





BACKGROUND PACK

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1. ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

The Royal Court Theatre presents

Jumpy

By April De Angelis

Jumpy was first performed at The Royal Court Jerwood Theatre Downstairs, Sloane Square, London on Thursday 13th October 2011

Cast in order of appearance

Tilly **Bel Powley** Hilary Tamsin Grieg Mark **Ewan Stewart** Lyndsey Seline Hizli Frances Doon Mackichan Roland Richard Lintern Bea Sarah Woodward James Musgrave Josh Micheal Marcus Cam

DirectorNina RaineDesignerLizzie ClachanLighting DesignerPeter MumfordSound DesignerPaul ArdittiCasting DirectorAmy Ball

Assistant Director
Production Manager
Stage Manager
Deputy Stage Manager
Hannah Banister
Paul Handley
Kirsten Turner
Sarah Alford Smith

Assistant Stage Manager
Stage Management Intern
Costume Supervisor
Voice Coach

Claire Atha
Ida Nelson
Jackie Orton
Neil Swain

Set built by Miraculous Engineering

Set painted byKerry Jarrett

2. ABOUT THE WRITER

April De Angelis

Previous plays for The Royal Court:

Hungover: Election Shorts (Rough Cut), Catch (co-writer),

Wild East, Havana, Hush.

Other Theatre:

Calais (Paines Plough/Oran Mor); **Country** (Terror Season, Southwark Playhouse); **Wuthering Heights** (adapt. Birmingham

Rep); Headstrong (NT Shell Connections); A Laughing Matter (Out of Joint with National/tour); The Warwickshire Testimony (RSC); The Positive Hour (Out of Joint with Hampstead); Playhouse Creatures (Sphinx Theatre Company/Old Vic/West Yorkshire Playhouse); Soft Vengeance (Graeae); The Life and Times of Fanny Hill (Red Shift Theatre); Ironmistress (ReSisters Theatre Company). Opera:

Flight (with Jonathan Dove, Glyndebourne); **The Silent Twins** (Almeida).



3. SYNOPSIS OF JUMPY

Hilary is fifty years old. She has a routine and unexciting passionless relationship with her husband Mark. The rift between them is wedged firmly and a point of constant contention is fifteen year old daughter Tilly. Feisty and rebellious, she has a volatile relationship with Hilary and when Hilary discovers she has been having sex with fellow fifteen year old boyfriend Josh, she goes to visit his parents to discuss the problem. Here we meet icy Bea, Josh's Mum, and Actor and charmer Roland, Josh's Dad, who takes a liking to Hilary and his failing marriage makes him the hungrier for her attention. Roland later tells Hilary of an encounter he has heard about from Josh, where Tilly slept with two boys at a party. This is of much concern to Hilary who confronts Tilly. A trip away to Norfolk with Roland, Josh and Francis sees the family messes come to a head with a hilarious burlesque routine from Francis, Hilary's friend also struggling to cope with being 50 and being single.

Mark has moved out when it turns out Tilly's fallen pregnant. The two families and Tilly's with child friend Lyndsey have a meeting, where views are aired and blame is portioned and a huge row kicks off. We meet Cam, who is a new friend of Tilly's, he throws Hilary a bit off kilter and it is he who teaches her that Tilly does love her deeply. With many surprising (and often hilarious) twists the audience see Hilary on her own journey of self understanding.

-Hannah Banister, Assistant Director

4. THE SET DESIGN



A Model Box of the Set of Jumpy – during the 'Bedroom' Scenes



A Model Box of the set of Jumpy – during the "Outside in Norfolk" scenes

Activity - In the Designer's Chair

- 1) Why do you think Lizzie Clachan decided to design the set in the way she did?
- 2) Do you think the set design is effective?
- 3) Imagine you are the set designer for a new production of Jumpy how would you design the set?

Would you focus on the "bleached banality" that Henry Hitchings thinks encompasses Hillary's "hollow existence" perfectly or some other aspect in the script?



5. RESEARCH

Greenham Common:

In Jumpy Hilary and Frances remember their days as protestors at the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp...

