

War Horse

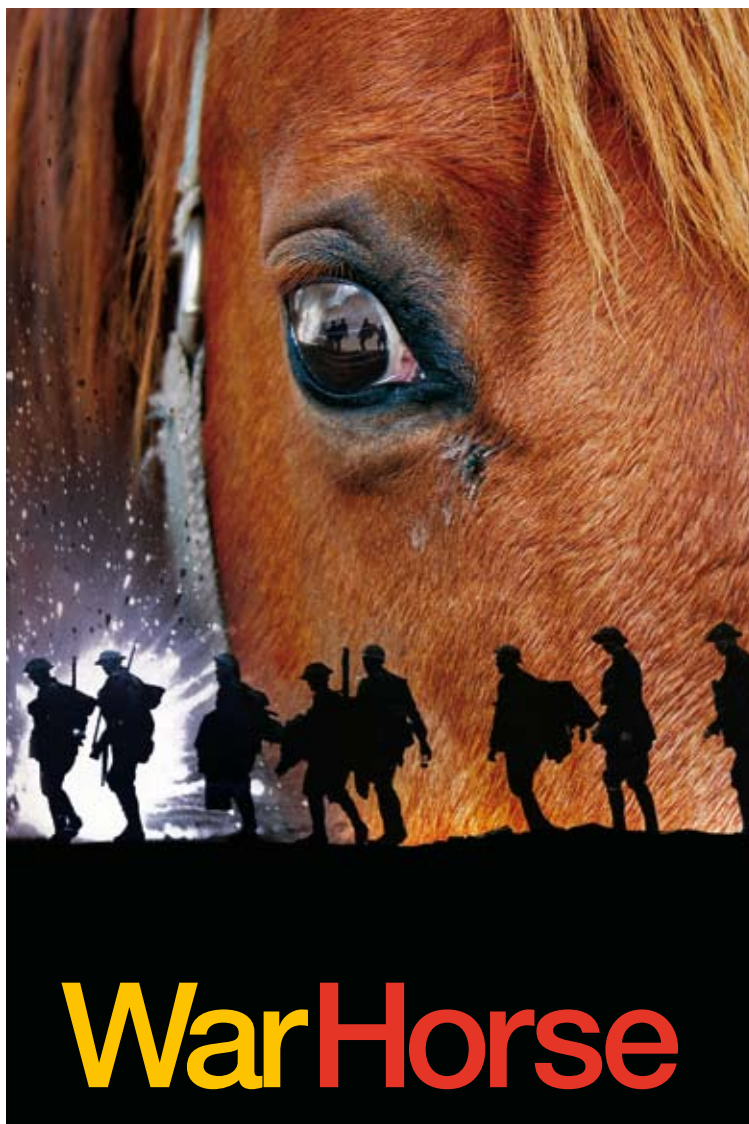
based on a novel by Michael Morpurgo

adapted by Nick Stafford

In association with Handspring Puppet Company

Workpack

The National's production	2
Synopsis	3
Putting the production together	6
The script	6
Research	7
Puppet and character	8
Puppet rules	9
Cast interviews	
Jamie Ballard	10
Tim Lewis	12
Resources	13



WarHorse

Further production details: nationaltheatre.org.uk

This workpack is published by and copyright The Royal National Theatre Board Reg. No. 1247285 Registered Charity No. 224223

Views expressed in this workpack are not necessarily those of the National Theatre

Directors
Marianne Elliott
and Tom Morris

NT Education
National Theatre
South Bank
London SE1 9PX
T 020 7452 3388
F 020 7452 3380
E educationenquiries@nationaltheatre.org.uk

