

Stephen Kelman's

PIGEON ENGLISH

Adapted by
Gbolahan Obisesan

The National Youth Theatre of Great Britain Teacher's Pack
Exclusive resources, interviews & classroom activities for Key Stages 3–5
Photography by Helen Maybanks & Helen Murray



Pigeon English

Newly arrived from Ghana with his mother and older sister, eleven-year-old Harrison Opoku lives on the ninth floor of a block of flats on the Dell Farm Estate, a run down and crime-ridden inner-city housing estate in South London. The second best runner in the whole of Year 7, Harri races through his new life in his personalised trainers – the Adidas stripes drawn on with marker pen – blissfully unaware of the very real threat all around him. With equal fascination for the local gang – the Dell Farm Crew – and the pigeon who visits his balcony, Harri absorbs the many strange elements of his new life in England: watching, listening, and learning the tricks of inner-city survival. But when a boy is knifed to death on the high street and a police appeal for witnesses draws only silence, Harri decides to start a murder investigation of his own. In doing so, he unwittingly endangers the fragile web his mother has spun around her family to try and keep them safe.

A story of innocence and experience, hope and harsh reality, Pigeon English is a spellbinding portrayal of a boy balancing on the edge of manhood and of the forces around him that try to shape the way he falls.

Stephen Kelman's 2011 Man Booker Prize shortlisted novel is electrifyingly adapted for stage for its West End premiere by award-winning playwright Gbolahan Obisesan. The NYT REP Company present this tender, funny and heart-breaking story full of colour and carnival. Under the inspired direction of National Youth Theatre Associate Director Anna Niland, Pigeon English looks at the sometimes harsh reality of adulthood in modern day Britain.

Education Pack to support Key Stage 3, 4 & 5 students and teachers.

This pack was developed with teachers and theatre professionals to support schools' visits to the production. The pack is designed for Drama and English students who are studying the play, and includes production interviews, textual extracts, film extracts and classroom activities to inspire creative and analytical responses tied to the curriculum.

Production Credits

Director – Anna Niland
Assistant Director – Sean Hollands
Designer – Cecilia Carey
Lighting Designer – Elliot Griggs
Movement Director – Kane Husbands
Music and Sound Design – Dom James and Tommy Antonio
Production Manager – Jacqui George
Assistant Production Manager – Beth Marston
Technical Manager – Jackson Ingle
Company Stage Manager – Linsey Hall
Lighting Operator – Gareth Weaver
Head of Costume – Helena Bonner
Wardrobe Mistress – Ugne Dainiute
Costume Assistant Isabelle Homer
Fight Directors – Rachel Bown-Williams and Ruth Cooper-Brown of Rc-ANNIE Ltd
Sound Operator – Daffyd Gough

Cast

Harri – Seraphina Beh
Dean – Felix Mackenzie-Barrow
Mamma – Chinenye Ezeudu
Lydia – Daisy Fairclough
Auntie Sonia – Shalisha James-Davis
Julius – Joshua Lyster-Downer
Never Normal Girl – Charlotte Law
Maquita – Arianna Beadie
X-Fire – Kwami Odoom
Killa – Michael Kinsey
Dizzy – Shiv Jalota
Jordan – Joe Pierson
Pastor Taylor/Nathan/Papa/Chorus – Nathaniel Wade
Chanelle/Mrs Frimpong/Chorus – Natasha Heliotis
Kylie/Lady Cop/ Newsreader/chorus – Catrin Walker-Booth
Terry T/Chicken Joe/Fag Ash Lil/ Suspect/Chorus – James Mace
All other parts/voices to be played by the chorus



We Are Proud of Our Young

A nation strives and struggles to find a new identity and place in the world. Hundreds of young people unite to celebrate sixty years of the world's first youth theatre and one of our members suffers racial hatred on our streets in 2016. There is work to be done.

