a lost marriage. The appearance of the mysterious John Rokesmith has the potential to change their lives for ever. Will they sink or swim?

This romantic and propulsive thriller is a hymn to the city and the river that runs through it. Directed by **Ian Rickson** (*Translations*) and adapted by **Ben Power** (*The Lehman Trilogy*), with original songs throughout, the genius of Dickens meets the fierce musical imagination of acclaimed singer-songwriter, **PJ Harvey**.

Data from Material Trackers

Department	Actual Reuse	Future Life	TGB Standard Attained
Scenery	75%		Intermediate
Props	87%	100%	Intermediate
Costume	80%	97%	Intermediate
Armoury	60%	75%	Intermediate

**We are unable to put an exact percentage to scenic items kept for future us, however, we can say with certainty that at least 70% of the items from this show was stored for use on future productions.*

Design

The set design for this production was minimalist and made good use of existing stage engineering within the theatre to achieve a sense of swaying movement like water within the piece. Bunny Christie (designer) has in-depth knowledge and experience in the Lyttelton theatre which helped when choosing to use the stage lift as a major element of the design. Some of the lighting bars were also used a scenery in this production, again to bring a sense of movement. This has highlighted how crucial it is for designers and directors who are new to the theatre to have in-depth tours along with technical specifications for the venue so they know the range of features available to use before building anything new.

A huge amount of research into alternative and more sustainable materials was carried out over the course of making this show which was an enjoyable aspect of the production. For example, the rubber material used – EPDM - is 100% recyclable and no emissions are created during its manufacture, and the 'plastic' curtain is in fact made from sugar cane and is biodegradable.

Compromises were made in the design to enable sustainability, however some elements remained with artistic justification, the main example being the shiny black floor where alternatives were explored but didn't meet requirements.

Scenery

It was originally intended to use real timber groynes however the decision was taken that these would be too heavy for the stage crew to manoeuvre during the show. Therefore, the groynes were made using Compostablock.

This is the first production for which Scenic Construction have used Compostablock, a material they are hoping to use in place of polystyrene in the future. Testing proved that it is a usable material with some limitations. It is quite crumbly; therefore, it is hard to say whether it can completely replace polystyrene for all applications.

The use of the gloss show floor was a success as the high gloss finish is extremely difficult to achieve scenically. There is potential for the floor to be re-used, however this will be determined in the get out. The tiles are very delicate and if removed or stored incorrectly this could impact their re-use.

Props

Props put a lot of time and resource into sourcing second hand items wherever possible, so many of the small props and furniture came from second hand sources. When one second hand source didn't work out, another one was found, for example the pub tables were originally made from planks of reclaimed wood, but these were too heavy for the acting company to handle and therefore Props remade them using balsa wood salvaged from offcuts.

Where it was not possible to source items second hand was with items such as the e-cigarettes and a hairbrush which must be new for hygiene purposes, or the fountain pens and notebooks which had to function properly and look a very particular way.

Costume Production

Most of the costumes were taken from the NT's existing costume stock with some hires also made from 'Angels'. Using a large amount of stock resulted in Costume needing more workshop hours to make them fit and work for the design. This highlighted the need for higher levels of staffing on greener re-use shows.

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Wigs, Hair and Make-up

Wigs, Hair and Make Up (WH&M) used several hair pieces from stock, making slight alterations and adding new hair as required. For example, plaits were used for one of the actresses for her understudy plot, that WH&M had used for her previously on another NT show. WH&M were able to use the actors' own hair for many of the styles.

WH&M try to use stock pieces wherever possible, however it was necessary to make three wigs, one toupee, and one hair piece from new, due mainly to having to match actors' own hair colour exactly. WH&M will keep all the new items in stock to hopefully use again in future productions.

WH&M also use reusable cloths wherever possible to avoid using wet wipes at all.