Workpack writer
Polly Findlay, staff director
on *War Horse*

Editor
Emma Gosden

Design
Patrick Eley
Clare Parker

The National's production

CAST, IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

Major Nicholls **JAMIE BALLARD**
Swallow/Emilie **ALICE BARCLAY**
Chapman Carter/Rudi **JASON BARNETT**
Sergeant Bone/Colonel Strauss/
Sergeant Fine **JAMES BARRISCALE**
Captain Stewart/Soldat Schmidt
SIMON BUBB
Goose/Topthorn/Veterinary Officer Martin
FINN CALDWELL
David Taylor/Soldat Schultz
PAUL CHEQUER
Song Man **TIM VAN EYKEN**
Young Joey/Topthorn
THOMAS GOODRIDGE
Dr. Schweyk/Coco, a horse/Geordie
STEPHEN HARPER
Rose Narracott/Private Shaw
THUSITHA JAYASUNDERA
Veterinary Officer Bright/Karl
GARETH KENNERLEY
Crow/Joey **CRAIG LEO**
Young Joey/Emilie **RACHEL LEONARD**
Topthorn/Major Callaghan **TIM LEWIS**
Joey **TOMMY LUTHER**
Young Joey/Emilie **MERVYN MILLAR**
Paulette/Crow **EMILY MYTTON**
Swallow/Joey/Crow **TOBY OLIÉ**
Ted Narracott/Coco, a horse
TOBY SEDGWICK
Ned Warren/Heine, a horse
ASHLEY TAYLOR-RHYS
Albert Narracott **LUKE TREADAWAY**
Sergeant Thunder/Soldat Klebb
HOWARD WARD
Arthur Warren/Soldat Manfred
ALAN WILLIAMS
Heine, a horse/Ensemble
MATTHEW WOODYATT
Hauptmann Friedrich Müller
ANGUS WRIGHT

Other parts played by Members of
the Company

Music played live by

Colin Rae (Music Director, trumpet,
flugelhorn, bugle),
Richard Ashton (French horn, tenor horn),
Andy Callard (trumpet, cornet, piccolo
trumpet),
Susi Evans (clarinet),
Tracy Holloway (tenor trombone,
euphonium)

Directors **MARIANNE ELLIOTT**
and **TOM MORRIS**

Designer **RAE SMITH**

Puppet Design & Fabrication

BASIL JONES and **ADRIAN KOHLER**

for Handspring Puppet Company

Lighting Designer **PAULE CONSTABLE**

Director of Movement **TOBY SEDGWICK**

Music **ADRIAN SUTTON**

Songmaker **JOHN TAMS**

Music Director **HARVEY BROUGH**

Video Designers

LEO WARNER and **MARK GRIMMER**

for Fifty Nine Productions Ltd

Sound Designer **CHRISTOPHER SHUTT**

Associate **MERVYN MILLAR**

Company Voice Work **KATE GODFREY**

and **JEANNETTE NELSON**

Staff Director **POLLY FINDLAY**

OPENING: THIS PRODUCTION OPENED IN
THE OLIVIER THEATRE ON 17 OCTOBER
2007



Craig Leo, Tommy Luther, Luke Treadaway and Toby Olié.
Photo: Simon Annand

Synopsis



left: Joey, Craig Leo and Luke Treadaway as Albert Narracott. Photo: Simon Annand

5 August 1912. At the village auction, ALBERT's father, TED NARRACOTT (who has had one too many beers that morning), decides to take on his brother-in-law and long-standing enemy, local bully ARTHUR WARREN. They set to bidding over a young hunter colt; the kind of show-off horse that a rich farmer like Warren might buy in the same way that a contemporary businessman might buy a fast car, but which is practically speaking way out of reach for Ted, a poor farmer struggling to pay his mortgage. However, Ted's drink-fuelled determination wins the day, and after having driven the price up to astronomical proportions, Warren gives up the bidding and lets Ted buy the horse. Albert's delight at the purchase is short-lived, as his drunken father beats him in public and sends him home to his mother.

ROSE NARRACOTT, Ted's wife and Arthur's sister, is furious with her husband for making such a stupid purchase and resolves that the only way to make good on the outlay is for Albert to bring the horse up in order that he might be sold as an adult hunter. Over the next two years Albert and Joey, as the horse is named, grow to love and to develop a profound understanding of each other: in fact, each is the other's only friend. Disaster seems about to strike in the summer of 1914 when Ted makes a ridiculous bet with Arthur that Joey, who is not a farm horse and therefore technically unable to pull heavy loads, will be able to plough in a week.

The stake is the horse himself, and Albert is desperate. However, the pair's astonishing team-work sees them through: with Albert's help Joey manages the impossible and ploughs a straight furrow, shaming Arthur and the Warrens in front of the entire village. The Narracotts seem to have been vindicated at last: Joey is the finest horse in the parish, and Albert's astonishing feat with the ploughing seems to have persuaded his parents that he should be allowed to keep him.

