

LIFE X3

Education Pack

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Additional Material from **Matthew Dewsbury, Lucy Barnes, and Elaine Peak**
Photographs by **Mike Eddowes**

To Teachers

This pack has been designed to complement your visit to see *Life x3* at The Watermill Theatre.

Most of the pack is aimed at drama students and anyone with an interest in the subjects raised by the play.

While there are some images from the production as well as the rehearsal process, the pack has been deliberately kept simple from a graphic point of view so that most pages can easily be photocopied for use in the classroom.

Your feedback is most welcome, please email any comments you have to outreach@watermill.org.uk.

Workshops to accompany the production are also available. You can call me on 01635 570927 or email me at the above address for further information.

I hope you find the pack useful.

Beth Flintoff
Deputy Outreach Director

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Synopsis

Henry and Sonia are having a difficult evening with Arnaud, their wakeful six-year-old son; but Henry has other worries. About to publish the results of two years' research on the flatness of galaxy halos, he's desperate to make a good impression on the distinguished astrophysicist Hubert Finidori, who wields a decisive influence over the question of Henry's longed-for promotion.

So when Hubert arrives with his rebellious wife, Inez, in tow for dinner on the wrong night, the fact that there is no food in the apartment (merely an ample supply of Sancerre) is only one of the potentially disastrous elements in play. Add to this Hubert's often brutal treatment of Inez; his lust for Sonia; Inez's weak head for alcohol; Henry's discovery that rival scientists may have beaten him to the punch; Sonia's equivocal feeling of attraction towards Hubert; and the entirely unpredictable behaviour of the invisible Arnaud and the stage is set for a catastrophic unravelling of normal civilized behaviour. But will it be this kind of catastrophe? Or that? Or, perhaps, worse still, will catastrophe be averted altogether?

ELAINE PEAK



Sarah Ball
Photo by Mike Eddowes

Yasmina Reza

"Writing helps me survive. I don't believe in happiness. One can be content, but the moment I'm content, I don't write. I don't need to. I write when life is not enough."

Yasmina Reza

Yasmina Reza was the first French playwright since Jean Anouilh to enjoy a commercial hit in London's West End. Daughter of a Hungarian violinist, who decided to settle in Paris when the Iron Curtain came down, and a brilliant businessman father, the black sheep of a Russian Jewish family who fled Bolshevism, she was born in Paris in 1959, and fondly recalls a cosmopolitan childhood in a comfortably-off, music-loving, artistic family.

She studied at Paris X University Nanterre and then trained as an actor at Jacques Lecoq Drama School. Her acting career included plays by contemporary French dramatists as well as Molière and Marivaux. But this did not ultimately fulfil her, as she soon realised, 'Early in my acting career I saw it was a life of waiting and dependence. Writing I could do by myself, for myself.'

So in 1987 she wrote her first play, *Conversations After a Burial*, for performance in France, which won

her the prestigious Molière award for best author, among many other plaudits. The play was then produced in translation in both Europe and America. Her second play, *Winter Crossing*, won the 1990 Molière award for best fringe production. Then, four years later, came the play for which she is best known so far, *Art*.

Art premiered in Berlin and opened in Paris where it scooped Molière awards for best author, best play and best production. Since performed in more than twenty languages, the play has become an international phenomenon, picking up many awards along the way. On opening night in Paris, Reza herself was convinced that the play was a flop. As she paced backstage, she heard the audience laughing almost from the beginning and was afraid it had degenerated into 'stupid entertainment'. She made a decision, 'I said if they laughed at a certain point later on, I'd jump out the window. Fortunately, they didn't.'

Of course, the main reason for *Art's* success is that it is not really about art, but about men's friendship, honesty and the contemporary obsession with modernism and social status. Reza is still good friends with the man who sparked off the idea when he bought an all-white painting. The play has also attracted many of the finest stage actors around.

The Unexpected Man followed in 1995, then in 2000 came *Life x 3*, exploring three possible versions of the same domestic situation. When she became a playwright, Reza

regretted the fact that thereafter no-one seemed to want to employ her as an actor but, in 2001, she played the alcoholic and hysterical wife in the Paris production of *Life x 3*.

Alongside screenwriting and film and translation work, Reza has also written several novels including *Hammerklavier* and *Desolation*. *Hammerklavier* was published in 1997 and later translated into English; it was inspired by her father who was a pianist as well as a businessman. Late in life, he also took a deep interest in the Jewish religion, bequeathing this fascination to his daughter; the central character and narrator of *Desolation* is a 73-year-old Jewish man.

