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**‘Clowns work as
well as aspirin, but
twice as fast.’
(Groucho Marx)**

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We would like to invite the reader of this document to crack open a beer when indulging in this read. If the reader does not partake in alcoholic beverages, please pour yourself a cool, refreshing glass lemonade or another soft drink of your choice.



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Our personal favourite tipples



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Jamie's Artist Statement

It is not my intention to make this document to talk you through our piece and manipulate your mind process into what you take from it. If anything, it is the other way around. With the Armageddon Arms being a clowning performance, we cannot really comment on what will happen in the show as we cannot predict that, but we can show you our process and why we did what we did to get to the point we are at whilst writing this.

What I can acknowledge and share is the thought process and physical process behind the piece.

Clowns throughout history have acted as pedestal and speaker for the people of lower status against the monarchy leading them to have some sort of higher political standpoint. With our piece being based off of the loss of a society think that there is no better way to approach this than to use clowns to make people aware of this loss as they have a past in tackling problems out of the typical persons hands.

Emperor Ch'in Shih Huang-ti of china had a fool/jester who served for him and his name was Yu Sze. Yu Sze being an extremely important figure was famous for being the only person to convince Ch'in Shih Huang-ti not to paint the Great Wall, not a single person spoke up in the imperial court to advise against the idea. However, Yu Sze poked fun at the emperor during one of his routines stating it would be bad and far too expensive.

We want the clowns in our play to become the Yu Sze of our performance.

Gabby's Artist Statement

This catalogue document speaks for our work, and our work speaks for this catalogue document. I didn't want to stop half way through our piece of comedic theatre to say, "This is a commentary on a more serious matter, but anyway let's keep watching and having fun!". So, we chose clowning, which is a great medium to achieve the light-hearted, fun show we wanted but also, we could use these quite sad and lonely archetypal characters to do so. If you look deeper into a clowning show, you will always find the reality behind the fun and surrealistic façade. And in this catalogue document, I want to delve deeper to uncover that façade.

'Standing in as Conquergood (1995) suggests may be viewed as an act of mimesis (faking), poiesis (making), or kinesis (breaking and remaking).' (Pelias, R.J: 2008, p. 187)

'Breaking and remaking', I want to break and remake the system, break and remake my creative process, break and remake what I are sending out to the world. Reimagining and taking stock is vital in creativity to keep on creating the work that I am proud to send into the world that I believe will challenge views and ways of thinking.

I want to create art that challenges opinions and I want to create art that sparks conversations and debates. I want to pose questions that will challenge society and I want to create politically active and aware art. I want my art to do all of this however, most of all I want to create art that is FUN!

Our Piece:

'The Armageddon Arms' is a social commentary on the loss of community with the ever growing number of pub and working men's clubs in local communities across the UK and the majority being in the North of England. Set in a run down, past-its-time pub, we introduce Bev, the pub landlord. Bev is lost and in many ways acts as the child of the piece, he has only ever known life in the Armageddon Arms and without it, Bev will lose his security and world. Next into the pub enters Tod, an old and loyal local to the pub whose life revolves around the Armageddon Arms. Tod acts as the antagonist of the piece and has an affinity with Bev as they both have childish qualities although Tod has the upper-hand as his childish qualities come from a place of not caring anymore and Bev's come from a place of caring and feeling too much. The last two to enter the pub are Jan and Kev, another two loyal locals of the Armageddon Arms, Jan and Kev have been married since early adolescence through convenience of the time and ever since a rift between has appeared which only grows stronger through alcohol consumes. Jan is the anger authority in the piece and is very much lost in her own feelings and small world. Kev is the know-all and has the most logic to his actions; he only ever wants to impress Jan and in trying to do so, finds himself in strange positions and situations. The piece follows the four characters in their own dysfunctional and bizarre world where anything is possible and where relationships and friendships that should never fit on the outside, somehow seem to fit inside the walls of the Armageddon Arms.

Stock characters.

When we came up with the idea of our piece we had a brief picture of stock characters in mind. Stock characters are fictional stereotypical characters that an audience member recognises due to its characteristics and traditionality portrayed by its common traits. They are used often in theatre to allow the audience to gather as much information about the character without much character development.

If you have ever been to a pub you will have undoubtedly come across some "characters". if you go to multiple pubs you will start to be able to pick out the similarities between certain people and what they do on a daily basis. Myself and Gabby both consider our selves to know what sort of people go into our local and when talking to each other about the regulars from our local pub (both of which are in different towns) we have found that ourselves saying "have someone who does that in our pub" or "there's a fella like that in ours at home". The reason for this being is that pubs are flooded with stock characters due to the clientele that they attract. This is mainly due to the age of the people that go to pubs as they seem to be a lot older.

