



Sat 7 - Sat 21 May

# NOTHELLO

By Mojisola Adebayo

Belgrade  
Theatre  
Coventry



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



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Welcome to this performance of **Nothello**, the last piece in our programme of work for Coventry UK City of Culture 2021.

**Nothello** is directed by **Justine Themen**, our Co-Artistic Director for 2021. Justine has been with the Belgrade for 18 years, formerly our Deputy Artistic Director and before that Associate Director, and has pioneered the Belgrade's practice of co-creating work with Coventry's communities. We'd like to thank Justine for her passion and hard work over the last 18 years and we wish her the very best in her new ventures.

**Nothello** is an absurdist, anarchic, insightful and witty new play from playwright Mojisola Adebayo. The increasingly meta deep-dive into Shakespeare's Othello is told from the perspective of Othello and Desdemona's unborn twins, Nothello and Desdeknownow. Join us as we imagine a version of Othello for today, where it's not a tragedy anymore, but a romance. Where Othello and Desdemona can start all over again - full of love and possibility, hope and wonder.

This show explores Othello's legacy and what it means to be of mixed heritage, working with a community company of interracial couples and people of mixed heritage.

Although we're about to say goodbye to Coventry's year as City of Culture, we're looking ahead to a summer of shows celebrating the legacy of the last 12 months. Our B2 stage will play host to remounts of two local plays which made their world premiere in summer 2021; **May Queen** and **The Allesley Silas**. **May Queen** follows sixteen-year-old Leigh as she is crowned Coventry's May Queen on a hot summer day, and will once again be directed by our Co-Artistic Director for 2021, Balisha Karra. **The Allesley Silas** comes from the pen of Coventry playwright and Vice Chairman of the Belgrade's Board, Alan Pollock, and retells George Eliot's beloved story of Silas Marner.

From September onwards, we welcome an incredible Autumn Season with highlights like West End hit musicals **SIX**, **Beautiful: The Carole King Musical**, and **The Rocky Horror Show**, classic drama **An Inspector Calls** and **The Mousetrap**, plus the world premiere of the brand new musical **Bombay Superstar**, co-produced by the Belgrade and Phizzical (*Stardust, Bring on the Bollywood*).

Beyond this, we look forward to more ground-breaking, co-created new work in the B2 as we shape our plans for the future.

We'd like to thank Coventry City of Culture Trust for their funding.

Thank you to our loyal audiences for your continued support of the Belgrade. We look forward to having you back soon.

Laura Elliot (CEO) and Corey Campbell (Creative Director)

**NOTHELLO**

## CAST

**Gabriel Akamo**  
Othello/Otis

**Harris Cain**  
Nothello

**Alex Scott Fairley**  
Iago/Colin

**Rayyah McCaul**  
Desdemona/Emilia/Cathy

**Aimee Powell**  
Desdeknownow

## CREATIVES

**Justine Themen**  
Director

**Mojisola Adebayo**  
Writer

**Simon Kenny**  
Designer

**Ola Animashawun**  
Dramaturge

**Ben Ormerod**  
Lighting Designer

**Arun Ghosh**  
Composer and Sound Designer

**Una May Olomolaiye**  
Songsmith

**Shaun Cope**  
Movement Director

**Sam Behan**  
Fight Director

**Victoria Williams**  
Voice Coach

**Joelle Ikwa**  
Assistant Director

**Keith Tunstall**  
Producer

**Sâmîr Bhamra**  
Producer

**Kim Hackleman**  
Community Embedded Producer

**Ayesha Jones**  
Community Embedded Producer

**Leon Phillips**  
Community Co-ordinator and  
Drama Worker

**Adrian Sweeney**  
Production Manager

**Emma Barber**  
Casting

**Aime Neeme**  
Company Stage Manager

**Patricia Davenport**  
Deputy Stage Manager

**Ruth Porter**  
Assistant Stage Manager

## BORN CHORUS

Collette Bardell  
Sascha Bernard  
Reya Bird  
Annalise Brown  
Shalondie Clarke  
Hannah Farmer  
Natalie Murray  
Raheem Qadiri  
Raysheena Qadiri  
Carly Smith  
Maia Smith  
Serena - Summer Wilson