However, it would be wrong to think that Yasmina Reza's work is circumscribed by such influences; she says, 'I don't write a lot, but I can write anywhere, on anything. It's a strength; I'm always available for people and ideas.' Unfazed by her success so far, you can be sure that when she has something to say, we will hear about it.

'I loved the theatre and I loved words, so it was logical to write for theatre.'

I have fun, I'm not a sad person, and I grew up with wonderful parents in cultured and comfortable circumstances. But I was an unhappy child, for some reasons I know and some I don't know. It's nothing to do with my family. I've always known somehow that life is not easy. I was born feeling that life was sad.

What interests me is what I have not experienced: the other sex, the masculine world, the world of another age. I write more from my terrors than from my experiences.

My way of writing is very intuitive, not intelligent, though it might look intelligent. I write from my intuition, my sense of freedom, my feeling for words and rhythm. Sometimes from my heart, but not very much. I think dreams and desires are usually higher than reality.'

Plays

Conversations après un enterrement (Conversations After a Burial), 1987

La Traversee de l'hiver (Winter Crossing), 1990

Art, 1994

L'Homme du hasard (The Unexpected Man), 1995

Trois versions de la vie (Life x 3), 2000

Une Pièce Espagnole (A Spanish Play), 2004

Translation

La Metamorphose (Steven Berkoff's version of Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, directed by Roman Polanski)

Film

Includes *Le Pique-Nique de Lulu Kreutz*, directed by Didier Martiny,

Other Writing

Hammerklavier, 1997

Une Désolation (Desolation), 1999

Adam Haberberg, 2003

'How can we grasp the world as it is?'

Yasmina Reza presents audiences with a unique premise, of replicating the same situation three times, a luxury reality does not afford. She attempts to show that the way in which we grasp the world, the way we view reality can be altered by subtle nuances of language and our reactions to them. By simply changing a word or gesture, the direction of a conversation, even an entire evening can be drastically altered.

The style used by Reza is developed from the existing literary canon. In the film *Sliding Doors*, we follow two parallel lives of Gwyneth Paltrow, one where she catches a train and the other where she misses it. In *Intimate Exchanges* Alan Ayckbourn wanted to explore the decisions we make in our life, where at the end of every scene a decision is made, resulting in eight variations of the same play, each with alternate endings. In *Life x 3* Reza looks much closer, not just at the outcome of choices or big decisions, but at language, the very tool we use to make these decisions. She shows that words, their subtleties and nuances can alter events drastically if interpreted, intoned or reacted to differently. The play emphasises that meanings are not inherent in objects, nor even in words, but supplied by those who interpret

them. Hubert directly asks the questions how can we "close the gap between object and word?" a question that hits the crux of the play.

Reza believes interpretation is key to understanding our world. She writes directly for actors, and believes only the best actors can do justice to her plays, valuing her silences just as importantly as her words. In an interview about writing *Life x 3* Reza said, "I wanted to avoid classical horizontal writing. By that I mean, the character enters the room, a series of events occurs and he leaves. Mine is vertical writing. The character enters, goes 10 feet, then enters again, slightly differently. I wanted to mine the character not through events but through his psychological response to events. It's like digging a hole and studying the geological layers". (New York Times – 2000 Alan Riding) Writing in this style is experimental and scientific, reflecting the way in which her male protagonists, both astrophysicists, make sense of the world.

The experimental nature of the play is reflected in the male protagonist's way of thinking. Science plays a prominent role in the way they understand the reality around them, particularly demonstrated in the third act.

Hubert and Henri study cosmology which attempts to unite the physics of the largest structures, i.e. planets and the physics of the smallest structures, i.e. particles. Reza suggests human nature limits our understanding of the world around us, as we can not objectively discover things, as we in fact create them. Ines exclaims that it was humans that gave these terms and ideas names, 'provided this labyrinth with black holes and dead stars...with things that no-one can see' and that without us the world would be a 'dreary black place without an ounce of poetry'.

So by repeating this seemingly ordinary situation three times and by discussing both large and small matters, from the nature of the cosmos, to the way we interact with each other, Reza questions the way we view our reality and our place within it. "How can we grasp the world as it is?" is a deeply thought provoking question, which the play particularly asks us to consider.

MATHEW DEWSBURY



Sarah Crowe & Sarah Ball
Photo by Mike Eddowes

Navigating the Known Universe

Fun Facts about the World of the Play

The employment ladder in Life x3

"They'll be licking our boots"...