A short list of stock characters in pubs.

- Lonely old man
- The drunkard
- The moody landlord
- The argumentative couple
- The jokester
- The wise old man
- The hopeless romantic
- The everyman
- The adult child

Our performance consists of four different characters that are all based off of stock characters typically found in pubs as we wanted to make the play something that people can somewhat relate to in some sense and come away thinking that their local pub may be home to a clown or two.

Tod:

Tod is the first clown, he is a lonely old man that struggles to communicate due to his gravelly and aged voice that comes across as more of a grunt or mumble. We have taken inspiration for this from the commedia dell'arte comedic speech technique entitled Grammelot or Gromalot. This consists of a nonsense imitation language that is a use of sound that is made to come across like a form of communication when realistically they are not saying anything sensible at all. We wanted to Tod to be a vocal clown but only to an extent as we didn't really want the rest of the clowns to be able to communicate with him except for Kev

The character of Tod is also of an older age but has a tendency to play on how old he is to get his way. We have realised that it is much funnier that he plays on his age but occasionally the audience sees that he isn't quite as incapable as he claims to be. Whilst playing in the space we have realised that it is really funny when he just slips out of being really restricted. We have realised that it is more humorous that he plays on his age but occasionally the audience sees that he isn't quite as incapable as he claims to be. It was an idea that I had after I had seen an old man that came into our pub and he shuffles around really slowly with a walking stick but whenever he got to stairs he would climb them as if he was a contestant on ninja warrior.

Bev:

Bev is the next clown and he is the owner of the bar. Bev is basically the man-child of the group which contrasts greatly with his role as the landlord and bar man of the pub. With being burdened with unwanted responsibility of the pub and the customers within it, he is unaware on how to really approach any problem that is sent his way and often requires help from the other clowns which only seem to make the problem worse in due course.

His clown is the only character that doesn't vocally communicate throughout the full play. There are multiple reasons behind this firstly being that the backstory is that the pub is about to get closed down. He has no say and nothing can be done about it. This is a historical link as clowns in the past have been used to act as the middle ground and communication method between the lower class and the monarchy. We are using Bev to represent the people that are helpless and have no say in commands that are out of their power even if it is greatly affecting them. Another reason behind this is that Bev being the landlord should have the higher authority when it comes to the clowns in the pub but stripping him of his speech makes him completely reliant on everybody, making him somewhat like a child in need of care which was the initial aim we had in mind.

With Bev's childlike mannerisms, as you can probably imagine running a bar can be difficult work as he often finds himself getting distracted by the small stupid things that occur during simple tasks. Children have a tendency to have a small attention span and get distracted easily in comparison to the everyman.

Kev:

Kev is the innocence of our performance he is the most aware of what is going on and the most present out of all the clowns on stage. We have based Kev as part of the duo of Kev and Jan the mishap couple. These two were created with the intent of a love hate relationship between each other. Our original idea was to have them all caught up in lust in one scene and then have them want to rip each other's throats out in the next and then return to the lust stage again and so on. Plans changed when we started to experiment as we didn't believe that we should have two clowns with the exact same characteristics on stage at the same time. We decided to see if we could have Kev be the love side of the relationship and Jan be the hate.

Kev the clown is very much a typical clown in the sense that he craves attention. He craves obviously like any clown, from the audience but more importantly he craves attention from Jan. The constant disapproval from Jan makes it very clear that he isn't afraid to fail and will stop at no means to try and impress her.

This brings us to where Kev's character is now. Kev is an innocence clown as all he wants to do is impress. His mind seems to be working too hard for any sense to be able to process out of what he is doing. He thinks too much into things and creates plots that are so far-fetched for anybody else to grasp why he is doing what he is doing until he has finished it. By the time the plot unveils itself, it becomes apparent that what he has done is very stupid and way too thought into.

Kev's clown being the innocence allows him to create a response from the audience in many ways such as sorrow and pity and sense of achievement.

Jan:

Jan is a what I refer to as a feeder of a clown. She generates and supplies material for the other clowns to respond off of. This is probably one of the more complex roles out of all as Liv who is playing the clown needs to be able to feed the reaction of the other clowns whilst still reacting to what they say and do simultaneously.

