



Education Pack

For Drama GCSE, A Level & BTEC
Performing Arts students

The House Party

By **Laura Lomas**
An adaptation of *Miss Julie*
By **August Strindberg**

Headlong

chichester
festival
theatre

FRANTIC
ASSEMBLY

LEEDS
PLAY
HOUSE

ROSE
THEATRE

HOME

BRISTOL
OLD VIC

BELGRADE
THEATRE

Overview

This education pack has been created by Headlong Theatre. As a national touring organisation and producer of high-quality theatre we are committed to an ongoing ambition of connecting with young people and supporting their learning and understanding of theatre and the arts.

We are critically aware of the importance of increasing access points to our work. As a cultural provider which engages with young people around the country and we are attentive to the fact that opportunity to access and engage with cultural provision is not evenly distributed.

The education and resource pack was designed for teachers of Drama GCSE and BTEC Performing Arts students and is geared to the live theatre review and practitioner study. This pack features in conversation interviews with members of the senior creative team. It was written from a theatre-maker and a GCSE Drama school teacher perspective.

There is information about the historical context of the play and the original work *Miss Julie* by August Strindberg. There are some resources and ideas of how you may be able to further explore the text and the craft of theatre-making.

Content warning & age guidance

Ages 14+. This production contains frequent strong language and themes of class divisions, power and privilege, sexual relationships, social media including the sharing of video footage without consent, self-harm, references to suicide, miscarriage, and psychological trauma; and depictions of drinking, sexual activity and violence towards animals.

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Why *The House Party*

At Headlong our ambition is to make theatre with the power to move. We're interested in big, exhilarating productions that use the unexpected to connect with audiences around the United Kingdom and internationally.

Our Artistic Programming is focused on new plays which have at their core a central dramatic question which resonates with the political conversations of today and to rediscover classic plays, treating them as new works to find resonances with a contemporary audience. We aim to ask audiences and artists alike to consider new questions, new perspectives, and new contexts when meeting theatre history and canonical plays, which so often have a storied legacy. Finally we have to fall in love with a work or an idea in order to put it on to the stage.

The House Party written by Laura Lomas, is a radical and explosive adaptation of August Strindberg's *Miss Julie*. The play propels the psychodramas of Strindberg's

1888 classic play to the world of today, infusing a story of female friendship, betrayal, and class disparity with a world where the relationships of young people are so completely intertwined and shaped by social media, digital surveillance, and pervasive standards of beauty and success.

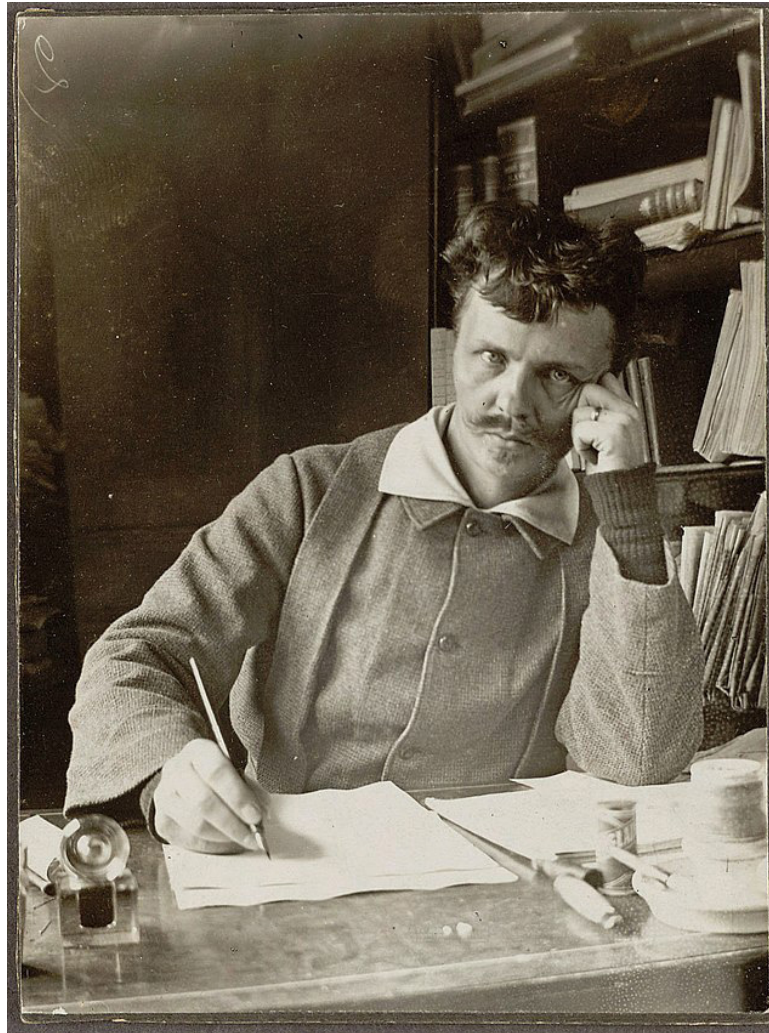
This work sits at the intersection of our programming strands, Laura's writing reinterprets themes central to Strindberg's original text and recontextualises *Miss Julie* for an audience today. This work feels like a new story sitting on the theatrical scaffolding of a seminal text in theatre history, preserving some key elements of Strindberg at the same time as challenging others. We've also partnered with Frantic Assembly to bring a dynamic and evocative physical vocabulary to the text which heightens the emotionality of the work, and propels us into a physical exploration of youth and the tectonic plates of emotions sitting underneath the play around belonging, sex, consent, and friendship.