Research Director: Sets the agenda for their department; develops the research programme. Leads individual researchers and supports them in their professional development. Represents the institution in the academic and professional worlds. Carries out own research and acquires research projects and funding. Develops postgraduate programmes and participates on the academic board. Must have a substantial list of publication and have realised the funding of research projects. Must have an extended network of contacts in their field.

Research Assistant: Carries out own research and acquires research projects and funding. May assist in delivering postgraduate programmes. May represent the institution in the academic and professional worlds.

Grade A is presumably some kind of qualification that is required to move up from Research Assistant to Research Director, and

publication is either essential or very useful to attain it.

Lab Director: Responsible for the overall operation and administration of the laboratory, including the employment of competent qualified personnel, ensuring that all the duties are properly performed and applicable state and federal regulations are met. Although duties may be delegated to qualified personnel, the Laboratory Director is ultimately responsible. The Laboratory Director will also ensure that a quality system approach to laboratory testing is utilized to provide accurate, timely and reliable patient test results. (This is presumably only one of Hubert's titles.)

A **dynamicist:** a person who studies dynamics. Dynamics is the branch of physics concerned with the effects of forces on the motion of a body or a system of bodies (such as a galaxy).

The I.A.P.: The Institut d'Astrophysique de Paris. It is a research institute of the CNRS (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique or National Centre for Scientific Research) which is the largest governmental research

organisation in France.

Researchers who are members of CNRS are classified in two categories, in order of seniority:

- Research associates (*chargés de recherche*) (2nd class, 1st class).
- Research directors (*directeurs de recherche*) (2nd class, 1st class, exceptional class).

All permanent employees (researchers, technical and administrative personnel) are recruited through annual nationwide competitive campaigns. The candidates selected have the status of civil servants. The performance of CNRS has been brought into question, with calls for wide-ranging reforms. In particular, the effectiveness of the recruitment, compensation, career management, and evaluation procedures were under scrutiny.

Meudon: A municipality in the south-west of Paris. Home of the Paris Observatory, which is the foremost astronomical observatory of France and one of the largest astronomical centres in the world. It has a status close to that of a public university and it is responsible for research in astronomy and astrophysics, postgraduate education and educating the public.

National Committee: There is an International Astronomical Union made up of National Committees for Astronomy. The current Vice-President of France's National Committee is based in Meudon, like Hubert. The key activity of the IAU is organising scientific meetings --

symposia and conferences such as the one in Turku -- but it also see to define astronomical and physical constants and astronomical terms, and to promote education and research. It also produces publications such as the *Highlights of Astronomy* series.

Academy of Science: The French Academy of Sciences (Académie des sciences) is a learned society, founded in 1666 by Louis XIV to encourage and protect the spirit of French scientific research. It was at the forefront of scientific developments in Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries. It is one of the earliest academies of science. Its members are elected for life. Currently there are 150 full members, 300 corresponding members, and 120 foreign associates.

Publications in Lifex3

"My husband was published in Nature magazine"...

Nature magazine: A prominent scientific journal, first published on 4 November 1869. Although most scientific journals are now highly specialized, *Nature* is one of the few journals that still publishes original research articles across a wide range of scientific fields. In many fields of scientific research, important new advances and original research are published as articles or letters in *Nature*. Some of the most significant scientific breakthroughs in modern history have been first published in *Nature*, including nuclear fission, the structure of DNA and the cloning of Dolly the sheep.

Astro PH: An archive of articles published on the subject of astrophysics since 1992. It is extremely comprehensive.

A.P.J.: The *Astrophysical Journal*. Begun in 1895 by George E. Hale and James E. Keeler (two eminent American astronomers), the *Astrophysical Journal* is the foremost research journal in the world devoted to recent developments, discoveries, and theories in astronomy and astrophysics. Many of the classic discoveries of the twentieth century have first been reported in the *Journal*, which has also presented much of the important recent work on quasars, pulsars, neutron stars, black holes, solar and stellar magnetic fields, X-rays, and interstellar matter.

The A&A: *Astronomy and Astrophysics*, a European journal, publishing papers on theoretical, observational and instrumental astronomy and astrophysics. A&A is one of the major journals of astronomy, alongside the *Astrophysical Journal* (the A.P.J.) the *Astronomical Journal* and the *Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society*. While the first two are often the preferred journal of US-based researchers and the MNRAS is often the favoured journal for UK- and Commonwealth-based astronomers, A&A tends to be the preferred journal of astronomers based in Europe (excluding the UK), particularly since page charges are waived for astronomers working in member countries.

