

Frankenstein

By **NICK DEAR**

From the novel by **MARY SHELLEY**



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“

I hunger for
knowledge.
But the more
I learn,
the less I
understand.”

- CREATURE

CAST & CREATIVES

CAST

JAMES KUPA

Victor Frankenstein / The Creature



James is a graduate of the Toi Whakaari: New Zealand Drama School (Bachelor of Performing Arts).

He has previously appeared in Court Theatre productions of *The Perfumed Garden*, and other theatre credits include *Betty's Summer Vacation*; *Twelfth Night* (Toi Whakaari); *Strange Resting Places* (Taki Rua); *Penalties, Pints and Pirouettes* (Centrepont Theatre) and *A Lion in the Meadow* (Tim Bray Productions).

Television credits include *Brokenwood Mysteries*; *Ka Pai Living*; *Agent Anna* and *Nothing Trivial*. His film credits include *I Got Robots*; *Morgan Foster's: Mind Creep Cinema* and *Small Fish, Big City*.

As a part of the creative collaboration, Chess Club, James has co-written, co-directed and starred in several films including *I Got Robots*, which placed second at finals of the 2013 48-Hour Film Festival and was selected for the 2013 Hawaii International Film Festival. For his role in *I Got Robots*, James won the award for Best Actor.

WESLEY DOWDELL

Victor Frankenstein / The Creature



Wesley's love of performance started with Auckland-based Massive Company, to whom he credits his acting training and development.

His previous Court Theatre production was *Constellations* in 2015. Other theatre credits include *Red Speedo* (Auckland Theatre Company); *The Biggest* (Tikapa Productions); *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (Auckland Theatre Company); *Raising the Titanics* (SmackBang) and *The Sons of Charlie Paora* (Massive Company). Wesley's television credits include *Outrageous Fortune*, *Roman Empire II* and *The Brokenwood Mysteries*. His film credits include *The World's Fastest Indian*, *Lovebirds* and yet-to-be-released *Punch*.

Wesley is also a musician who has played for solo artists, in various bands and theatre productions, predominantly as a drummer and singer. His current project is duo group Wesjam.

ELISABETH MARSCHALL

Elizabeth and Agatha



Elisabeth Marschall is a graduate of Toi Whakaari: New Zealand Drama School (Bachelor of Performing Arts) and Valla Folk Highschool (Diploma in Physical Theatre).

Frankenstein is Elisabeth's Court Theatre debut. Her other theatre credits include *The Maids* (Valla Folk High School); *Concrete Sphinx* and *Brilliant Eyes* (Duende School of Ensemble Physical Theatre); *I Never Thought I'd Have to Explain It All* (Wellington Fringe Festival); *Merrily We Roll Along* and *Lockdown La Ronde* (Toi Whakaari). Elisabeth's film credits include *Hand*; *Excavation Point Thestias* and *När Landskapen Susar Förbi*.

Elisabeth is a global nomad who moved to New Zealand from Sweden to pursue a career in acting. She is a passionate theatre maker, writer and physical mover who wants to also create her own work, looking at stories from different cultures and, more specifically, her own African/European background.

ROY SNOW

De Lacey / Monsieur Frankenstein



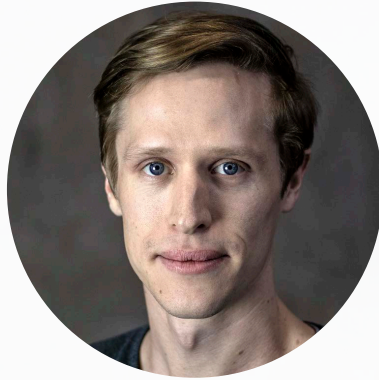
Roy's previous Court Theatre credits include *Anything Goes; Much Ado About Nothing; SNAP! The Mikado; End of the Rainbow; Blood Brothers; Plum; One Man, Two Guvnors; Romeo and Juliet; Winston's Birthday; Legally Blonde the Musical; The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time; Chicago; Easy Money; Ideation* and *Ladies Night*.

Other theatre credits include *Middle Age Spread; Poor Boy; Hair; Cabaret, The Rocky Horror Show; My Name is Gary Cooper; Guys and Dolls (Auckland Theatre Company); Some Girls; This is How it Goes; The Threepenny Opera; Assassins (Silo Theatre); Evita (Showbiz Christchurch); The Phantom of the Opera; Hairspray and Cats*. Roy's television credits include *Shortland Street; Outrageous Fortune; Legend of the Seeker; Orange Roughies; Go Girls (Series 3 and 4); Spartacus – War of the Damned* and *Shannara*.

His film credits include *Raising Weylon; Stolen; What Really Happened: Waitangi; Elevation; Serve and Protect; The Kick and Breakery*.

TOM EASON

Felix/Ewan/Victor Understudy.



Tom began his training at Original Scripts Theatre School and gained a Bachelor of Performing Arts (Acting) from Te Kura Toi Whakaari O Aotearoa: New Zealand Drama School.

Previous Court Theatre credits include *Astroman* and *The Pink Hammer*, and other credits include *Sea; Dust Pilgrim* (Red Leap Theatre); *The Wholehearted* (Massive Theatre Company); *The Breath of the Volcano* and *Skin of Fire* (Auckland international Arts Festival; Group F).

In 2014 Tom was awarded the Circa Award Donated by TACT Most Promising Male Newcomer for his role in the Wellington production of *Equivocation*.



“

Can a man
be a god?
I had to
find out

- VICTOR

ENSEMBLE

ABIGAIL MCDONALD
Clarice & Ensemble



Scottish-born Abigail grew up in Auckland. She feels privileged to be doing the work she loves, whilst being part of The Court Theatre.

GEORGIA CARNEGIE
Ensemble



Born and raised in Timaru, Georgia is loving being exposed to a professional environment while also continuing her studies at NASDA.

KRYSTAL RAMIREZ O'GORMAN
Elizabeth & Agatha Understudy and Ensemble



Krystal is originally from Dunedin. Her previous credits include *The Book of Everything*, *On The Town* and *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change* (NASDA). She is a co-founder of Yugto Productions.