Just when things seem to be going right for Albert at last, war with Germany is declared. The local yeomanry set about recruiting and sequestering, and Ted, unknown to Albert, decides to sell Joey to the army. His delight at the huge profit he raises is soon quashed by Albert's fury when he discovers what has happened. MAJOR NICHOLLS, a local soldier, promises Albert that he will look after Joey when he goes to war: he gives him his solemn word that the horse will be safe. Albert reluctantly lets him go.

Major Nicholls is as good as his word, proving a loyal keeper and friend of Joey's. He introduces him to Tophorn, a thoroughbred and the finest horse in the yeomanry. The two horses come to find peace and security as a unit. Any sense of stability, however, is shattered almost immediately the troop arrives in France: Major Nicholls is killed in their first charge. Under the less than expert guidance of his replacement, the well-meaning but inexperienced CAPTAIN

Synopsis

STEWART, the horses are led into a second, much more disastrous cavalry charge. Nearly the entire troop are killed. The only survivors, Stewart, Ned, Tophorn and Joey, are taken as German prisoners of war.

Meanwhile, back in Devon, the news of Major Nicholls' death has reached Albert. Convinced that Joey will no longer be safe outside of his custody, Albert escapes from the farm and runs away to join the army. His mother is devastated.

The horses fall into the hands of FRIEDRICH, a kindly, horse-loving cavalry captain. Despite his collected, calm exterior, Friedrich is secretly terrified of going back into the fighting. The arrival of the horses (particularly of Tophorn, who reminds him of his beloved old cavalry horse Siegfried) re-awakens his sense of compassion and humanity, and fuels his determination to get out of the fighting. His habit of talking to the horses in English to make them feel at home enrages his unhappy, volatile and English-hating junior officer, KARL.

After meeting EMILIE, a tiny French girl living on the farm where he is billeted, Friedrich becomes increasingly determined to escape the war in order to get back to his own little daughter, Gisa. Taking advantage of a rare quiet moment, he dons the uniform of a dead ambulance orderly, and reports the 'death' of Friedrich Müller. He can scarcely believe his

luck when his plan works. Joey remembers his Devon ploughing lesson and teaches Tophorn how to pull an ambulance cart: for a year, Friedrich, Joey and Tophorn manage to stay on the farm and out of the direct line of fire.

Meanwhile, Albert has arrived in France. He is rapidly disappointed in his hopes of finding Joey; no one seems able to help him. He does, however, find a real friend in the form of PRIVATE DAVID TAYLOR, who he meets on his first day in France. Albert proves himself to be a fine soldier and is soon promoted to lance-corporal. However, throughout the war he is haunted by the image of the dead Captain Nicholls and plagued by his sense of responsibility to find his horse again.

After a year of happiness, Friedrich's luck is about to run out. By chance, he runs into Karl again, who is now in charge of a heavy artillery unit trying to move a huge gun to the front. His attempt to keep his head down and go un-noticed is scuppered by Emilie, who has also learnt to talk to the horses in English and draws attention to herself and Friedrich by doing so. Karl realises that the 'dead' Captain Müller has in fact simply cut and run from his army duty. Now at Karl's mercy, Friedrich is forced to harness Joey and Tophorn to the heavy gun. The physical burden on two horses not designed to pull anything, let alone something as huge and unwieldy as they must now manage, proves excruciating. After two years of back-breaking physical work, Tophorn's delicate thoroughbred physique renders him unable to cope and he dies. Friedrich's grief is unmitigated: life no longer seems worth living, and he lets himself be killed by an oncoming tank.

With the disintegration of the gun team, Joey finds himself completely alone for the first time in his life. Desperate and afraid, he bolts through the French countryside, not knowing where to head for safety. After a terrible, fear-filled night, he runs into barbed wire and is forced to stop. Injured and exhausted, he comes to rest between English and German trenches in No Man's Land.

In the morning, neither English nor German soldiers can believe their eyes when they see a horse in the middle of the battlefield.

From left: Arthur Warren
(Alan Williams) and
Ted Narracott
(Toby Sedgwick)
photo: Simon Annand



Synopsis

Deciding that his appearance must be some kind of miracle, both sides fly white flags and send an emissary into No Man's Land to see who will claim him. The English win a botched game of heads-and-tails and bring Joey back to a British clearing station to see if they can mend the barbed wire wound on the miracle horse's leg.