## COMMUNITY CHORUS

Dan Bailey - Ludovico  
Iskander Fakhritdinov - Cassio/Attendant  
Eric Hodgkins - Gratiano  
Nathan Holden - Usher  
Christopher Old - Brabantio  
Jason Riley - Cassio/Attendant

## DANCERS

Elaine Barrett  
Amelia Clark  
Carol Darmon  
Sherrie Edgar  
Lorraine Murray

## CHAPERONES

Arun Dheandsa  
Margaret Francis  
Sophie McNulty  
Giancarla Pflieger  
Yvonne Williams

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## GABRIEL AKAMO

**Othello/Otis**

Training: The Actors Class and National Youth Theatre of Great Britain.

Theatre credits include: **A Christmas Carol** (Antic Disposition, London); **Macbeth** (Redbridge Drama Centre/Kenneth More Theatre); **Lovesick** (Hope Theatre); **At Home I Speak** (Rich Mix); **F OFF** (Underbelly Cowgate); **Nowhere Orange** (Theatre N16); **A Change Is Gonna Come** (Barbican Centre); **Zigger Zagger** (Wilton's Music Hall); **Grey Matters** (Theatre Royal Stratford East); **The Tempest** (Royal & Derngate) and **The State We're In** (Theatre 503).



## HARRIS CAIN

**Nothello**

Harris Cain graduated from East 15 drama school in 2018. He has gone on to do many types of work, such as a cameo in **Enterprise** (BBC 3) and a stunt man in the opera **Simon Boccanegra** (Royal Opera House).

In 2021, Harris toured with Told By An Idiot Theatre Company in their production of **Charlie & Stan** and has most recently joined the cast of **Nothello**, working with the Belgrade Theatre.

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# ALEX SCOTT FAIRLEY

**Iago/Colin**

Alex is delighted to be a part of **Nothello**, and to be working at the Belgrade. Normally, he lives in the Highlands of Scotland, where he is a keen naturalist, walker and mountain-climber.

Alex has most recently played Hugh Paddick in Apollo's tour of **Round the Home**. Further recent credits include **The 39 Steps**, **Keeping Up Appearances**, and **Wait Until Dark** (Swanage Repertory Theatre), and **Mary Sunshine in Chicago**, **Dexter in High Society**, **Travesties**, **Quality Street**, **Absurd Person Singular**, **People**, **The Ruling Class**, **A Chorus of Disapproval**, **Lady Windermere's Fan** and **Hello, Dolly!** (Pitlochry Festival Theatre).

Other theatre credits include **Call Me Mr. Bullfinch** (Lyceum, Edinburgh); **Peril at Sea** (UK Tour); **The Shakespeare Revue** (UK Tour); **A Christmas Carol** (Apollo); **Stiles and Drewe's The Three Little Pigs** (UK Tour); **Blood Brothers** (West End and UK Tour); **Flahooley!** and **Mexican Hayride** (Sadler's Wells); **Enjoy!** (York Theatre Royal); **Doctor Faustus** (Creation, Oxford); **Pool** (Brockley Jack); **The Tempest** (Winchester Theatre Royal); **Alice in Wonderland**, **Twelfth Night**, **The Merry Wives of Windsor**, **A Midsummer Night's Dream** and **The Taming of the Shrew** (Guildford Shakespeare Company); and **The Way to Keep Him** (Artifice). As a puppeteer he worked on **Midnight** (Peacock, London); and **Monstersaurus** (UK Tour) and has toured the USA with **The Gruffalo**, **The Gruffalo's Child**, **Room on the Broom** and **Pigeon Party!** He regularly appears in pantomime, last Christmas as the Beast/Prince in **Beauty and the Beast** (Corn Exchange, King's Lynn).

He has also been seen in Vienna, last year in **Travels With My Aunt** (Vienna's English Theatre); **A Capital Affair** (Vienna's English Theatre); **An Inspector Calls** (International Theatre). His German-language credits there include **Was Ihr Wollt** and **Romeo und Julia** (Openhouse).

Alex studied English at Jesus College, Oxford, and he still works as a proof-reader and translator, for everyone from Volkswagen to the University of Bern. His translation work for the stage includes **Der Gruffelo** (Junges Theater, Bonn). His website is [www.alexscottfairley.com](http://www.alexscottfairley.com).