ASUKA KUBO
Female Creature & Ensemble



Asuka (she/her), from Japan, is finding huge joy in being a part of *Frankenstein* and is very excited to be using physical theatre to express the full 'aliveness' of the story.

JAYSHRI RATNAM
Ensemble



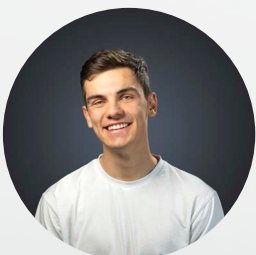
Jayshri (she/her) is a proud Fijian Indian New Zealander. She hopes to continue creating important work through Yugto Productions for Christchurch's Asian theatre scene.

KYLE AITKEN
William & Ensemble



Kyle's theatre credits include *On The Town* (NASDA) and *Avenue Q* (Nelson Musical Theatre). He is part of the Court Theatre's Youth Jester company. Kyle hopes to be part of bringing a thriving musical theatre industry to New Zealand.

BEN JARRETT
Rab & Ensemble



Ben loves the collaborative nature of *Frankenstein*. He wants to explore how performing arts can empower and bring unity.

KATIE ATKINS
Gretel & Ensemble



Katie, from Palmerston North, is excited to share this journey of love, loss and what it means to be human with Court Theatre audiences.

LEO MUNRO
Ensemble



Being part of *Frankenstein* has enabled Leo to have fun while learning and creating. His goal is to continue his studies in Musical Theatre and Dance in Sydney.

NADIA HILL
Female Creature & Ensemble



Nadia moved to Christchurch in 2019. She aims to work professionally in musicals and physical theatre. She is also interested in composing.

NICOLE WILSON
Klaus & Ensemble



Nicole moved from Auckland to Christchurch in 2018. As part of an ensemble, Nicole has loved helping to translate physical theatre moments into vital elements of the story.

MATTHEW FARNELL
Gustave & Ensemble



Matthew is originally from Auckland. He is planning on future study to help build the presence of Te Reo Māori and New Zealand Sign Language in New Zealand theatre.

NICOLE BREBNER
Clarice & Ensemble



Originally from Hawkes' Bay, being part of *Frankenstein* with such a dynamic team has been inspiring for Nicole. It has challenged both her imagination and knowledge of physical theatre.

TRISTAN VALENCIA
William & Ensemble



Tristan (he/him) proudly affiliates to both Pilipinas and Aotearoa. His most prominent aspiration is to write and direct his own play representing the Filipino LGBTQIA+ community.

XAVIER PAUL
Constable & Ensemble



Xavier is originally from Auckland and is of Ngā Puhi descent. Xavier plans to write and perform his own original content for this year's Ignite fringe festival at Little Andromeda and aspires to support Māori youth unfamiliar with the arts.



CREATIVES

HOLLY CHAPPELL

Director



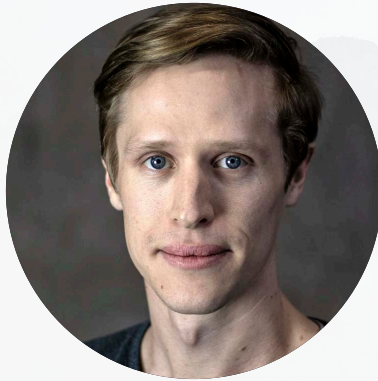
Holly has a Master of Theatre Arts in Directing from Victoria University and Te Kura Toi Whakaari O Aotearoa: NZ Drama School.

She is the co-artistic director and producer of Two Productions, which has produced the devised works *Moemoea*; *If You Only See One Show in Your Life*; *The Disaster Brothers*; the immersive theatre show, *The Powerful Event*; *The Wild Hunt*; *Open for Business*; and *The Little Prince*.

Holly has directed for The Court Theatre, Auckland Theatre Company, Red Leap Theatre and The Fortune Theatre. As the Artistic Director of Little Andromeda, she has programmed their 2019, 2020 and current seasons. Holly is Head of Acting at Ara Institute of Canterbury's National Academy of Singing and Dramatic Arts (NASDA); taught acting at Original Scripts Theatre School for ten years; had a successful high school teaching career; and worked as a director and tutor for Toi Whakaari and Whitireia Polytechnic.

TOM EASON

Movement Director



Tom began his training at Original Scripts Theatre School and gained a Bachelor of Performing Arts (Acting) from Te Kura Toi Whakaari O Aotearoa: New Zealand Drama School.

Tom has taught and directed for Toi Whakaari, The Court Youth Company and Original Scripts Theatre School. He is co-artistic director of Two Productions and has performed in their works *Moemoea*; *If You Only See One Show in Your Life*; *The Disaster Brothers*; *Balmy*; *The Powerful Event*; *Open for Business*; *Moby Dick* and *The Little Prince*.

As Movement Director he incorporates processes of which he has enjoyed working inside (Red Leap Theatre, Massive Company, Group F, Annie Ruth, Jade Erikson), as well as others he has watched, researched, and been inspired by from afar (Hofesh Shechter, Sidi Larbi, Pina Bausch, Zimmerman and De Perrot, Théâtre du Soleil).

JO BUNCE

Stage Manager



Jo graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from Canterbury University in 1994 and Toi Whakaari: New Zealand Drama School with a Diploma in Technical Production in 1996. Jo has been working in theatre for over 25 years as a lighting designer/operator and Stage Manager. She has worked in London and Edinburgh and in film, she was an on-set production assistant for *King Kong*.

Jo is the Head Stage Manager at The Court Theatre and has been involved in over 50 Court productions including *Cabaret*; *Othello*; *Travesties*; *Art*; *The Seagull*; *Amadeus*; *Pacific Post*; *The Motor Camp*; *End of the Rainbow*; *The Hound of the Baskervilles*; *Blood Brothers*; *One Man, Two Guvvors*; *Shepherd*; *Constellations*; *Niu Sila*; *The Ladykillers*; *Waiora*; *The Events*; *Steel Magnolias*; *Venus in Fur*; *Ideation*; *Misery*; *Astroman*; *Elling*; *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*; *The Arsonists*; *Fresh Off the Boat*; *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *Ladies Night*.