Meanwhile, Albert's grief at not being able to find his horse is beginning to tip into despair. Resigned to the fact that Joey is lost, he cannot summon the will to don his gas-mask when he is subject to an attack. It is only with David's help that he manages to escape and is dragged, helpless, to the same clearing station where Joey has just arrived. However, having been temporarily blinded by the gas, Albert's

eyes are bandaged and he is unable to see him. The British Army vet decides that the wound is too bad to warrant saving Joey, and announces that he is going to have to shoot him. The news that another horse is going to die pushes Albert to the limit of his emotional capacity. He breaks down, and begins calling Joey's name. To everybody's astonishment, the No Man's Land horse begins to respond to the calls of the blind boy, and charges through the assembled soldiers to reach him. Albert can scarcely bring himself to believe the truth, that he and Joey have by such extraordinary chance been reunited. Just as the wonderful reality sinks in, the bells toll, announcing the end of the war. Joey and Albert return to Devon, Ted and Rose: although a cycle has been completed, we feel that their lives will never be the same again.



Top: Major Nicholls (Jamie Ballard), and Captain Stewart (Simon Bubb) prepare for a cavalry charge
Below: Topthorn (Tim Lewis), Captain Stewart (Simon Bubb), villagers (Emily Mytton, Mervyn Millar and Alice Barclay) and Bernard
Photos by Simon Annand



Putting the production together

By Polly Findlay, staff director on *War Horse*

My involvement with *War Horse* began back in March 2007 when we workshopped an early version of the script over a month at the National Theatre Studio. We took over two rehearsal rooms and the tea-machine, and for weeks on end the Studio rang to the sounds of wooden hooves as we started to work out the mechanics of cavalry charges, gun carriages and puppet tanks. Seven months and what seem like hundreds of rehearsals, meetings, script changes and cups of coffee later, we have a one-in-a-million production on our hands.

Although I've only been working in the professional theatre for a few years, I have never heard of, let alone been involved in, a production that has had as much work put into it as this one. The whole process began over two years ago, when Nicholas Hytner (the director of the National Theatre) together with two of the NT's associate directors, Marianne Elliott and Tom Morris, began talks with the internationally renowned South African puppet company Handspring about whether it might be possible to bring such an epic story to the Olivier stage. The novel *War Horse* by Michael Morpurgo has been long established as a children's classic: featuring huge numbers of characters, crossing an astonishing number of locations, taking place over a period of six years, set in the last century and narrated by a horse to boot, it seemed like an impossible

story to try and render dramatically. It wasn't until Basil and Adrian (the Handspring team) came up with the first, astonishing design proposals for the Joey puppet that excitement about the project really started to run through the theatre: it seemed like the impossible might be about to happen.

THE SCRIPT

Nick Stafford came on board as adapter together with Rae Smith as designer, and things really began to get going. From the very beginning everybody knew that this was going to be a huge project; early on the decision was taken to not try and make Joey the narrator, as he is in the book, but to turn the narrative inside-out and tell the story as a straight play. This entailed a huge amount of work for Nick, and we went through several drafts of the play before settling on what we eventually took into rehearsal. (We began rehearsing with draft nine, and were on something like draft 12 by Press Night!)

The major challenge with turning a book into a play tends to be structural. The kind of story that lends itself well to being told in a novel will often be reliant on a kind of narrative slow-burn, made up of several vignettes or episodes, moving from location to location and character to character at a relatively relaxed pace. The author is able to take the time he or she wants to describe something at his or her leisure. This is, of course, because the reader is free to put down the book whenever they like, taking a break whilst knowing that they can pick up the story again later; we don't, as a rule, expect to read a book in one sitting. The job of the playwright, however, is almost completely the opposite: his audience is captive – they need to be entertained every step of the way, and to feel that the story is progressing with every dramatic beat that unfolds before them. The narrative muscle of a play needs to keep it going at all costs, and works successfully when every event on the stage seems to have come inexorably out of the one before: a good play is more like a game of consequences, when each scene could not have happened without the scene before it having unravelled in exactly the way that it did. Resolving the tension between the novelistic structure already underpinning the story we were trying to tell, and the dramatic structure that we needed to draw out in order to make that story a successful play, was a huge issue in rehearsal, and accounted for many of the drafts that we went through.