Jan's character takes no shit. She is the tough nut and somewhat scariest of all the clowns on stage. She has a sense of disgust towards Kev even though she is in a relationship with him. After a long relationship with Kev she has become bored of everything that he does and the routine that they seem to have fallen into. Jan's character has what many people call a short fuse and you never know exactly when she will flip and her way of dealing with this sad depressing and angry life that she leads is getting drunk. Throughout the play all she wants to do is get drunk but it is never that easy for a clown to get what they want. As for Jan, whenever she tries to settle for a drink she is rudely interrupted by any of the other clowns on stage, obstructing her from achieving her goal therefore leading to a reaction.



Disciplines in Working as a Duo:

‘Knowledge exists on a spectrum. At one extreme, it is almost completely tacit, that semi-conscious and unconscious knowledge held in people’s heads and bodies. At the other end of the spectrum, knowledge is almost completely explicit or codified, structured and accessible to people other than individuals originating it. Most knowledge of course exists between extremes.’ (Nelson, R: 2013, p.38)

Working as a duo and having different ideas and ways of working, we had to set ground-rules and boundaries. We knew we never wanted to throw an idea away without trying it, but we also knew we wanted to be honest and if an idea wasn’t working, we would say so. Jamie and I are fortunate to have the same drive and the same working methods when it comes to creating and when we do have a difference in creative vision, we always try it out and work together on either making the idea work or not getting uptight when an idea gets scrapped. When starting this project with Jamie we knew the respect we had between each other as creatives, and with IPAR we knew that **‘knowledge is not fixed and absolute’ (Nelson, R: 2013, p. 39)**. If one of us has an idea, we always try it, but we will always build it up from the others point of view. We also are not scared or precious with our creative visions and ideas; we want to challenge and be challenged by each other. We are extremely similar in our tact but we are still individuals and though our visions are complimentary, we push each other and create work that succeeds our individual thinking. Jamie and I work well with our differences and as two individuals we make a complete and mature making and directing team. 13

When it came to creating our work, Jamie and I found very quickly that we settled into co-director roles very organically and I never felt like he was stepping on my toes or vice-versa. The skills we had for devising were complimentary and when one of us would come up with an idea we would then build upon that until our show was built. We realised very early on that we both had the same drive when it came to creating and that was to make work that speaks to a bigger picture than just us and also work that is fun to make but also watch. When working with our cast, I realised quickly the skills that Jamie has with connecting to people was something I could use alongside analysing and piecing the ‘playing’ in rehearsals together.

‘A technique is a particular skill or application of a skill. A technical invention is then a development of such a skill or the development or invention of one of its devices. A technology by contrast is, first, the body of the knowledge appropriate to the development of such skills and applications and, second, a body of knowledge and conditions for the practical use and application of a range of devices.’ (Nelson, R: 2013, p. 41)

We work with each other to question each other. For example, if one of us is the ‘particular skill’, the other is the ‘technology’. In the situation of rehearsals, Jamie being the particular skill for engaging with the cast to the point of them understanding what we wanted from them, allowed me to be the ‘technology’ to be able to stand back and view what we were making from a different point of view. Having Jamie on the inside view and me on the bigger picture allowed us to really delve deeper into our artistic vision and also give us more from what we even expected our vision to be. Of course this wasn’t how we worked all the time, we would switch roles or work together which also allowed new and exciting perspectives however, when Jamie and I first joined forces, we did not expect to complement each other’s working styles so well to the point where sometimes we felt like one force pushing forward in creating the piece. 14

'I look for someone who has a sense of fun, who's audacious, who's forthcoming, who has politics, who has even a small scrap of passion for the planet, someone who's decent, has a sense of justice and who thinks I'm worthwhile.'

(Lily Tomlin: 2016, Internet)



Why Clowning? Anarchism:

‘I want freedom, the right to self-expression, everybody’s right to beautiful, radiant things.’ (Goldman, E: 2006, p. 42)

Anarchism = Clowning.

A collapse in society is what we want, what our cause needs and has been screaming out for. We want our community back, not the government telling us what our community should be through their corrupt, right-wing media meant for working class, ‘little-Britain’s’ to digest and then spit out hatred that hasn’t come from their minds, but because it’s from their mouths, the government can pass their bill, their laws, like it was ‘our’ idea, when all along the idea came from them.

Clowning = Anarchism.

And we need anarchism to make *our* statement. *Our* lives are the ones that change. *Our* voices. *Our* freedom. *Our* community!

