Interval Drinks podcast, Series 3

Ibraheem Toure and Philip K Morris - transcript

Welcome: Welcome to the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Ibraheem: You're listening to Interval Drinks, the podcast where current RSC artists talk to those who inspire them. Each week a different creative from the RSC speaks to another artist about their secret interval rituals, fascinating personal stories and the big questions facing artists today.

Maggie O'Farrell: You know, Shakespeare is a very mysterious and shadowy person. You know, on one hand, we have this enormous wealth of his work. On the other hand, there's so much about him we don't know. But I've always felt that Hamlet is a play in which he becomes most visible to us at certain times as a human being.

Philip: It's kind of my bread and butter for theatre making. It's the thing that connects us as human beings. It's being able to go, You know what? I understand you or I maybe didn't understand, but now I feel like I know a bit more. Just see ourselves within different worlds that are creative.

Ibraheem: Have you collected your drinks?

Ibraheem: And let's begin.

Ibraheem: My name is Ibraheem Toure, and this week I'll be catching up with Director, theatre maker and artistic director of Trybe House Theatre, Philip J Morris. Hello, everyone, and welcome to our Interval Drinks, the Royal Shakespeare Company podcast in which we talk to people who inspire us. Today I'm joined with Philip J. Morris, who is a brilliant practitioner, director, and I'm just going to hand over to him real quick to just introduce a bit about himself.

Philip: Wonderful. Philip J. Morris. I am a director, theatre maker and the Artistic Director of Trybe House Theatre.

Ibraheem: And my name is Ibraheem Toure. I'm an actor, facilitator and I've worked at the RSC. I did the Henry VI shows last year, and then I went on to do the First Encounters tour of Twelfth Night. So first of all, our interval drink of choice. Philip tell me, what is your interval drink of choice? Talk to me.

Philip: So my interval drink of choice is an elderflower and soda water with some ice. Many years ago, when I used to work at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, I was friends with the bar staff and they said, 'Have you tried elderflower with with soda water?' I was like, 'No, I haven't. I haven't like combined the two before.' It was the perfect combination of sweetness that I needed with a bit of fizz. And it also was the most affordable drink during, during an interval break. So I used to buy it for like 70p. It's a good hack for anyone who's listening. It's a really good theatre hack. Um, cost less than a pound.

Ibraheem: Um, but it's. You know what, though? It really does be those secret drinks that the bar staff know about that no one else really knows about. And you have to, you know, get the education. You have to ask them, So what am I. What am I drinking here? Yeah. Where's the last place that you had that interval drink?

Philip: I last had that at the Apollo Theatre when watching For Black Boys Who Have Considered Suicide When The Hue Gets Too Heavy. Yeah, that was my my go to. If you want to be a bit more bougie, you can get it with tonic water, you can get it with gin and it's still a nice combination. That's my go to.

Ibraheem: Nice. For me personally because you see, when I go and see a show in the evening, I do get a bit tired. I won't lie to you. So I have to get a coffee. It's a black coffee, a little just something just to pick me up. Just for that second half, you know? And the last place I had that drink... I went and watched Cymbeline on Tuesday. Now, Cymbeline is a is a heavy show, Right? And during that five minute pause, I had to go and get myself a little coffee just to be like, Right, let's go. Because that play is heavy. And it was late.

Philip: Yeah, it's a marathon.

Ibraheem: So yeah, that's me personally. It's a marathon. And I think especially with Shakespeare, it is a marathon innit? A lot of those plays are so heavy and so dense. Sometimes you just got to give yourself a little pick me up and coffee is the way to go.

Philip: Absolutely.

Ibraheem: So have you got any interval rituals like for you interval bell hits - what is your ritual during that time?

Philip: I like to go outside, actually, and just kind of decompress. The thing that's tricky about being a director is that you analyze everything, so you're really taking in the set and what's really beautiful about the set and the lighting and the performance and sort of all components that make a show. So I love to kind of just, um, sort of separate myself from everything for a moment and maybe just go for a walk, whether it's to a shop or, somewhere that's just not too far away, just to kind of like really filter and process what I've just seen and actually be in tune with how I'm feeling as an audience member. Like whether regulating, whether I'm really excited to anticipate the second half coming or whether I'm questioning things.