From left:
Tom Morris (co-director),
Michael Morpurgo (author)
and John Tams (songmaker)
photo: Mervyn Millar



Putting the production together

RESEARCH

Outside of working on the script, early rehearsals consisted of a huge amount of group research. Everybody involved felt that, given the subject matter of the piece, we had a real responsibility to get the historical detail right. Nick had, of course, already done a lot of the work in the script, but we had to come up with all kinds of seemingly obscure historical facts and details in order to ensure that our dramatic recreation of Devon in 1912 or the Marne Valley in 1915 was a faithful representation of what might have happened. The sort of things we found ourselves trying to investigate were at times absolutely bizarre; I was researching the intricacies of an early twentieth-century Cornish farmer's diary at one point ('Carting dung... Sent two pigs to Redruth factory' etc) and, at another, trying desperately to find out the exact pattern of First World War bugle calls to make sure that the cavalry charges were accurate. Because so much of the action revolved around the German soldiers, and one of our heroes was a German cavalry captain, it was very important to us to make sure that the research on the German side was as accurate as the work we'd done on the British army, even though it was harder for us to access this information. Most of our research came from the Imperial War Museum, though we also made use of local county councils, lots of books and websites, and even first-hand information from various cast members' grandparents etc. A real-life sergeant came in from a nearby barracks to teach us all basic army drill; for several mornings, the huge Rehearsal Room One at the bottom of the National Theatre building became an army training ground as the entire cast were bellowed at for not standing straight, picking up the wrong foot or not having their arms at the uniform angle.

Putting the production together

PUPPET AND CHARACTER WORK

Because so much of the story was reliant on believing and caring about the horses, a huge amount of rehearsal time was devoted to researching the behaviour of the real-life animals and working out how best we might translate that into our puppet work. Tom Morris, one of the directors, was particularly adamant that we avoid any traces of sentimentality or anthropomorphism ('humanising' or reading human traits into animal behaviour) when dealing with the horses: we were going to portray them as if they were absolutely real. That's why at times during the show you might see the horses whinnying or making noise at seemingly dramatically inappropriate or sensitive moments; like real horses, our puppets give the sense that they are pursuing their own agenda rather than tuning too unnaturally into what is going on in the human world. That said, we were still keen to make sure that our horses had their own distinct character, and much time was spent with the Joey and Tophorn puppeteers drawing up lists of characteristics and tendencies that they felt were manifested in their respective horses. These lists were displayed in the room to remind us of the kind of customers we were dealing with in the horse scenes.

Basil and Adrian from Handspring were on hand throughout the rehearsal process to ensure that the way the actors were dealing with the puppets helped to make them seem like real horses. We were all astonished to discover quite how much of a puppet's authenticity is dependent not on the puppeteer inside but on how the other actors in the space behave around the puppet; the next page shows one of the lists we drew up to show actors how to help out with the believability of the horse puppets.



Top: Basil Jones and Adrian Kohler of Handspring Puppet Company in rehearsals
Below: Tim Lewis operates Tophorn
Photos by Simon Annand

Putting the production together

PUPPET RULES...

1. Horses don't like it if you look them in the eye. Either avoid doing it, or expect a definite reaction away from you if you do!
2. Remember to relate to the whole body of the horse – not just the chest and the head.
3. If you're in direct contact with a horse puppet, you automatically become to some degree responsible for manipulating it. You therefore need to keep random movements with the puppet to a minimum. Everything reads when you're relating to a puppet – keep in mind a clear intention.
4. Keep in mind that the huge mass/immobility of a horse will affect most of the direct contact you have with the puppet. Grooming, for example, will end up being quite a vigorous action – there's a real exchange of weight as the horse leans into the brush. It's up to you to puppeteer the horse's weight in a situation like this – use the cane, reverse energy etc. Keep in conversation with the puppeteer to make sure you both know who's meant to be bearing what weight and when.
5. If the puppeteer's intention as the horse is to be giving you problems – not wanting you to shoe or clean them – it'll more often than not be up to you to puppeteer the more minute specifics of how that'll work, eg the difficulty of raising a hoof or whatever it is that you're doing.
6. If you're giving a horse a treat, remember to manipulate the force of the head down into your palm.
7. If you're manipulating the neck be careful not to make it bend back unnaturally: the puppet is physically capable of things that a real horse wouldn't be...
8. If you're directly holding the puppet (particularly the horses' heads around the mouth area) make sure you hold as much of it as possible – take a big handful! – to stop it from breaking.

