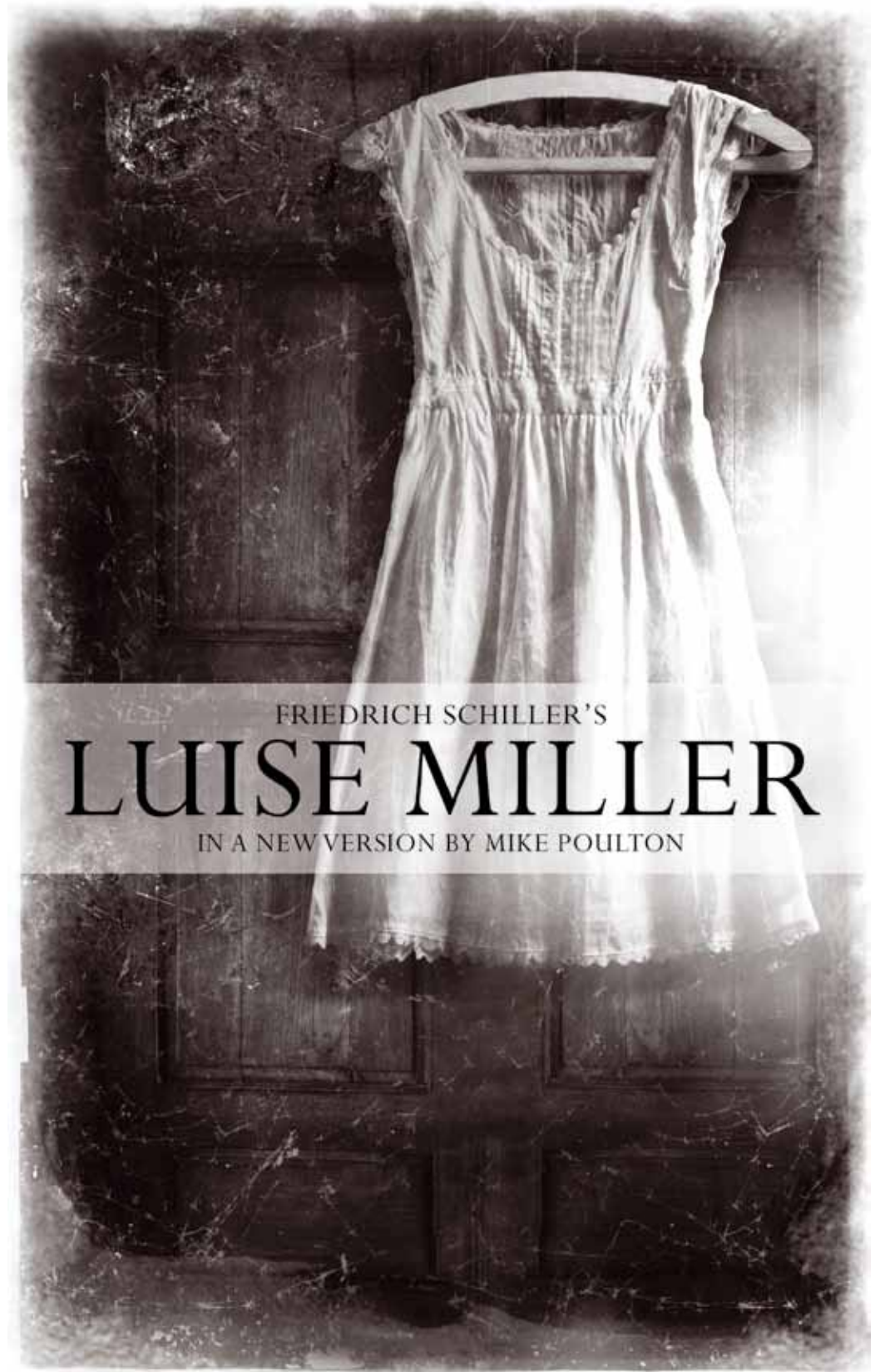


DOMMAR®

Study Guide for



FRIEDRICH SCHILLER'S
LUISE MILLER
IN A NEW VERSION BY MIKE POULTON

Written by **Sophie Watkiss**

Edited by **Sam Maynard**

Rehearsal and Production photography by **Johan Persson**

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Ruth Finch and Harold Hyam Wingate Foundation

Production Supporter: Judy Craymer

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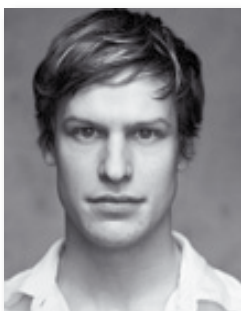
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Cast and Creative Team

Cast



Max Bennett – FERDINAND

Theatre: includes *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Headlong), *Fabrication* (Affabulazione) (The Print Room), *Danton's Death* (NT), *Mrs Warren's Profession* (Bath Theatre Royal/UK tour/Comedy), *Measure for Measure* (Plymouth Theatre Royal/UK tour), *Waste* (Almeida), *Romeo and Juliet* (Middle Temple Hall), *Thyestes* (BAC), *Finisterre* (Theatre503), *The Herbal Bed* (Salisbury Playhouse).

Film: includes *The Duchess*, *99 Francs*.



Ben Daniels – THE CHANCELLOR

For the Donmar: *The Wild Duck*, *The God of Hell*, *Tales from Hollywood*.

Theatre: includes *Les Liasions Dangereuses* (New York), *Thérèse Raquin*, *Iphigenia at Aulis*, *Three Sisters*, *All My Sons* (NT, Olivier Award), *As You Like It* (Sheffield), *Martin Yesterday*, *Pride and Prejudice* (Royal Exchange), *Naked* (Almeida/Playhouse), *900 Oneonta* (Old Vic/Ambassadors), *Waiting for Godot* (Lyric Hammersmith), *Cracks* (King's Head), *Entertaining Mr Sloane* (Greenwich), *Never the Sinner* (Bath/Playhouse), *The Tutor* (Old Vic), *All's Well that Ends Well*, *Electra*, *The Hypochondriac* (Leicester), *Family Circle*, *The Brontës of Haworth* (Scarborough).

Film: includes *Jack the Giant Killer*, *Doom*, *Fogbound*, *Married Unmarried*, *Fanny and Elvis*, *Madeleine*, *I Want You*, *Beautiful Thing*, *Passion in the Desert*, *The Bridge*, *Wish You Were Here*.

Television: includes *Law & Order UK*, *The Last Days of Lehman Brothers*, *Women in Love*, *Ian Fleming – A Life in Pictures*, *Conspiracy*, *The Passion*, *Lark Rise to Candleford*, *State Within*, *Elizabeth – The Virgin Queen*, *Spooks*, *Miss Marple*, *Real Men*, *Cutting It*, *Aristocrats*, *Silent Witness*.



David Dawson – HOFMARSCHALL VON KALB

Training: RADA.

Theatre: includes *Posh* (Royal Court), *Comedians* (Lyric Hammersmith), *Romeo and Juliet* (RSC), *The Entertainer*, *Richard II* (Old Vic), *Nicholas Nickleby* (Chichester/ West End/UK tour/Toronto), *The Long and the Short and the Tall* (Sheffield Lyceum).

Film: includes *London Boulevard*.

Television: includes *Luther*, *The Road to Coronation Street*, *Gracie*, *The Thick of It*, *Secret Diary of a Call Girl*, *Doc Martin*.



Lloyd Everitt – THE CHANCELLOR’S PAGE

Training: Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.

Theatre: includes *The Dug Out* (Bristol Old Vic), *Devon Country* (Tobacco Factory).

Television: includes *Alys*.



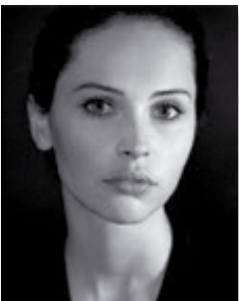
Paul Higgins – MILLER

For the Donmar: *The Cosmonaut’s Last Message...*

Theatre: includes *Caledonia*, *Nobody Will Ever Forgive Us* (writer), *Black Watch* (National Theatre of Scotland), *The White Guard*, *Paul*, *An Enemy of the People*, *The Hare Trilogy* (NT), *Damascus* (Traverse/Tricycle), *The Tempest* (Tron), *Macbeth*, *Conversations After a Burial* (Almeida), *Measure for Measure* (RSC), *The Golden Ass*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (Globe), *Night Songs*, *American Bagpipes*, *A Wholly Healthy Glasgow* (Royal Court), *Buried Alive*, *The Maidenstone* (Hampstead), *Macbeth* (ETT/Lyric Hammersmith), *Slab Boys Trilogy* (Young Vic).