Historical context of August Strindberg and *Miss Julie*

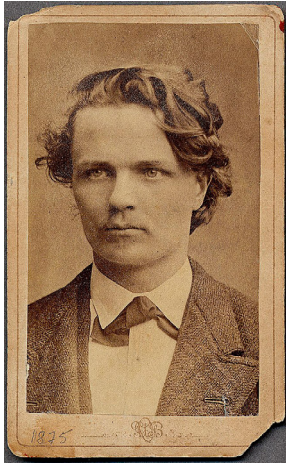
August Strindberg was a prolific dramatist, literary figure, and essayist. He was an experimental theatre-maker and the author of over 60 plays. He was born in 1849 in Sweden, Stockholm to a middle class family, the son of a shipping agent.

His writing often explored themes of psychology, sexuality, class struggle, and the supernatural. In his later years, Strindberg became increasingly interested in mysticism and the occult. At the time he pioneered the theatrical techniques of expressionism and naturalism.



From left
August Strindberg in
1882 and 1912

Images courtesy of
National Library of
Sweden



August Strindberg in
1875

Image courtesy of
National Library of
Sweden

Key Dates of Strindberg's Life

- 1849** Strindberg born
- 1871** First play: *The Outlaw* premieres in Sweden
- 1872** *Master Olof* premieres in Sweden
- 1877** Marriage to Siri von Essen - a Swedish aristocrat and actress who was said to be the inspiration for *Miss Julie*
- 1887** *The Father* premieres in Sweden
- 1888** *Miss Julie* premieres in Copenhagen
- 1889** *Creditors* and *The Stronger* premier in Sweden
- 1891** Divorce from Siri von Essen
- 1893** Marriage to Frida Uhl -an Austrian journalist, writer, and translator
- 1897** Divorce from Frida Uhl
- 1901** Marriage to Harriet Bosse - a Swedish-Norwegian actress who was 29 years younger than him. He was 53, she was 23
- 1904** Divorce from Harriet Bosse
- 1901** *The Dance of Death* premieres in Sweden
- 1907** *The Ghost Sonata* premieres in Sweden
- 1912** Strindberg dies at 63 from cancer

A timeline and the history of the original *Miss Julie*

- 1889** The first production of Strindberg's *Miss Julie* by August Strindberg premiered at the Scandinavian Experimental Theatre in Copenhagen, Denmark in March.

The play was written in Swedish, but first performed in Danish (which Strindberg was fluent in and translated). The premiere took place in Denmark because of the censorship in Sweden - the 1842 Theater Act required all plays to be approved by government censors before they could be performed publicly. The censors had the authority to prohibit or modify any play they deemed offensive or politically subversive. *Miss Julie* would likely not have passed due to its perceived presentation of immorality and sex.

- 1889** The first English language version (translated by Scottish playwright and novelist, Henry Arthur Jones) premiered in May - 2 months after the Danish premiere - at the Avenue theatre in the West End. The same theatre had previously shown Strindberg's *The Father* (translated by Walter L. Courtney. Courtney's) in 1887 - the first of his 5 plays to be seen in London. By all accounts, *Miss Julie* was the more popular.
- 1889** First *Miss Julie* performed in Sweden, in Swedish, at the New Theatre (now known as the Royal Dramatic Theatre) in Stockholm.
- 1906** The first US version, in English staged at the Bijou Theatre in New York City.

What is the original *Miss Julie* about?

Miss Julie is a naturalistic tragedy that takes place during the course of a Midsummer's Eve in the kitchen of a Swedish count's estate. The play revolves around the interactions between three main characters: Miss Julie, the count's daughter; Jean, the count's valet; and Kristin, the cook.

Miss Julie, discontent with her life and feeling suffocated by societal expectations, decides to spend the Midsummer's Eve mingling with the servants. She becomes increasingly drawn to Jean, despite the vast social gap between them. Julie and Jean flirt, revealing their desires, fears, and vulnerabilities. Kristin sleeps through most of it.

Julie and Jean sleep together as the local peasants sing a song, mocking the two of them. After the act, Julie despairs and tries

to persuade Jean to run away with her, and Jean considers a future where they start a hotel together in lake Como. As the night progresses, they argue about staying or going, as Jean becomes more callous towards Julie. Julie reveals her mother taught her to hate men and the two go hammer and tongs at each other as to who has the more class. At one point Julie brings down her pet bird which Jean decapitates.

Kristin returns and realises what has happened, Julie asks her to run away with them, but Kristin is disgusted and tells them she will tell the grooms to hold the horses - preventing any hope of escape. Jean tells Julie there is only one way out, and gives her a razor. The count returns and calls for Jean, as Julie exits, presumably to die.