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## RAYYAH MCCAUL

Desdemona/Emilia

Rayyah is very excited to be making her debut at the Belgrade Theatre with **Nothello**.

Other credits include: **A Doll's House** (Leeds Playhouse) and **Mine** (Leicester Haymarket). Rayyah has toured extensively around the UK and Europe including playing the title roles in **The Inquisition of Queen Elizabeth I** and **Penthesilea**.

Her screen credits include: **Coronation Street** and **Emmerdale** (ITV). Rayyah is also a swing dancer, performing at the Royal Albert Hall with **JazzMAD** in 2018. She is represented by Bodhi Talent Agency.



## AIMEE POWELL

Desdeknewnow

Theatre/TV credits include: **Middlemarch** (Dash Arts); **Seaview** (Belgrade Digital Media and Strictly Arts); **Sent to Cov** (Sky Arts); **This Little Relic** (BBC); **Crongton Knights** (Pilot Theatre and Belgrade Theatre); **Freeman** (Strictly Arts Theatre Company) and **Doctors** and **The Archers** (BBC).

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# JUSTINE THEMEN

## Director

Justine Themen is the outgoing Deputy Artistic Director of the Belgrade Theatre and was Co-Artistic Director for its City of Culture 2021 programme. She played a key role in the winning of the City of Culture title for Coventry, and directed **Coventry Moves**, its opening event, the first large-scale outdoor event in the UK as the country emerged from the second wave of the global pandemic. She is currently Leadership Associate at The Royal Shakespeare Company.

She is a Theatre Director and Change Maker committed to placing an integrated approach to artistic excellence & creative engagement at the beating heart of contemporary theatre. Her work around diversity, community engagement and new work, has driven the agenda for the Belgrade Theatre's organisational change programme, **Keys**, and its new vision for a regional theatre for all; as well as influencing Coventry City of Culture's co-created approach to programming.

Her directing work spans a broad range of forms/contexts - from large-scale outdoor performances such as **Coventry Moves** (Coventry UK City of Culture 2021); to radio drama including **This Little Relic** (BBC Radio 3, 2021); from new writing from the UK's diverse communities **Under the Umbrella** by Amy Ng (Belgrade Theatre 2019), to innovative work with young people **Like There's No Tomorrow** (Belgrade Young Company/NT Connections commission, 2019 - published by Bloomsbury).

Prior to working at the Belgrade, she worked for 6 years in Suriname (the country her grandfather left for England in the late 1920s), co-creating theatre and using the Arts as a tool in Development & Cultural Diplomacy. She delivered projects for the Ministry of Education (Directorate of Culture), the Dutch Embassy & Arts Council and various UN organisations, as well as working closely with grass roots voluntary organisations, particularly in the rain-forested interior of the country.

She is a Fellow of the Clore Leadership Programme and sits on the Board of the Birmingham Opera Company. Justine has a BA in Drama and English from Bristol University, and an MA in Women's Studies from the University of Warwick.

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# MOJISOLA ADEBAYO

## Writer

Mojisola Adebayo is a playwright, performer, director, producer, workshop facilitator, mentor and lecturer. She holds a BA in Drama and Theatre Arts, an MA in Physical Theatre and a PhD in black queer theatre (Goldsmiths, Royal Holloway and Queen Mary, University of London). Mojisola trained extensively with Augusto Boal and is a specialist in Theatre of the Oppressed. She has worked in theatre, radio and television, on four continents, over the past 25 years, performing in over 50 productions, writing, devising and directing over 30 plays, from Antarctica to Zimbabwe.

Mojisola's plays include **Moj of the Antarctic: An African Odyssey** (Lyric Hammersmith and Ovalhouse, London); **Muhammad Ali and Me** (Ovalhouse, Albany Theatre, London and touring England); **48 Minutes for Palestine** (Ashtar Theatre and international touring); **Desert Boy** (Albany Theatre, London and tour); **The Listeners** (Pegasus Theatre, Oxford); **I Stand Corrected** (Artscape, Ovalhouse, London and international tour); **The Interrogation of Sandra Bland** (Bush Theatre, London); **Wind / Rush Generation(s)** (National Theatre - Connections) and **Nothello** (Belgrade Theatre Coventry). Her latest plays, **STARS** (Tamasha Theatre and ICA) and also the Alfred Fagon award-winning play **Family Tree** (Actors Touring Company) open in Spring 2023.

