

Big Lil's Lament

A brief (very) outline.

I visualise this piece as truly collaborative. With a strong mix of music, movement and text. I was struck after my visit to Hull how engrained the Trawler community is within the current psyche of the City and it felt almost like a haunting.

I want to produce a piece that celebrates the past. The hard and dangerous industry Trawling was, the women who fought fiercely and fearlessly for it but also a community that was by no means perfect. A community ruled by a feudal system of Ship owners and their mercenary attitude towards profit. Why this was allowed to continue and why did Lillian Bilocca divide the Hessle Rd. Why was she celebrated and berated in equal measure and why was she vilified and her death went mainly unnoticed, bar a handful of mourners.

For me Hessle Rd reflects not only the attitudes of a community of it's time but also now. A microcosm of our voracious capitalist system.

Lillian's story too has overtones of greek drama, almost mythical in it's scale. A woman taking on an army of men.

This may make it sound very sombre but this will not be the case. Here is a story that is dark and brooding but with real moments of triumph and celebration. Humour and wit. A tight knit community full of love and at times hate.

The Setting.

I envisage a found space. Somewhere official with fading grandeur. I want it to feel like the Hessle Roaders have 'gate crashed'. Set up with silver service and pomp, evening for the Trawler Ship owners, invaded by the 'Cowboy' trawler celebrating their return to dry land. A high octane night of love, laughter, music and the odd brawl intertwined with the story of Lil and women.

It will be a very inclusive piece. The audience in the thick of. Scenes moving around the venue. At the bar, at a table of guests. It will be an event.

I see strongly the role of Lil as the mysterious narrator who leads us through the Hessle Rd and it's inhabitants. Lil is revealed to us by others initially in what they say about her, their view on her actions and the impact on their lives. I see Lil's story being expressed by herself through song. That is were The Unthanks would come in but also I would like Adrian to compose various sound scares and incidental music.

I am attaching a few pages I jotted down after my return from Hull just to give you a flavour of how I would like to proceed.

Maxine Peake.