Film: includes *In the Loop*, *Red Road*, *Complicity*, *Bedrooms and Hallways*.

Television: includes *Vera*, *New Town*, *No Holds Bard*, *The Last Enemy*, *Silent Witness*, *Low Winter Sun*, *The Thick of It*, *Murder*, *Staying Alive*, *Dr Finlay*, *Tumbledown*, *A Very Peculiar Practice*, *The Negotiator*.



Felicity Jones – LUISE MILLER

For the Donmar: *The Chalk Garden*.

Theatre: includes *That Face* (Royal Court).

Film: includes *Like Crazy*, *Chalet Girl*, *Albatross*, *Cemetery Junction*, *The Tempest*, *Soulboy*, *Chéri*, *Flashbacks of a Fool*, *Brideshead Revisited*.

Television: includes *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Doctor Who*, *Cape Wrath*, *Northanger Abbey*, *Servants*, *Weirdsister College*, *The Worst Witch*, *The Treasure Seekers*.



Alex Kingston – LADY MILFORD

Theatre: includes *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* (Garrick), *Morning and Evening* (Hampstead), *Darwin’s Flood* (Bush), *Othello* (Birmingham Rep), *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (Sheffield), *Bad Blood* (Gate), *The Bright and Bold Design*, *The Curse of the Starving Class*, *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, *King Lear*, *Much Ado About Nothing* (RSC), *The Tutor* (Old Vic).

Film: includes *Like Crazy*, *Sweet Land*, *Essex Boys*, *Weapons of Mass Distraction*, *The Croupier*, *In Hitler’s Shadow*, *Saint-Ex*, *Carrington*, *The Woman and the Wolf*, *A Pin for the Butterfly*, *The Wildcats of St. Trinian’s*, *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover*.

Television: includes *Doctor Who*, *Marchlands*, *Flashforward*, *Law & Order*, *CSI*, *Ben Hur*, *Hope Springs*, *Lost in Austen*, *Freezing*, *Without a Trace*, *Boudica – Warrior Queen*, *The Poseidon Adventure*, *E.R.*, *Moll Flanders*, *I Hate Christmas*, *The Knock*, *The Bill*, *Covington Cross*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Wanted – Marjorie and Oliver*, *Henry’s Leg*, *Hannay*, *A Killing on the Exchange*.



John Light – WURM

Training: LAMDA.

Theatre: includes *The Master Builder*, *Certain Young Men*, *The Cenci*, *The Tower* (Almeida), *A New World: The Life of Thomas Paine* (Globe), *True West* (Sheffield Crucible), *Clocks and Whistles*, *Apologia* (Bush), *Hedda Gabler* (Gate, Dublin), *My Boy Jack*, *The Giant* (Hampstead), *Julius Caesar*, *The Tempest*, *The Seagull*, *In the Company of Men*, *A Patriot for Me* (RSC), *The Night Season* (NT), *Singer* (Tricycle).

Film: includes *Albert Nobbs*, *Scoop*, *Partition*, *Heights*, *The Lion in Winter*, *Benedict Arnold*, *The Good Pope*, *DK2*, *Trance*, *Purpose*, *Investigating Sex*, *5 Seconds to Spare*, *A Rather English Marriage*, *John's Epic Journey to the Light*.

Television: includes *Silk*, *DCI Banks*, *Dresden*, *North & South*, *Cambridge Spies*, *Lloyd and Hill*, *Dalziel and Pascoe*, *Band of Brothers*, *Love in a Cold Climate*, *Aristocrats*, *Cider with Rosie*, *The Jump*, *The Unknown Soldier*, *Holding On*, *Cold Lazarus*.



Alexander Pritchett – LADY MILFORD'S SERVANT

Training: Mountview.

Film: includes *Dead Time*, *The Killer*, *The Liar and the Thief*. This is Alexander's professional theatre debut.



Finty Williams – FRAU MILLER

Training: Central School of Speech and Drama.

Theatre: includes *Twelfth Night* (NT), *Bedlam* (Globe), *Bedroom Farce* (Kingston Rose/Duke of York's), *Tons of Money*, *Party Piece*, *Bedroom Farce*, *One for the Pot* (Theatre Royal, Windsor), *The Chiltern Hundreds* (Windsor/Chichester/West End), *The Secret Life of Charlie Chaplin* (Edinburgh Fringe), *Taking Steps* (Derby Playhouse), *Northanger Abbey* (Queen's, Hornchurch), *Black Comedy* (Edinburgh Fringe), *Lloyd George Knew My Father* (Watermill, Newbury), *The Clandestine Marriage* (UK tour), *The Impresario from Smyrna* (Old Red Lion), *Pride and Prejudice* (Royal Exchange).

Film: includes *The Good Night*, *Ladies in Lavender*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Gosford Park*, *North West One*, *Mrs Brown*, *Dame Flora*, *The Secret Rapture*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*.

Television: includes *Cranford*, *Born and Bred*, *Tales from the Crypt*, *The Torch*.

Creative Team

Friedrich Schiller – AUTHOR

Born Johann Christoph Friederich Schiller on 10 November 1759. He studied at the military ducal academy founded by the Duke Karl Eugen and whilst there he wrote *The Robbers*. At the age of 21, Schiller graduated from the academy and was enlisted as a military surgeon in the army of Stuttgart. *The Robbers* was performed for the first time on stage in Mannheim in 1782. Schiller married Charlotte von Lengefeldt in February 1790 and the same year he became a university professor of history at Jena. As a professor, he authored several historical journals and almanacs. In 1802, Schiller received a diploma of nobility from Emperor Francis II. After living most of his later life in sickness, he died on 9 May 1805, leaving his last work *Demetrius* unfinished. Major works include: *The Robbers*, *The Genoese Conspiracy*, *Intrigue and Love*, *The Minister*, *Don Carlos*, *Wallenstein*, *Wallenstein's Camp*, *The Piccolomini* and *The Death of Wallenstein*, *Maria Stuart*, *The Maid of Orleans*, *The Bride of Messina*, *Wilhelm Tell*, *Demetrius* (unfinished).



Mike Poulton – AUTHOR

Recent productions include: *Morte d'Arthur* (RSC), *The Bacchae* (Manchester Royal Exchange), *Rosmersholm* (Pearl Theatre, New York), *Canterbury Tales* (Northern Broadsides), *Anjin* (Galaxy Theatre, Tokyo/Umeda Arts Theatre, Osaka), *Wallenstein* (Chichester Minerva), *Mary Stuart* (Clwyd Theatr Cymru), *The Lady from the Sea* (Birmingham Rep), *The Cherry Orchard* (Chichester Festival Theatre), *Rosmersholm* (Almeida), *The Cherry Orchard* (Clwyd Theatr Cymru), *Don Carlos* (Göteborgs Stadsteater), *Don Carlos* (Rough Magic Theatre Company, Dublin), *The Father* (Chichester Festival Theatre), *Myrmidons* (Samuel Beckett Theatre, Dublin), *Canterbury Tales Parts I & II* (RSC/Washington/Barcelona/Madrid). Other productions include: *Don Carlos* (Sheffield Crucible/Gielgud), *The York Mysteries* (York Minster), *Saint Erkenwald* (RSC), *Fortune's Fool* (New York), *Ion* (Mercury, Colchester), *The Seagull*, *Three Sisters*, *Dance of Death* (Mercury, Colchester), *Ghosts* (Theatre Royal, Plymouth), *Uncle Vanya* (New York), *Three Sisters* (Birmingham Rep).

Michael Grandage – DIRECTOR

Michael is Artistic Director of the Donmar.