Ibraheem: It's nice that you actually said that because this podcast is there to open a different side of the industry, right? Like the whole point is, yeah, you can have your big names come on this podcast, but also what are us theatre makers that are just do it working, working theatre makers, How do we respond to theatre? There's an element of, we go to a show and our work brain wants to kick in. You know, we meet people like - we saw each other at the Black Boys last night. Like you see people that you're working with and there's an element where you're still I'm still at work. I can't just go to a show. And I think that's really important to sort of just say, actually, I want to just watch some theatre. I just want to watch. I just want to enjoy some art today. I just want to go to the theatre, feel it for myself and that I love that ritual because you've made space for you to process and you've made a very dedicated space for that. For me personally, my ritual is very similar to yours with Cymbeline, for example, because the play is very heavy, there's a lot of misogyny in that play and a lot of discussion about sexual assault and stuff like that. Those sort of topics which are quite heavy. I really didn't want to talk to anybody. I just wanted to kind of just take some time outside the theatre. So I literally

walked outside and just went, okay, that's what we're being posed with, because theatre is a is a question as well, right? The audience are active.

Philip: Always.

Ibraheem: You know, and you're a director. So, you know, even more so how do you make that theatre challenging and active for the audience to come in and actually say something and have an opinion about it?

Philip: Yeah, a lot of my work, just centres around empathy. And I think I'm really into audience members seeing a piece of themselves in the work, whether it is actually reflecting back on the person that they used to be or it's the person that they are right now, or it's the person that they are imagining themselves to be. I'm a stickler for connection. Whatever background you're coming from in terms of there being, feelings that feel resonant, either displayed through a character or the arc of the story. But us being able to just see ourselves within different worlds that are created through plays, that's like the first thing I always look for. So I've, you know, had the privilege of working shows that speak to masculinity or I've worked on plays that speak to going for a driving lesson for the first time. These are all things that I definitely know and people are experiencing every day of their lives, as big or small as a topic might be, that's always what I'm looking for in the kind of work that I make. I love when audience members are like, 'Yeah, I know that feeling.'

Ibraheem: That sparks that response that we're looking for, right? As soon as people go, 'Oh, I see myself in that', they can then talk from a place of of feeling informed and feeling that empathy as you're talking about.

Philip: Absolutely.

Ibraheem: And I think a good question is then, how do you bring that into your work in terms of Shakespeare working around the RSC? How does that flow? Because obviously those stories were written 400 years ago plus, you know, they weren't necessarily written for, you know, South Londoners, as I know you are. So how do you bring that empathy into the work that you're doing with the RSC?

Philip: Yeah, it's a great question. I think a lot of it sparks from like conversation and being able to distill, some of the basic core themes that come out of Shakespeare's work. Like I was someone a long time ago was like, Shakespeare what? Shakespeare can't tell me nothing. Yeah, I don't connect to the words. But actually, once I was able to find a way to understand and find a way for it to feel like Shakespeare, to feel accessible and feel like it can give me just the base layer of what some of the topics are. I think that in this process with the RSC, conversations have been key. I've had really rich conversations about, about the play I'm going to be directing , and actually thinking about the basic needs and requirements of the characters that are in this story. And actually it's about love and passion. And actually once I feel like you have to start with those things to be able to find those nuances. So, in this case, I know how it feels to love. I know how it feels to try something that is dangerous. I know how it feels to, disregard hierarchy. I know that. Do you know what I mean? Being born and raised in South London and the experiences that I've had. I know what that feeling is. So being able to attach, my understanding and broaden that for wider audiences is the fun part. But I think it starts with conversation.