Anita Björk and Ulf Palme in Alf Sjöberg's 1951 film adaptation *Fröken Julie*

What is *The House Party* about?

The House Party is a naturalistic tragedy that takes place on the Winter Solstice, the longest night of the year, and Julie is throwing a last minute 18th birthday party in her father's extravagant townhouse.

Julie has just turned 18, her boyfriend has dumped her, her father has cancelled their dinner plans, and she is young and popular. The play revolves around the characters of Julie, her long suffering best friend, Christine, and Christine's boyfriend, Jon, who is the son of Julie's cleaner. Julie and Christine met when she transferred from her fee paying private education to the state school that Jon and Christine attended. A move that was precipitated by someone sharing a naked photo of her online.

The play begins with some pre-drinks between Julie and Christine, but Christine is reluctant to drink claiming she

has to work in the morning, when actually she has an important interview with a prestigious university that she isn't telling Julie about. Julie is spiralling and wants to have a big night.

During the party, Julie's behaviour becomes increasingly erratic. Jon, who is there to drive Christine home early, gets annoyed with Julie but in the middle of a confrontation between Jon and Julie, he admits he used to have feelings for her and the two have sex in the kitchen.

As the action unfolds, the party, Julie's mental state, Jon & Christine's relationship, and the fabric of connection between all three characters deteriorates. Julie ends up locking herself in the bathroom to presumably die.



Character Comparison

Miss Julie (25)

Miss Julie

The daughter of the Count.
She broke off her engagement and enjoys manipulating men.
She is headstrong, having been raised to 'act like a man'.



Anita Björk and Ulf Palme in Alf Sjöberg's film adaption *Fröken Julie* (1951)

Julie (18)

The House Party

Lives in a big 3 storey house and used to go to the 'posh' school.
Her friendship with Christine is one of the only things she values.
She is described as needing to 'control herself' at the party.



Synnøve Karlsen as Julie in *The House Party*

Kristin (35)

Miss Julie

The cook at the Count's estate.
She is a minor character, engaged to Jean.
She is extremely religious.



Märta Dorff as Kristin in Alf Sjöberg's film adaption *Fröken Julie* (1951)

Christine (17)

The House Party

She lives in a flat and has a job at a supermarket.
She is Julie's best friend.
She is bright and academic but can be pessimistic.