HAROLD MOOT**Set Designer**

Harold has worked in the professional theatre industry for over 33 years. After studying Visual Communication at the Christchurch Polytechnic, where he majored in 3-Dimensional Studies, he joined The Court Theatre as a member of the set construction team and has gone on to freelance as a designer, set builder and scenic artist.

Harold has designed extensively for a variety of shows at The Court Theatre, including *Shortcut to Happiness* - the inaugural production in 'The Shed' in 2011.

In addition to his work for The Court Theatre, Harold has designed significant large-scale musicals throughout New Zealand. He also designed the set for the New Zealand premiere of *Disney's Beauty and the Beast* for Showbiz Entertainment and *Miss Saigon* for the NZ Music Consortium.

Harold has worked in film, television and advertising, including working at Weta Workshop, and was this year awarded the Out of the Limelight Theatre Award.

STEVEN JUNIL PARK**Costume Designer**

Christchurch-based Steven is a graduate of the Elam School of Fine Arts at the University of Auckland. This is his first show with the Court Theatre and first time working in theatre.

His previous costume work includes Aldous Harding's music videos for 'The Barrel' and 'Zoo Eyes'. He costumed a short film written by the 2020 Poetry Slam Champion Nathan Joe (for Going West Festival 2021). He also costumed 'Dances with Aldous' by Josie Archer and Kosta Bogoevski for Tempo Dance Festival 2019. Steven first worked with Holly and Tom in 2019 while art-directing and costuming the CoCA Fundraising gala.

Steven runs his own clothing label called '6x4', hand-making one-off pieces using mainly vintage, repurposed, or recycled materials.

MATT SHORT**Sound Designer**

Growing up in North Canterbury, Matt developed a passion for music from an early age. He formed rock bands in high school and university, becoming an accomplished guitarist. He worked professionally in London broadcast television and other media platforms before becoming a senior camera operator for British Sky Broadcasting, gaining considerable experience in all aspects of live television production in both studio and international field environments.

Matt returned to New Zealand to co-film, record sound and compose music for an adventure guide series for TVNZ. He has composed music and designed sound effects for many major brand advertising and marketing films.

Matt joined The Court Theatre as the House Technician/Sound Designer at the beginning of 2018. His previous Court Theatre credits include *Easy Money*; Stephen King's *Misery*; *Mum's Choir*; *Hansel and Gretel*; *Thumbelina*; *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*; *The Pink Hammer*; *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *Things I Know to be True*.

CREATIVES

SHEENA BAINES-ALHAWAMDEH
Lighting Designer



Sheena is a lighting designer with over 30 years' experience and is also currently Events Manager at Spectrum Lighting and Sound.

Her previous Court Theatre credits include *Mother Courage*, *Great Expectations*, *Proof*, *Angels in America* and *Kiss Me Kate*. Her other theatre credits include *The Wedding Singer (NASDA)*, *Suor Angelica (Toi Toi Opera)*, *Peoria Ballet (ONU)* and *Copenhagen (ATC)*, as well as touring extensively with Mark Hadlow.

Sheena is an accomplished Event Manager and spent 13 years at the Christchurch City Council where she produced Classical Sparks, Summer Theatre and Botanic D'Lights.

TIM BAIN
Assistant Stage Manager



Tim started his association with The Court Theatre in 2004 as an ambassador (part of the Education programme). Following that he worked in a variety of roles in Front of House, Stage Management and Production.

His previous Court Theatre credits include *Ladies Night*; *Songs for Nobodies*; *Legally Blonde: The Musical*; *August: Osage County*; *MAMIL* and *Stag Weekend*.

Other theatre credits include *Cinderella (GMG Productions)*; *The Mousetrap (Lunchbox,)* *Les Misérables*, *Miss Saigon (Showbiz)*; *HAIR*; *Beauty and the Beast* and *Cats (NASDA)*.

Tim was the Producer of The World Buskers Festival for several years, a career highlight. Festival producing credits include *Nina Conti*, *Ginger Minj*, *Tape Face*, *Buskers Burlesque*, *Butt Kapinski*, *Urzila Carlson* and over 100 individual street shows.



ABOUT THE PLAY

In this daring adaptation of the classic novel, young scientist Victor Frankenstein brings to life a man-made creature, sewing together dead body parts with little thought to the consequences.

Abandoned by his maker and treated to the worst of humanity's scorn, the Creature becomes intent on finding Frankenstein and making him pay...

With two actors alternating between the roles of the scientist and his creation, this international hit explores the eternal themes of humanity, good vs evil and what happens when we blur the line between life and death.

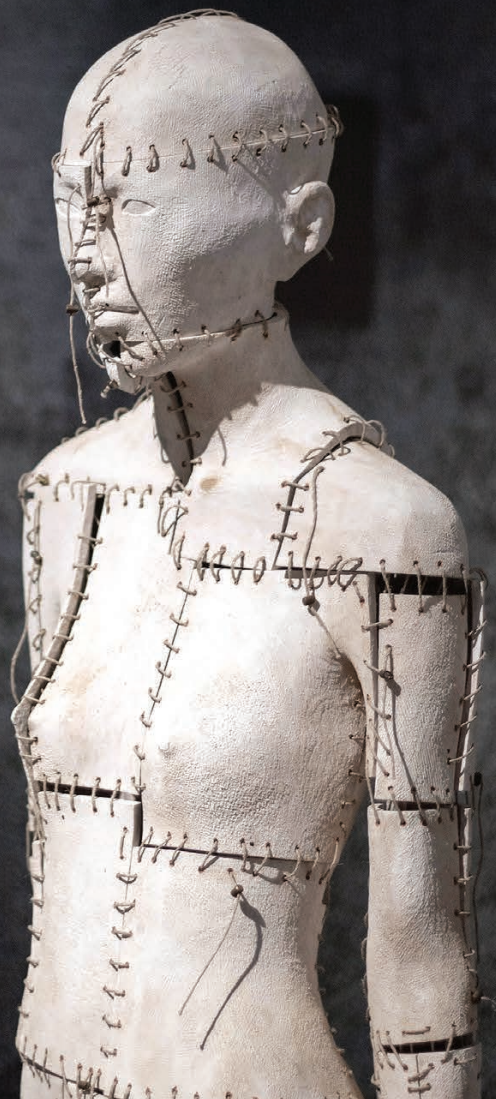
The play is adapted by Nick Dear (2011) and based on the novel by Mary Shelley (1818).