‘Anarchism meant to me, and I would live it in spite of the world – prisons, persecution, everything. Yes even in spite of the condemnation of my closest comrades I would live my beautiful ideal.’ (Goldman, E: 2006, p. 42)

It is not for the faint hearted, fighting for something different; something that changes what people have come to know and feel comfortable with. Seeking change that will bring in new ways of thinking and doing is what I and I know Jamie agrees, want to use our art as a platform for; anarchy. We want to shake things up and cause a stir; we want to make noise and make a mess and pave our own way for our own ‘beautiful ideal’. And our ‘beautiful ideal’, is community and passion for people, caring and listening. Our show, ‘The Armageddon Arms’, is situated inside of a pub, an old and run-down pub that is closing down. We have locals and a landlord and together they create the utopian madness that our anarchist brains envisaged. Art and performance is a beautiful thing, it can act as a mouthpiece for addressing what you want to say and a springboard to spread your message to many others, in this sense we see art as a utopia and through this, we see the pub we created as a utopia also. So, in viewing our show as a utopia, it made total sense to me that adding in four clowns to cause total anarchy was a way for us to show the destruction that is being done to communities from closures of pubs, community centres and working men’s clubs. I want to disclaim that I am in no way comparing the severity of Emma Goldman’s risk when performing to when our cast performs our piece. However, Goldman saw her performing and creating as her ‘political commitment’ and in this sense, so do Jamie and I when creating art also.

‘Art is understood to have a role in the present, as a protective force with an ‘in spite of’ quality that enables people to tolerate suffering, not so that they become immune to it, but so that they have the energy to continue to resist.’ (Thompson, J: 2009, p. 2)

Being in the present is the number one rule when clowning. To truly be present, you have to react to what is in front of you at any given moment. Clowning stands for now and every rebellious idea and feeling you want to portray to be able to tell your truth. By understanding this, and allowing yourself to truly open up to living in the moment, you find your inhibitions lifting and 'energy to continue to resist' takes over your body. Our show wants to find the comedy within the rebellion and as stated earlier: clowning is anarchism and anarchism is clowning.

As argued by Jill Dolan, theatre makes a difference and has a whole lot to say, performance has the ability to make 'palpable an affective vision of how the world might be better.' (Dolan, J: 2005, p. 6) This to me, sums up my thoughts on why I wanted to create a piece of anarchistic theatre as its bringing together the idea of art as utopia and the clowns representing the will to fight and make noise for change.

'It is often dirty work, this digging into the rich soil of humanity. Digging into our humanity, we cannot keep the soil out from under our nails, the clay off our faces, and the sand away from the fold of our skin. We write with humility about that which makes us remember our humanity, that which makes us humble, that which makes us human.' (Lockford, L: 2001, p. 118)

Clowning is one of the most human artistries in performance; it accepts failure, allows in our anarchist history and finds comedy in the most inherent human of needs: to be acknowledged and noticed. For us, clowning was a no-brainer for our performance as we knew that we wanted to have a social commentary and with clowning it is hard to 'keep the soil from under our nails'; it acts as a mirror showing back the dirt of the human condition and accepting our dirt but learning and moving on from it. The clown acts as a reflection to the society and context to which it was brought up in and so as our piece is emanating that of community and the loss of it, as the piece expands, the clowns emanate that loss within their anarchistic, angry and celebratory finale which climaxes into a big 'fuck you!' to the governing voice of the powers-that-be and symbolises that of triumph inside of protest and anarchy.



‘Clowning resonated and interacted with aspects of its immediate social reality. The narratives of authority, domination and resistance we had played out in clown were not just entertaining frivolities, but critical reflections on the world we were inhabiting’

(King, B: 2018, p. 4)

“You’ve got to realize that when all goes well, and everything is beautiful, you have no comedy. It’s when somebody steps on the bride’s train, or belches during the ceremony that you’ve got comedy!”

–Phyllis Diller

(Famous Clowns, n.d.)

How they all interact with each other which creates not just four individuals on stage but an ensemble that compliments each other through anarchism.

This here is one of many examples that we used to create scenes and the way that the clowns would work with each other and bounce throughout the play



The Process of Creating a Clown:

It was crucial for us that our cast understood our creative vision and what we were striving for overall. Jamie and I would use the 'clowning workshops' we had each week in the earlier months of rehearsal to not only teach our cast the basics of clowning but by doing so, we were setting a base to which they would act and think as a clown when it came to putting them into the scenario of the pub setting. We wanted to set them a ground where they could start playing instead of telling them what to do; we built perimeters but we never wanted to build walls for our cast when playing and creating.