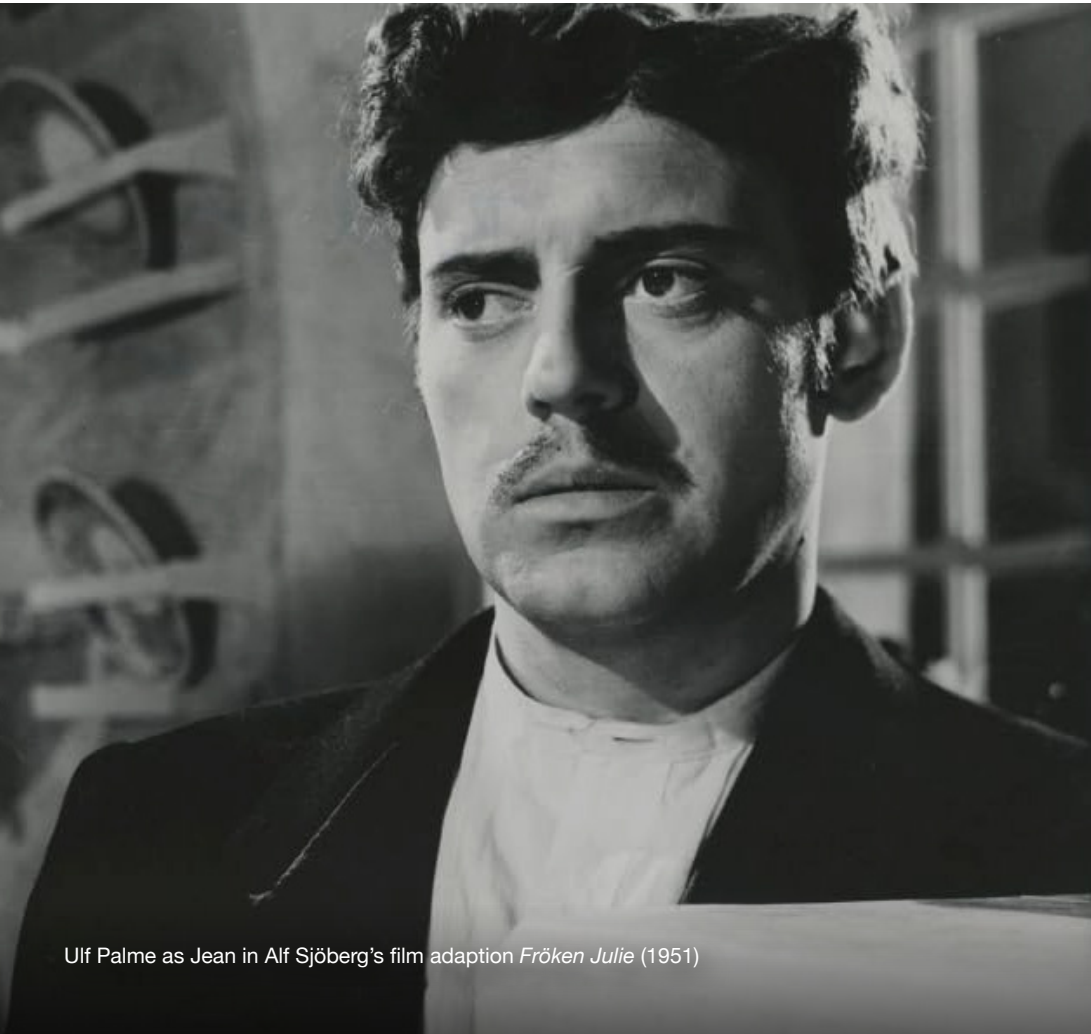


Sesley Hope as Christine in *The House Party*

Jean (30)

Miss Julie

Valet to the Count.
He envies Miss Julie's social position.
Whilst also belittling her, he tries to seduce her.



Ulf Palme as Jean in Alf Sjöberg's film adaption *Fröken Julie* (1951)

Jon (18)

The House Party

The son of Julie's cleaner, he works for Julie's father.
He is Christine's boyfriend.
He is not academic in the way Christine is and is very mindful of the different experiences of 'rich people' and 'people like us'.



Tom Lewis as Jon in *The House Party*

In conversation with creatives

Laura Lomas, Playwright & Adapter



The decision to adapt *Miss Julie* into a contemporary setting was something that stemmed from a conversation between you and the director, Holly, several years ago. Can you talk about how that idea first came about?

Yes. The decision to look at *Miss Julie* came from a conversation between Holly, the director, and me a few years ago. We were

discussing how you might create a truly contemporary version of the play—one that engages with class politics in a way that reflects today's society, where class structures aren't as rigid as they were in Strindberg's time. When we both went away to reread the play and then came back to discuss it, what struck us was how extreme and volatile the emotional shifts in the story are. There was something in that intensity that felt very teenage. The more we talked about it, the more we saw a connection between the play's stakes—especially around what happens when you sleep with someone you shouldn't—and the kind of emotional intensity that can exist in a teenage setting. That idea became the foundation for the adaptation. It felt like *Miss Julie* had this innate hormonal energy, and relocating it to a contemporary teenage house





party allowed us to explore those heightened emotions in a way that felt both relevant and dramatically urgent.

Strindberg is known as one of the major naturalist playwrights. How did you approach adapting his work within—or against—that tradition?

I'd say that naturalism is still probably the dominant form in contemporary theatre, though there are many different variations. In my own writing, I'm interested in how you can introduce more metaphorical elements within a naturalistic framework.

For example, at the beginning of our adaptation, the stage directions describe the characters feeling like they are submerged in water. That's a heightened, poetic image—something that pushes at the boundaries of strict naturalism. Another example is that one of the characters talks about being haunted by the ghost of her younger self, and we actually see that ghost-child manifest physically on stage.

So while this adaptation is grounded in naturalism, I was also interested in stretching it—exploring how it could be more theatrical and expressive while still maintaining a sense of emotional truth.

Could you talk about the relationship between Julie and Christine at the house party and how you explored the nuances of female friendship in a contemporary setting?

One of the key things I wanted to do in this adaptation was bring Christine forward as a character. In the original play, she's quite minor—it's mostly about the power dynamics between Jean and Julie. But I wanted to focus more on the female friendship and what happens when someone betrays that trust—like sleeping with your best friend's boyfriend—and what the emotional fallout of that is.

So I added a whole new scene at the beginning that establishes their friendship more fully. I was also interested in how class differences play out between them. In the original, Christine is a servant and Julie is a countess.



In this adaptation, they're both teenagers, but there's still a divide—one that might not feel immediately significant when you're young but starts to take shape as you grow up.

At 17 or 18, you might be aware that some of your friends have more money than you, but you don't fully understand the consequences of that difference in the wider world. You're still in school, still living at home, still part of the same social circles. This adaptation explores that moment—when those differences exist but haven't yet defined their lives.

Then, in what is effectively a third act, we see the consequences of that night—the betrayal, the breakdown of their friendship, and how class differences do start to manifest in real ways.

What does your working relationship with the director, Holly, look like—both before and during the rehearsal process?

Holly and I worked very closely on this one, I think partly because

the idea for the adaptation came from a conversation between us. That's not always how it works—sometimes a writer will bring an idea to a director, or they'll be working from something they've already written.

But with this play, because it was such a shared idea from the start, Holly was involved at every stage. She's read every draft and given a lot of feedback. This is actually the second production of the play—we first staged it last year in Chichester. During that process, we made a lot of changes, even in rehearsals. I completely rewrote the final act, for example. That's quite normal with a new play—you learn so much from actually seeing it on its feet.

Holly has been key to that process, almost acting as the primary dramaturg. But I've also worked with another dramaturg, Frank, who's been brilliant. There have been a lot of discussions about how to keep the bones of the original *Miss Julie*—particularly its political themes—while making sure it feels contemporary and speaks to today's audience.