For the Donmar: *King Lear* (also UK tour/New York), *Red* (also New York – Tony Award), *Hamlet* (also Elsinore/New York), *Madame de Sade*, *Twelfth Night*, *Ivanov* – 2008 Critics' Circle Award for Best Director (shared with *The Chalk Garden*) & 2008 Evening Standard Award for Best Director (shared with *The Chalk Garden & Othello*), *The Chalk Garden*, *Othello*, *John Gabriel Borkman*, *Don Juan in Soho*, *Frost/Nixon* (also Gielgud/New York/USA tour), *Guys and Dolls* (a Donmar production at the Piccadilly – 2006 Olivier Award for Outstanding Musical Production), *The Cut* (also UK tour), *The Wild Duck* – 2006 Critics' Circle Award for Best Director, *Grand Hotel* – 2005 Olivier Award for Outstanding Musical Production & 2004 Evening Standard Award for Best Director, *Pirandello's Henry IV* (also UK tour), *After Miss Julie*, *Caligula* – 2004 Olivier Award for Best Director, *The Vortex*, *Privates on Parade*, *Merrily We Roll Along* – 2001 Olivier Award for Best Musical & 2000 Critics' Circle for Best Director, *Passion Play* – 2001 Critics' Circle & 2000 Evening Standard Awards for Best Director, *Good*.

As Artistic Director of Sheffield Theatres (1999-2005): includes *Don Carlos* – 2005 Evening Standard Award & TMA for Best Director & 2005 German British Forum Award (also Gielgud), *Suddenly Last Summer* (also Albery), *As You Like It* – 2000 Critics' Circle & Evening Standard Awards for Best Director & 2001 South Bank Show Award for Theatre (also Lyric Hammersmith), *The Tempest* (also Old Vic), *Richard III*, *Edward II*.

Other theatre: includes *Danton's Death* (NT), *Evita* (Adelphi), *The Doctor's Dilemma*, *The Jew of Malta* (Almeida/ tour).

Opera: *Billy Budd* (Glyndebourne), *Madame Butterfly* (Houston). He has been given Honorary Doctorates from Sheffield Hallam University and Sheffield University where he was also a visiting Professor. He is currently a visiting professor at University College Falmouth and has recently been appointed the new President of Central School of Speech and Drama.

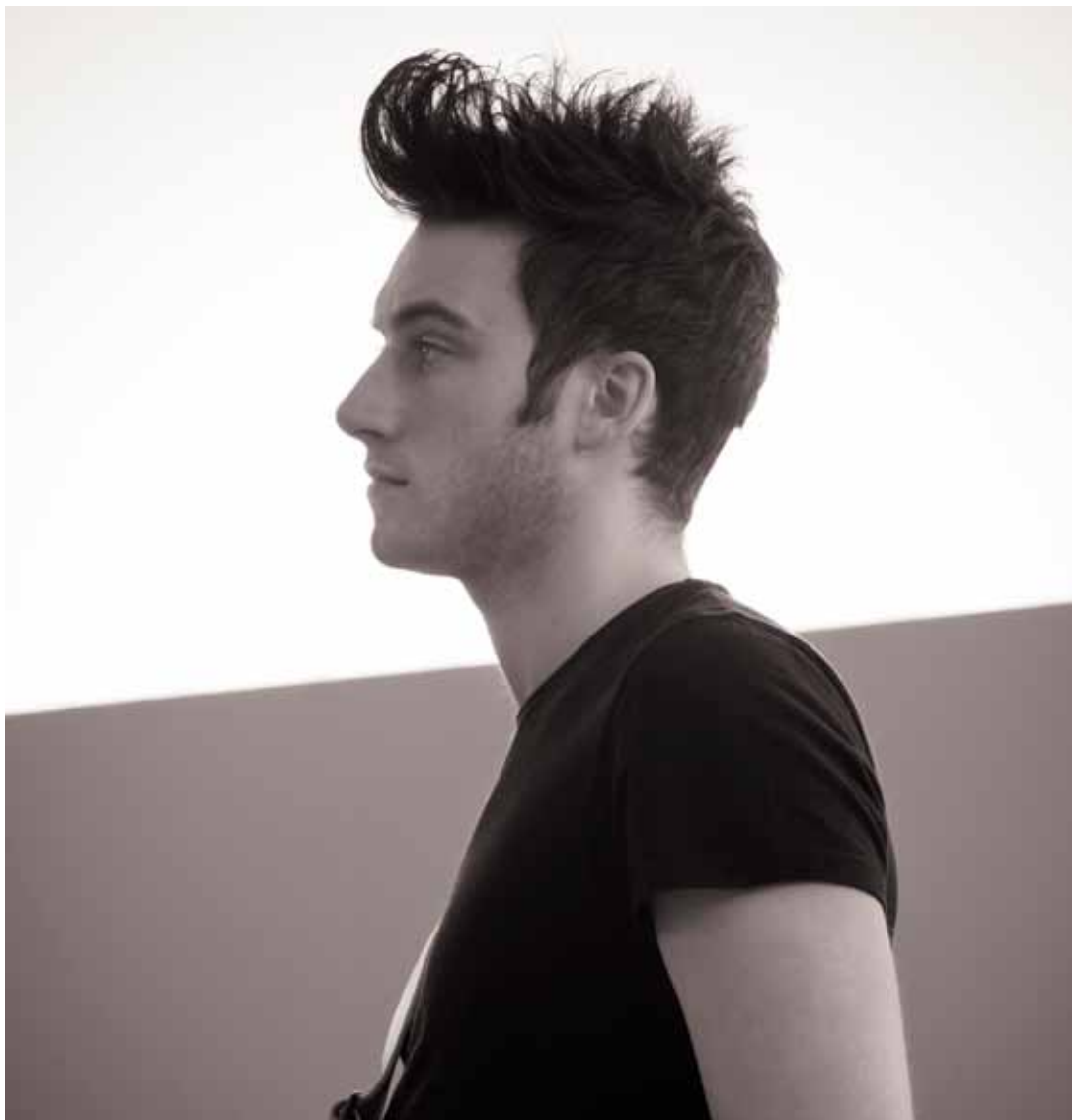
Peter McKintosh – DESIGNER

For the Donmar: *Serenading Louie* (also UK tour), *Be Near Me*, *The Chalk Garden*, *John Gabriel Borkman*, *The Cryptogram*, *Boston Marriage*.

Theatre: includes *The 39 Steps* (London/ New York/Israel/Italy/Australia/Korea/China/Russia/Japan/US & UK tours), *Prick Up Your Ears*, *Donkeys' Years*, *The Home Place* (Comedy), *Hello, Dolly!* (Regent's Park), *Educating Rita & Shirley Valentine*, *Entertaining Mr Sloane*, *The Dumb Waiter* (Trafalgar Studios), *Fiddler on the Roof* (Savoy), *Summer and Smoke* (Apollo), *Butley*, *Love Story*, *The Birthday Party* (Duchess), *A Woman of No Importance* (Haymarket), *King John*, *Brand*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Pericles*, *Alice in Wonderland* (RSC), *Honk!*, *Widowers' Houses* (NT), *The Knot of the Heart*, *Waste*, *Cloud Nine*, *Romance* (Almeida), *The Home Place* (Gate, Dublin), *Honk!* (UK tour/ Boston/Chicago/Tokyo/Singapore), *Love Story*, *The Scarlet Letter*, *Just So*, *Pal Joey* (Chichester), *Antony and Cleopatra* (Liverpool), *Kirikou et Karaba* (Paris).

Opera: includes *The Handmaid's Tale* (Royal Danish Opera/ENO/Canadian Opera), *Love Counts*, *The Silent Twins* (Almeida Opera).

Dance: includes *Cut to the Chase* (English National Ballet).



Paule Constable – LIGHTING DESIGNER

For the Donmar: *Chalk Garden, The Man Who Had All the Luck, Othello, Absurdia, The Cut, Proof, Little Foxes, Bondagers.*

Theatre: includes regularly at the NT (most recently *War Horse, Death and the Kings Horseman, Danton's Death*), RSC, Royal Court, Young Vic. West End productions include *Evita* (Adelphi), *Oliver!* (Theatre Royal, Drury Lane), *Clybourne Park* (Royal Court/Wyndham's) and *Don Carlos*.

Opera: She has designed opera throughout the world as well as at Covent Garden, Glyndebourne and English National Opera.

Dance: includes *Dorian Gray, Play Without Words* (Matthew Bourne), *Seven Deadly Sins* (Royal Ballet).