Publications include **Mojisola Adebayo: Plays One and Mojisola Adebayo: Plays Two** (Oberon Books); **48 Minutes for Palestine** (Methuen); **The Interrogation of Sandra Bland in Black Lives, Black Words and Theatre in Times of Crisis** (Oberon); **The Theatre for Development Handbook** (Pan, co-written with John Martin and Manisha Mehta); **Wind / Rush Generation(s)** (Methuen) and **Black British Queer Plays and Practitioners: An Anthology of Afriquia Theatre**, co-edited with Lynette Goddard (Bloomsbury Methuen).

Mojisola is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, an Associate Artist with various organizations including Pan Arts, Building the Anti-Racist Classroom Collective, AICRE and Black Lives, Black Words, a Visiting Artist at Goldsmiths, University of London and Rose Bruford College, where she is also an Honorary Fellow. Mojisola is also a Lecturer at Queen Mary, University of London and a Research Fellow at University Potsdam. Mojisola is currently a commissioned artists with Counterpoints and will soon start as a Writer-on-attachment with the National Theatre.

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# SIMON KENNY

## Designer

Theatre includes: **Blue/Orange** (Royal & Derngate Northampton); **The Death of a Black Man** (Hampstead); **Footfalls & Rockaby** (Jermyn Street); **Antigone** (Mercury Colchester); several UK tours for Eclipse including **The Gift** (Stratford East), **Black Men Walking** (Royal Exchange) and **Princess and The Hustler** (Bristol Old Vic); **Crongton Knights** and **Noughts & Crosses** (Pilot/UK tours); **Red Dust Road** (National Theatre of Scotland); **Giraffes Can't Dance** (Curve); **The Children** (English Theatre Frankfurt); **Holes** (Nottingham Playhouse/UK tour); **Broken Glass** (Watford Palace); **Wind in the Willows** (Sherman Cardiff); **Babette's Feast** (The Print Room); **Rose** (HOME); **Twelfth Night** and **The Merchant of Venice** (Shakespeare's Globe); **Sleeping Beauty**, **The Ladykillers** and **Sleuth** (Watermill); **Ghosts** (Theatr Clwyd); **Entertaining Mr Sloane** (UK tour); **In The Next Room or the vibrator play** and **4000 Miles** (Ustinov Studio Bath); **Island** (National Theatre); **The Belle's Stratagem** (Southwark Playhouse) and **BORDER FORCE**, an immersive installation/performance/club event for Duckie.

Musical theatre includes: **The Wiz** (Hope Mill); **Ghost Quartet** (Boulevard Theatre); **Assassins** (Watermill/Nottingham Playhouse); the multi award-winning **Sweeney Todd** in a purpose-built pie shop (West End/Off-Broadway – Drama Desk Nomination for Outstanding Set Design of a Musical); **The Selfish Giant**, a folk opera by Guy Chambers (West End); **Cabaret** (English Theatre Frankfurt); **The World Goes Round** (Stephen Joseph Theatre); and **Saturday Night Fever** (Theatre Royal Bath/UK tour).

Opera includes: **A Midsummer Night's Dream** and **Le Nozze di Figaro** (Nevill Holt Opera); **Vivienne** (Royal Opera House: Linbury); and **The Cunning Little Vixen** and **Háry János** (Ryedale Festival).

Simon's designs for **Black Men Walking** were selected to represent the UK at the Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and the V&A Museum. He is a core member of design collective **SCENE/CHANGE**.

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# OLA ANIMASHAWUN

## Dramaturge

Ola Animashawun is a National Theatre Associate and Connections Dramaturg and the co-founder and Creative Director of the playwriting consultancy, Euphoric Ink. He is also a former Associate Director of the Royal Court Theatre, where he worked for 23 years, during which time he founded and ran the Royal Court Young Writers Programme, and set up a nationwide writers' programme – Critical Mass – which is dedicated to finding and nurturing new playwrights from the Global Majority.