Holly Race Roughan, Director



What excited you about this project as a director?

What excited me most was the opportunity to collaborate with Frantic Assembly.

We're working with a cast of ten—three principal actors and seven ensemble members—to create a production that is not only text-driven but also highly physical and emotionally charged. The combination of movement and storytelling allows us to push the drama to its full intensity, making the experience feel immediate and visceral.

The House Party explores power, class, and gender politics. How do those themes resonate in a modern setting?

Laura Lomas's adaptation brilliantly reimagines Strindberg's *Miss Julie* in a teenage house party setting, where emotions run high, and social dynamics are intense.

Strindberg's original explores gender and class struggles in a rigid 19th-century society. Laura brings those same tensions into the world of young people today, where class privilege still plays a role, but it's often less immediately visible. The stakes remain just as high, and the emotional fallout just as devastating. This adaptation lets us interrogate power, privilege, and consent in a way that feels urgent and relevant.

How does this adaptation differ from Strindberg's world? How have we moved on?

In some ways, we haven't moved on as much as we'd like to think. Class structures have shifted, but economic privilege still creates huge divides. Gender expectations have evolved, but double standards persist.

By setting the play in a modern teenage party, we show how these same power dynamics play out today—sometimes in subtle ways, sometimes in stark, brutal ones.

The pressures young people face, especially around status, relationships, and consent, mirror the themes in *Miss Julie* but in a way that speaks directly to a contemporary audience.

What is your approach to reimagining a classic for a new audience?

The key is to treat it like a new play. Laura's adaptation isn't just an update—it's a complete reinvention that honours the spirit of the original while making it feel completely fresh.

For me, it's about asking: Why this story now? How do we make it feel alive and urgent for today's audience? And in this case, the answer was to lean into the rawness of youth—the intensity, the recklessness, the joy, and the devastation.



Scott Graham, Movement Director

How did you approach incorporating movement into a text-based play like *The House Party*?

When you look at any piece of text and start thinking about movement, you're really looking for what's unsaid. You're looking for the tension between people and how that might build or even explode at any moment.

In a poetic sense, you're not necessarily trying to illustrate the context through movement—you're playing the subtext. And there's a lot of that in *The House*

Party. The unspoken emotions, the charged dynamics—those are the moments where movement becomes essential.

What was it like collaborating with Headlong and Holly on bringing *The House Party* to the stage? How did the process of adapting it feel?

Whenever you make a show for the first time, honestly, you're just grateful if it's not bad! Because you never really know how it's going to land until it's in front of an audience.



Working with Holly and Headlong was a fantastic experience. It's always great to step into someone else's rehearsal room and see different ways of working. And what was particularly exciting was seeing our different disciplines—our different approaches—come together.

But no matter how well things seem to be going, you never really know if it's going to work. So I was very thankful that it did.

Having the opportunity to come back to it for a new tour is a real privilege. It's not just a chance to revisit the work itself, but also to apply everything we've learned—about the piece and about working together. That's been really exciting.

Miss Julie is an intense psychological drama. How did movement help translate those themes into a modern, high-energy party setting?

One of the brilliant things about this adaptation is that Laura has captured a moment in young people's lives where the stakes feel impossibly high. From the outside, that stage of life might

seem shallow or even trivial. But when you're in it, it's everything.

You're figuring out who you are, testing your relationships, and every little failure or heartbreak feels like the end of the world. She's captured that emotional intensity beautifully, alongside the socio-economic themes that sit at the heart of *Miss Julie*.

And that world—the world of *The House Party*—is explosive. It's charged with energy, with movement, with unpredictability. That makes it ripe for a physical interpretation.

The atmosphere of the play is filled with testosterone, estrogen, pheromones—it's all on a knife's edge. You know something is going to happen. You know it's going to have consequences. That kind of tension is where movement really thrives—it's not just about physicality, it's about capturing that unspoken, visceral energy.

I actually think it was an inspired choice to set the adaptation in this world.

Gitika Buttoo, Associate Director



How has it been working on *The House Party*?

It's been really exciting! I love working on classic adaptations, and this one is particularly thrilling because it's such a fresh take on *Miss Julie*.

Since it's a new adaptation, there's been a lot of room for discovery in the rehearsal room. We're constantly making choices with the actors, refining lines, and shaping the piece as we go. It's a really collaborative process. Plus, the energy of the play is incredible—it's fast-paced, electric, and filled with absolute bangers on the soundtrack. It's been a joy to work on.

The House Party explores themes of power and class. How do those themes intersect with Strindberg's original?

I think *The House Party* engages with power and class in a way that will feel different depending on who's watching. Your own

background and lived experience will shape how you connect with it.

Casting plays a crucial role here—race, class, and gender all impact the dynamics of power, and this adaptation really leans into that. Power isn't static; it shifts depending on who's on stage and who's in the audience. It's fascinating to see how different people interpret and respond to those shifts.

At its core, the play still explores privilege and status, but in a way that's grounded in today's world. Setting it in a modern teenage party makes those themes feel urgent and immediate.