Ibraheem: And I think that's what we're trying to show like especially through the First Encounters tour. I did First Encounters last year in October with Twelfth Night and that was the biggest thing that we're trying to find is, how can we get young people who are watching - the shows are aimed at young people and adult learners as well, how can we get them involved in the conversation? Because we put them into the show, they had a scene. So how can they be part of that conversation? And it's about using the the space of the rehearsal room, right? And what we develop in a rehearsal room, that love that we develop in the rehearsal room, that safe space, that brave space that we develop in the rehearsal room, and how we take that to our communities and show them that this is the truth of theatre, right? And we're using these stories to just access that thing. First Encounters is another project that the RSC do apart from their main stage projects. It's a brilliant outreach project because it takes the work that we're doing at the RSC and takes it across the UK to all our partner community schools, partner community youth organizations and our theatre partners around the UK.

Ibraheem: So it allows for a condensed and shortened version of a play of an hour and 30 to go on tour, to go and involve young people in the show and involve young people in the creation of a show and also just makes a first encounter that is accessible, And I

think that's the biggest bit. It's the accessibility of Shakespeare. Shakespeare is the only thing that we all learn in the UK. Everybody must learn Shakespeare, and we're trying to break the barriers of what that means to have a first encounter, because usually your first encounter is in English, is in class, and you read a line each and it's da dum da dum da dum. It's a bit boring. But what the RSC are trying to do with first encounters is go. Actually, no. Shakespeare can be fun and it can be. It can be wild, it can be silly, it can be lamenting, it can be big, it can be small, it can be in a community hall. It can be in a sports hall. It can be anywhere. And that's your access. When I did it last year, I really enjoyed just, I took my steel pan and just showing people that we can put in loads of different access points, you know, like. A steel pan in a RSC show.

Ibraheem: It's not something you normally see, you know, but these kids were like, 'Oh my God, you're paying the Caribbean steel drums, like' and we're talking about now we're opening conversations about 'where is it from, where is the instrument from? Oh, does anybody know where Trinidad and Tobago is?' And this is the power of theatre, right? You can have these conversations that you might not be able to have through the curriculum because the curriculum is a little bit narrow at the moment. You can really delve into topics about just who you are, your identity. You can talk about, you know, with Twelfth Night, you've got Viola playing a man, Cesario, you're talking about gender, We're talking about love. We're talking, about all these things. That goes back to what you were saying earlier about empathy. Yeah, right. It goes back to that about what is empathy through our plays. I think hot take - dunno about you - I think it's one of the most important things that the RSC do. I think the Education and Learning Department is one of the most important things that the RSC can do.

Philip: One million per cent.

Ibraheem: And seeing the outcomes of that on the on the ground.

Philip: Priceless.

Ibraheem: Yeah. I think that Education and Learning department I'm Jackie O'Hanlon. We went to a training session with her in October and she was just explaining what the Learning department do and why it's important. And she put it so brilliantly. She just concisely and brilliantly about, it's all about young people feeling that they can have an

opinion on this work because, you know, there are some plays that we won't like. You know, it's not about a love for Shakespeare. It's about, can you make an opinion on Shakespeare? Can you say, 'I like that? Because da da da da da.' 'I don't like that because.' And I think that's the important part of the learning department and therefore the RSC.

Philip: Absolutely vital.

Ibraheem: But I think that goes for all theatre. I think all theatre needs to be educational, all theatre needs to bring people in and all theatre needs to allow people to have an opinion.

Philip: Yep, absolutely.

Ibraheem: What was your first encounter with Shakespeare?

Philip: So my first, like, personal encounter was actually when I was, I think I was like 18. So I was quite a late bloomer in terms of my interest in theatre. And I worked with, who's now a doctor in terms of when it comes to Shakespeare, called Dr Tyler McCarthy, and he was my first director in youth theatre when I, so I used to live in London, moved to Birmingham for university and joined the youth theatre. And I ended up playing the role of Demetrius. What was wonderful was that it was like a promenade piece, so you travel around the theatre and you enter a room and you'd see, you know, a scene between Demetrius and Helena, and then you go to another room and you see another scene happen. And I just remembered, like really having fun, and it felt so empowering to understand the words that I was saying so that I could really play with it.