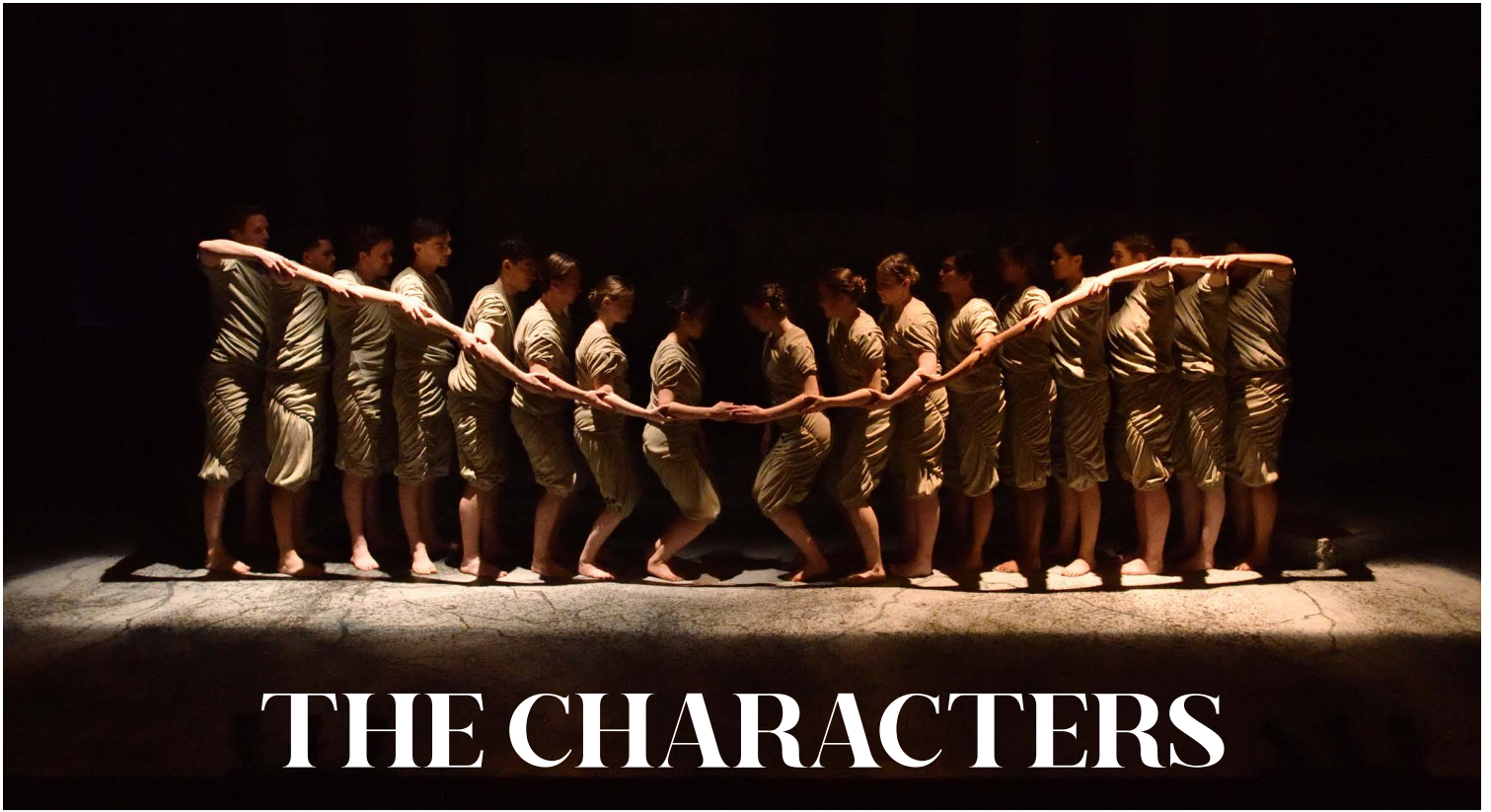
DISCUSS

Whose story is this?
As a class discuss who you
feel empathy for
and why.

HAVE A GO

The play was adapted from a novel written in 1818. What is a classic story that you think could be turned into a play? Present a pitch for why you would choose that story and how you think it could be done as a piece of theatre.





THE CHARACTERS

CREATURE

Referred to as 'the Creature', Frankenstein's unnamed creation is abandoned by his maker once he has been brought to life. He yearns for human connection and a sense of belonging, but his terrifying exterior leads to strangers rejecting and abusing him. Despite his grotesque exterior he is a compassionate character, however, once hardened by his isolation and misery he learns the darker side of humanity and reflects this in his actions.

VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN

Victor is a scientist obsessed with scientific achievement and glory. He represents the dangers of enlightenment and the responsibility that comes with knowledge. He devotes all his time to his studies, sacrificing his health and his relationships for his ambition. He believes he is a genius, but he resents that he cannot share that with the world and receive the acclaim he feels he is deserving of. He is both amazed at what his genius creates and appalled by it. His arrogance and ambition that becomes his downfall.

DE LACEY

De Lacey is an old peasant man living in an isolated cottage with his son and his daughter-in-law. He is blind and thus able to create a friendship with the Creature that is not influenced by what he thinks of his gruesome exterior. De Lacey teaches the Creature to read and is kind and understanding but pushes him to meet his family; they are unable to see past the Creature's appearance. This leads to tragedy as the Creature feels betrayed by De Lacey's broken promise that his family would accept him.