As an Associate Director, how do you balance supporting Holly while also bringing your own creative perspective?

This is my first time working with Holly, and being an associate director can be a tricky job. You have to balance your own creative instincts while making sure you're

supporting the director's vision.

Luckily, this collaboration has been really seamless. Holly is an incredible director, and we've been very much in sync. Sometimes we'll both be taking notes, and I'll find myself crossing something out just as she's giving that exact note to the actors—it's great when that happens!

It's also been a very open process. I feel comfortable sharing ideas, and even if they don't always make it into the final production, there's always space for discussion. That trust and communication make the work so much easier.

Discussion Points





Class, Gender and Power

Julie and Jon are presented in the play as a young man and woman from different economic backgrounds, seemingly on opposite ends of the class spectrum.

But who do you think holds the most power and why?

What role do you think gender plays in contemporary society and how people are treated?

Are there any expectations that exist today around how people should behave depending on gender?

What happens when those expectations are defied?

Do you think that class is still an issue in today's society and why?

Is there a difference between wealth and class and how people are perceived?

How do people gain, hold and keep power through wealth or class?



The Future

In the play, we find out that each character has a different preoccupation with the future.

Julie has plans to travel to Thailand with Christine.

Christine has an upcoming interview at Cambridge.

Jon wants to save enough money to live independently.

When they think about the future, what do you think they might be hopeful for?

What do you think this looks like in the short term, and what do you think this looks like in the long term?

What do you think they expect will happen? Does this align with their hopes?

What are the opportunities that they have, and what are the obstacles?

What circumstances are beyond their control and what power do they hold over their own destinies?

Some things to think about from dramaturg, Frank Peschier

- Strindberg's play takes place on Midsummer Eve, the night before the summer solstice (the shortest night of the year), around June 20th or 21st. Strindberg's Julie, if we decide it's also her birthday, is a Gemini. However, she was likely a practising Protestant, specifically Lutheran (who believe in justification by faith) so she probably didn't care.
- *The House Party* takes place on the Winter Solstice (the longest night of the year) December 20th to 22nd. In *The House Party* Julie is a Capricorn. I've decided she was born at an ungodly hour in London making Julie a Capricorn, Pisces Moon, Scorpio rising. I reckon she definitely does care.
- In Sweden, the Winter Solstice is linked to Saint Lucia's day (December 13th), the Saint of light and blindness (she scooped out her own eyes and carries them around on a plate in statues). In the UK its associated with Yule log (light in darkness) and Wassailing is a traditional practice that involves singing and toasting to the health of apple trees in orchards,
- Strindberg's Julie is 25, our Julie is 18.
- Cambridge interviews for undergraduate courses typically take place in December. In general, interviews are conducted in the weeks leading up to the Christmas break, with most interviews occurring in the first half of December. Candidates are usually notified of interview invitations in late November or early December. Nearly all the colleges offer English literature, Trinity College, St John's College, and King's College are most competitive.
- Schools typically break up for Christmas holidays around the third week of December, with the last day of term often falling on a Friday. Therefore, for 2023, schools would have broken up for Christmas between December 15th and December 22nd. Julie's party is either right at the end of term, or at the start of the holidays.
- It would make sense that they haven't yet taken their A levels, that they have taken their AS levels, (in the summer) and will take A levels the following summer before leaving sixth form next June, after their exams. I think Christine's Cambridge place would likely be dependent on her predicted grades.



- Julie left her Private School (fee paying) to go to Christine and John's State School. In January 2022, the average annual fees for private schools in the UK ranged from approximately £15,000 to £30,000 or more. I checked the current rates for some central London, mixed private schools:
Latymer Upper School: £20,000 to £22,000 per year
Westminster School: £29,000 to £31,000 per year
St. Paul's School: Approximately £26,000 to £28,000 per year
- On average, you can expect to pay anywhere from £1,500 to £4,000 or more for a pedigree French Bulldog puppy.
- If Julie's house is minimum three stories, with a cellar and garden, and in Highgate or Islington, RightMove reckons we're looking at £3 to £5 million.
- As a comparison, I tried to calculate what Christine's and Jon's household income might be. If we assume Christine's mum can't work and they get everything they are entitled to (which is unlikely)
Housing Benefit or Universal Credit: £800 - £1,500 per month
Child Benefit: £85 per month
Carer's Allowance: £270.40 per month
Total rough estimate for Christine's household income: £1,155.40 - £1,855.40 per month or between 13k - 22k a year. Or one year of Julie's school fees...
- If John's mum is single, her cleaning job could be around £1,360 to £1,920 per month (based on £8.50 per hour, 40 hours a week) - making John's household income around 18k a year
- Strindberg's Jean is the son of a labourer who claims to have been brought up in a hovel with 7 other children and a pig.