But the solution is clear: a vital force in youth arts opportunity, the NYT at 60 has nurtured and supported thousands of young talented voices encouraging empathy, cohesion and communication in all its participants. These three important qualities were all too lacking in our supposed role models as they took to the political stage earlier this year. It's a living travesty that is in danger of alienating a generation and reversing the valuable work all arts communities stand by. Against all odds of too little government funding, and an increasingly expensive education system, the National Youth Theatre is strong and proud of its identity in celebrating the mis-fit and banning the bland. Whilst offering many their first job in our growing creative economy, we also believe in a second chance for those less fortunate in their first.

We reach out to those with no life-line, no confidence, and no hope. We also reach out to those who believe they are sitting comfortably in a world of opportunity but encourage them to go beyond their perceived comfort zone. The magnetic result is a creative powerhouse which celebrates the nation's diversity and ever evolving cultural heritage with some of the most relevant work on offer for young people today. We create a company of young voices that mixes the demographic of privilege and poverty, with the character of vulnerability and verve, and in doing so we all learn the best lessons from the best of each other.

At least two of our West End Season productions each year are chosen from the School curriculum to inspire those studying the plays in a way no other company of actors could. Our NYT REP season captures students' imagination, with a cast trained to professional standard but young enough to keep their attention, and award-winning playwrights and directors to produce great theatre in the heart of the West End.

I am immensely proud to be championing this life changing charity in its sixtieth year, which has encouraged those on the fringes of society to speak up and play their part to theatrical applause. We should and must be proud of our young, and be equally proud of their futures. But surely the growing question for us all now is will they still be proud of us? Investing in our company and our shared values is a good way to start.

Paul Roseby
Artistic Director and Chief Executive



Introduction

The National Youth Theatre of Great Britain is a world-leading youth arts organisation. We were established in 1956 as the first youth theatre in the world and have performed critically acclaimed productions over the past 60 years.

Our approach is unique because we believe that the best place for young performers to learn is in front of an audience. Our ensemble ethos means young people working with us learn as much about themselves as they do about acting and how to relate to an audience. Whilst some go on to be great actors, many others go on to be great lawyers, journalists, doctors, teachers, entrepreneurs and CEOs. What they all have in common is that they stand out from the crowd.

We showcase young talent on West End stages, in stadiums worldwide and at iconic sites both at home and abroad. We commission brave and relevant new writing and reinterpret classic stories of our time.

The National Youth Theatre owe a great deal to fantastic teachers around the country. Every year bring groups to see our productions or encourage their pupils to be a part of the organisation by championing our work and sharing our ambitions to deliver life-changing opportunities to young people.

Thank you.

As someone who went to university so couldn't afford Drama School fees, it was invaluable.

Temi Wilkey, 2014 REP Company



The National Youth Theatre REP Company

The NYT REP Company launched in 2012 in response to the rise in tuition fees to offer an affordable alternative to expensive formal training.

Inspired by the traditional repertory theatre model, the NYT REP Company course offers free, practical, industry-based talent development in drama and performance over nine months to 16 NYT members. The course culminates in three months of performances in the West End.

Each REP member plays three roles in three different productions over a run of 43 performances at the Ambassadors Theatre in the heart of London's West End. Last year over 200 agents and casting directors attended, opening up industry opportunities to the cast. All the company members were signed by leading talent agents and the majority continue to work professionally in theatre, film and TV.

Every REP company member gains an NYT 'buddy' from the previous year's REP company, as well as an industry-based mentor to support their progress and work throughout the programme. This makes the course entirely unique and offers true foundations in the industry.

As good a way into the business
of acting as any drama school
Ian McKellen



Notes From The Author:
Stephen Kelman

My name is Stephen Kelman and I wrote Pigeon English, the novel upon which this play is based, to pay tribute to the children I grew up with and lived amongst. The children I saw killing each other on the news. The kids I knew who came to this country from all corners of the world in search of a better life and found only violence and danger and temptation. I wanted to show that despite the violence and danger and temptation that surrounds us it's possible to hold on to your innate goodness. It's possible to be free. I felt that this was a message worth sending to whoever cared to listen. Our urban youth is too often demonised and misunderstood and I know that within the heart of every gang member and victim of knife crime, every council estate kid like me, lays the potential for great things.