Ola has worked in theatre for over 30 years, with 20 of those years dedicated to specialising in script development as a dramaturg and facilitator. He has also held positions as an Associate Artist, Dramaturg and Mentor for Belgrade Theatre, Cheltenham Everyman Theatre, Theatre Absolute, Shop Front Theatre, and Eclipse Theatre. His other skills include acting, directing, devising, writing and presenting. He is a patron of Graeae Theatre and Script Yorkshire and an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. He is also an Alfred Fagon Black Champion of Theatre.

# VICTORIA WILLIAMS

## Voice Coach

Victoria Williams has worked for the last twelve years as an Associate Voice Practitioner with the Royal Shakespeare Company and in West End theatre on **Matilda the Musical** since it began in Stratford-upon-Avon moving with the show to the West End in 2012. She continues to coach voices and teaches both adults and children to use their voices effectively, both in business and on stage. Victoria's specialism is on speaking Shakespeare and classical theatre in the open air and she has run many **Voice in the Open Air** workshops and **Shakespeare and Voice** workshops for the Royal Shakespeare Company and The Minack theatre.

Victoria has directed 100s of full scale children's productions and open air festivals over the last twenty five years through her youth theatre company Gobstoppers Theatre Arts, which she runs from her studio in Berkhamsted. She has also worked on countless projects and shows for the RSC at the following theatres: Associate Voice and text coach on Royal Shakespeare Company open stages programme, **Pericles'** (RSC The Courtyard Theatre); Stratford Upon Avon, Voice and text coach on **Henry V** (The Duchess Theatre West End); **RSC open stages Voice and Shakespeare Workshops** (Theatre Royal Norwich); The Hall for Cornwall; The Grand Theatre Blackpool; The Sherman Theatre Cardiff; The Gaiety Theatre The Isle of Man and at the Theatre Royal Bath and The National Student drama Festival.

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# JOELLE IKWA

## Assistant Director

Joelle is delighted to be Assistant Directing **Nothello**, an absurdist piece of theatre which brings together professional, youth and community practises. It is a play exploring interracial relationships, what it means to be of mixed heritage and deconstructing Shakespeare's famous Othello. Her involvement with **Nothello** has been working with the youth and community groups. As one of the first groups introduced to **Nothello**, she found it a joy to explore the different themes even from the first treatment. The youth and community groups have come together to devise some of the songs for the play, based on the themes of being mixed heritage.

She has found the process enjoyable and educational. It has challenged her personal thoughts and allowed her to become more knowledgeable about experiences of both interracial couples and people of mixed heritage. She encourages everyone to come and see the show, as it's the perfect way to end the City of Culture year at the Belgrade Theatre. This is a play for everyone, and a story that will keep you laughing and also thinking at the same time.

# ARUN GHOSH

## Composer & Sound Designer

Arun Ghosh is a British-Asian musician, composer and music educator. Twice awarded 'Jazz Instrumentalist of the Year' at the Parliamentary Jazz Awards, Arun leads his own ensembles, touring nationally and internationally. A renowned clarinettist and bandleader, he has released five albums on camoci records: **Northern Namaste**, **Primal Odyssey**, **A South Asian Suite** and **But Where Are You Really From?**

His latest album, **Secluded in Light**, was released in March this year, with an accompanying national tour. A new work for chamber ensemble and voice, **The Canticle of the Sun**, is a Spiritual Jazz setting of St. Francis of Assisi's stunning paean to nature, the cosmos and the elements. Commissioned by Sound UK and Norwich and Norfolk Festival, the piece will tour churches, cathedrals and other sacred spaces from Summer this year. As a composer for theatre, Arun has contributed scores and sound designs to over a hundred productions since his debut in 2002; **Storm** by Lemn Sissay (Contact, Manchester).

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**Nothello** is Arun's sixth production for Belgrade Theatre, having previously composed scores for **Blood; Made in India** (with Tamasha); **Red Snapper; Under the Umbrella** and the large-scale, site specific community project, **CET**. Other theatre work includes: **The Bone Sparrow** and **Noughts & Crosses** (Pilot Theatre); **The Wolf, The Duck and The Mouse** (Unicorn/New Perspectives); **A Doll's House** (Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith); **Bystanders** (Cardboard Citizens); **Hobson's Choice, The Tempest, Antigone, Volpone** (Royal Exchange, Manchester); **Approaching Empty** (Tamasha/Kiln Theatre); **Much Ado About Nothing** (Watford Palace Theatre) and **Lions and Tigers** (Shakespeare's Globe Theatre). Arun Ghosh is a Creative Associate at Watford Palace Theatre, and an Associate Artist of Z-arts, Manchester.