Finn Caldwell with
Goose in rehearsals.
Photo: Simon Annand

9. If you're playing an intention to get the horse to do something, it's helpful to keep making noise – talking, cajoling etc – as puppeteers often can't see you to read exactly what it is that you're trying to do physically.

10. If you're playing a lack of confidence with the horse, make sure you give it a wide berth as you go round the back of it. If you're playing confidence, you can stay in close but keep patting/touching round the back of it till you come out of the horse's blind spot and back into safety.

11. Don't be tempted to balance the picture by matching the position of the head puppeteer – it looks much better to keep playing with different distances away from the horse.

12. A horse – particularly an untrained one – will lean into you if you lean into him. He will lean with all his weight and love it!

13. When urging a horse or communicating, small taps or tugs are better than an all-out tug of war. A light tap or a tickle on the ribs is more effective in making a horse move away than steady pressure. Take a lesson from flies!



Interview: Jamie Ballard

How long have you been an actor? Where and when did you train?

I trained at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School from 1999 to 2001.

Have you worked at the National Theatre before?

I was in *Saint Joan*, which was in the Olivier theatre prior to *War Horse*.

How did you come to be involved in the *War Horse* project?

I had worked with Marianne Elliott (one of the two directors) for a year at the RSC (Royal Shakespeare Company) on *Much Ado About Nothing*, which finished in January '07; she asked me to be in *War Horse* at the end of that.

Have you worked with puppets before? What challenges – if any – did or does it present to the way you work in a rehearsal room or on stage? Did acting with puppets change the way you worked in the room, or affect the way in which your character developed?

I played Flute in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the RSC in 2005 and puppets were used in the show as the changeling boy and as the fairies. I only encountered them briefly, in the scene where Puck and the fairies cause havoc in the mechanicals' forest rehearsal. Working with the horses on *War Horse* has been a completely different experience; I am interacting with them physically and developing a very personal relationship with them. It actually freed up the rehearsal process for me, as all the individual horses were so clearly such free spirits. No run of the scene is ever the same, as they respond differently to – for example – whether I stroke their nose, as opposed to their ear or their neck. In essence, the horse puppets are so good that I feel that I am working with a real animal rather than with a fellow actor: there is a sense that anything can happen. This has the effect of relieving the actor of the usual pressure to keep things fresh: being with an animal can't help but put you in the moment.

Have you had much experience of working with a living playwright before? What advantages and/or challenges does this present to the actor?

I have only worked with living playwrights in the development stage of projects, which usually consists of doing readings of their new

plays and then taking part in the discussions about where the pieces might go. This is the first time I've worked on a production of a play by a living playwright. It was a completely positive experience: if we felt uncomfortable with something, Nick was happy to change it to accommodate us, or if we didn't understand something he was on hand to explain it. It was a fantastic way of working, and very different to what I've been used to when working on classical pieces.

And has working with two directors rather than one affected your working process at all?

It affected me a bit at the beginning simply in that I had worked with Marianne before, so whenever Tom Morris (the other director) gave me a note or a bit of direction I would find myself unintentionally turning to Marianne to see if she agreed! Awful, I know, and I soon got a handle on that...

Marianne and Tom had very clearly defined their roles in the production, and so it ended up being incredibly helpful having two directors dealing with different aspects of the rehearsal process. It was an amazing working practice, and helped me enormously. I still did what I would normally do with Marianne on the text-based side but Tom was able to work his magic on the movement/horse/more physical side. The partnership came off brilliantly.

Jamie Ballard with
Joey in rehearsals
Photo by Mervyn Millar



Interview: Jamie Ballard

What have you particularly enjoyed about the *War Horse* process so far?

I have found working with the puppets absolutely extraordinary. I never thought I would be riding a horse into a cavalry charge on the Olivier stage! The feeling of teamwork and support is immense: having three guys operating this animal beneath you, quite literally carrying you through the show, is something I have found both humbling and moving.

I have also very much enjoyed working with Marianne, a director I love and respect, on a project very different to anything either of us have done before; and I have relished the chance to work with Tom and to experience his special brand of directing.

And conversely, is there anything that you have found particularly difficult?