FELIX

Felix is the son of De Lacey and husband to Agatha. A hard-working farmer who is content with his simple life and beautiful wife, he reacts with cruelty and disgust when he first meets the Creature. This leads to the Creature seeking revenge by burning down the cottage with Felix and his family still inside.

AGATHA

Agatha is Felix's wife - a beautiful peasant woman. She works with Felix in the fields but reacts unkindly when presented with the Creature who looks so monstrous on the outside. She is unable to perceive that De Lacey has befriended the Creature because he can sense that he is a good person.

ELIZABETH

Elizabeth is Victor Frankenstein's fiancée, and one who has been very patient in waiting for their wedding day. She is strong willed and frustrated by Victor's distant behaviour and inability to open up to her. She is beautiful, loyal, trusting, and sympathetic - which is why the Creature knows losing her will be fitting revenge for Victor having destroyed his potential bride.

WILLIAM

William is Victor Frankenstein's younger brother. The Creature happens upon him during a game of hide and seek and tried to befriend him. However, upon seeing the monster, William is terrified of the ugly Creature, showing that even with his innocence of youth, he judges people by their appearances. The Creature murders William to get Victor's attention.

MONSIEUR FRANKENSTEIN

Monsieur Frankenstein is Victor's father. He is sympathetic towards his son and tries to remind Victor of the importance of family.

GRETEL

A prostitute that is saved by the Creature when he inadvertently scares off her attackers. At first, she is grateful until she sees his face. Her instincts lead her to flee from him and bring others to attack him.

GUSTAV AND KLAUS

Gustav and Klaus are beggars who are repulsed by the Creature when he approaches them looking for food. Initially frightened away by the Creature, they return the next day to beat him and chase him away.

CLARICE

Clarice is a maid to Elizabeth and the Frankenstein family. She offers pragmatic advice and is a sympathetic ear.

RAB AND EWAN

Ewan and Rab are two crofters that end up grave robbing bodies for Victor Frankenstein. Ewan is Rab's uncle and although Rab is apprehensive about being involved in this work, Ewan convinces him that it is okay for medical research (and the extra money they make from performing this service).

FEMALE CREATURE

The female creature appears in a dream to the creature and is beautiful and enamouring. The Creature becomes obsessed with the idea of having a mate. However, although the female creature is created, she is never animated, Victor destroys her.

DISCUSS

What do you think would be challenging about being one of the actors in this show?

This play has a strong movement focus and ensemble. What is the effect of the ensemble and how are they used to support the story?

“

I desired love and fellowship and still I was spurned”

- CREATURE

A MONSTER...

What is a Monster?

- A monster is a large, ugly and frightening imaginary creature.
- A monster is something that identifies something within us that we are unwilling to confront.
- A monster is everything that a given society hold abhorrent projected outside of itself.
- A monster is a badly behaved and cruel person.
- A monster is created by humans not being open to another way of thinking.

DISCUSS

Finish the sentence “A monster is...” with what you think makes a monster. How does this relate to the Creature?

Is the Creature always a monster and, if not, when and why does this change?

HAVE A GO

Set up a debate in your class of 'Who is the Real Monster' in the play; half of the people arguing for Victor Frankenstein and the other half arguing for the Creature. Who has the more compelling argument? What does this tell us about the play?

THEMES & IMPACT ON THE AUDIENCE

DISCUSS

What do you think are the major themes in the play and what impact these have on the audience?

HAVE A GO

As an audience member, what does this play make you think about? Using the headings below as a starting point, explore how the play made you feel about these topics and what choices the production team made to get you thinking this way.

COMPANIONSHIP

Audience response	What made you feel this?

SOCIETAL ACCEPTANCE

Audience response	What made you feel this?

EMPATHY

Audience response	What made you feel this?

RESPONSIBILITY

Audience response	What made you feel this?

HUMANITY

Audience response	What made you feel this?

MONSTERS

Audience response	What made you feel this?

THE DIRECTOR'S VISION

HOLLY EASON
Director



In 1818 a 20-year-old Mary Shelley wrote the novel, *Frankenstein*, and birthed the genre of Science Fiction. Often when we think of the story of Frankenstein, we focus on the horror and gore aspects of the creation of a monster, but it is so much more; it is a work of intense complexity. *Frankenstein* is a story of the search for true companionship, how we treat otherness in our world, and the infinite question, 'where does life come from?'

Our creative team took the vision and ran with it; the scale of this work blows my mind every time I walk into the theatre. Every costume, prop and set piece has been made with the detail and passion of Frankenstein creating his creature. I had the privilege of working with my husband, Tom Eason, who as the Movement Director has created such beauty, heartache and wonder in the physical sequences that I'll never get sick of watching them. Steven Junil Park's theatrical costuming debut is astonishingly beautiful; his conceptual genius has been crucial to creating the epicness of this work. Stage Managers seldom get a mention, but Jo Bunce is a true hero and fights every day for the work to be the best it can be.

This is an epic story and we wanted to match it with epic imagery, performance and energy. We wanted to create a journey that an audience can really feel, and can leave questioning what really makes a monster - the people that are labelled as one, or the systems that create them?

AN INTERVIEW WITH

HOLLY CHAPPELL

FRANKENSTEIN DIRECTOR

Charlie Gates, *The Press*, 2 August 2021

"Actors James Kupa and Wesley Dowdell will alternate between the Dr Frankenstein and the Creature each night...They have the freedom to find different things. By opening night, I want them to be totally comfortable with swapping roles every night.

"They both are very different performers, and they are learning from each other and playing together."

"One of the big questions of *Frankenstein* is: who is the monster and who is not?

"The doctor is a kind of a monster, but the Creature ends up as a really involved human being."

The Christchurch production does not have the Hollywood-style budget of the National Theatre original but instead uses an ensemble of 15 actors using movement to conjure the major set pieces, like snow stems, blazing fires and gales.

"This still has a large budget" Chappell said, "but that epic scale can come from so much more than massive set pieces and prosthetics. We have been able to do it through costume and physicality."