In 1981 a group of women, angered by the decision to site Cruise Missiles (guided nuclear missiles) in the UK, organised a protest march from Cardiff, Wales to Greenham Common Air Base near Newbury, Berkshire. Here they set up what became known as the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp. Between 1981 and 1983 the protesters attempted to disrupt construction work at the base, methods included blockading the base and cutting down parts of the fence.



Protesters and police outside Greenham Common Air Base. Photograph taken by Isia Brecciaroli. (IWM ref: HU 56670)

In December 1982 more than 30,000 women gathered at Greenham to join hands around the base at the 'Embrace the Base' event.

Despite the efforts of the protesters, the first Cruise Missiles arrived at Greenham in November 1983. The protest against the missiles, however, continued throughout the rest of the 1980s. Many women faced court cases, fines and sometimes imprisonment for their actions. Newbury District Council tries many times in vain to close the camp by evicting protesters. Numbers dwindled but the camp remained.

In 1987 US President, Ronald Reagan and Soviet President, Mikhail Gorbachev signed the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, which paved the way for the removal of Cruise Missiles from Greenham. Between 1989 and 1991 all missiles sited at Greenham were removed. The United States Air Force left the base in 1992 and were soon followed by their British counterparts. The Peace Camp, however, remained as a continuing protest against nuclear weapons.

Today Greenham no longer belongs to the military. Part of it is in the process of being converted into a business park, while the rest will be common land, open to all. The last of the Greenham peace women left the base in September 2000, 19 years after they first arrived. There are plans to commemorate the Peace Camp at the site.

Source: http://www.iwm.org.uk/upload/package/22/greenham/protest.htm

Further Reading: The Imperial War Museum's Sound Archive: http://www.iwm.org.uk/upload/package/22/greenham/index.htm

http://www.yourgreenham.co.uk



6. INTERVIEW WITH ASSISTANT DIRECTOR HANNAH BANISTER

Transcript of interview with Hannah Banister – Assistant Director of Jumpy **How did you get involved with Jumpy?**Well Nina, the director, I've assisted her before on Tiger Country at

Hampstead Theatre. And so she sent me the script and asked what I thought of it and I thought it was great...and that was that really. What drew you to Jumpy, what made you think it was "great"? Well it's mainly because it's so surprising, I remember when I first read the first scene and I was like "right so its going to be about this" and then you read the 2nd scene and you think "oh so its going to be about that", and by the time you've got to the end it's been about so much; a gun, babies, pregnancy and running away. It's got so much in it that its but its also like really real, its really really exciting. It's a feminist play if you like but it's brilliant because it's not women moaning about women's things. It's a play with women at the centre of it who aren't perfect and aren't heroes but are heroic because of their ideals, their trying to live their lives by ideals. And how living something that is an idea but in practice how do you actually fulfil [that]. And at the same time there are all these relationships. A mum and her daughter, I think any parent, or any child can relate to the problems without going to the extremes that Jumpy does...and in the middle of it all there is this comic tone as well as a tragedy and sadness that goes though. And it's beautifully constructed so that when someone asks you what is it about, you go "oh god what is it about?"

What kind of research did you have to do for the play?

Lots of research into Greenham Common [women's peace camp], I'd actually never heard of it, at all. I was born in 1984, so just after it. You think my mum would have been all like "GREENHAM!" but no she wasn't, so I had never heard of it. So I read loads about that and learnt about what happened there because that came up in the play.

Then general sort of research into the 2nd wave of feminism so like Jermaine Greer and Natasha Walsall and Betty Friedman, there are lots of conflicting arguments about what feminism is and who is a feminist so that's what Frances and Hilary argue about on stage, and with all the burlesque stuff , in the play Hilary and Frances talk about how that is or isn't feminis.

I also looked into the music, the sort of music that Tilly would listen to, and the music that Hilary and Frances listen to, and I researched into education reading support units, and Walthamstow, the area where they live.

What would you want the audience to get from jumpy?

Possibly the sort of sadness that exists in the mother daughter relationship. They are so similar yet they misunderstand each other so much they have lost that sort of connection. You know how there are people who are best friends with their mums but then there are people who can't stand their mums. Can I be really grand and say realise the truth at the end, to realise what Hilary realises that she loves her daughter. I would like to think [the audience] have swapped sides a lot, I hope we have got it right so whatever you think of Tilly's character there are times when you are on her side, because there are a lot of harsh arguments especially the ones about whether or not she should keep her baby. As the play goes there, I hope the audience have gone with it. Gone on the journey with them? Yes and more than emphasise with them but experience it with the characters, especially the mid-life crisis of a woman. I've never really seen it on stage, I'm sure it has been on stage before, but we tackle this head on, the issues. Every day she has these issues, she turns them against the people around her; husband, friends, daughter everyone. Yet we are still on her side. So I would like people to go on that journey with Hilary.