'With training, the performer's instrument becomes increasingly attuned and generates more productive insights.' (Pelias, R.J: 2008, p. 186)

Making our cast feel comfortable and confident was all we wanted, especially with clowning, we say don't pressure yourself, it will come with time and never be afraid of the inevitability of failure. Learn, grow and use it to become a stronger clown, more-willing to openness and failure at their very cores. After our break-through moment three weeks before the performance date, we saw our cast's 'instruments' becoming ever more 'attuned to more productive insights' and this was down to going over the same scenarios we did in the early weeks. Even seeing our cast know their clowns well enough to know if they speak or make sounds or are inaudible, that's something that was a struggle in the early weeks and months.

But giving our cast clowning workshops and key rules and lessons, a lightbulb moment happened in all of them and they just knew how to apply their training to the practice. Using this quote as our mantra in the earlier workshops, we saw it paying off later on when our casts clowns starting playing off of instinct which was an amazing turning point in my personal growth and learning as a director.

'Performers are always trying to separate the good from the bad, the magical from the mundane.' (Pelias, R.J: 2008, p. 186)

In clowning we all want to hit the 'magical' and create the laughter we so desperately aspire to obtain, but you have to accept the mundane to do so; accept the humanness within the clown. It is important to note that we also accept the 'bad', we want the failure but separating the 'good from the bad' is an important skill so you can acknowledge the failure or the success and read the room and feed off from the audience and their energy. The bodies instincts are rarely wrong and being able to throw away your inhibitions and allow yourself to follow those instincts, be them as grotesque or out of the ordinary as they might seem, is what clowning is all about at its core.

The process to finding your clown is different for everyone and even when you think you have found it, it is only the tip of the iceberg and the clowning journey has just begun. It is in the willingness to be earnest is where your clown truly will flourish and your audience will, in turn, be willing and open to your clown. If you do this, there is no need to worry what you think 'your clown' may or may not do, 'your clown' will just be.

Presence.

Being present as a clown is what makes you a clown. Without it you are just acting. Clowns live in the present moment and the present moment only. They have no time for past or future only what is happening there and then.

Presence in my experience is one of the most fundamental skills you can use for clowning. When you are living in the present you can experience life to its full extent, you can forget and stop conveying about the past and future and most of all you can let go of any of the beliefs that hold you down or manipulate your decisions in life. Presence allows you to have complete control and awareness over your emotions and actions because you have no thoughts or beliefs holding back your inhibitions. You do as you please without thinking, a total freedom of the mind and body.

A clown has to understand the concept of presence to be able to be present but to understand presence you have to immerse yourself within it.

Some people find becoming present one of the most difficult aspects when it comes to clowning and I believe that this due to the fear of failure. When a person fails it seems to be a natural response to dwell on that failure which leads to an emotional recall. This is very typical in everyday life but impossible if you are present. If you are dwelling on failure you are no longer in the present and your emotional recall is product of the past. If you no longer have a fear of failure you cannot have this issue.

One of the techniques that we used to help our cast get over the fear of failure and become present was an exercise called Step Laugh. Step Laugh consists of an empty stage and the clown has to get from one side to the other but is only allowed to move forward when the audience is laughing. If the audience doesn't laugh the clown has to take a step back. This technique helps with the embracing of failure due to its gifting of time on stage as a clown. All a clown wants is to be on stage and be present so it complements their attributes.

'Beyond the concept of here and now,
how much power do you need? To go
anywhere else you need power, but to
be here what do you need?'

– Mooji

(Parato, n.d.)



Our Set:

We wanted to keep our set pretty simple, in the aspect of it being a hectic show. Wanting to give our show a run-down, faded look, there are three main areas of our set to create the look of a pub but also to be able to function for the four clowns to live and play in.

The Pool Table: we wanted the pool table to be centre stage as, when in conversation between Jamie and me, we always said the pool table was the centre of a lot of the fun and banter within our times in pubs. A pool table is a place for highs and lows, celebrations and failures & excitement and annoyance. To me, the pool table is the hub or home base for a pub and in the piece it acts as that anchor to this idea of contradictions of ups and downs in our piece.

The Piano Bar: Our bar was something we knew would be of multiple uses from the start. We wanted it to be multi-functional for purpose and also for surprise factor. It is 'Bev's' sanctuary and whenever he leaves it, uncomfortable situations seem to arise for him. With this in mind, we wanted it to also be his piano for the finale as it shows his playful side as well and his functionality (his job).