Ibraheem: Yeah.

Ibraheem: And I think what you got was just that decoding of, of what the language is, what the story is. And that is the, the essence of all good plays. What's the story we're trying to tell and how do we make that story ours and how do we make that, you know, this is the process of most good theatre companies and good actors and directors in a room. How do we take this story, make it our own, have an opinion about it, Say what we want to say about the characters and play. And that's the biggest bit. It's the play,

right? It's the fun. That's what we bring to it. Regardless of how heavy the play is, there's an element of play and fun, right?

Philip: Yeah, big time.

Ibraheem: And it's so interesting, even before your first encounter that you had an opinion on it. Yeah. And I want to ask you, where do you think that opinion came from for you personally?

Philip: I feel like I felt really pushed out a theatre like before, I even kind of gave it a chance. I think I had like a bit of a complex of not feeling like I saw enough people that looked like me in theatre to begin with when I was younger. And so, I think once I actually got over the fact or understood that actually it was just a language of its time, then I was able to accept it, that actually we have a language of our time. Do you know what I mean? And actually, language is consistently evolving. There are young people that I work with now and they say phrases and I have no idea what they're saying, do you know what I mean? But they completely. They completely.

Ibraheem: Yeah. And they. But they know. They know. They know each other's language.

Philip: And actually that's just the case. And that's, um, and language is constantly evolving and changing. I feel like I was just quite rebellious to theatre as an idea to begin with, coming from a much deeper place of not feeling like I fit in at the time.

Ibraheem: Yeah.

Ibraheem: And and that's a response that I've heard from a lot of young people is, 'Oh, Shakespeare is so boring. Yeah. Oh, Shakespeare, man. Why are we learning about this dead guy? Oh, Shakespeare. Like, why are we still doing this?' I think that's a big one. Why are we still doing this? And it's a question that even the Royal Shakespeare Company needs to ask itself. Why are we still doing this? Yeah. And I think it goes back to what we were speaking about earlier is having a reaction and opinion to what the story is telling you, you know, and having an empathy for those characters. And I think that's the work that the learning department is doing. And I think that's why it's important

to talk about it on this podcast. And that's why, you know, we wanted to speak to you, especially, because you're about to embark on taking on the next First Encounters project. And I think what I want to ask you with that project is, what do you aim to do that is kind of your source? Like when I say your source, for the people that may not know what your source means, but like, what is your sort of signature on the First Encounters that you want to put on that?

Philip: My my source or the thing that I want to bring to it is just like energy. You know, like young audiences, I've always said for me are the toughest critics you will ever find. More than reviewers, more than, you know.

Ibraheem: The realest ones.

Philip: They're the realest. They will tell you they'll be like, this is boring, five minutes in. And so actually energy is something that I embrace on productions that I work on. I'm also someone with a short attention span too, so I have to work really hard in trying to infuse that into the shows that I work with. I think though I'm not a specialist in movement, I think movement is going to be massive, in being able to also tell the story without words. I think there's such a power in people being able to understand or get an idea of a concept or a moment because of physical movement. I do love current settings, you know. Just thinking back to I remember online watching the RSC's version of Julius Caesar, which was like set in Africa, and I was like, 'Wow'! That's that's how you really reimagine a play and it being fun. I'd like to think the shows that I make are fun, fun and deep. And actually the story definitely contains both aspects of that.

Ibraheem: Do you think it's integral to making things accessible that we use the original text in these performances and in these plays, or do you think there's a world in which we can tell the stories without the text? What's your feeling on that?

Philip: Yeah, that's a that's a great question because I think I feel like both are possible. I guess the beauty of text being so old, is that there are different stresses, which means different things. And so being as playful as possible with the old text is actually is a really joyful thing and you find something new. I've seen different plays where there are different stresses or different intentions used and I've been like, 'Wow! that's blowing my mind. I've never seen that speech done that way ever.'