Could you talk us though the sort of rehearsal techniques you used to develop Jumpy?

Ok, well the first few days we sat round the table and read though the script with all the actors there and then we started again scene by scene. And if any questions came up, we had the writer there in the room for the first week and she answered a lot of questions, asking where characters came from and she gave the actors a good background into the play. And then we got straight up on our feet, going though scene by scene. We couldn't go quite chronologically because two actors were in another play, but where we could we went chronologically. I think we would do a couple of hours on each scene each day, and then when we finished back to the beginning. Then when we came back to the scene they had to be off book, then we work in a bit more detail. Nina doesn't say "OK now you walk here on this line and you walk there on that line". She just says do it and we see what works and hang on to that. Everything else is up for grabs really [laughs] right up until tech week in fact, where you have to know

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where you are for lights and stuff. How we rehearsed was always quite fluid, because Nina wanted the play to do that, because it's not a script that sits still for two seconds, it kinda rips along, it's not particularly wordy. That was how we rehearsed it. We tried [different techniques] for different characters, Roland's character has these massive great speeches and you think "Good god he's still speaking, what do we do?" So we did lots of improvisation, and actioning-finding out what you are trying to do to each person with each line, so everyone could see what worked best and hopefully we come to a compromise that way. Other exercises we did, we got scenes moving around the room, so every time you thought you were attacking someone with a line you went towards them and you got a really clear picture, physically of who was driving the scene forward. As things came up we would use games or exercises to help tackle the problem. There was one thing we did, improvising each scene, still staying true to the nature of the script but saying things in your own words. And that really worked to unlock something for some of the actors. Then when they came back to the lines it was far more real.

What one thing would you say drives the play?

Well I suppose the massive outer things are fear ... and hope because at the end there is that hope for the future, so that's a happy ending, because so much that happens in the play is driven by fear; like fear of losing your looks, your life, your job. I think it's relevant to people generally at the moment , there is a lot of fear in the world, that's not played up in the play, exactly but... I think your right. I think the play brings out those fears though Hilary but we can apply them to bigger things. I hope so and I hope people see things from Tilly's point of view as well because actually she is really misunderstood and in the play you can just look at the things that she does and think oh nightmare!, but I hope by the end you can see the girl who is genuinely really sweet and does love her parents and things she does doesn't make her a bad person.

Do you think it's predominantly Tilly's play then?

I think it is, I love Tilly. I think she makes the play progress, because you have these adult scenes and then Tilly comes on, tears things up and storms off again, and like I think she is the cause of lots of things. And she is nice; she forgives her mum lots of things. Her mum speaks to her in terrible terrible ways, you know "can't you keep your knickers on!" We worked out in Tilly's back-story that night that she was at a party and went up to a room with one guy and another guy, we decided that in actual fact she hadn't slept with one of them, she had slept with one but she hadn't slept with the other, and people forget actually she turned up to that party and her boyfriend is with another girl and it made her feel crap and she goes home and her mums an alcoholic who sits there with wine every night, and its not her fault. I defiantly feel like its Tilly's play but I know others would disagree [laughs] especially Nina! I don't know but it's definitely a Tilly- Hilary play. The way Tilly is with her mother and other people come in and out but it is their play.

Interview conducted by Matt Withers (Education Assistant at the Royal Court)

Royal Court Theatre

In the Director's Chair

Hannah Banister insists that two of Jumpy's ideals are hope and fear. If you were the director how would you ensure that these driving forces were present in your production?



7. Rehearsal Diary

Rehearsal Wk 1.

Read through 1: First morning of day 1 rehearsals, all creatives and stage management present.

After tea break: All extra bodies leave the room.

Read through 2: Start bashing through the play. Still round tables, just reading but taking it scene by scene, with April present, stopping whenever questions arise about character, place, time, or if anyone doesn't understand a line etc.