Adam Cork – COMPOSER & SOUND DESIGNER

For the Donmar: *King Lear* (also UK tour/New York – Olivier Award), *Red* (also New York – Tony Award), *A Streetcar Named Desire, Hamlet* (also New York), *Madame de Sade, Ivanov, Creditors, The Chalk Garden, Othello, John Gabriel Borkman, Don Juan in Soho, Frost/Nixon* (also Gielgud/New York/US tour), *The Cut, The Wild Duck, Henry IV, Caligula.*

Theatre: includes scores and sound designs for London Road (NT), *Enron* (Headlong/Chichester/Royal Court/ New York), *All's Well that Ends Well, Phedre, Time & The Conways, Danton's Death* (NT), *A View from the Bridge, No Man's Land* (Duke of York's), *Macbeth* (Chichester/New York), *Six Characters in Search of an Author, Don Carlos* (Gielgud), *Romeo and Juliet, The Tempest, Speaking Like Magpies* (RSC), *The Glass Menagerie* (Apollo), *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot, The Late Henry Moss* (Almeida), *Suddenly Last Summer* (Albery).

Film: includes scores for *Macbeth, Bust, The Three Rules of Infidelity, Tripletake.*

Television: includes *Frances Tuesday, Re-Ignited, Imprints.*

Radio: includes *The Chalk Garden, Losing Rosalind, The Luneberg Variation, The Colonel-Bird, Don Carlos, Othello, On the Ceiling.*

Background

Schiller and LUISE MILLER

“The drama Schiller creates is a unique mixture and it is as powerful today as it was when it was written. It a world of contrasts, sharp dualisms and extremes. With his dramatic art Schiller allows us to feel the force of ideas and the intensity of anguish his characters experience”.

John Guthrie¹

German-born Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805) ranks as one of the most important playwrights in his country and, during the last hundred years, LUISE MILLER, which Schiller originally called *Intrigue and Love* – has been the most widely produced of his plays on the German stage. It is often defined as a “domestic tragedy”, a term relating to a genre of play that focuses on the more personal and domestic elements of tragedy, in this instance, the tragedy of the eponymous heroine. First produced in 1784, LUISE MILLER is similar to the earlier German domestic tragedies written by Lessing, such as *Miss Sara Sampson* (1755) and *Emilia Galotti* (1772), in that it shares analogous themes and plot details, i.e. day to day life, class rivalry, rigid patterns of thought and the impossibility of true love.



Alongside the play's domestic focus sits a more global politic theme; an attack on eighteenth century tyranny, which was rife in Schiller's lifetime in a Germany divided into over three hundred separate states and principalities. Schiller's patron, Duke Karl Eugen, who ruled over one of the largest principalities, Württemberg, was a despot, and Schiller observed firsthand the oppression of the middle and lower classes by the aristocracy. His experiences lie at the heart of the drama he creates in *LUISE MILLER*.

Schiller wrote *LUISE MILLER* during what is known as the "Sturm und Drang" (the "Storm and Stress") movement in Germany and the play has many of the movement's hallmarks, such as explosive passion, violence and pathos. During this movement, Shakespeare received widespread acceptance on the German stage and became the idol and model of the Sturm und Drang dramatists. This is evident in *LUISE MILLER*, with elements that have been taken from *Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello* planted firmly into a German setting. ²



An introduction to the ideas behind the play

The hierarchical world of the play

“When there’s thunder in heaven little folk get struck by lightning.”

Miller, Act One.

The action of *LUISE MILLER* takes place in 1784, within a fictional hereditary principality, somewhere in Germany.

The play brings together two different worlds, the hierarchical world of the court, and the domestic world of the humble court musician, Miller. This fusion comes about through the relationship between Ferdinand, son of the Chancellor, the most powerful statesman in the land, and Luise Miller, the court musician’s daughter. It is a union forbidden by the social codes of the time, “The likes of us don’t speak to the likes of them”, expounds Frau Miller in the opening scene, as she and Miller discuss rumours abounding the court of Ferdinand’s relationship with their daughter. Miller is adamant that the schism in the young couple’s social standing means the relationship must be discouraged, “Ferdinand is a lord, among the greatest in the land. We’re poor folk”, says Miller, “Because he’s a lord, we must know our places – keep a respectful distance.”

As the opening scene progresses, the Chancellor’s secretary, Wurm, comes calling, seeking Luise’s hand in marriage. Whereas Ferdinand, as a lord, is considered of too high a status to be romantically connected to Luise, Wurm is of rank where it is permissible for him to pursue her hand in marriage. However, he is keen to remind the Millers that, as Secretary to the Lord Chancellor, “Some say I have risen too high to be considered a proper match for a fiddler’s daughter.”

The role of religion in the play

The opening scene is also crucial to establishing the central role of religion in the play, and its importance in the Millers’ lives. The first time we see Luise, she has just returned from Mass. Schiller’s stage directions describe her as “subdued”, and holding her prayer book. Her first line is a blessing to her father.

As the discourse between Luise and her father develops, the tension between her dedication to her faith, and her feelings for Ferdinand, rise quickly to the surface:

“O’ I’m so afraid! I kneel and try to pray but the holy image before me takes on human form – his divine form – and it’s Ferdinand I worship.”

Act One, Scene One.

An understanding of the absolute commitment Luise has to her religion is vital for the audience to appreciate the plot that Wurm hatches against her later in the play: he coerces her into writing a letter containing lies, in the promise of releasing her father from jail, and forces her to swear an oath that the letter was written of her own free will. The oath is sworn on the most sacred of Catholic symbols, a monstrance – the vessel used to display the consecrated host. Wurm is assured that Luise will never break her oath, as he explains to the Chancellor and Hofmarschal, “To Luise a broken oath sworn upon the living body of her Redeemer is a thing of terror”.

Characters, in order of hierarchy

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS, THE PRINCE

"Monsters had been our Prince's tutors – now they are his advisers and his confessors."

Lady Milford, Act Two, Scene One.

Although he never actually appears, the Prince is a powerful force in the play, holding ultimate authority and rule over his court and principality. His quest for pleasure at the expense of his duty to govern is exemplified by the Hofmarschall's message to the Chancellor in Act One Scene Two, "His Royal Highness sends me to inform you that this morning's meeting of Cabinet is postponed. Officially he's weighed down with cares of State. Unofficially he's gone hunting."





LADY MILFORD – Alex Kingston

“Revenge is not in my nature – true – but ruthlessness is.”

Lady Milford, Act Four, Scene Two.

Lady Milford is the Prince’s mistress, and as such, has his ear, making her a powerful force at court. She herself is of royal blood, tracing her family tree “back to the greatest Kings of England.” Her involvement in the action revolves around the proposed marriage between herself and Ferdinand, arranged by the Chancellor to counterbalance the impending marriage of the Prince. As the Chancellor proclaims, “when the new bride arrives, what’s to be done with the old mistress?” (Act One, Scene Two). However, the Chancellor makes it clear that the Prince has no intention of discarding his English courtesan, in his words, “she’s entangled his heart and made herself a power in the land.” (Act One, Scene Two). His ulterior motive is of course, to ensure his power remains unassailable, by having the Prince’s mistress as his daughter-in-law.

THE CHANCELLOR – Ben Daniels

“The stuff of seduction is also the stuff of politics. Lies and promises!”

The Chancellor, Act One, Scene Two.

The Chancellor is first minister to His Royal Highness, the Prince. He is a member of the nobility, though one who has to work hard to maintain and widen his influence; we are told that he arranged the murder of his predecessor in order to take up his post. He represents the abuse of real power by those who are close to it; he has to siphon his authority from the prince who holds true authority and sovereignty. Throughout the action, he is simply referred to as “the Chancellor”, however, his ancestral name is “Von Walter”. The German verb ‘walten’ means to wield power, so the name may be intended to convey a sense of that.³ Schiller’s audiences would have been familiar with the idea of someone on the lower fringes of the nobility walking over dead bodies in order to consolidate their position at court. His son, Ferdinand, abhors the evil that his father has perpetrated in the pursuit of power, and the “empty shell” that he has become.

FERDINAND – Max Bennett

“I’m young! I am in love! And love knows nothing of ceremony, Courts, high office – strip all that away and what is left but naked, loving humanity.”

Ferdinand, Act Two, Scene One.

Blood of ancient nobility and son of the Chancellor, Ferdinand is willing to forsake his fortune and status for the love of Luise. His absolute belief in their relationship supersedes his belief in his rank, “The stars in my coat of arms have less influence than the stars of heaven where God’s hand has written ‘I give this woman to this man – this man to this woman.’” (The stars that adorn the German coat of arms refer to celestial goodness, indicating a noble person of excellence).