M.N.R.A.S.: *Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society*. One of the world's leading scientific journals in astronomy and astrophysics. It has been in continuous existence since 1827 and publishes peer-reviewed letters and papers reporting original research in relevant fields. Despite the name, the journal is neither monthly nor carries the notices of the Royal Astronomical Society.

LUCY BARNES

"On the Flatness of Galaxy Halos"

Here comes the science bit ...

A galaxy is a system of billions of stars, planets, gas and dust, all held together by gravitational attraction.

Any physical body attracts any other physical body to a greater or lesser degree, and this force of attraction is called gravity. The larger the physical body the greater the force of attraction it exerts, so for example the earth pulls an apple towards it very easily because the earth is so much bigger than an apple. This theory of gravity is also known as the theory of General Relativity -- Einstein's big idea.

There are four types of galaxies: spiral galaxies, elliptical galaxies, irregular galaxies and peculiar galaxies. The two types mentioned in the play are spiral galaxies and elliptical galaxies.

Spiral galaxies consist of a flattened rotating disk of young stars, a central bulge of generally older stars, and a surrounding halo of older stars, hot gas and dust. The disk is prominent due to the presence of young, hot stars in a spiral pattern.

Elliptical galaxies are round or elliptical in outline, typically contain

little gas and dust, no spiral arms or disk, and few hot, bright stars. In an elliptical galaxy there is no sharp transition between the body of the galaxy and the halo, unlike a spiral galaxy, in which the halo of older stars, gas and dust contrasts with the flattened, rotating disk of young, bright stars.

Dark matter is matter we cannot see. It is very dense.

Visible matter is matter we can see.

Luminous matter is matter that gives off light (so for example a star is luminous but dust is visible).

The **halos** of both elliptical and spiral galaxies are thought to contain dark matter because in the outer regions of most galaxies the stars orbit very fast. Without large amounts of matter in the halo these stars ought to slow down the further away from the centre they get. They do not slow down therefore there must be large amounts of matter in the halo. However, there are not large amounts of visible matter in the halo. Therefore there must be large amounts of dark matter in the halo. Otherwise Einstein's Theory of Relativity is completely wrong, and

whilst that could be possible most scientists would require large amounts of compelling evidence before even considering it.

There has been debate over the shape of these halos. Some people think they are elliptical (flattened) and some people think that they are spherical. Current thinking is that they are probably elliptical, but this was being debated in the late 1990s (the time the play was originally set) and is still not conclusively established.

There are different ways of investigating the shape of these invisible halos. The two mentioned in the play are:

Simulation: producing a computer model of the galaxy and the forces that are acting on it and within it, either from observation or from calculations (or both).

Modelisation: Constructing a model of the galaxy based on observation or calculation.

The two terms seem to be almost interchangeable but I think that modelisation does not necessarily imply a visible representation of the galaxy -- you could have a model that is simply a set of formulae that reveal what the shape of the halo ought to be, whereas simulation definitely implies the construction of a visible model. The play suggests that modelisation can only be applied to spiral galaxies but I haven't been able to find out whether this is true.

Henry's approach is modelisation. If he has only produced a theoretical

model (a set of formulae) then his approach is to turn observations into formulae -- i.e. to go from the concrete and visible to the abstract and theoretical.

Cosmological simulations:

Simulations are used in cosmology to study processes such as the process of forming galaxy halos from dark matter.

The external galaxies: An external galaxy is any galaxy that is not the Milky Way (our own galaxy). Henry is working on the external galaxies. The Mexicans are working on the Milky Way.

"Is intergalactic plasma

multiphased?" Intergalactic plasma is the hot gas that exists between galaxies. Hubert asks whether it changes composition at any point or whether it is constant throughout intergalactic space.

Unifying Theory: A theory of everything (TOE) is a putative theory of theoretical physics that fully explains and links together all known physical phenomena. Initially, the term was used with an ironic connotation to refer to various overgeneralised theories. Physicist John Ellis claims to have introduced the term into the technical literature in an article in *Nature* in 1986. Over time, the term stuck in popularizations of quantum physics to describe a theory that would unify or explain through a single model the theories of all fundamental interactions of nature. There have been many theories of everything proposed by theoretical physicists over the last century, but none have been confirmed

experimentally. The primary problem in producing a TOE is that the accepted theories of quantum mechanics and general relativity are hard to combine.