You will see skill and craft. You will see emotion and humour. This young cast will dazzle you with their talents, and the story they have to tell will enlighten and entertain you. Maybe you will be changed as Harri, my protagonist, changed me. When I heard that my novel was to be adapted for the stage I was delighted. Harri is a character who should be given a life beyond the confines of the pages of a book and his story is one that should be seen and heard as well as imagined.

This cast have imagined him in a way I could not. They have breathed a new life into him, and I am as excited to see this transformation as I hope you are.



Pigeon English Synopsis

The play opens in a street; a crime scene outside Chicken Joe's Take-Away on the Dell Farm Estate. Harri and Dean, both eleven-year-old Year 7 schoolboys stand before a make-shift shrine, which marks the spot where a young man has been killed in a gang-related stabbing. Harri speaks English in a heavy Ghanaian accent and talking in both a religious and superstitious sense refers to a story from Ghana where a man brought back his own son from the dead. Dean dismisses the story but Harri, who leaves his favourite bouncy ball at the shrine as an offering to the 'dead boy', encourages Dean to give something of his own too. Dean only has a pebble from the street. Harri and Dean make their offerings and the sign of the cross at the shrine. Though Dean is reluctant.

We follow Harri and Dean through the Dell Farm Estate meeting the local eccentric characters, the petty thieves, dealers and alcoholics and the notorious local gang the DFC, (Dell Farm Crew.)

We hear how much Harri enjoys school and about his crush on Poppy Morgan whom he sits next to in Art.

We see Harri at home where he lives with his mother and sister Lydia on the ninth floor in a block of council flats. We hear the voices of his father and baby sister, whom the family keeps in contact with via long-distance telephone calls.

During the night from his ninth floor balcony Harri sees a hooded youth remove a bag from beneath the communal bins on the estate. He sees the youth take a knife from out of the bag.

The following day Harri and Dean are discussing how the Police don't have any leads in the murder enquiry. Dean talks enthusiastically about the television program CSI. They agree to be like CSI themselves and solve the murder case. At this moment the Dell Farm Crew appear. The Dell Farm Crew intimidate Harri and Dean and the gang's leader X-Fire talks about 'chooking' (stabbing), describing his murderous acts in extremely graphic and gory detail to the delight of the other gang members apart from Killa who remains silent. X-Fire offers Harri the gang's protection but asks Harri to do a job for him. Harri refuses.

We meet Harri's Auntie Sonia whose partner Julius is known as 'The Boss Man' around the estate. We see money changing hands quickly between Harri's mother, and Julius and Auntie Sonia assuring Julius that he can trust her sister. We get a sense for the first time that Harri's Mother has made a moral compromise to improve her family's life by borrowing money from Julius. We learn that Auntie Sonia burns off her fingerprints on the stove so the police can't trace her fingerprints. We hear accounts of racism towards Harri's Mother at the hospital where she works as a midwife.

Harri and Dean, acting in a pastiche of CSI detectives, begin their secret inquiry into the murder case around the estate.

We meet Maquita, who has befriended Harri's sister Lydia. Maquita is Killa's girlfriend and is herself caught up with the Dell Farm Crew. She puts pressure on Lydia to be 'one of the crew'. Lydia reluctantly agrees to take a bag of soiled clothes to the launderette for Maquita. Harri follows Lydia and sees blood on the clothes as Lydia empties the bag into the machine.

Harri and Dean continue their murder enquiry with naïve forensic work largely involving Sellotape. We see humorous and unsuccessful endeavors until they discover a package on a rooftop that contains a wallet. Inside the wallet is a picture of 'the dead boy'.

Harri hears in playground gossip that Jermaine Bent (Killa in the Dell Farm Crew) is the murderer. His friend Nathan claims he witnessed the incident as he drove past in his brother's BMW. Harri refuses to believe it at first then realizes the amount of risk he is putting himself in.