Ferdinand is an archetype that appears in many of Schiller’s early plays; the individual who strives to liberate himself from the shackles of prejudice, taboos and a corrupt society. At the time Schiller was writing, ideas of liberty and love were in the air; the French Revolution was only a few years away and a better society beckoned. Rousseau’s ideas about nature and society were imbibed even at the military academy where Schiller studied. A new God was emerging, to replace the heavenly Father of Christianity. Schiller embraced these new ideas, being guided by a personal God of love and one that sanctioned individual freedom and autonomy. This secularisation went hand in hand with a challenge to parental authority and patriarchy. We cannot fail to be deeply moved by the quest for liberty that Schiller’s young idealistic heroes such as Ferdinand embark on. But Schiller also lays bare the problems of this idealism. It is fatally flawed. The young idealist becomes obsessive, blind to the demands of mundane reality. Stimulated by works of the imagination, the Schillerian hero constructs a world for the self. We recognise it as a dream-world. It is a world in which the stakes are high; it demands absolute faithfulness and obedience. This world crumbles tragically through a combination of human frailty and circumstances. The rebellion which has threatened to replace the old order ends in its own violent destruction from within.⁴



HOFMARSCHALL VON KALB – David Dawson

“A donkey in silk drawers – filling up the space where a proper man should be – a bowing, scraping monkey fit only to fetch and carry billets-doux and empty chamber pots. If I fire a lead ball into your foppish head it will be the first time anything’s been in there.”

Ferdinand addressing Von Kalb, Act Four, Scene One.

The Hofmarschall was the title for the administrative official in charge of a princely German court, supervising all its economic affairs. He was responsible for organising the royal family’s receptions, foreign trips and state visits. Other duties included organising the court household, the maintenance of the royal castles, and the provision of food and drink for the princely table, kitchens and wine-cellar.

The risible figure of Von Kalb seems to underline Schiller’s intention to ridicule the nobility. “Kalb” in German means calf and suggests a bovine and ultimately passive and insignificant individual. He represents the wasteful and empty obsession with outward appearance that contemporaries saw as one of the evils of life at the princely courts. ⁵

SECRETARY WURM – John Light

“Oh run away then you civil-servile, rat-faced, writ-scribbling pox-blister.”

Miller talking about Wurm, Act One.

The Secretary was responsible for dealing with the Chancellor’s correspondence. The corruption of the court, and the interdependence of each member of the Chancellor’s administration on each other through their shared practice of dishonesty, is exacerbated by Wurm in his role as Secretary to the Chancellor. “You have a chestful of evidence against me” Wurm reminds the Chancellor, when proving his loyalty, “ forged signatures, misappropriated funds, honours sold, titles denied, secrets leaked, lies sworn as truth and truth denounced as lies.” Wurm describes himself as the Chancellor’s “creature”, without whom, he is nothing more than “a woodlouse crawling here and there and under every stone and rotten log.” (Act One, Scene Two). Although the snide aside to the audience which follows this, “you have almost as much on me as I have on you”, alerts them to the duplicity of his character.





THE MILLERS

MILLER – Paul Higgins

“Music’s my trade, sir – I keep my counsel and let my instrument do my talking for me. I’m a man of few words, and the few words I speak are usually blunt ones.”

Miller speaking to Wurm, Act One.

As the court musician, Miller is the conduit between the world of the court and the domestic world of his household. It is Miller who is responsible for bringing Ferdinand into the heart of his home, the setting for the young nobleman’s music lessons. Miller’s blunt words indicate a rigidity of character; he adheres strictly to religious doctrine, which guides all the decisions he makes. His insistence on his daughter’s obedience to absolute duty appears to derive from a father’s selfless love.

FRAU MILLER – Finty Williams

“It’s harmless! – enchanting – the musician’s daughter and the Chancellor’s son.”

Frau Miller, Act One, Scene One.

Frau Miller is rooted firmly at the heart of the play’s domestic core. In the Donmar’s production, she establishes the familial setting for the Miller’s home at the opening of the play, as she is discovered folding freshly laundered linen at the kitchen table. She is both naively enchanted by Ferdinand’s adoration of Luise, and proud of the vicarious status it brings to the family. Her role as mother to Luise is subsumed by her husband’s dominance as the father.

LUISE MILLER – Felicity Jones

“Mother...do you think that when I’ve done with this world – and I stand before God – when rank is forgotten – when wealth and power lose meaning – and our state of childlike innocence is given back to us – do you think there’ll be nothing left then to keep the two of us apart?”

Luise, talking of her love for Ferdinand, Act One Scene One

Luise is the embodiment of the exemplary Catholic daughter; dutiful to her parents, living a pure and honourable life through a strict adherence to the guiding principles of her religion. She is more of a pragmatist than Ferdinand, rooted firmly in the reality of her lowly social standing and the implications this has for her future with Ferdinand.

Her sex, youth and low status render her powerless to the machinations of the court. The worst crimes are committed to her when her father, who is her protector, is absent from the house, rendering her vulnerable and open to abuse. Despite these circumstances, she has a vibrant inner strength which is most evident in her scene with Lady Milford.



The rehearsal process

Translating LUISE MILLER

Michael Grandage's first collaboration with Mike Poulton was during his production of Schiller's *Don Carlos* at The Crucible in Sheffield. This collaboration was followed by the Donmar's production of Peter Oswald's version of Schiller's MARY STUART at the Donmar, which transferred into the West End and on to Broadway.

LUISE MILLER is the second "Schiller venture" as Poulton terms it, that the two have collaborated on. The original title for the play is *Kabale und Liebe*, translated into English as *Intrigue and Love*, but, after discussion, the two collaborators decided to change the name as Verdi had done when he adapted the work into an opera, using the name of the trigger character of Luise Miller as their title.

Poulton finds it inexplicable that Friedrich Schiller is only just beginning to assume his rightful position in Britain as one of the world's very greatest playwrights, "in Europe he's right up there with Shakespeare – never out of the repertoire. But in the past English speakers have been neglectful and suspicious of him." He acknowledges, however, that adapting Schiller for an English-speaking audience is not an easy task:

"The plays do not easily give up their hidden treasures. They are all very long. Some of them seven hours... The writing is often dense, and its philosophy can seem complex. They were written in an age that seems to us to present innocence and hope against a background of political turmoil. Their themes are love, youth, joy, freedom and repression. In the form that Schiller published them his plays are like thrilling novels – written in dialogue and intended for reading rather than for performance. In his day theatre was an occasional event – usually for the rich or the intellectual elite. When they were to be staged Schiller cut and adapted his full versions – making them into fast-paced dramas designed to keep audiences on the edge of their seats. Passionate thrillers we would call them. (It can be no accident that there are over ninety Operas based on Schiller's plays.) For this reason a modern adapter should feel no guilt about cutting and streamlining. In making my own stage versions I have only followed in the footsteps of the master – Schiller himself".

Translating Schiller's heightened language from German into English whilst keeping the dialogue accessible, believable, and spontaneous is another challenge:

"How for example do you turn the following literal translation into a speech an English actor will enjoy saying and an audience will understand: "It lasts too long the old man's life – and the doctors would welcome seeing a turn-around – an eternity! The course would be free and plain before me but for this troublesome lump of tough flesh which like the infernal demon-dog in some ghost stories bars the way to the possibility of undiscovered treasures. So then, must my iron yoke bend my projects to a mechanical system"? Or try this one: "Ach! Ach! I must tell you that lemonade was brewed in hell!"



Poulton has learnt that “Schiller is always real and never melodramatic”, though on the page and in a literal translation an unwary reader could be lured into believing he could be. To get the tone and pace of a Schiller play right an adaptor, whilst sticking as closely as possible to the vocabulary and language of the original play, “must focus on interpreting the spirit, pace and emotion of the piece as faithfully as possible.”⁶

The concept for the production

Introducing the cast to the model box on the first day of rehearsals, Michael Grandage talks about creating the world of the play on the Donmar stage by “utilising what is already there: the biggest statement we have, which is the back wall.” The domineering black brick of this wall will influence the look and texture of the set, which needs to have a Germanic feel, and be multi-locational, with scope for swift exits and entrances. “We need to know where we are, with a design that allows us to go from the humble house of the Millers, lit solely by a lamp, to something more grand.” Running the length of the back wall will be a passageway that can act as an interior or exterior space. As with other productions Grandage has directed at the Donmar with multi-locational settings, he is keen to stage the piece with as little furniture as possible; “the play works in such a fluid, on its feet way”, explains Grandage. Because of this fluidity, he wants to encourage the actors to get the play “up on its feet” as soon as possible.