Ibraheem: Yeah, but cutting Shakespeare is so important. I mean, we have to remember the context of these plays. These plays were done, you know, in a open air theater with the sun with hundreds of thousands of people. How many thousands of people were in those auditoriums? And you had to get the attention of these people and you had to make sure that everybody got something.

Philip: Yeah.

Ibraheem: Whereas now, you know, we've got maybe a thousand seat theater like the RST's a 1,000-seater theatre. And I think having a four hour play just doesn't run, especially after Covid, where all of our attention spans have just gone vump and they've gotten really small, and it's finding the essence of the play, right?

Philip: And also just to add like some things are not okay anymore, you know, I mean, over time there are some reference points and some things that are really racist or misogynist or, you know, you name it. So actually, those those cuts feel important too.

Ibraheem: Talking about that, because these plays have these things in it, right? Like I say, like Cymbeline went to see it and there's loads of misogyny in that play. There's loads of it. They're bartering women and this for, you know, is she going to kiss you? Is she going to... you know, it's a very misogynistic play. Do we still do those plays or do we say, Right, let's put it on the back burner? Like, what's your feeling on that?

Philip: I think it's about the question and what you're trying to raise to the surface. If you are absolutely trying to hammer down that, that is an issue. And it, of course, is an issue that exists today, it may be useful to keep some of those things, to really make the point of the fact that that society and our society that we're living in now still sadly have the same values or it's something that speaks to the world that we're in. So I think it is about really tastefully thinking about what that does, and it's nice because I could definitely argue for cases where it's not needed at all because that's not what you're trying to draw on. And actually some cases where it's useful because it's making a bigger statement about the parallels, you know.

Ibraheem: I was talking to a friend about why do we call it the house and why do we say the house is now open and inviting people into our home? And I just wanted to sort of unpack that with you a bit like, the RSC house. And what do you feel about the theatre house and what do you think the responsibility of the theatre is?

Philip: Yeah, the house is an interesting phrase and term. I've never really actually questioned, but what I think it still feels relevant to the work that I do. Even the, you know, the name of the company I have is Trybe House and actually it's about being in commune with each other. It's about stepping into a space and seeing each other, whether it's on stage or, the fellow audience members around you and being able to be entertained and consumed and think critically, think whether it's about your own life or someone else's life, or time that has existed before you or time that might exist after you. It's an invitation to bear witness to something. And I think that's the beauty, of storytelling and actually being able to sit and observe and think and at the interval, go for a walk or go for a quick drink or speak to someone about your opinion. And I really love how much you've mentioned the importance of having an opinion on art. Because art is inspired by everything around us, you know what I mean? And, there is there is something amazing about being a young person and gaining autonomy and saying, 'I would do this differently' or 'this doesn't speak to me' - for young people to identify what they need. Like, 'Oh, this show didn't work for me. What I would want to see is so and so.' So I think the theatre's responsibility is to bring all corners of humanity together in a space to be able to, to laugh, to be able to cry, to be able to, like, tap into emotion. It's about escapism and being able to step out of your life for a moment and and be entertained.

Ibraheem: And I think there's that safe space that the theatre must create. And that's why all the other stuff around the shows and around the plays and the mainstage work is important because in an ideal world, if I had the keys to the RSC, I'd be like, 'You can come and do a yoga class on the you know', 'you can have a meditation session on the RST.' You know, it's a community centre. You know, a building like that is a community centre that is for everyone to have ownership of. And so when you do come to tell these stories and the story hits you in a certain way, you feel safe enough to to share it in that experience. And I think that's why it's about breaking down the boundaries of also, you know, how do we respond to theatre because everybody responds differently. But if the space is safe, everybody's responses can be accommodated for. Absolutely. And I do

think that the work that we're doing outside of the mainstage shows can be some of the most important work because it just goes to show we can all come in because we've invited you through these steps and we're saying 'this is where this is where you fit, this is where you can sit, This is your this is your arm chair. This is for you.' And yeah, okay, historically, it's been for a certain group of people and it's been sort of gatekept. But now we're kicking down the gates and it's an open community space.