Poincaré: Jules Henri Poincaré (29 April 1854 – 17 July 1912) was a French mathematician and theoretical physicist, and a philosopher of science. As a mathematician and physicist, he made many original fundamental contributions to pure and applied mathematics, mathematical physics, and celestial mechanics. Poincaré became the first person to discover a chaotic deterministic system which laid the foundations of modern chaos theory. Poincaré's research formed the basis for much of Einstein's work in relativity.

Miscellaneous Facts

Montparnasse was the artistic hub of Paris before the Second World War, but after the war many of the artists left. This area of the city is now more known for its restaurants, cafés and nightlife, as well as being a popular tourist spot.

Rue Langelot does not exist. Henry and Sonia might live in the 17th arrondissement, which is towards the edge of the city and rather varied in character, containing a working-class area (including part of Paris' red-light district) a more upper-class area and an area in between the two, the Batignolles, which was a cultural hub in the 19th century and has a growing reputation as a trendy place to live.

The Fox and the Hound: an

animated film produced by Disney in 1981. A fox and a hound live near each other when they are little and grow up as friends. When they mature the hound is taken away and taught to be a hunting dog. When he comes back he will no longer play with the fox and has to hunt him instead. The fox also grows up, meets a vixen and falls in love. There is a climactic chase in which the hound runs the fox down, but just as the hunter is about to shoot the fox the hound interposes himself between the fox and the gun. The hunter relents and lets the fox go. After this confrontation the two animals don't resume their previous friendship ("a fox and a hound can't be friends") but it is implied that they each live their own lives peacefully.

Hausfrau: a housewife, but often used in a derogatory manner and seems particularly to suggest suburban living e.g. in a Saul Bellow novel: "I am not just another suburban hausfrau" or the blog *Diary of a Suburban Hausfrau*: "I'm just a poor lil' full-time job holding married dame stuck in my suburban (Chicago NW 'burbs) lifestyle. No more roadtrips to LA to visit friends and see bands play or tour buses for me."
<http://diaryofthesuburbanhausfrau.blogspot.com>

LUCY BARNES

Philosophical Points of Interest

"The world is always on the other side of the door!"...

These are some of the philosophical conundrums brought up either implicitly or explicitly in the play.

"If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?" is a philosophical riddle that raises questions regarding observation and knowledge of reality. The origin of the question is unknown, but the current phrasing appears to have originated in the twentieth century.

The "common sense" answer is that yes, it does indeed make a sound. Since a sound is by definition a frequency, and such a frequency is emitted when one object strikes another, the frequency created when the hypothetical tree hits the hypothetical ground qualifies as a sound. However, this "common sense" answer misses the point of the question, which is merely using the tree as an example to pose the question if reality is dependent on, or independent of, perception. Logically, the question itself is flawed, since it is an example of begging the question (in which the proposition to be proved is assumed implicitly or explicitly in one of the premises). Specifically, the question implies two premises,

that A) there is a tree, and B) there is no one there to see it. If the tree exists despite the fact that no one is there to see it (as the question implies), reality is not based on perception, which allows for the sound of the fall to exist as well, regardless if there is someone there to hear it.

Can something exist without being perceived? - e.g. "*Sound is only sound if a person hears it*"

The most immediate philosophical topic that the riddle introduces involves the existence of the tree (and its sound) outside of human perception. If no one is around to see, hear, touch or smell the tree, how could its existence occur? What is it to say that it exists when such an existence avoids all knowing? George Berkeley in the 18th century developed subjective idealism, a metaphysical theory to respond to these questions, coined famously as "to be is to be perceived". Today meta-physicians are split. According to substance theory, a substance is distinct from its properties. According to bundle theory, an object is merely its sense data. The tree will not make a sound.

Can we assume the unobserved world functions the same as the observed world? - e.g., "*does*

observation affect outcome?"

A related question involves whether or not an unobserved event occurs *predictably*, like it occurs when it is observed. The anthropic principle suggests that the observer, just in its existence, may impose on the reality observed. However, most people, as well as scientists, assume that the observer doesn't change whether the tree-fall causes a sound or not, but this is a difficult claim to prove. However, many scientists would argue as follows, "*A truly unobserved event is one which realises no effect (imparts no information) on any other (where 'other' might be e.g., human, sound-recorder or rock), it therefore can have no legacy in the present (or ongoing) wider physical universe. It may then be recognized that the unobserved event was absolutely identical to an event which did not occur at all.*". Of course, the fact that the tree is known to have changed state from 'upright' to 'fallen' implies that the event must be observed to ask the question at all - even if only by the supposed deaf onlooker.