Designer Peter McKintosh has conceived a space dominated by imposing shutters, which will be an important source of light, and a key component for lighting designer Paule Constable to utilise. The shutters will have the capacity to open and close, either to shut light out indicating night time, or offer differing variations of light levels to end scenes. "The possibilities are substantially variable", says Grandage, "creating a world that takes us into the centre of the play's eighteenth century setting." Such a precise historical location leaves little room for debate in terms of costuming the uniforms, but there will be discussions during the first week of rehearsals regarding the costumes worn by the non-military characters.



Inside the rehearsal room

Based on weekly rehearsal updates written by Simon Evans, Assistant Director

Week One

One of the initial discoveries that the cast and creative team made during the first week of rehearsals was about the language of the play, "Schiller is not a plaintive playwright by a long chalk; his characters don't "um" and "ah", and a pause is an exception rather than a rule. His characters speak in superlatives and with a level of passion that seem beyond our 21st Century vocabulary."⁷

Week one was a fast paced affair; by the end of the week the cast had already staggered through the whole show, putting every scene on its feet (albeit roughly) and beginning to get a sense of how the whole piece fits together. Day by day, one scene after another was addressed. A semi-circle of chairs was set up for the cast and a basic read through of a scene was followed by a short discussion. Michael's insistence that "there's no such thing as a stupid question" opened the conversation up wonderfully, with everyone from Chancellor to Court Musician to Page to Mistress asking a myriad of questions ranging from "What time of day is it?" to "What does despair mean to these people? Adaptor Mike Poulton joined rehearsals every day and, as everyone began collectively answering questions (with the caveat that no decisions were set in stone), the company seemed to come together wonderfully, "I can now personally vouch for how lovely it is to hear ten actors sigh together in a shared moment of clarity" cites Simon.

Things became even more exciting when, following these preliminary discussions, the company pushed the chairs back and put the scenes on their feet. This was the earliest of passes at staging the show, offering Michael and the cast a chance to assess the show's physical language and determine which moments might require more attention. It also allowed the actors to get an early understanding of the mechanics of playing "the Donmar" and offered Michael the opportunity to systematically remove the need for all but the most imperative pieces of furniture.

"In the space of four days I've seen plots, proposals, machinations and murders, all contained within a production which (based on the first week) is going to be an intense and action-filled two hours of theatre. As we sat down on Friday afternoon to revisit what we'd been over, it occurred to me how many exciting choices we'd already made and, through even this first set of questions, how much we'd learnt. I can't possibly list it all here, so I'll pick out some favourites: the difference between a rapier and a short sword, that mercury treats syphilis, how to threaten someone with the hilt of a sword, how to say "goose-shit" in French, what kind of containers poison can be kept in and what exactly is meant by a mouchoir duel".⁸

Week Two

Michael's focus for his cast this week was clarity of storytelling. As Simon corroborates, "before a director can begin making a production their own, they have to ensure that at no point is the audience left confused or, worse, left behind." To accentuate the precision of the story, the Friday afternoon of the second week of rehearsals was spent sitting around a table and reading the play from beginning to end as a company for the first time. "At the end of it, I was struck by two things", says Simon, "The first was that it's an absolutely cracking story full (almost to bursting) with love, sex, betrayal, revenge and passion. I'd understood this from my own first readings, but it's a whole new kettle of fish when you hear Ben Daniels and Alex Kingston really "embrace the Schiller" and go hell-for-nails at whoever strays into their plotting. The second thing that struck me was how clearly the actors are now telling this cracking (but relatively unknown) story."

This, no doubt, was the result of the forensic work carried out in the rehearsal room during the week, which was spent working through the play a second time, taking considerably longer on each scene unlocking character and unpicking more and more of the language. Michael's efforts to minimise furniture continued apace, giving the actors space and freedom to explore the physical world of the play, and they were on their feet from 10am on Monday with discussion flowing freely from performance, rather than table work. What became the driving force of this week's work, however, were the discussions, encouraged by Michael, that came out of questions of plot.



It's not a hugely complicated narrative, but the company is faced with the problem of communicating an eighteenth century story clearly to a twenty-first century audience, ensuring that any antiquated concepts are rendered faithfully and lucidly. As they worked on the scenes, gradually fixing blocking and playing with language, Max Bennett and David Dawson discussed honour and how its value in 1780s Germany lies at the heart of a duel between their characters; Felicity Jones and John Light put forward their thoughts on the strength (and nature) of Catholicism in that era and how that allows for one of the most cruel scenes in the play between Luise and Wurm, while Alex Kingston and Paul Higgins discussed suicide and the eighteenth century fear of mortal sin that threatens the perpetrator with Hell.

Michael listened and appraised all these views as spokesman for the audience, ensuring that the cast retained what helped make the story clearer and jettisoned what muddled it. "We played with character, staging, direct address, inflection and (even) the odd tweak to a line," says Simon, "but our top priority was always that we tell the story sharply."

Simon concludes his rehearsal update for the week:

*"We could have spent our first two weeks on the sound of Mike Poulton's sumptuous language and the fabulous flamboyance of his characters, but this week's work is, instead, a vindication of the idea that what draws an audience into the story (more than theatrical flare) is knowing what's going on."*⁹

Week Three

The cast were on their feet from the beginning of the week, with each actor already impressively off book, fixing blocking, playing with intonation, discussing the play's themes, and trying to solve some of the more difficult moments that they seed. "It was a helpful lesson to learn", cites Simon, "that fifteen pages of swords-drawn/loud voiced/plot driving action is (even with the logistics of people movement) a quicker thing to rehearse than five pages of people discussing faith and suicide".

The cast, under Michael's direction, have taken another leap forward in telling Schiller's great story this week, the relationships have developed in complexity, the dialogue is starting to zip along excitingly and, as everyone in the rehearsal room becomes more familiar with the play, they are starting to see it's full arch and how readily it's going to pick an audience up and carry them along for a couple of hours, lost in 1780s Germany. Simon is keen to stress the "fun" that the cast are having with the play, best explained in his own words:

"My reason for saying, somewhat flippantly, that the cast are having fun is that, in the twenty-first century rehearsal rooms I've frequented, there is a tendency toward naturalistic reserve in characters. Directors call on actors to suppress the obvious emotion a character is feeling and bury it under neuroses until it bubbles under the surface as subtext. We might give an audience one or two moments when it bursts out, but generally a maxim of "it's more powerful to look like you're holding back tears than to actually cry" is adhered to. Here, however, in the pages of LUISE MILLER, is language which requires declaration, perspiration and, God knows, bags of

emotion. At the end of almost every rehearsal Michael has given permission, if not actively encouraged the actors to invest in the passion of the language, to “not hold back”. Every time this releasing note has been given the actors on stage seem to beam with an air of “where has this writer and director been all my life”. This is not to say the play is going to be played as a constant shouting match, and Michael has layered in plenty of beautiful softness and silence, but, off-the-leash like this, the actors arrive at rehearsal eager to throw themselves heart and soul into Schiller’s world of pistol duels, sword fights, honour and passion.”¹⁰



A conversation with members of the cast:

Max Bennett (Ferdinand), Paul Higgins (Miller), Finty Williams (Frau Miller) and David Dawson (Hofmarschall)

What discoveries have you made about Schiller through working on the play?

Paul: He's quite simple, plain and direct. People tend to say what's going on inside them, fairly straightforwardly. Characters tend to declare themselves quite a lot – certainly the lovers, Luise and Ferdinand – they really say who they are.

Finty: There's nothing about Schiller that is internalised. It's very externalised.

Paul: Which is quite hard, because modern actors are always looking for what's going on underneath. But with Schiller, what's going on underneath could also be what's going on at the surface. There doesn't appear to be as much tension between the two as there can be with other writers.

Finty: It's also potentially a lot funnier that you first think it is.