Tod's Games Corner: Tod's corner is down stage to the left, we placed it here to create a space of solitude and quiet for him but also close to the audience to give him chance to play with them. His mischievous nature needed a home for him to play and also to return to whenever he fashioned one of his schemes.

Embracing Failure:

'The performer listens to what the body is saying and, based upon what the body has come to know, make judgments about performance choices. (Pelias, R.J: 2008, p. 186)

Throughout the creating process and in our rehearsals with our cast, we have been enforcing the embracement of failure and the fact that it is a gift in clowning. To truly be present in the space and with your audience, it is vital to know when something is working and when something is necessarily not. Embracing failure is something quite foreign to all of us, it is something that we all have wanted to deflect and pretend didn't happen and ignore, what we wanted to show our cast was that it is completely natural and human to fail and in doing so, acknowledging that failure with your audience and moving on from it is something quite powerful. To put quite simply, and something I wanted my cast to use as a mantra throughout not just the final performance but the whole creating process, was that without failure, there is no room for play, just like playing as a kid, you were never afraid of failing, it was all just playing; it was all just fun.

In an article written by an amateur clown taking a workshop from a professional clown named Toto, the student asked him why failure is an integral part of clowning, his reply was earnest and simple: 'you disarm yourself when you realise you've failed. When you feel the shit, you become much more human.' (Crosson, K: 2019, The Irish Times) We wanted our cast to feel safe to play and to have fun within the realms of this world we created together, no fear in failing and acceptance when it happens; the will to fail and try again, taking what you discovered from that failure and allowing your audience see you acknowledge your failure and presence in the space, invites them along for the journey as well.

Exercises to help progress as a clown:

Mr Hit:

Mr Hit is a warm up game that is designed to get the players engaged and used to responding in the present moment. The exercise consists of getting your cast to walk around an open space and one elected person will start the game by tapping somebody on the shoulder. The person that has been tapped on the shoulder then has to say somebody else's name in the room. They can not say the name of the person that tapped them. The person who they named then has to quickly as possible tap somebody else on the shoulder and so on.

We used this game as a warm up exercise to make sure that our cast were engaged and also improve their awareness of the importance of presence within clowning in each rehearsal.

Hotter & Colder:

Hotter and colder is a clowning exercise with a sense of achievement. A lot of clowning exercises seem to set you up and prepare you to embrace failure but this is one of the few that actually give a feeling of accomplishment when the final goal is achieved. It consists of a clown exiting a room and the audience then discuss what they would want the clown to do on stage, either it be an action in a certain position on the stage or for them to vocally sing a specific song. The opportunities to play with this are endless as it is completely up to your own imagination as the observer to make the clowns do whatever you want. Once an image or action is thought of the clown/clowns will be asked to re-enter the space. The observer will then clap or laugh when the clown gets closer to its objective. It is up to the clown to really observe the audience's response to figure out if it is giving them what they want. The game is completed by them recreating exactly what the observer had decided.

This exercise helps to improve the clown's observation skills of the audience, therefore placing them in a constant present state throughout.

We used this technique not only to improve our cast's clown's presence and observing skills but we also used this to try and help them figure out who their clown is. We used this in early stages of production in order to pick out their common traits that they have in different situations in attempt to figure out more about their clowns. This worked to an extent in the idea that the cast seemed to be getting more of an understanding of how contemporary clowning works but they still had a bit of a struggle with figuring out their own clowns.

The moment that they really started to get the grasp of this was when we used the exercise Step Laugh which I have explained earlier in the document. That was a big breakthrough moment for us as a troupe as we really started to realise what we were missing from the performance. We had realised that our cast tended to apply a selected few of set techniques that we had learned whilst forgetting about the others. Step laugh helped us realise that to achieve full presence we needed to make sure that it was drilled into everybody's head and become somewhat a second nature to our cast. The way that we approached this was to run the scenarios that we had created multiple times with a stop start process. The stop start process consists of stopping the cast as soon as something goes wrong instead of waiting until the end of a scene. This allowed us to really plant what presence is into their heads. The stop start has a similar approach to the step laugh technique as in it forces the clown to make sure it is engaged and present and if not, they have to start again. This way of creating can be frustrating for the speed of the creative process but it has been the most affective for us.

‘To truly laugh, you must be able to take your pain and play with it.’

- Charlie Chaplin
(*Famous Clowns*, n.d.)

Some Quick Statistics

Which area is losing the most pubs?

Total pub closures, January to June 2018



Source: CAMRA

(Ainsworth, P: 2018, Internet)



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