- Julie's life is destroyed by the sharing of first the naked selfie, and later the video of her and Jon having sex. According to a study published in JAMA Pediatrics in 2019, approximately 14.8% of adolescents (14 to 18) reported having been sent a sexually explicit image of themselves, and 27.4% reported having received one.
- The picture was likely sent by Whatsapp or Snapchat. Snapchat allows users to post stories (disappear within 24 hours) or Snaps (sent directly to friends can be viewed for a limited time before they disappear, typically within a few seconds after being opened.)
- Christine's mum suffers from chronic pain. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 20% of adults worldwide experience chronic pain. Chronic pain can manifest in various forms, including back pain, arthritis, migraines, neuropathic pain, and fibromyalgia.
- There is a direct link between chronic pain and poverty known as 'Psychosocial Stressors': Socioeconomic factors such as poverty, unemployment, housing instability, and food insecurity. Chronic stress can also exacerbate pain symptoms, increase the risk of developing depression and anxiety, and hinder effective pain management strategies.
- Hallucinations are most commonly associated with psychiatric disorders such as schizophrenia, where auditory hallucinations (hearing voices) are a hallmark symptom. Approximately 70-80% of individuals with schizophrenia experience auditory hallucinations. They can also be a symptom of certain neurological conditions such as Parkinson's disease, Lewy body dementia, and epilepsy.

Text Exploration



A Friendship

Extract from *The House Party*

Julie goes back to putting on make-up.

Julie What was that thing that you wanted to talk about?

Christine Sorry?

Julie When you text. You said there was something you wanted to talk about?

Christine Oh. Ahm. Yeah. It's not a big thing. We can talk about it later.

Julie You sure?

Christine nods. Short pause.

Julie Was thinking about my Mum today.

Christine Yeah?

Julie Yeah, like if she was here, what she'd think of me?

Christine She'd be proud.

Julie You think?

Christine Definitely.

Julie (I) Miss her

Christine I know.

Julie I know you do. Sometimes think you're the only one who gets it.

Christine smiles.

Julie You think I look like her?

Christine Why are you asking me that?

Julie Just something my Dad said. Keeps telling me I look like her. Think he hates it.

Christine You look like yourself Julie, don't need to worry about being anyone else.

Julie I know, just... sometimes...

Christine You're not the same.

Julie You promise?

Beat.

Christine I promise.

Pause. Julie looks at her.

Julie I love you.

A beat. Christine smiles.

Christine I love you too.

Julie Me and you. We're the same.

Christine smiles, separates. Julie watches her.

Read the extract aloud with a partner.

What do you learn about the characters?
What do you think this relationship is like at this stage of the play?

Eye contact

Sit on a chair opposite your partner and re-read the text. Try to make eye contact with the other character when you feel your character wants to connect with them.

Break eye contact when they pull them away from the other character.

What moments did you discover?
Were there any moments where you both made eye contact?

Is anyone 'chasing' or trying to connect more with the other?
Is the relationship equal?

Proxemics

This time, stand in a space, facing your partner and re-read the extract. Move closer to the other character when you want to build a connection, and move away when you want to create some distance. This can be the framework of how you might block the scene.

Blocking the scene

Incorporating some moments of making and breaking eye contact, and movement towards or away, run through the script again. However, this time think about how eye contact and movement could be made to look more naturalistic.

What stage directions are already there to help you with this?

What natural reasons might your character have to move away or move closer?

How could you use props/ set to help with this?

Are there any moments you could hold to highlight what this relationship or the characters are like?



Discuss

What possible reasons do you think keep this friendship intact?
What is pulling them apart?
What do you predict will happen next?

Develop

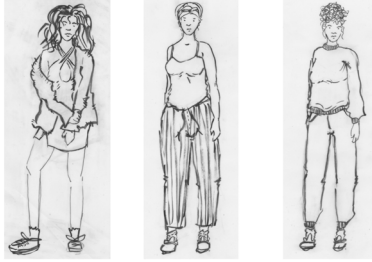
Continue exploring who these characters are by creating an imagined next scene.
How could you pull what you learned about the characters and their friendship into a future moment?

After seeing the play, create a scene of what could happen if you changed the story or if the characters made different choices.

Design Adaptation



CHRISTINE



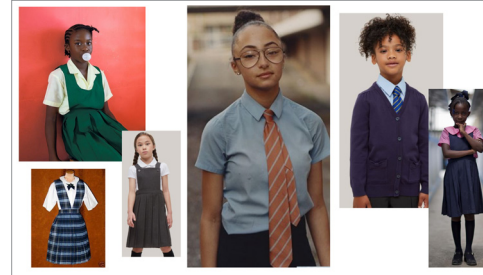
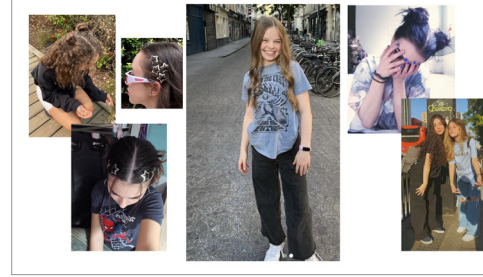
JULIE



CHILD



JOHN



Moodboards and costume design by
Maybelle Laye for *The House Party*

For this production, the costume designer, Maybelle Laye, had to consider the characters in the play, their status and how they want others to see them. Their clothing can be used as a way of reflecting this.

This activity focuses on taking the historical and making it contemporary for an audience today.