Improvisation:

In pairs, discuss a time when you have encountered sexism, share with your partner, Then choose one story to convey to the rest of the company, but with the other person playing the central character if it is your story.

5 mins to do this.

Company makes an audience as the pairs act out their improvisations. The company and the pair discuss what we have seen, the circumstances around the improvised scene and how it relates to scenes in the play.

Read/ stagger scenes begins.

All actors are free to leave, apart from those in Act one Scene one, Ewan Stewart and Tamsin Greig, as we begin looking at putting the play on its feet. From this point, actors will only be in the room when called to rehearse their scenes.

Scene 1 rehearsal:

Read through the scene. What time of day is it? What time of year? What state is their relationship in? How long have they been married? How long ago did her panic attack take place? How long have there been problems with Tilly? Has Mark had the same problems?

It is 8.18 May 2009, their relationship isn't bad, just boring and they are not unified on Tilly. Mark does not need to have control over Tilly like Hilary does and he is the listener in their relationship but doesn't do enough talking. So when the scene begins they are recapping. She has already told him the general gist, but he is taking her into more detail about it.

They play the scene as they feel just on their feet. Inevitably, it is quite static, with some wandering and people feeling like they don't know where they are, who they are, or what they are doing here! But by the second or third go, they have a sense already of the shape of the scene and can feel where it is a good time to sit or stand, and in Hilary's case, she has entered with shopping and has a coat on so had to negotiate a good time for her to take those off and strike them.

At the moment the scene is quite slow, it is clear that pace needs to be injected so when we next come back to it, the actors will need to be off book and Nina will instruct a speed line run. This will make more sense of what happens in the scene and pauses can grow from here.

Wk3 Monday

All scenes have been looked at at least once; the actors are off the book. We are coming back to look at the Norfolk scenes, these along with scene 13, the "Military Tribunal" scene, are the hardest. A lot of actors on the stage, a lot of sub plot undertones to eek out, comedy to play and the story to follow. And time has passed and we are in Norfolk, it's September, Mark and Hilary's relationship has deteriorated, Roland's marriage has ended and Josh and Tilly are back together. There are props to play with today as well. With the addition of a new sun lounger and some cool bags. Also the rehearsal treads have been fitted in the rehearsal room, which is great because it shows us the real sense of

height and depth the audience will see. This too will help with blocking.

So, from the top, and it is complex to get a sense of the sexual chemistry between Roland and Hilary, whilst keeping the lightness and the complexity. We run the first page a few times, this sets up the whole scene. This is broken by the entrance of Mark, who we have decided will be mostly preoccupied with the BBQ upstage. When he enters we must have a sense that he has broken something, but as this deepens and he breaks them again later, we don't want to leave ourselves nowhere to go. We have discovered triangles are very strong shapes for the Court stage, especially with the sizeable rake and difficult sightlines, so we can create a dynamic of some strength here without too much effort. Hilary did a nice wander up the steps to lay out her towel and sit, which we are keeping,

that gives a great runway down centre stage for Frances' entrance to the scene. She enters in a tiny swimming costume, sunglasses and a pair of wedges, to the line "That's Brave for Norfolk in September".

We worked out, she comes centre front, lays her sarong on the floor, then heads upstage to grab the sun lounger and wheels it down to the front slightly SL of centre. Facing Roland. This gives us a nice off diamond shape as basis for the next few bits of action. Roland comes to join Frances on her sun lounger, so we have a small alliance there while Hilary and Mark remain distant from one another upstage, which gives a sense of the distance they feel in there relationship.

We rehearsed this section a lot for clarity, as the lines of two conversations are broken up between the two bases and this is hard to follow when not pitched correctly.

Then we had to work out how Hilary was to end up Centre stage for the big reveal of her swimming costume. (If Tamsin had had her way she would have been tucked behind the stairs so no one could see her!) But we found if she cleared the stairs on the way to go swimming, she can end centre stage and be taking her jumper off as Tilly and Josh enter on the stairs for Tilly to say "Oh my God Mum, That's disgusting". The problem was getting Francis and Roland to strong observers' positions, we went back over this moment a lot to make it natural that they would clear to form almost a full circle round Hilary all staring at her in her swimming costume. It became funny and humiliating and embarrassing. It was good fun.