David: If you think about *Mary Stuart* and this, and Shakespeare, too – the audience is in on everything that's happening. So, even if characters hide things from each other, when we meet them, as an audience, we know what they're hiding from each other because we've seen everyone in the room plotting what they're going to do. In modern drama, there's room to hide things away. What makes this terrifying, but also liberating, is that the minute you walk into that room, you've got to be on your action, and the language is the most important thing to drive you through your action. In a lot of modern drama, what you say is not what you mean. What's exciting about Schiller, is how incredibly direct it is, and you've got to come into that room right on the thought and on the line, otherwise you're scuppered.

Paul: It keeps you honest in a way. It's a good contrast to *Moonlight*, the previous Donmar production. I had no idea what was going on in *Moonlight*, and I'm not supposed to know what's going on either. I find that tantalising as a member of the audience – trying to work out why we're even there at all. Whereas, with this, you know exactly what story is being told and you know where you want it to go and you get to find out if it goes there or not; there's nothing ambiguous about it.

Finty: Also, there's something about what's happening on stage being very immediate, in terms of what the audience is finding out. It's almost as if the audience is half a step ahead of the plot, and it's up to them to keep ahead. It's almost as if they are able work out what you are going to say, before you say it.

David: A big thing about Schiller seems to be survival. All these characters, whether they are good or evil, each and every one of them is trying to survive in this period of time. If you don't survive, you are destitute.

Is that one of the main themes that you would say has come out of the rehearsal process?

David: I've noticed it because I'm playing a character that does quite a lot of nasty things. But I can't think of him as nasty – he's just trying to survive in this world. But then, if I think about the Millers, they are trying to do the same thing – survive, whether this is done for good or bad reasons.

Finty: It's also steeped in social hierarchy and a deep sense of religion, which you have to get a real grip on before you can understand why they are doing what they're doing.

Paul: Religion is terribly important in the play, in a different way than in Shakespeare in that regard. Religion is absolutely at the forefront.

Max: Most of the characters have their own concept of religion as well, their own versions of it. They have their own personal relationship with God, and talk to him a lot of the time.

David: And either fear him, or need something from him.

And would you say the very Germanic, eighteenth century setting has influenced how you've approached interpreting your characters?

Max: It's very much rooted in its period. The creative team talked about setting it somewhere else, in a modern framework, but they just couldn't make the power structure work, in terms of the court and the Prince. In relation to how the society is structured, there's no equivalent now.

David: Certainly the date of this piece is very important, because we're on the brink of the French revolution, so the Prince that we never meet – whose not concerned with politics whatsoever, who just wants to feast and sleep around – is comparable to the hedonistic, debauched perception of the French monarchy of the time. And we've got a character in Ferdinand whose fighting against all of that. The Prince is a very dangerous man.



It's interesting that we never meet him.

David: It is, and it makes him a lot more powerful.

Max: He's like God in the play: he means different things to different people.

Have there been any key moments in the rehearsal process to date that have really illuminated your characters for you?

Paul: We didn't have a read through on the first day, but had one at the end of the first week after we'd worked through the play. I don't know if this is Schiller's intention, but during the read through, I noticed that the play, which purports to be about love, is really a play about possession: my possession of my daughter, and Ferdinand's possession of her. The father's idea that love is immediate, and that if he can't have her, he doesn't want anyone else to have her. I think there's a lot in that.

Max: It's a competitive, hierarchical thing between Ferdinand and Miller in that last scene. Who's in charge, is it me, or is it him? Who does she belong to?

Finty: I do think the read through that Paul referred to was interesting. And it worked so much better than it would have done on the first day, when everyone was at different stages and level.

Max: We'd rehearsed the scenes in isolation prior to that, where you are very much focussed on your own character's journey. To hear the story of the whole play was really exciting.

Structurally, some of the characters are quite isolated, aren't they? How has this impacted on the rehearsal process?

Finty: Personally, I've found that quite hard. I always find it a challenge when the character I'm playing doesn't have contact with a whole group of other people in the play. But there again, when a play, such as this one, is founded on social hierarchy, that sort of thing can work quite well.

David: In a 'method acting' type of way, for my character, the fact that the two classes don't meet, has been quite helpful; people you don't know, or have ever heard of, you don't meet.

Paul: As the court musician, I've been in the same room as the Chancellor and I believe him to be an ordinary man. But I obviously don't know anything about him at all, because he really isn't an ordinary man! I think the structure of the play is quite good for the audience, in that every scene has a different tone, because it deals with a different level in society.

Are there any rehearsal techniques that are special to you, as individual actors, that you've brought to the rehearsal process?

Paul: One thing that I do, is read through the script for every single thing that is said about me – which means that I read the script very carefully, even the scenes that I'm not in – picking out references to my character, and the type of man that I am.

Max: We all have different approaches when we're away from the rehearsal room floor. Ben Daniels was actioning* his lines the other day while waiting to rehearse. For preparing to play Ferdinand, I've been trying to conjure up images relevant to the places that he finds himself in; when you fire up your imagination and go to a dark place, what images flash in front of your mind? I've been trying to fill those moments in, and read around the sort of things that help me develop my character. For example, Ferdinand writes a lot of poems, so I've been asking: what sort of poems would he read himself? I find that sort of research enriching.

David: I really appreciate how direct Michael is when he works with us. On the first day of rehearsal, we just jumped in at the deep end. He also encourages us to be brave as actors, and I value that way of working.

Is there any advice you'd give to a young person coming to see the production, anything they should look out for, or have in the back of their mind as they are watching it?

Finty: Just to understand the importance of religion at that time, and the social structure, because that is so embedded in the play. Everybody's argument is about that, and it all ties into the main objectives of the play. And if you don't appreciate that from the beginning, I think you might get a bit lost.

At this stage in the rehearsal process, what is currently the biggest challenge for you?

David: To think faster! To stay ahead of the audience and to keep surprising people. And now we know it, to really listen and play it.

Finty: And to make all those internal thoughts as conversational and as real as possible.

Paul: This scene we are about to rehearse, which is the last scene of the play, is very, very challenging. It's quite hard to get into his (Miller's) head, or get his head into mine! I ostensibly send my daughter off to kill herself. To submerge yourself in that absolute faith in God, that knowledge that the Christian God is there. It shouldn't be hard to immerse yourself in that, but it is.

Finty: I think that's because it's not a very modern British concept, is it? The challenge is to make the audience understand that this is what you absolutely believe in.

Max: The absolute certainty that life goes on beyond death. Life is almost less important, because there is definitely an afterlife, whether it's in heaven or in hell. My character makes the decision that he's going to hell, or at least he thinks that is where he should go.

* Actioning the text is finding a transitive verb, i.e. 'an active' word to define the intention behind the line. For example, the action for the Chancellor's line to Ferdinand, "never again – never defy me!", could have the action "threatens" or "bullies".



Practical work

Practical exploration, Act Two, Scene One

In this scene, Ferdinand visits Lady Milford in accordance with his father's instruction that he should make her a proposal of marriage. In an aside to the audience at the close of the previous scene, he admits that he will obey his father, and go to the meeting with Lady Milford, but only to "set up a looking-glass before her vices". His malicious intentions towards Lady Milford are diametrically opposed to her long-held feelings of love towards him, as indicated in her opening soliloquy.

(Lady Milford's apartments. Lady Milford is handed a box and a note by a liveried servant who bows and begins to back out. Clock chimes four.)

MILFORD: His Royal Highness sends his mistress wedding gifts. Rubies. And diamonds. Come back here! Did I give you leave to go? Take them to the goldsmith – have them valued – lock them away with the others. (Servant goes) The Prince – my prince... I'd give a ruby for every hour I could spend out of your company – a diamond for each day I could be absent from your Court!

SERVANT: Major Ferdinand von Walter.

MILFORD: Wait a little. Then show him in. (Exit servant) The man I'm to marry. The man I have loved since I first caught sight of him – caught sight of him! Since first the vision of his angel face struck me like lightning – since his smile pierced my heart. Ha! When the Chancellor came to tell me that for the sake of form and show – but more to deceive the Prince's young bride – I must be married – O how casually I mentioned my love's name! Consummate actress! A vixen royally outfoxing all the royal foxes! O my hands! I'm shaking! I can't receive him like this! What shall I say to him? O what have I done! What have I done!

SERVANT: Major von Walter.

FERDINAND: Lady Milford. (curt bow)

MILFORD: My Lord.