X-Fire and Killa confront Harri and Dean in the basketball court; they steal Dean's trainers and turn out Harri and Dean's pockets discovering the wallet with the picture of the 'dead boy'. Killa is visibly emotionally disturbed by it. Maquita tries to calm Killa down by saying "It's only a picture..." But Killa is now in tears. X-Fire reaches into the back of his trousers, puts up his hood and attempts to attack Harri. Lydia arrives and announces she has filmed everything on her mobile phone and called the Police. Harri, Dean and Lydia make their escape.

Following an arson attack on the playground - life returns to relative calm. Harri and Dean walk together to school for extra protection and discuss what they will do with their reward when they show their evidence to the Police.

Poppy Morgan announces her affections for Harri and this he says, "Fills him full of yellow." It is the end of the summer term and amongst the school leavers' chaos of shirt signing and pranks with flour and eggs Harri runs home through the estate feeling on top of the world. However, someone is waiting for him in the stairwell with a knife.

Harri

"Asweh – it happened before – where I used to live there was a chief who brought his son back like that. It was a long time ago, before I was born. Asweh, it was a miracle "

Harri Opoku. The protagonist, an eleven year old Ghanaian immigrant, caught up in gang warfare on a South London estate. When a boy is knifed to death on the high street and a police appeal for witnesses draws only silence, Harri decides to start a murder investigation of his own. He is positive, optimistic and sees the good in everyone. He is not immune from the pressure of fitting in with the Dell Farm Crew and criminality on the estate but we sense his strong resistance to it. He sees the brutal, grey urban world around him in technicolor and finds beauty in it. He talks directly to the audience.

Lydia

"Don't bring yourself, you don't even know. It's only leftover bits from the costume - they were no good, we got paint on them."

Lydia is Harri's older sister. Lydia struggles with the social pressures of fitting in on the estate, particularly from her new friends Marquita and Channel and the Dell Farm Crew. She makes moral compromises against her better nature.

Mama

"Make you wash your hands so you no catch bird flu - "

Mama is Harri's mother. Originally from Ghana, Mama has brought Harri and Lydia to the Dell Farm Estate in South London to seek a better life for her family.

Papa

"Good work – You are the man of the house until I escape. It's your duty to look after everything."

Papa is Harri's father back home in Ghana.

Aunty Sonia

"It's quite scary the first time. You can smell your skin cooking. You have to pull your fingers off before they get stuck for good. It's the only time I cried."

Harri's aunt. She has been forced to make moral compromises for a better life and is implicated in the violence that pervades estate life through her relationship with Julius.

Agnes

Harri's baby sister back home in Ghana.

Dean

"What would you do if your blood was going to run out in five minutes?"

An eleven year old boy, Harri's best friend and partner in Harri's murder investigation.

Never Normal Girl

"Sitting pretty's pretty shitty when you're stuck in this city of self-pity and loathing."

A young girl who lives with her Grandfather on the Dell Farm Estate. She is ostracized by the other characters in the play and along with Harri talks directly to the audience in 'spoken word' performance poetry. She speaks as if she knows Harri's fate.

Pastor Taylor

"They'll have covered their faces – they're ignorant but they're not stupid."

Pastor at the Jubilee Church/Centre.

Mr Frimpong

"It's senseless, that what it is – No respect for anything."

An older Ghanaian gentleman living on the Dell Farm Estate.

Maquita

"Who are you – his mum? Just cause you're frigid, don't mean everyone's like you. You lot are so f – ing lame man."

A friend of Harri's older sister Lydia. She is overly-made-up-glamorous, seemingly streetwise, sexualized and older than her years. Maquita is also naïve, impressionable and lives under the influence and oppression of the Dell Farm Crew. She is Killa's girlfriend.

Chanelle

"Don't man, that ain't necessary. She knows the score innit."

A friend but also a rival of Maquita.

Asbo

Terry Takeaway's dog.

Terry Takeaway

"Wanna buy these? Proper copper worth a bundle."

Local petty thief and dealer on the Dell Farm Estate. Has earned the nickname 'takeaway' because if he sees something he wants he takes it away.