PRODUCTION TECHNOLOGIES

SET

HAROLD MOOT
Designer

When designing the set Harold made a conscious choice to create a set that was time and place neutral. The play goes to many different locations, and it is the lighting and ensemble that really shows where the location is. The objective of the set design was to provide a 'playground' of various levels and spaces to give the director as many options as possible in order to tell their version of *Frankenstein*. Other than simply being visually interesting, the texture paper is there to help the lighting design create mood with shadow.

The set creates a cold and stark monolithic look that supports the atmosphere of the play. It gives an openness that allows for lots of ensemble work and has a few hidden entrances to allow for many ways to get on stage and characters to be spying on other characters without being seen. The set designer works closely with the director to create the space they envision creating the show in; it often gives a strong sense of genre or style and then the final considerations relate to what the practical requirements are.



DISCUSS

How does the set design help support mood of the play?

COSTUME DESIGN

STEVEN JUNIL PARK
Designer

In this play the costume design aims to create a sense of magical realism.

When designing the costumes Steven was particularly interested in the idea of Dualism and the parallel between Victor and the creature. This can be seen both in the swapping of roles but also in moments of mirroring in their costuming. The play begins with both leads on stage in the same costuming but then the ensemble alters one to show which role they will be playing that night. This emphasises the idea that Victor and the Creature are strongly connected and either one could be the monster.

Steven was interested in exploring the emotional aspects of clothing. The female creature is in a beautiful layered and floaty dress that emotes feeling of sadness.

After the Creature murders William, he is next seen wearing a heavy and exaggerated cape which mirrors the heavier emotional state and burden of now having killed a child. This cape then becomes part of the set atop the stormy mountain.

The mood of the play is very dark, and the costuming has been made to support that whilst fitting into the world the late 18th century.

HAVE A GO

Choose one of the characters from the play. If you were the costume designer for this production, how would you choose to dress this character and what would your decisions say about them? Present your ideas in the form of a mood board, using images from magazines.



“

**You and I,
we are one”**

- CREATURE



SOUND DESIGN

MATT SHORT
Designer

DISCUSS

What were the most memorable moments of sound?

How did the sound support the atmosphere of the play?

The sound design for *Frankenstein* is atmospheric and dark; it is fair to say there are not a lot of happy tunes in this production.

Matt would create big impact sounds to punctuate moments in the play when something unexpected happened. He worked in collaboration with the Movement Director and ensemble testing the pieces of music and extending them to fit the choreography.

He composed an original song for this production, which is sung at the wedding; it is medieval sounding to stay in the world of the show.

There is a lot of music that supports this show; it almost becomes like a film score where it is constantly there, underlying the mood and the action of the play. A lot happens without words.

LIGHTING DESIGN

SHEENA BAINES
Designer

What stylistic choices were made when designing the lighting for Frankenstein?

The set and costumes are abstract and gorgeous and provide the light and the dark, so the lighting is very stark and abstract in nature. Lots of different angles create tension and unease when needed. It has been a project that has been all-consuming as the rehearsals and the style of the production have inspired me to work with starkness with splashes of colour. It made me question movement and how to technically add to the performance. Is time of day important? Are the seasons? This led me and Holly, as the director, to conclude the elements were, but not necessarily the time of the day.

How does the lighting support the transitions?

Lighting is about telling a story through light. Where is the key light for the scene – is it a window or a gas light. Is the season winter or spring; what do I need to contribute to the story to make it believable to the audience? In this production the actors and ensemble are creating the world of the play and I am supporting their work on stage in a way that is unlike any other play I have done. For example, fire – the cast become the fire and are on fire, so I just need to light them; and they create the movement.

Is there anything else you would like to share about your process and decisions for making the lighting design?

There are four things that lighting brings to a production – visibility, mood, selectivity, and dimension. Visibility and mood are self-evident – dimension is making actors be 3D and not appear flat, and selectivity is selecting the area of the stage where you would like the audience to look at. Every production generally has an element of all of these, but some become more important. In this show, it is about dimension and visibility on the scenes where there is dialogue and in the ensemble pieces it becomes more about dimension and mood. Dark, moody, stark, with splashes of colour on a textured set, with amazing costumes!

PHYSICAL THEATRE

TOM EASON

Movement Director

Movement Direction Process

The main thing to note is that the show is not scripted to have physical theatre or stylised movement in it. There are requirements of performers to engage and invent with their bodies more than they would normally (for example, *The Creature*), but many of the moments we invented were our way of solving theatrical storytelling problems presented by the script. How to show a mountain, how to transition from a living room to the rock, stormy coast of the Orkneys, how to give the feeling of a creature in a womb-like apparatus being brought to life, etc. These can be solved with high budget elements, or we can solve them with performances.

To create the moments of Physical Theatre in the show, *Frankenstein*, we mostly used the following process:

- I identified a moment of the script that could be illuminated by heightened physicality, either characters or natural elements or a combination.
- We would engage in long improvised sessions, where the key objective is to listen to our impulses and respond freely and openly to images and ideas. For example, when working on “the ocean” or “fire”, we would embody things like “crackling”, “crashing”, “floating”, “rage” etc etc.
- We would then refine independently what we had explored, choosing our three or five favourite moments. And then refine them into single, repeatable, short gestures. These we would share with the whole group.
- We would then feedback to each other what were the key exciting moments from the whole group. I.e.: “that moment really felt like fire”, or “When you did that it looked like snow, but like that was a wave in the ocean”.
- Then we would get into small groups, of about four or five. And in these groups we would develop short routines of movement, linking together the best moments that were shared earlier, sometimes adding rules like “it must travel from this corner of the stage to that” or “it must be in a tight clump” or “there must be unison until halfway through, and then a moment of all different”.
- Then is the phase where the Movement Director takes the content that has been generated and organises it in space and time and body. I make some calls about which performers do which sequence and where on the stage they do it.
- The next phases become messy to describe, because each different moment will now have a different life. Sometimes by now the moment is perfect, and until we add some major element to it (the set or costume or lights) we keep it unchanged. Sometimes there is much more work to be done, it feels too short, there are not enough different gestures. When there is more work to be done, we jump back to whatever step we need to populate the work with more content.