FERDINAND: The Chancellor wishes me... Lady, if you are not at leisure at this time I should be more than happy to leave you –

MILFORD: I am at leisure.

FERDINAND: The Chancellor has ordered me to wait upon you.

MILFORD: Excellent father – dutiful son.

FERDINAND: The Chancellor has ordered me to offer you my hand.

MILFORD: In marriage?

FERDINAND: In marriage, Lady. Hand. Body. Soul.

MILFORD: And what of your heart, Ferdinand?

FERDINAND: The Chancellor did not consult my heart. Not having one of his own, I doubt he's aware such things as hearts sometimes have a part to play in the arrangement of marriages. Princes and their Chancellors are disinclined to burden themselves with such matters.

MILFORD: Such matters as love? Do you wish to speak to me of your heart, Ferdinand?

FERDINAND: I do.

MILFORD: Then speak.

FERDINAND: I'll be brief.

MILFORD: Take your time – take a lifetime.

FERDINAND: Lady Milford I hope you know me to be an honourable man.

MILFORD: The whole Court knows it. I prize you for it.

FERDINAND: I come of an ancient, noble line –
MILFORD: I trace my own people through many Royal Dukes back to the greatest Kings of England – but what have we to do with the past? You are to be my husband – I've no intention of marrying your grandfather's grandfather. It's of yourself and of your heart I wish to hear you to speak.

FERDINAND: Myself? O I'm of little consequence in this affair!
MILFORD: You're of consequence to me. Come. What have you to say?
FERDINAND: I mention my honour – my name – not out of pride, but because these things are real to me – mean much more than can be contained in idly-spoken words. They are the virtues I hold most dear. If I am required to sacrifice my honour – my name – to preserve the hollow fiction of honour in a Prince who stuffs the mouth of truth with gold and hides his naked shame under ermine robes, then I must beg you, Lady... I must beg...

MILFORD: Go on.
FERDINAND: I am commanded to trample upon everything I love. I shall do so. If you can prove to me that my happiness is not to be sacrificed in a worthless cause.

MILFORD: You think my love worthless?
FERDINAND: Utterly worthless.



Exercises

Explore the following practical exercises,

Either

Working in groups of three, with one member of the group taking on the role of Lady Milford, another Ferdinand, and the third taking on the role of director

Or

Working as a group, team directing Milford and Ferdinand, with your teacher taking on the role of facilitator

Setting the scene

Read through Lady Milford's speech prior to Ferdinand's entrance. Work on staging this part of the scene, considering the following questions:

- Why doesn't the scene just start with the Servant announcing Ferdinand?
- What state do we discover Lady Milford in at the top of the scene?
- Where does the Prince fit into the picture now that Ferdinand is about to come into Lady Milford's life?
- How does Lady Milford know that the box isn't from Ferdinand?
- Is the note from the Prince sealed and folded? What does the note say? What is the sequence of Lady Milford's physical actions? Does she take the note and read it, and then open the box?
- When you've explored this section of the scene, you might like to read some of the creative decisions made by Alex Kingston (Lady Milford) and director Michael Grandage when they worked on the scene during the third week in rehearsal.

Alex: That bit before Ferdinand comes on is there like a thriller; you don't know who she is, is she the Prince's bride? Her nervous excitement could mislead the audience, is it for the Prince? Also, I must be a bit miffed about the bride – this comes out later on, in my scene with Luise; there is "ego-elbowing" going on.

Michael: The Prince is aware of this, which is why he's sent you the box of rubies. We've been starting the scene with your preoccupation with the Prince, but it actually starts with you thinking about Ferdinand, and then the Prince comes into your consciousness with the box.

Alex: There's nothing in the text to say it's frenetic. It could be loungey; I'm in my undergarments and dressing gown, after all.

Michael: Yes, it should be read as "woman at leisure", not, "I'm here to seduce you". You tell us you're nervous in the text, but you don't need to do more than indicate your inner nerves; you know he's coming – you don't know how bad the exchange is going to be yet. The start offers a colour we haven't yet begun a scene with. The scene you want doesn't start until Ferdinand arrives.

The “proposal”

Read through the remainder of the extract, from Ferdinand’s entrance. As you start to explore this part of the scene practically, consider the following:

- With what state of energy does Ferdinand enter the scene? How does this compare to Lady Milford?
- The cornerstone of Ferdinand’s argument appears to be that he is a “honourable” man; he repeats the word honour over and over again. As actors approaching the scene, it important that you define what honour means to each of the characters in the scene.
- What are the objectives of Lady Milford and Ferdinand at the start of the scene? How do they each go about trying to achieve their objectives?
- To what extent has each character succeeded, or failed, in gaining their objective by the end of this section of the scene?
- Why do you think Ferdinand is unable to continue after the line “Lady... I must beg....”
- How do you think Lady Milford’s emotional state shifts by the end of this section? Can you identify a specific moment when this shift occurs?

Afterword

- When you see the Donmar’s production of *LUISE MILLER*, consider how the Chancellor’s abusive treatment of Ferdinand in the previous scene, and his insistence that he marries Lady Milford, impacts on Ferdinand’s attitude towards her in this scene.
- When you watch the scene you have just worked on in it’s entirety during the production, consider how the theme of honour develops. Who “wins” the scene by the time it closes, and how is this communicated in performance?

Responding to *LUISE MILLER*

- When you go to see the Donmar’s production of *LUISE MILLER*, you may want to consider the following:
- How is the world of the Millers and the world of the Court created using the same setting? What contribution does lighting design make to creating the mood and atmosphere of the two worlds?
- How is the production’s preoccupation with religion and social hierarchy accentuated through set, costume and the use of stage properties?
- Can you identify examples of how the actors portray unexpected shifts in status during any of the scenes?
- In directing *LUISE MILLER*, how has Michael Grandage captured the spirit, pace and emotion of the play?
- How do the actors physicalize the emotional preoccupations of their characters? For example, Felicity Jones’ posture becomes gently stooped during the second half of the production, as if the burden of Luise’s emotional journey is literally bearing down as a weight on her shoulders.
- There are two fathers in the play, Miller and the Chancellor. Consider how the fathers’ differing moral codes impact on their children, Luise and Ferdinand. How is this accentuated in performance?

Ideas for further reading

Luise Miller, Friedrich Schiller and Mike Poulton, Nick Hern Books, 2011

Don Carlos and Mary Stuart, Friedrich Schiller, Oxford Paperbacks, 2008

The Poems of Schiller, Friedrich Schiller, Dodo Press, 2007

The Life of Friedrich Schiller, Thomas Carlyle, BiblioBazaar, 2009.

Schiller the Dramatist. A Study of Gesture in the Plays, John Guthrie, Camden House, 2009.

Friedrich Schiller: Drama, Thought and Politics, Lesley Sharpe, Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Endnotes

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- 1 'Schiller's Domestic Tragedy, *Luise Miller*', by John Guthrie, Donmar programme note for LUISE MILLER, p.4.
 - 2 Ibid.
 - 3 Professor Chris Clark, quoted in "LUISE MILLER Encyclopaedia", p.5, a rehearsal document researched and compiled by Simon Evans, Assistant Director.
 - 4 These are the ideas expressed by John Guthrie, *ibid*.
 - 5 Professor Chris Clark, quoted *ibid*.
 - 6 The quotations from Mike Poulton in this section are taken from an internal document, 'Translating Schiller', written by Poulton for the Donmar.
 - 7 LUISE MILLER Rehearsal Update, Week One, compiled by Simon Evans, Assistant Director.
 - 8 Ibid.
 - 9 Ibid, Week Two.
 - 10 Ibid, Week Three.



About the Donmar Warehouse

The Donmar Warehouse is an intimate not for profit 251 seat theatre located in the heart of London's West End. The theatre attracts almost 100,000 people to its productions a year. Since 1992, under the Artistic Direction of Michael Grandage and his predecessor, Sam Mendes, the theatre has presented some of London's most memorable theatrical experiences as well as garnered critical acclaim at home and abroad. With a diverse artistic policy that includes new writing, contemporary reappraising of European classics, British and American drama and music theatre, the Donmar has created a reputation for artistic excellence over the last 12 years and has won 38 Olivier Awards, 23 Critics' Circle Awards, 21 Evening Standard Awards, two South Bank Award and 20 Tony Awards from nine Broadway productions.

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