Philip: Big time.

Ibraheem: Talking about the keys of the RSC. What's the first three things you'd do if I gave you the keys to the RSC?

Philip: That is a wonderful question. Oh, it's a long list, so I'll try and I'll try and behave myself. I would use the house as a space, as a raving space, um, for people to come down once a week, once a week, once a month and there to be like a massive rave. I feel that theatre still like, not just necessarily RSC but theatres need that. Like they should just put on a rave. Like the same way we do press nights and stuff. Let's just have once a month, once a week where actually everyone gets to shake a leg. Um, yeah. And enjoy. I think that would be so amazing to have that in the, in the house. In terms of education, it would be so cool if there was, just kind of reflecting back to like Greek theatre, if there was like this big truck or bus that could stop, around Stratford-upon-Avon and actually just tell like really short mini stories of some Shakespeare shows. I think that'd be really cool. Like literally a bus that people hop out of, actors play and yeah, we just sort of follow this track that, you know, I don't know, like, you know what I mean? I've always thought that'd be so cool if that existed now. I think it'd be really cool from an educational aspect too, if there was like a room where people like my younger self who really resented at the time Shakespeare's work, could actually just come in and talk to people who understand it in a variety of different levels and know how to make it so accessible. So there'd be like references of like films and videos and books and comics and all types of different ways that help support someone's understanding of it. So those would be kind of three utopian things, many more ideas, but I'll, I'll keep it to three.

Ibraheem: So I just want to take us back to what we were talking about, the outcomes of first encounters and the Learning department's involvement with young people. And

I've actually got a clip here from one of our young people that we've worked with. His name is Hareth, and he's a Palestinian born in Iraq who with his family, actually fled the violence and as refugees, lived in Cyprus, Turkey and Syria before eventually settling in the UK five years ago. He joined his school's Shakespeare Club, working with the RSC's Associate Schools program and says the experience quickly developed his language skills and pushed him to make friends quickly. He's now at university reading for a degree in politics, which is amazing and is still involved with the RSC as a member of the Youth Advisory Board. So let's have a little listen and then we'll have a little chat about what we think.

Hareth: My teacher was like, Hey, this looks interesting. Do you want to do it? And I was like, Yeah, why not? Um, and it's a thing I I'm yet to regret. I've been part of the RCC Youth Advisory Board, or at least at least an ambassador of them since beginning of the project in 2018. I thought maybe it was just going to be like a. Well, I guess for a lack of a better word here, just a bit boring because I thought it would just be like you go in, you talk a bit about Shakespeare, you read maybe a bit of theatre. We read about one of his plays and then you leave. But no, there's a lot more. A lot more interesting than that, really. Shakespeare was always a figure that I've heard a lot about but never really knew anything about, or, you know, why he was great or why, you know, people respect him or why people even know about him. It was relatively difficult just because, you know, it was speaking in Ye Olde and English. But I do love how olde English sounds like saying come hither instead of just saying, Come here. I was I was hooked there as well because I was learning more and more of the ye olden stuff. We were given a set of tasks of like, Oh, okay, well, you know, you have 30s. You have to act out a scene from Hamlet or show me what a teapot looks like. And then you have 30s to kind of like stand awkwardly in like, you know, twist your bodies with like two other people you've just met. It really pushes you to kind of be friendly with these people, like immediately.

Hareth: And I find that, you know, it, it just gives you like a bit of a shortcut to like, okay, we've met just now. Sure. But let's just be friends immediately. Why not? From there, I was invited to go to Stratford-upon-Avon. Watch the play there as well. Loved it. Absolutely loved it. It's such a weirdly specific feeling I get every time I know I'm going to Stratford-upon-Avon. Um, going to the Royal Shakespeare Company with a completely new light that I wouldn't have thought about that being theatre when I'm

feeling down, when I'm feeling like I cannot be bothered to do any work, I cannot. I just do not want to do anything. I just want to lay in bed and wither away. All of that just gets completely reinvigorated and I just go back to my normal life, I guess, still buzzing off the adrenaline that I would get and then just go back into, you know, writing, doing uni work or just doing normal work or whatever. It's such a really good feeling that I always get every single time I go, I always see an email in the inbox saying, 'Hey, at this date you're going to be coming to Stratford-upon-Avon.' And to me, you know, there's only two answers there. It's 'yes' or 'Hell yes'. I wasn't exactly aware, I guess, of theatre being such an important aspect of life and just education, early life as well, at least at least in this society. I very much am now a theatre lover just because of, well, learning Shakespeare in such a weird and interesting way.