DISCUSS

Think about the section of the play where the creature burns down De Lacey's home. How is movement used to represent this moment?

HAVE A GO

In groups devise how you would stage concepts like fire, creation, water and storms through movement.

ASK AN ACTOR

JAMES KUPA

as the Creature and Victor Frankenstein

How did you prepare for the role of the Creature/Victor?

I've been a big fan of Mary Shelley's novel for a long time (and Gothic Horror on the whole to be honest) so when I got the call that I'd get the chance to play Victor AND the Creature I immediately re-read the book. I knew the National Theatre had put it on years ago (with the rotating roles) and over lockdown had made it available online so I watched both versions (which I kind of wish I hadn't in hindsight). Before I'd even read the script it was becoming abundantly clear that the Creature specifically was going to be intensely demanding physically, so I joined a gym, had a few personal trainer sessions and attempted to get match fit (or as match fit as time would allow). About a month before rehearsals started I got the script. Because the idea of learning two lead roles was so foreign to me, I set myself the goal to read the script every day to familiarise myself with it.

Why do you think the Creature/Victors story is important to tell?

I think potentially the reason *Frankenstein* has had such a lasting impact as a piece of literature (can you believe it was published over 200 years ago?!? I sure can't) is that at its core it addresses so many things that are still relevant today. As far as Victor and the Creature are concerned, it raises questions around the relationship between a parent and a child, the pitfalls of unbridled ambition and the price we pay as a society for exponential industrial and scientific "progress".

What were the biggest challenges during the rehearsal process?

The Lines. The Lines. The Lines. No actor likes to learn lines. Show me an actor that says they like to learn lines and I'll show you a good actor. But they are a fact of the business I'm afraid (unless you do improv....) And, for me anyway, the REAL fun part comes after you have the lines down. Once you're in a comfortable spot with the lines, then you can explore and play and experiment. You can do anything you want and if it's way off base, the director will reign you in (if you have a good director, which in our case is absolutely true). So, learning the lines for TWO lead parts is mind numbing. There were times where I'd be running lines out loud for scenes between Victor and the Creature and I'd have an out of body experience, looking down at a glazy eyed version of myself having a full-on conversation WITH MYSELF. Also, Although I'd attempted to prepare myself physically for the Creature, I was not prepared for how demanding the role would be. I shudder to think what would happen if I didn't start at the gym when I did.

“**At first I knew nothing at all. But I studied the way of men, and slowly I learnt: how to ruin, how to hate, how to debase, how to humiliate. And at the feet of my master, I learnt the highest of human skills, the skill no other creature owns I finally learnt how to lie.**” - CREATURE

What do you think are the main messages in *Frankenstein*?

That's a big one. There's a quote in the play from the Creature to Victor - "You and I, We are one." which sums up these two tragic characters at the close of the play. The way these seemingly opposed forces have, through their actions, become so entwined is fascinating and as an actor exploring both characters the ideas of duality appear constantly. And so, I think for Victor, messages and themes around responsibility, absolute Ego and immense and thoughtless ambition. For the Creature there's the idea of what it means to live as an outcast through no fault of your own and based purely on your appearance and, probably strongest and most human, the search for unconditional love and acceptance.

Anything else interesting you would like to share about your experience being involved in this production and playing both the roles of the Creature and Victor?

One of the biggest draw cards to accepting the offer to be in *Frankenstein* (apart from the fact that I love the source material) was that it would be the revolving lead roles. I have never heard of anything like this happening outside of this play and to be able to DO IT is an absolute gift to an actor, a literal once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. It's amazing to sit back and watch an actor rehearse the exact scenes you have or will be rehearsing, offering things on your own account but also "borrowing" offers from what you saw the other actor do. And to be able to do it with such an amazing and talented creative team, in a place like The Court where everyone is just so splendid and welcoming. Good grief, my vocabulary lacks the superlatives.

REFLECTING ON THE PLAY

HAVE A GO

In groups work to complete the tables below. Use the information in this pack and add your own ideas and thoughts on how The Court Theatre's production of *Frankenstein* used drama elements, techniques, conventions, and technologies within this performance. Remember to consider why the director/designer/actor made these choices and what impact this had on your interpretation of the play.

DRAMA ELEMENTS AND HOW THEY IMPACT THE MEANING AND UNDERSTANDING

ELEMENT	HOW IT WAS USED	THE IMPACT
TENSION		
SITUATION		
MOOD		
CONTRAST		
TIME		
CAST		
LANGUAGE	The Creature speaks with broken English and quite formal language	Even as the Creature becomes more fluent in English he is seen as different from everyone else, and this is shown in the way he still speaks differently

DRAMA TECHNIQUES AND HOW THEY IMPACT MEANING AND UNDERSTANDING

TECHNIQUE	HOW IT WAS USED	THE IMPACT
USE OF SPACE		
BODY		
MOVEMENT	The Creature is an extremely physical character and bounces around a lot	
VOICE		
MONOLOGUE		
ENSEMBLE	This production has an ensemble that created lots of different environments through their movement and characters	
SONG AND DANCE		

PRODUCTION TECHNOLOGIES AND HOW THEY IMPACT MEANING AND UNDERSTANDING

TECHNOLOGY	HOW IT WAS USED	THE IMPACT
SET		
LIGHTING		
PROPS		
SOUND		
COSTUME		
EFFECTS		

PARADISE LOST

John Milton's *Paradise Lost* is one of the greatest epic poems in the English language. It tells the story of the Fall of Man, a tale of immense drama and excitement, of rebellion and treachery, of innocence pitted against corruption, in which God and Satan fight a bitter battle for control of mankind's destiny. The struggle rages across three worlds - heaven, hell, and earth - as Satan and his band of rebel angels plot their revenge against God. At the centre of the conflict are Adam and Eve, who are motivated by all too human temptations but whose ultimate downfall is unyielding love.

DISCUSS

Why do you think the writer chose to use this piece of literature as something the Creature connected to?

The creature reads *Paradise Lost* in the play and often references it.