What is the difference between what something is, and how it *appears?* - e.g., "*sound is the variation of pressure that propagates through matter as a wave*"

Perhaps the most important topic the riddle offers is the division between perception of an object and how an object really is. If the tree exists outside of perception (as common sense would dictate), then it will produce sound waves. However, these sound waves will

not actually *sound* like anything. Sound as it is mechanically understood will occur, but sound as it is understood by sensation will not occur.

Henry's study of dark matter halos is essentially an aspect of **physical cosmology**. Physical cosmology, as a branch of astronomy, is the study of the largest-scale structures and dynamics of our universe and is concerned with fundamental questions about its formation and evolution. Cosmology involves itself with studying the motions of the celestial bodies and the first cause (the origin of the universe). However, cosmology as a science originates with the Copernican Principle, which implies that celestial bodies obey identical physical laws to those on earth, and Newtonian Mechanics, which first allowed us to understand those motions. This is now called celestial mechanics. Cosmology is unusual in physics for drawing heavily on the work of particle physicists' experiments, from general relativity research; and from plasma physics. Cosmology therefore unites the physics of the largest structures in the universe (e.g. planets) with the physics of the smallest structures in the universe (e.g. particles). The all-encompassing nature of this study might be relevant to Hubert's musings at the beginning of Act 3 about the possibility of "an overall Theory" and "nostalgia for some lost wholeness."

LUCY BARNES

Interview with Sarah Esdaile

The director of Life x3 describes the process of bringing the play to life.

How did you become a director?

I always knew I wanted to be a director. I studied theatre studies at A Level and directed productions at school. Then I did lots of productions on the London fringe, before landing a job as an Assistant Director at the Globe Theatre. I did this for two seasons, before going to assist at the Royal Shakespeare Company in the late 1990s. Then I was offered a production at The Bush (in London), and became an RSC Associate Director. I've just had a great year, I've been working at the West Yorkshire Playhouse, now I'm here at the Watermill, and later I'm going to co-direct *His Dark Materials* in Birmingham.

Can you describe the rehearsal process for this production?

The first thing we did was spend some time on the text. I have a rule that 'no question is too stupid'. I encourage everyone to ask really obvious questions, which can throw some valuable light onto the play. Then we broke the play down into 'units' – these are really just manageable chunks that we give a name, to help us in rehearsals.

The next thing I always do is some character work. I found hot-seating a really helpful tool for this play (where one actor answers questions, in character, that are posed by the rest of the cast). Sometimes after hot-seating, all the *other* actors interact with each other as the hot-seated character. The actor playing the character can just watch and see what happens. It helps the actor see how everyone else views the character, and pick up some ideas he or she might not have thought of.

Then we get it on its feet. For *Life x3* it was important to work through the play fairly quickly, as only when we got to the end did we begin to understand how we felt about the earlier sections.

I'm not autocratic. I don't find myself disagreeing very often with the actors because I can usually see at the auditions that we will work well together. But

if we come across differences in interpretation then I won't want to force my view. Directing is always about navigating the middle ground.

Once the play has opened I will keep coming to see it every so often and make notes. A play is an organic, ongoing process.

What challenges have you encountered in this play?

There's no real through-line. It's a difficult play because nothing is clear cut. The given circumstances in each Act are the same, and they are the same people reacting slightly differently each time. We found that in the second Act, the child's behaviour is much better, which leads to a more relaxed atmosphere when the guests arrive.

We have found that starting each Act is difficult, so we've been looking at all the tiny details. The slightest nuance can change everything. It's also a very funny play, but there are so many choices, so many ways each line could be played, that it takes time for the actors to make all the decisions.

Life x 3

By Yasmina Reza
Translated by Christopher Hampton

Director Sarah Esdaile
Designer Francis O'Connor
Lighting Designer Aideen Malone
Music by Simon Slater

Cast

Sonia	Sarah Ball
Inès	Sara Crowe
Hubert	Christopher Villiers
Henri	James Wallace

Production Manager Lawrence T Doyle
Company Stage Manager Ami-Jayne Steele-Childe
Assistant Production Manager Nelly Chauvet
Deputy Stage Manager Clare Loxley
Assistant Stage Manager Victoria Horn