Kylie

"Why didn't you tell the cops then?"

A school friend of Harri, Dean and Nathan.

Lady Cop

"Cheeky – [You stay out of trouble]."

A female Police Officer.

Fog Ash

"Everybody agrees. That's why she has crazy red eyes - Mad and watery – it's from eating human meat."

Resident of the Dell Farm Estate. Reported to have killed and cooked her husband in a pie.

Newsreader

"Police are still appealing for witnesses."

Television news reporter.

Nathan

"What crack spoon? Where is it?"

Nathan Boyd is a school friend of Harri's who has a reputation of not being scared of anything.

Jordan

"It's the sickest man. It the most powerful. If I shot you with a Glock it'd take your head off. It shoots dumb-dumbs innit".

A boy on the Dell Farm estate roughly Harri's age who's been expelled from school. He is a gangster wannabe and is in awe of the Dell Farm Crew. Harri's mother sees Jordan as a bad influence on her son Harri.

Julius

"The only friends a man needs, his bat and a drink. One to get you what you want, the other to forget how you got it".

Julius is Auntie Sonia's partner. A hardened criminal known on the Dell Farm Estate as 'The Boss Man.' Auntie Sonia's partner, a hardened criminal in the underworld of the Dell Farm Estate.

Harvey

X-Fire's dog.

Dizzy

"Do you wanna roll with us – If you roll with us we'll show you what's good –"

A member of the Dell Farm Crew gang.

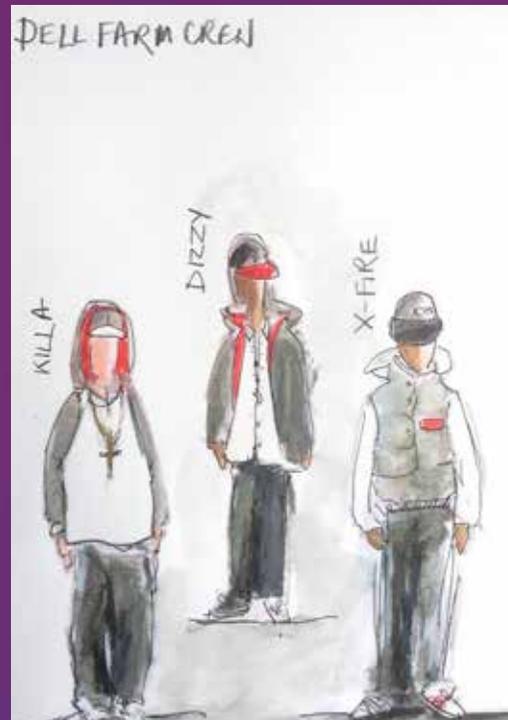
Killa

"Don't you know you're trespassing? You'll have to pay the tax now straight. How much you got?"

A member of the Dell Farm Crew gang. Maquita's boyfriend.

Pigeons

Pigeons. Mute onlookers on the action throughout the play.



Themes

Theatre director Anna Niland's production of Pigeon English is a story about loss of innocence. In the play we see the world through the protagonist Harri's eyes, who's newly arrived from Ghana. Harri sees the brutalist, grey, urban environment of the council estate he lives in in technicolor and sees a beauty in it.

The title of Stephen Kelman's book plays on the word Pigeon. Pidgin English is the language spoken by the multi-heritage residents of the Dell Farm Estate. Feral pigeons are wild birds that benefit from an urban environment as their adopted habitat. Pigeons are often seen as vermin and parasites. In Anna's production the pigeons become peripheral characters, onlookers and commentators on the action.

Harri narrates to the audience along with Never Normal Girl. Harri and Never Normal Girl are opposites, Never Normal Girl speaks of everything that is wrong with the world where as Harri remains optimistic and positive with a sense of innocence and bewilderment at what he sees. Harri's zest for life is in conflict with Never Normal Girl's pessimistic outlook on her own.

Design

In terms of the design of the production, Harri is the only character that brings colour to it. Vibrant colours fresh from Ghana. The Dell Farm estate is Harri's playground though it is grey like the concrete and the feral pigeons.