Creature *'Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,
Said then the lost Archangel, this the seat
That we must change for Heaven, this mournful gloom
For the celestial light?'*

Victor *(astonished) That's Paradise Lost! You've read Paradise Lost?*

Creature *I liked it.*

Victor *Why? You saw yourself as Adam?*

Creature *I should be Adam. God was proud of Adam. But Satan's the one I sympathise With.
For I was cast out, like Satan, though I did no wrong. And when I see others content,
I feel the bile rise in my throat, and it tastes like Satan's Bile.*



NICK DEAR

FRANKENSTEIN WRITER

*From the National Theatre Live Production***I know you've been working on this play for a long time. What drew you to *Frankenstein*?**

Dramatists are always looking for big ideas and big stories. *Frankenstein* is a hugely famous English story which was ripe for adaptation. It hadn't been done in the theatre for a very long time, only in the movies. The movies don't allow for the kind of intellectual debate that we've got in this play. I always thought there was something very dramatic about the centrepiece of the story, the confrontation between the scientist and his experiment, the creator and his creation, between God and Man. On the top of a mountain, man meets his maker and says, why did you make me in this appalling state and then abandon me? All of these things seemed to me to have enough immediate resonance to make me think, there's got to be a big scene there. Stories are hard to find – especially if you've been at it for thirty years or more, as I have. When you get hold of a good story, you think, 'I'm not going to give up that one, that's mine!'

How do you decide what you're going to strip away when you're adapting a novel for the stage?

It's a long process deciding what's going to be stripped away. You could write *Frankenstein* for the stage as a conventional historical epic, and keep all of the original characters, and you'd need about thirty people to do it. I think it would be quite slow and quite long. You could write it for three characters. I tried at one point to make the show simply out of the three narrators in the book: Walter the Sea Captain, Victor and the Creature. I tried to do it as cross-cutting monologues, sort of like Brian Friel. This was a long, long time ago. It didn't work!

You try to identify what is genuinely interesting about this story for now. For me, it was always about the debate between the Creator and his Creation – it wasn't about the sub-plots, of which there are several. They seemed to me to be generic, early-nineteenth-century, romantic period fiction. Mary Shelley was 18, 19 years old when she wrote *Frankenstein* – those subplots are frankly rubbish!

I thought long and hard about including Clerval [a close childhood friend of Victor and Elizabeth]. I

think there's quite a strong argument that Victor is homosexual and that the great love of his life is Clerval, hence he won't go near Elizabeth. But then I thought that to include Clerval may detract from the central idea of Victor's obsession with his Creation. Also, if we gave Victor a confidant, we would be led towards including discussions about how Victor was feeling, and increasingly through discussions with Danny, we became convinced that we wanted to focus more on the Creature and tell the story from the Creature's point of view.

Why did you decide to tell the story from the creature's point of view?

To the best of our knowledge, it has never been done – which is often a good reason for trying things. The versions Danny and I had seen in film were always predicated upon the dilemmas of the scientist; his guilt and remorse about what he's done. It struck me that it might be very interesting to approach the story as an early example of 'outsider fiction'; a story about someone who is outside society but wants to get in and finds it very difficult to absorb the normal discourses of human society. It was thinking not so much about the experimenter but the experiment. How does the experiment feel about being experimented on? In this case the experiment is a sentient being that develops feeling, intellect and memory quickly. Therefore, he has a point of view. This approach gave me the first half of the play. The first half is the Creature's experiences of growing up; the Seven Ages of Man done in Four Ages!

How much translation is involved in adapting an historic novel for now?

I have found that there are a few phrases in my text which survive from Mary Shelley, but not very many. For the most part, I have in a sense, translated it. I haven't translated it into modern, television language but I've translated it into something else. It's not English as we speak it, but an English which is stripped of modernisms, or modern swear words, or modern sentence construction. On the other hand, it's not accurate 1818 Mary Shelley dialogue as Mary Shelley wrote it. Then again, I'm quite sure that what Mary Shelley wrote is quite different from what she

said. The literary style of that period was very highly constructed, and I don't think people spoke like that.

Whilst writing the play, did you find there were certain themes you wished to draw out from the novel, such as paternity?

The more you explore the work you're going to adapt, the more it seems to chime with things you're thinking about. Over the course of my work on this adaptation, my children have grown up! I do see the book very much as being about fathers and sons. Mothers don't figure. I think if mothers had the status in the novel, they commonly have then Frankenstein wouldn't need to go and create life artificially.

Ideas about parenthood differ through the ages. Mary Shelley had a very enlightened upbringing, and she was so rebelliously precocious that at 16 years old, she ran off with married man! I would like to dis abuse people of the idea that people who lived in previous epochs were any different from us.

Whether you're talking about the Ancient Greeks or Shakespeare's time or now, people behaved the same way, and experienced jealousy, ambition, grief in the same way. Only the detail was different. I don't sellotape on themes, but themes emerge from the story and chime with what one's thinking about anyway.

How did you approach the famous moment from Chapter Five when Victor brings the Creature to life?

I ducked it! The important thing to say about that moment is that if you start to ask yourself the question, 'how does he do it?', there is no answer. Somehow, in order to adapt that moment, you have to find a way around the fact that we don't know how he did it. So, either you duck the question altogether by not showing it, or if you are trying to show it you have to find an imaginative way to suggest that he infuses this inanimate object with the spark of life. Then the question is how do you do that? As I say, I chose not to do it. It's far too difficult!

It's not that it's not do able because, of course, all of the films do it, in what have become very stereotypical ways. I think the most interesting starting point for creating that moment might be to imagine that you have almost no props. Imagine your set is minimal and your props are minimal and how would you do it then? Because if you try and get into the technological reality – either the science of 1818, or the science of now, or the science of some Victorian Gothic moment in time – for me that detracts from the real interest of the scene, which is the hubris of the scientist. Technology doesn't interest me very much. I don't think it interested Mary Shelley that much. As we know in Chapter Five, there is very little detail. Of course, she's got no real idea of how it's done. She's got an idea that electricity probably comes into it somewhere – but I'd say, how are you going to do it with language?