## **BEN ORMEROD**

### **Lighting Designer**

For Belgrade Theatre: **The Spanish Golden Age** (also Ustinov Bath/Arcola), **Head/Case** (also RSC/Soho Theatre).

Theatre credits include: **A Christmas Carol; The Duchess of Malfi; A Long Days Journey Into Night; The Orestia** (Citizens Theatre, Glasgow); **The Dresser; A Song At Twilight** (Bath & UK Tour); **The Model Apartment; Trouble In Mind** (Theatre Royal Bath, Ustinov); **The Sunset Limited** (Boulevard Theatre); **Assassins** (Newbury and Nottingham Playhouse); **Prism** (UK Tour); **The Scent of Roses; A Number** (Lyceum, Edinburgh); **Uncle Vanya; Prism; Loyalty** (Hampstead); **Broken Glass** (Watford Palace Theatre); **All's Well That Ends Well** (Sam Wanamaker Playhouse); **A Midsummer Night's Dream** (Regents Park) and **Zorro** (West End, Europe, US and Japan).

Opera credits include: **Die Tote Stadt, Tristan und Isolde and Der Ring des Nibelungen** (Longborough Festival); **La Traviata** (Danish National Opera); **Jeanne d'Arc au Bûcher** (Academia Santa Cecilia, Rome); **Falstaff, Il Trovatore** (Scottish Opera); and **La Traviata** (English National Opera).

Dance credits include: **Carmen Osipova** (Bird and Carrot); **@Home** (Humanooove); **The Shadow** (Company Chameleon); **Is to Be** (Le Prix De Lausanne); **The Nutcracker, Les Noces** (Ballet Geneva); **See Blue Through/Toot!** (Oper Leipzig); **Frame of View** (Cedar Lake Contemporary Ballet, New York); and **Tenderhooks** (Skanes Dansteater/Ballet Gulbenkian).

Ben is also lighting consultant at the Calico Museum, Ahmedabad and has directed Dimetos for the Gate.

# **NOTHELLO**

# SHAUN COPE

## Movement Director

Shaun Cope is a renowned choreographer, performer and teacher dedicated to the development of progressive dance, its appreciation and participation. His professional experience has taken him worldwide performing, teaching and choreographing for the stage, TV and video.

His self-styled fusion of dance and movement, incorporating contemporary, African, street dance and martial arts movement, has led him to work with cutting edge contemporary music and dance artists. His trademark style is one of fusion in the widest sense and allows him to work collaboratively with other artists, tutors and anyone with an artistic voice.

He also manages and promotes the successful **Bruk Up** music sessions as well as **N.E.O.** (new, exciting and original); a program of dance, music and visual arts events that provides new and established artists a platform to present new innovative work.

# SAM BEHAN

## Fight Director

Choreography Credits: **The Pact II** (BBC); **London Kills** (BBC); **Pobol Y Cwm** (BBC); **Hidden/Craith** (BBC - assist.); **House of Shades** (Almeida); **Hamlet** (Almeida / Park Avenue Armoury US); **Candida** (The Orange Tree Theatre); **Teleportation** (The Bunker Theatre); **As You Like It** (Rain or Shine Theatre Co.); **The Omission of The Family Coleman** (Theatre Royal Bath); **Macbeth** (Bear Left Theatre Co.); **Dying Light, Arcadia** (University of Northampton - Jackson Lane); **Macbeth** (PPA); **Various Music Videos** (Dwarfstar Media); **Edward II** (The Globe - assist.); **Love's Labour's Lost** (The Globe - assist.); **Merry Wives of Windsor** (RSC - assist) and **Robin Hood** (Bath, The Egg - assist.).

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## WITH THANKS TO

The people of Coventry who shared their inter-racial and mixed heritage experiences with us.

Frances Marks for her generous donation.

We dedicate this play to all the children of mixed heritage relationships and all of us fostered children. Welcome to the world. You are wanted.

**NOTHELLO**