Activities

Stephen Kelman was inspired by true events when writing his novel *Pigeon English*, on which Gbolahan Obisesan's stage adaptation is based. The NYT cast began their rehearsals researching the true events and themes surrounding the original novel.

Activity 1: Research & Development

In groups undertake research on the following:

- The murder case of Damilola Taylor in 2000 on an estate in Peckham, South London.
- Current knife crime statistics in London.

Who are the victims?

Who are the perpetrators?

How does the role of religion in Ghana differ from that in London?

How does the daily lifestyle in Ghana differ from that in London?

Activity 2: Physicality & Characterisation

Anna Niland explored how characters in *Pigeon English* displayed their status through their physical movement.

In your rehearsal space experiment with how different characters move and show your findings back to your group.

How does X-Fire and other members of the Dell Farm Crew move?

How would you display through movement the hierarchy within the gang?

How do Maquita and Channel move?

There are lots of descriptive clues in how they speak.

How do the pigeons and dogs in the play move when played by actors?

Activity 3: Social Groups

Discuss in groups, referring to personal experiences how you may have altered your own behaviour in order to fit in to different social groups, or said things about others that you don't actually mean in order to be accepted.

Draw ideas from how the characters speak about each other in the play. They are particularly cruel to one another at times, particularly to Never Normal Girl.

Activity 4: Music & Sounds

Music and sound in Anna Niland's production of *Pigeon English* is particularly important in setting the scene in modern day London and communicating to the audience.

Explore the below genres, how do they set the scene? What do you associate with them when you hear them?

Gospel Music.

Spoken Word poetry.

UK Grime.

Activity 5

In small groups using the music extracts from your research in Activity 4, create a series of tableaux which reflect upon strong themes in the story.

1. Identify four themes
2. Choose a piece of music or spoken word for each theme
3. Physicalise images from the story

Within each tableau you could chose to place characters to represent key moments and events in the play. Consider physicality of the characters explored in Activity 2 and the environment which surrounds them.

Scene Study

[Download the script exert here](#)

[Download a film of the scene here](#)



Production Design

Interview With Cecilia Carey,
Designer of The NYT Rep Season 2016

When did you first want to be a Theatre Designer and how did you get into it?

I did Graphic Design as my degree and worked in publishing for a couple of years, where the combining of text and image was key. However, I started making giant scaled props and painting murals for people's houses alongside and loved creating in a 'real' scale, so I decided to quit the Mac working life and go to Motley to do a post graduate course in Theatre Design. This was a brilliant intense year taught by the amazing designer, Alison Chitty, and all her superb theatre contacts. It was the first I really knew of how theatre design worked and the variety the job entails. From there I contacted theatres such as Hampstead Theatre to design their education shows, designed new plays in Fringe venues in London and assisted designers Es Devlin and Chloe Lamford as much as I could.

What's your favourite part of the job?

I love those first meetings with the director to discover where we match up, from masses of images I bring to it initially. Another special moment is when the design is realised from a 1:25 model you've been working on for months in the studio to being executed 1:1 scale – it is amazingly satisfying and then seeing how the cast react. I love working as a team and I'm always excited to see how the different disciplines can take the design in ways I didn't expect or realise were possible.

Where do you find the inspiration for your designs?

From my studio desk window I can spy on all walks of life spilling out from the local market and high street – perfect for costume and character observations. Aesthetica and Gup magazines publish inspiring visual culture and unique photography stories respectively.

Is it hard working on a REP season like this, designing 3 shows at once?

It's important to be as organised and disciplined as possible to be able to meet the directors enough and working out what needs to take priority – splitting my time between being in the rehearsals, to see how a show is shaping up and getting on with designing the other show - alongside my other design projects! Working with different directors of the first time is really exciting but also another reason to be organised and remember to ask the important questions to inform the design as everyone has different ways of working. My training at Motley has been invaluable in giving me the confidence in working in a similar structure each time on how to approach a project from start to finish.