Scene Ten in the Norfolk cottage, was a similar set up with similar problems. A scene that builds and builds from a couple of people and small conflicts to a stage full and relationships hanging in the balance. This is the last scene before the interval and so much happens, it is designed to send the audience out with so much its hard to fit it all in! We set a new triangle for the start, Mark DSL reading a paper, Hilary centre stage peeling vegetables for dinner and Tilly bounds down the stairs to DSR. When Roland and Josh enter with his eye problems Tilly has moved to the table which creates a small bursting effect when Josh and Roland enter giving them focus. They sort of whirl in and whirl out sending the room in to disarray.

This leaves just Hilary and Mark on stage and Nina wanted it to be that they nearly had their serious chat at this moment but that tension is broken by Frances entering down the stairs to ask permission to try her "Thing" out on a few mates. When she leaves the air should be thick and tense.

So we went over this a few times, then Nina asked Tamsin and Ewan to improvise the chat they would have had if Roland had not interrupted them, the chat that they subsequently must have at home which results in him moving out. This improvisation was really cold and sad, and it was great because it weighted the lines they said in the scene with everything they need to say and still haven't said.

This leads on to Roland's seduction section and the weightier that moment with Mark the more tense the Roland seduction is for an audience. And they shouldn't be expecting it. Nina and Richard spent a lot of time actioning all of his lines in the big speeches, so that each line offered a fresh approach and a new tactic for him to move in on her. We also drafted in some extra rehearsal time just for the two of them. Their

moment is broken by Josh and Tilly and Mark entering with the crisis emergency that is Chloe's sister having a party. This is the culmination of Tilly verses Hilary and Mark having to choose a side. Then Frances enters to do her burlesque dance in the middle of it, and at this stage Doon is very much still improvising but has some amazing ideas for this dance. Having been reading a magazine on a train, she has found pony burlesque to really suit Frances. She has put in requests for some costume pieces and music she thinks will work and has already worked out a rough shape. I am going to be watching her rehearse to help put in extra horse nuances, and burlesque dancer Crimson Skye has been booked to put in extra strip bits. But it is already hilarious. Can't wait. The rehearsal room is in hysterics. And Tamsin is crying with laughter by the time Roland has to re enter to kiss her. This will be a great end to the first half.

Wk5 Tech Week

Tech week is an interesting combination of working with the designers and stage management team to work out exactly when cues have to be called to make scene changes and states move exactly as Nina wants them, and to work with the actors on their quick changes, getting them used to the rake, as well as moving them around in place to make sure they can all be seen.

My main job is the sightline work. I have to run up and down between stalls and balcony, extreme SL seats and extreme stage right seats to make sure that when people are important in a scene or integral to plot that they can be seen by most people, if not everyone.

The tricky thing with the Royal Court stage is that in order to be seen by everyone, you have to be stood centre stage, and it would be an incredibly boring show to have the whole thing played in the centre. Rehearsals started 9am Monday morning, but the actor's aren't in until 2pm. This gives the designers and crew time to plot, focus, practise flying, hang the cyclorama, test speakers. Then it's just a case of bashing through the play cue by cue and as much as possible giving the actors a chance to run scenes. Tamsin in particular. She is in every scene and needs to familiarise herself with her changes and access to entrances and exits

For this week, all the designers are in, April the writer pops in and out. The biggest technical problems we had were flying the scenery out smoothly to reveal Norfolk. This was being rehearsed long in to previews, right up to press night. It was imperative that they were flown smoothly and not too slowly but slow enough to make it poetic and not reveal the unsightly parts of the set as they fly. Also working out the flying of US set pieces and the timing for the windows DS flying out became a constant problem. So we had to rehearse to reduce the gap between the pieces flying.

Also, surprisingly, Hilary's final speech. When she takes her walk forward, there are moving lights changing the state of light as she moves into it. It looks beautiful when it works but every preview she has ended up in the dark somewhere with her face shadowy for the all important closing lines of the play. This has taken hours of honing and rehearsing the same walk again and again with the actors.