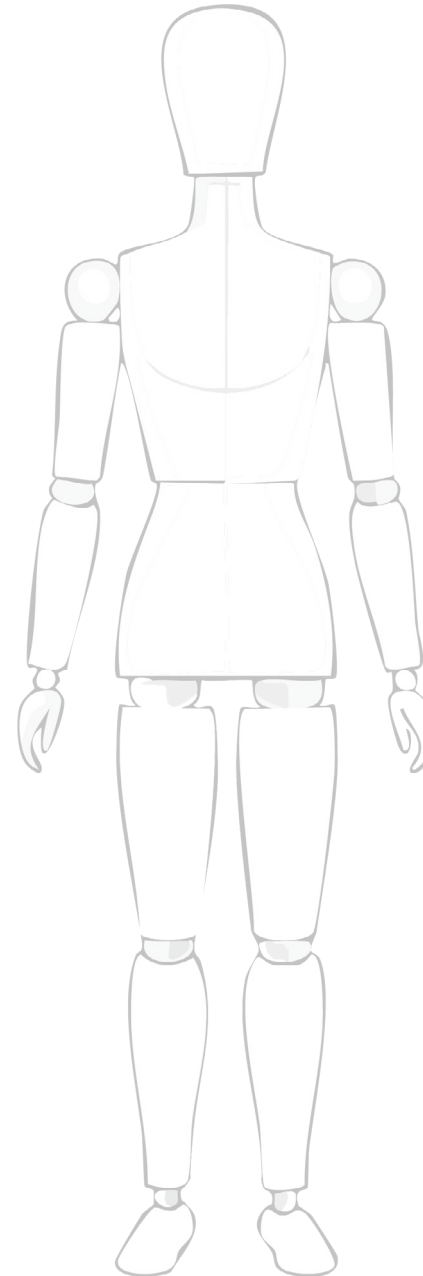
Imagine you are a costume designer. Choose any historical figure and envisage them being alive now.

Apart from living in a modern world, everything you know about them is still the same.

Design a costume for them, sketching it directly on the manikin outline.

Think about the fit and what different colours, textures and fabrics might symbolise or tell an audience about their character and status.

Write annotations around your design, describing your choices and what you intended to show an audience about your character.



Devising Theatre



In *The House Party*, naturalistic acting and movement are combined to tell the story. This activity is an exploration of these mediums used in a devising process, inspired by the text.

Note: This activity will work well if there has already been some exposure to physical theatre or movement work and there is a physical/ movement language that can be used. Otherwise, the later part of the activity can be done using mimed movement versus spoken dialogue.

“Christine sees something in the window. A GIRL, she is 9 years old. She’s looking back at her through the glass. She looks like Christine.”

...

“The GIRL opens the window and climbs in. She holds a book in her hand. She walks up to Christine and stands in front of her, staring at her. Christine reaches out her hand toward the GIRL’s face.”

What do you think these moments from the play are about?

What image do you think would stay in the audience’s mind? Why?



Girl

Who is she and what do you think she might symbolise?

Christine

What do we learn about Christine's thoughts / feelings / state of mind in these moments?

Write a list of as many words / themes / images that you can think of. Feel free to note down or doodle.

Share your ideas with your group and choose the top 3 words/ images. Turn these into 3 frozen images and perform these.

How do other people interpret your images?



Choose a favourite image and develop it into either a naturalistic scene or movement piece.

Perform your work and discuss what ideas felt the most rich?
If you created a naturalistic scene, what would it look like as a movement piece?

If you created a movement piece, what would it feel like as a naturalistic scene?

Re-rehearse your scene in this new medium.

What was lost and what was gained when communicating your scene naturalistically vs as a movement piece?

What felt 'knotty', layered or complex?

Discuss any new ideas that might have emerged and note down any new or exciting discoveries!

Credits

Creative Team

Writer – LAURA LOMAS
Director – HOLLY RACE ROUGHAN
Set Designer – LOREN ELSTEIN
Costume Designer – MAYBELLE LAYE
Co - Lighting Designer – JOSHUA PHARO
Co - Lighting Designer - JOSEPH HORNSBY
Composer & Sound Designer – GILES THOMAS
Movement Director – SCOTT GRAHAM
Voice and Dialect – AUNDREA FUDGE
Fight & Intimacy Director – HARUKA KURODA
Associate Director - GITIKA BUTTOO
Associate Set Designer – TALLULAH CASKEY
Associate Sound Designer – EMMA LAXTON
Associate Movement Director – RICHARD JAMES - NEALE
Dramaturg – FRANK PESCHIER
Casting Director – BECKY PARIS CDG
Original Production Casting Director – MATILDA JAMES CDG

This production is generously supported by Charles Holloway OBE

Photos by Scott Graham and Ikin Yum

Cast

SESLEY HOPE as Christine
SYNNØVE KARLSEN as Julie
TOM LEWIS as Jon

Ensemble

INES ARESTI
OLIVER BAINES
CAL CONNOR
MICAH CORBIN-POWELL
RACHAEL LEONCE
JAHEEM PINDER
JAMIE RANDALL



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