How does a set design become reality from a design on the page, and how involved are you in that process?

The Production Manager is key to getting the design to how you imagined it to be. There is a provisional 'white card design meeting' to check things are possible and roughly in budget and then changes might be made before the 'final design' hand in. It always pays to give lots of references to the stage management team, prop makers and wardrobe and double check everything that's being ordered or made as it never feels like there's enough time as we get closer to technical rehearsals in the theatre!

Is it different working on a new play like Pigeon English vs something so established as Romeo & Juliet?

I try to approach every project with the same openness and I don't get distracted about how shows have been done before. The key is to talk to the director as much as possible to find a new way into it together. Romeo and Juliet was a harder process of the two due to the fact it is so well known, but actually more difficult is designing two shows in Rep over the existing Stomp set. When audiences come to see the Rep shows, I don't think many people realise it's such a unique and challenging design project due to the overlapping sets. There are a huge amount of limitations and very little storage so the crew are hugely expert at packing every designed component into every nook and cranny!

What advice would you give someone who wanted to be a theatre designer?

You need lots of energy and determination! Meeting lots of different teams of creatives is what is exciting about working in theatre, but it means there will always be challenges you didn't expect or encounter from the last project so it's good to be clear what you are going to be doing and not get swept into other jobs of the team. Contacting designers to ask to assist them is a really good way in and try to work in as many different theatres or sites as possible as it gives you the experience to be confident in designing in lots of types of spaces.

Romeo and Juliet is set in the 1950's, how did you approach this era as opposed to Pigeon English set in the modern day?

Kate and I were briefed to set Romeo and Juliet in the 1950's and it's been so interesting to realise that members in the first year of the National Youth Theatre would have looked like all my reference photos of the teenagers then! So although Pigeon English is set in the modern day, we wanted to make Romeo and Juliet just as relevant to our young cast and it got us thinking about the parallels of teenagers today and that gulf that always exists between teenagers and the adult generation. The duality of the two generations was a theme we've taken on just as strong as the two opposing houses, Montagues and Capulets. The word 'teenagers' was first coined then and it was the first time the youth had real pocket money - those teddy gangs were a force to be reckoned with! We've delved into the gritty, grimey post war vibe of London 1956 and created a non-naturalistic setting in which to explore the heat of youth, revenge, love, conflict, lust, hate, rebellion and death.