One or two of the technical lighting problems were due to some "bounce" which happens with the white set. It was difficult to create linear spaces because you would always get some spill. But this became part of the design. However the intricacies of divulging space with light meant that at times the actors ended up not lit. So we have to go back and look at the cues again and at times compromise on the design, purely for function. Wonderfully, the acoustic of the theatre in most places in the theatre, even in the Gods, carry very well. And the vocal ability of the actors meant that on the whole audibility is not a problem, which is something that can be a big shock in technical rehearsals. However, there are seats at the back of the stalls which feel slightly less involved in the production than other seats in the house higher up. It is something to do with being right under the circle, some energy is sapped. This is something the actors must be aware of to pack it some extra punch so those audience members don't have to work too hard.

Coming to terms with the rake has been a cause for some concern. With Doon, Sarah, Bel and Seline all having to stride, stand, run (and dance) in heels, extremely high heels, it is important they learn the contours of the rake. Doon has fallen twice, with many slips and near misses. In one preview even a bottle of wine slid all the way down the table and off on to the floor. Luckily it didn't smash.

They are all coping with it really well. I am incredibly concerned about Doon's footwear for her burlesque dance. She has requested to perform it in flat pumps. This is not what the designer wants, so they are compromising a "See how it goes" situation.

The sound is great. All through tech Paul the designer has be honing and working sound cues and has had some difficulty with the sound of beds creaking and chatter from Tilly's room during scene six. He and Nina have now found something they are happy with but it threw the actors when we came to rehearse the scene, as the speakers are up stage (where the actors are) and facing them, using the set to bounce and muffle the sound. So to them on stage, it is really loud, and makes them giggle. This has been run a few times for them to feel the right pitch for them and a volume that is believable for the audience.

Tonight is press night, and it is an excited atmosphere among the cast and creative teams alike. We have had five previews to gauge where laughs are going to happen, (and there were some real surprises) and where those laughs are going to help or hinder the journey of the scene. So we have worked to make sure the laughs are ridden well and quashed when needed and the gravitas of the bigger themes of the play are sold to the audience as well. It's been amazing fun and a lot of hard work, and now it is their play. With Nina and me popping in every week to make sure it is still in good shape.

- Hannah Banister - Assistant Director

8. CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Here are exercises from *Jumpy* rehearsals that you can try.

Improvisation

Theme

In pairs, discuss a time when you have encountered sexism, share with your partner. Then choose one story to convey to the rest of the company, but with the other person playing the central character if it is your story.

Discuss how this relates to the scenes/themes in the play.

Scene

Many of the scenes in Jumpy feel like you have entered the conversation half way though. Pick a scene and improvise the conversation before the scene started, to help get a feel for the characters and their relationship.

Focus

Pick a scene to read, and then whilst performing it, get the character whom is 'attacking' with a line to physically advance towards the character they are attacking, likewise back away if defending. This exercise was used in rehearsals to physically explore who had the power and focus at each point in a scene.

Scene Study

Ask students to read the opening scene of Jumpy in pairs, one person taking the part of Hilary and the other the role of Mark. Once they've read it through, ask them decide the following for Hilary and Mark:

- 1. What is each character's objective in the scene?
- 2. What is preventing her/him from achieving this objective?
- 3. Does s/he overcome the obstacle/s and if so, what tactics does s/he use to do so?

8. EDUCATION AT THE ROYAL COURT

As the Royal Court is a centre for excellence and innovation in theatre-making, the Education Department aims to stimulate and inspire students of all ages, encouraging learning and participation in every aspect of the theatre's work, from the process of writing plays to pioneering rehearsal room techniques.

We offer a wide-ranging programme of work designed to open up and de-mystify the craft of making theatre. Royal Court Education activities include:

Workshops for productions
INSET workshops for teachers
Post-show talks
Royal Court in a Day Study Day
Drama School in a Day Study Day
Performing Arts Business Study Day

A full description of all education events can be found on the education pages of the Royal Court web-site, www.royalcourttheatre.com. If you would like more information, please e-mail Lynne Gagliano, Education Associate, at lynnegagliano@royalcourttheatre.com or phone 020 7565 5174.

For more information about Royal Court productions and the Young Writers Programme, please visit our web-site, www.royalcourttheatre.com.

The Jumpy Background Pack compiled and written by Matt Withers, Education Assistant at the Royal Court, October 2011. Cover Image by Sarah Howell ©2011. Production photographs by Robert Workman © 2011.