Ibraheem: What's your response to that man? What's your response?

Philip: I mean, everything that Hareth has said is so resonant to me, you know, from him mentioning the preconceived ideas of what Shakespeare, was to knowing Shakespeare exists, but actually not understanding what they did or the work that they've made.

Ibraheem: Yes. Yes.

Philip: To then having, you know, to then wonderfully articulating the transition of being given the opportunity to figure it out, to play and do these exercises that feel a bit weird to, to try and tell Hamlet within 30 seconds. And now like it was so wonderful. And again, it the sort of mentioned very briefly about escapism. He even said at least for a few hours, gets to leave work, gets to leave everything and just allow themselves to be immersed in the story and then return back to their normal working life.

Ibraheem: It's just those opportunities that you're offered. And you know what resonated with me? I've always said this. If you look at Stratford-upon-Avon on the map here and you look at the locality like you look at Street View, not, not, not the weird map, but the Street View. Yeah. And the RSC is right in the middle of Stratford and it looks like a battery pack. Yeah. And what really resonated with me is he feels reinvigorated and recharged in some way after he goes to the theatre, after he gets that email and he comes down and it's not just the RSC that should be a battery pack for the

local community. Every theatre, wherever it is, London, Blackpool, Manchester, everywhere should feel like a battery pack where you feel I just need to go and recharge, reignite my spark, my creative spark so I can get on with the rest of my life. Life can be tough, Life can be boring. Life can be not full of much happening. And then you get the opportunity to go to the theatre and just sit down and just enjoy and take something. So Hareth is part of the Youth Advisory Board. And just for the people that are not sure what that is, the Youth Advisory Board is made up of the young people that we work with and they're invited to actually make decisions about the RSC. So we've actually have given them the keys to the RSC and we say, 'What what do you want to see here? What decisions do you want to have?' And they're part of, you know, as the RSC is a charity and there's a board of trustees and there's meetings, they're part of those meetings. They are an integral part of what the RSC does.

Welcome: Ladies and gentlemen, please take your seats. The performance is about to continue.

Ibraheem: Philip, it's been a brilliant chat and I've really enjoyed speaking to you and just unpacking what your feelings and thoughts are on Learning department and learning development through theatre, and especially with your upcoming gig at the RSC directing the First Encounters play. I have got a question for you - last one. Who would you like to share your next interval drinks with?

Philip: I would like to share my interval drink with Omar Elerian. I'm a real fan of his work and I've in the last few years been able to connect with him. And I think he's he's just a really fascinating man. Um, and I'd be really keen to know what his, not just what his interval drink is, but just his process of, of making work. He makes brilliant theatre and really challenging theatre. Um, so that would be my go to, I think.

Ibraheem: Listen, Philip J Morris

Philip: So good to speak with you.

Ibraheem: Yeah, no, this has been really nice. And, you know, this is what the interval can be about. It can be about just chopping it up, as we say, chopping it up and just really talking about the things that matter.

Philip: Thank you. Thank you for having me. Yeah. It's so lovely to talk to you.

Ibraheem: Thank you very much for listening to today's episode of Interval Drinks with Philip J. Morris and myself. Ibraheem Toure, to thank you very much and take care.

Ibraheem: Join us next time where actor, writer and director Charlie Josephine will be catching up with Artistic Director of Cardboard Citizens Theatre, Chris Sonix. Remember, you can listen again to past episodes on the Royal Shakespeare Company website. Just search 'RSC Interval drinks'.