Further Resources

Stephen Kelman Interview

<http://www.pigeonenglish.co.uk/default.aspx?id=3>

Literacy Trust, Stephen Kelman inspiring prisoners to read

<http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/news/4901>

News Article: Children in peril, the gang culture turning kids to lives of crime

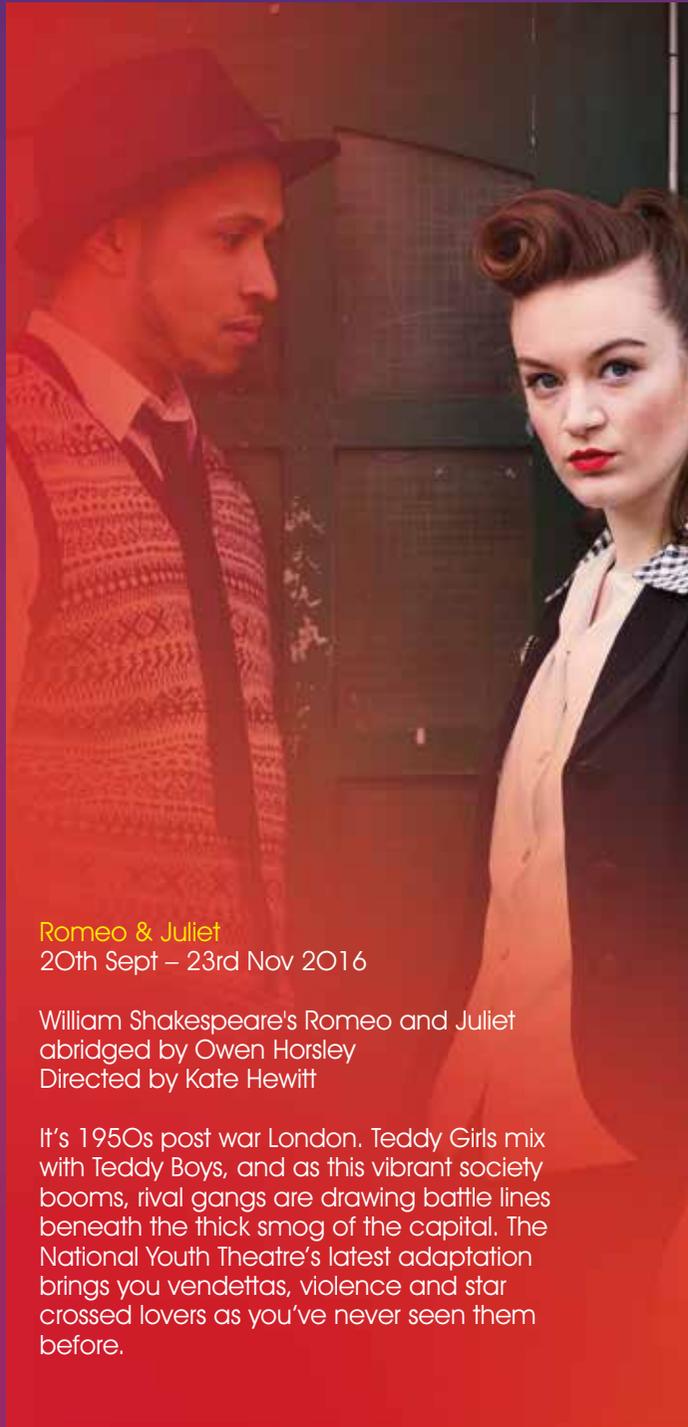
<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/children-peril-gang-culture-turning-767468>



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Romeo & Juliet
20th Sept – 23rd Nov 2016

William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet
abridged by Owen Horsley
Directed by Kate Hewitt

It's 1950s post war London. Teddy Girls mix with Teddy Boys, and as this vibrant society booms, rival gangs are drawing battle lines beneath the thick smog of the capital. The National Youth Theatre's latest adaptation brings you vendettas, violence and star crossed lovers as you've never seen them before.



DNA by Dennis Kelly
9th Nov – 25th Nov 2016

Directed by Sean Hollands

Amongst the darkness of an unnamed wood, a lawless gang are trying to bury a dark secret. The group need someone to take charge, but who can they trust? Who do they follow? While lies spiral and tension mounts, everyday adolescence twists and turns into an anarchic game of survival. This West End premiere will see the National Youth Theatre REP Company bring to life Denis Kelly's moral tug of war between actions and their consequences.

Have you spotted exceptional talent at your school?

There are so many ways your students can get involved with the National Youth Theatre. From free nine-month talent development programmes, to six day intensive skills-based masterclasses. Our courses offer young people a platform to learn, practice and thrive as young creatives and as individuals.

Find out more: www.nyt.org.uk/masterclass

Audition to join the National Youth Theatre of Great Britain

Auditions and interviews are now open to join the National Youth Theatre Company. We want to discover exceptional performers and technicians from across the UK and will be visiting over 30 theatre and arts venues in Spring 2017.

Visit www.nyt.org.uk/audition to find out more

CPD Events for teachers

We host regular and free CPD events for teachers and educators who would like to know more about how we approach theatre making with young people. Gain an insight into how to develop a large-scale productions and best practice for nurturing young talent.

Join our Schools Mailing List to hear about our next event

Host our Auditions

Do you want to bring more opportunities to your students? For no extra cost beyond the standard fees we can deliver an auditions day at your school for 20+ students with an interest in joining the National Youth Theatre. The session will include a three hour workshop delivered by a professional theatre director.

For more information please contact frankie.haynes@nyt.org.uk

The National Youth Theatre offers
a stellar beginning for young actors
BBC Radio 4