There were a couple of brief moments when I was worried that the story of my character – and sometimes the story in general – was being compromised or lost in order to accommodate the bigger picture or concept. Those concerns were, however, quickly addressed, and both Marianne and Tom put my mind at ease.

Apart from that, this is a breathtakingly amazing, extraordinary piece to have been a part of. I am well aware of how lucky I am.



Top: Tophorn and
Joey in rehearsal
Below: Marianne Elliott
(co-director)
Photos by Simon Annand



Interview: Tim Lewis

Where and when did you train? Have you worked for the National Theatre before?

I trained at Guildhall School of Music and Drama. I was in *The Man of Mode* in the Olivier earlier in 2007.

How did you come to be involved in the *War Horse* project?

During the run of *The Man of Mode* I was involved in one of the initial, month-long *War Horse* workshops at the National Theatre Studio.

What have you found to be the chief differences between portraying a character through puppetry and inhabiting one as an actor? And by the same token, are there any striking similarities? Which do you prefer?

The main difference for me is that as a puppeteer I can channel and focus all my energy into and through the puppet, instead of going through myself. I'm not sure if that makes sense, but I find that sometimes it gives me a little more freedom to play because the pressure – the focus of the audience – isn't on me.

I've never done any puppetry before, so this has all been a very steep learning curve for me. I love it, and thoroughly enjoy the work I'm doing on this show, but I think that I'll always prefer acting.

Tim Lewis with Topthorn in rehearsal
photo: Simon Annand



How easy have you found it to adapt to working so closely as a team with the other Topthorn puppeteers?

It's been quite a hard process, simply because of the fact that there are three of us playing one part. In rehearsals there were times when we were literally all pulling in different directions! But with time, practice and a few heated discussions we were able to breathe, move and work together as one. All in all it's been an absolute joy – they're great lads.

What do you think it is about the Handspring company that makes them so unique?

They're just really, really nice guys! They have a huge amount of love, passion and joy in their work. And I think that is manifested in their astoundingly beautiful creations. I'm a big fan.

Has working with two directors rather than one affected your working process at all?

It's been quite handy, actually! When one of them has been busy sorting something else out, the other has been available to talk to in their stead. They've worked fantastically together as a team and very much speak with one voice.

What have you particularly enjoyed about the *War Horse* process so far?

I have loved learning new skills and pushing my body in new ways with the puppets. It's been a real baptism of fire into the world of puppetry, and I've loved it. The company make up an incredibly supportive and creative team and it's been both instructive and a lot of fun to work with them.

And conversely, is there anything that you have found particularly difficult?

I actually found the rehearsal process quite difficult and rather stressful at times. I think that this part of the process of working on a new play and therefore having a lot of major changes and re-working right up until opening night. My body has also found it quite difficult adapting to the job, and I've developed some problems with my wrists and in my back. But I am gradually learning how to cope with the strain and to stay strong.

Resources

From the National's Bookshop:

War Horse, the novel by former Children's Laureate, Michael Morpurgo. £5.99

War Horse – The Play, Nick Stafford's stage adaptation of the novel. £8.99

The Horse's Mouth. Mervyn Millar's unique perspective as a member of the creative team and a puppeteer gives an extraordinary insight into the way this stage version of Michael Morpurgo's novel takes audiences on a journey through history. £12.99. Published by the National Theatre and Oberon Books.

War Horse t-shirts at £14.99

The *War Horse* programme, priced £3, includes an exclusive article by Michael Morpurgo; Nick Stafford reveals some of his research into German-occupied France during WW1; Robert Butler investigates the role of horses in war; and there are many beautiful photographs of the puppets and actors in rehearsal.

www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/bookshop

At the National Theatre:

The Big Wall, a huge interactive touch-screen in the National Theatre foyer, takes users into the world behind the production, with filmed interviews and lots of World War One source material.

Coming soon to **stagework.org**

Some Big Wall footage – and more material – will soon appear on the National's award-winning behind-the-scenes website, stagework.org

Handspring Puppet Company

Learn more about this extraordinary South African Puppet Company
<http://www.handspringpuppet.co.za/>

The Imperial War Museum holds a substantial collection of World War One memorabilia, footage, sound recordings. If you visit, experience the fascinating First World War 'trench experience'. Their book, *The Animals' War*, by historian Juliet Gardiner, is a remarkable insight into the crucial role played by all sorts of animals – horses included – in times of war. www.iwm.org.uk