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SF PERUSALS

ELECTROLYTE

by James Meteyard

Music and Lyrics by

Maimuna Memon

SAMUEL FRENCH

samuelfrench.co.uk

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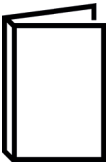
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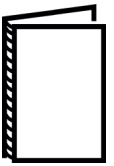
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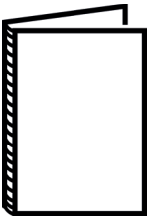
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



James is an actor, writer and theatre maker who trained at The Oxford School of Drama. He is Co-Artistic Director of the theatre company Wildcard, which he set up with members of his graduating year. *Electrolyte* is James' second play following *After Party* which played at The Pleasance, Islington in March 2017. James has a keen interest in developing work that explores important social issues.

ABOUT THE COMPOSER



Maimuna is a Lancashire-born, British-Pakistani singer-songwriter, musician and actress. She originally trained as an actor at The Oxford School of Drama and this is where she met James. Music has always been a huge part of her life, and so she continued to write and compose throughout her training and alongside her professional acting career. Although she has written music for ten years, *Electrolyte* is her first professional composition for theatre. Maimuna is very passionate about diversifying the world of songwriting and composition and wants to encourage composers and creatives from every background to step into the light and shine.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Jessie should be played by one performer.

The text should be more or less entirely underscored by live music that should be performed by actor-musicians who also play the other characters. The production should be presented as if it were a gig.

The characters of **Allie** and **Mum** should be played by the same performer.

Spoken text and rap lyrics are written on the left and song lyrics are written on the right.

... represents a search for a thought or a sense of space at the end of a line.

Beat represents a change in feeling, thought or action.

– at the end of a line represents an interruption.

HOW ELECTROLYTE WAS CONCEIVED AND MADE

For about six or seven years now I've wanted to create a piece of gig theatre, first attempting it five years ago using beatboxing and live looping. However, this was quickly abandoned as the complexities of the form started to emerge.

Since then I've been inspired by a number of companies and productions including the work of Middle Child, Paines Plough and Nabakov. From these productions I started to see patterns of when I thought gig theatre worked amazingly well. It was the moments where I was swept away from a theatre venue and into the world of the story, transported by music that I couldn't help but move to – both physically and emotionally – and yet somehow, at the same time I was completely there, in those theatres, enjoying and totally present to a celebration of musical brilliance, that placed the musicians at the forefront of the experience in a way that only a gig really does.

I knew I wanted to explore this form and at the time a close family member was coming through a mental health crisis. During this time, I'd researched shocking statistics relating to mental health problems in this country. This made me realise that there are millions of people who may not have the same support network that my family member had or perhaps don't realise that they are that support for someone in their life until it's too late. I wanted to write a piece that shared a very real story that could happen to any of us, with the hope it might encourage people to be aware of how their actions could impact those around them and inspire people to reach out and be there for one another when times get tough.

I started writing *Electrolyte* in April 2017 for a phenomenal actress and human, Olivia Sweeney, who has helped shape this piece right from the beginning in an extraordinary way. By September I had a first draft ready and I knew of only one person who could bring the music to life. The exceptionally talented Maimuna Memon, an actor-musician I trained with at The Oxford School of Drama. I knew she was keen to compose for theatre and when I approached her she leapt on the idea with incredible passion and enthusiasm.

Following this we completed a week of R&D at The Watermill Theatre, where we were joined by Ben Simon and Chris Georgiou, completed another week of R&D at Theatr Clwyd and then rehearsed for four weeks in London at Clapham Omnibus and Ovalhouse, where Megan Ashley joined us to complete the cast and Donnacadh O'Briain joined as director.

This has been an incredible journey and it wouldn't have been possible without the help of so many wonderful people and organisations. Thank you to everyone who has supported *Electrolyte* and to those who will support its future. I hope you enjoy it.

James
July 2018

Electrolyte previewed at Theatre503 on 23 and 24 July 2018. It then ran from 1–27 August at QueenDome, Pleasance at The Edinburgh Fringe Festival 2018, with the following cast and creative team:

CAST

JESSIE	Olivia Sweeney
PAUL	Ben Simon
DONNA	Megan Ashley
RALPH	Chris Georgiou
ALLIE	Maimuna Memon
JIM	James Meteyard
DONNA	Megan Ashley

Written and conceived by James Meteyard
Music and Lyrics by Maimuna Memon

Created by the company

Director	Donnacadh O'Briain
Producer	Joseph Dawson
Costume	Hannah Hodge
Lighting	Timothy Kelly
Sound Engineer	Piotr Dubrowski

WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO:

To Liv, Ben and Chris for believing in this from the beginning, Joey for helping to make it all happen, Hattie for her wonderful support, Paul Hart and Abigail Pickard Price at The Watermill Theatre for all they have done, all the team at Theatr Clwyd, Steven, Charlie and all of the team at Samuel French, Fiona, James and Oli at Les Enfants Terribles, Jack Shanks for his videography, Hannah Hodge for her fantastic costume design, Eliot for his illustration, David at St Gabriel's Hall for being so generous, James Spencer for his support with MC lyrics, The Oxford School of Drama, Oval House, Omnibus Theatre, Unity Theatre Trust, the Wildcard family for their constant inspiration, love and talent, everyone who supported our crowdfunding campaign and everyone who has helped us workshop the piece.

James would like to thank:

My dad for being so supportive and also my unofficial dramaturg, my sister for being a constant source of light in my life, my mum for all of her love and all that she has taught me, Liv for all of her love and brilliance, my friends for all of their support and inspiration, and to Maimuna for her incredible work.

Maimuna would like to thank:

Richard for all your love, support and creativity, Mum for injecting music into me since birth, Dad for inspiring me with your insatiable drive and determination, Adil, Itrat and Yusuf for being incredible brothers, James, Jess, Aileen and George at Hatton McEwan Penford for always believing in me, every friend who's ever come to support me at my gigs over the years, and to James, for this exceptional story and for taking me on this wonderful adventure.

For my mum, who made me who I am.

May you rest with the angels.

CHARACTER

JESSIE – A girl from Leeds, late twenties
PAUL – Donna's boyfriend and a friend of Jessie's
DONNA – Jessie's best friend
RALPH – One of Jessie's oldest and closest friends
ALLIE – A singer/songwriter from Leeds
MUM – Jessie's Mother
JIM – A lad from London
MAN – An abusive partner of Jessie's Mum
STRANGER – A stranger in the street
POLICE OFFICER – An emergency call operator
MC – A host at a warehouse party in London

A gig in Leeds. Nothing is on stage except for the performers and their instruments.

JESSIE I need to lose myself in something else,
something dirty,
something that will certainly degrade my health.
That's why we're out,
getting loud and on a hype.
I've got my team by my side
And I won't let anything bring me down.
Not tonight.
I can see Ralph out the corner of my eye,
he's clearly loving life,
cutting shapes like he was making Christmas pies,
you know the little ones that you pack mince inside
that come in any kind of shape and size and
fuck it I'm chatting shit – man I must be high.
Well now seems an appropriate time
to introduce you to the team.
You've got Paul.

PAUL 'Iya.

JESSIE The lovable type,
never after a fight,
whereas Donna's a bit of a drama queen.

DONNA Fuck off!

JESSIE They're together you see,
since we were about sixteen,

but it's never felt like that to me.
You've met Ralph already,

RALPH Y'right?

JESSIE He works in tele,
kind of boring by day
but by night he comes alive
and when he does he is deadly.
I say that in a nice way,
see these are my closest mates.
Always top of their game
and when someone's not
we're all there because we all feel their pain.
Call me insane
but we share a bond
that goes beyond
any kind of physical means
Joni said we're stardust
but I think we're made of more than that.
I think we're made of stardust and dreams.

DONNA Oi Jessie, hurry up we're gonna miss the start!

JESSIE Fuck I almost forgot!
I was too busy living in the sky,
contemplating life,
I'd lost the plot!
See apart from getting fucked and forgetting life
we've come to see Donna's mate on her opening night;
the launch of her new EP
on the biggest stage she's ever played live.
Donna grabs my hand tight

and guides me through
a claustrophobic crowd of mostly men
but every now and then
a female comes into sight.
We reach the front and head to the right,
end up next to the speaker
which is a little easier
with less people on both sides.
I feel free, energised
and ready to embrace the ride…
just as she steps into the light.

Spotlight on **ALLIE**.

She flashes a smile supernova bright,
that dazzles the crowd,
and has them soaking up her energy
like they were electrolytes.
Drop-dead gorgeous, she steps up to the mic,
the guitar plays and through the stage haze
I see a glint in her eye.
She looks left, then right,
then opens her mouth
and what comes out – christ.

ALLIE
HURRICANE HURRICANE
PICTURES
KNOCKING DOWN BESIDE ME
SUGARCANE SUGARCANE
SCRIPTURES
BEING SCYTHED AND TAKEN IN
WINDOWPANE WINDOWPANE
DREAMING

ALLIE *(cont.)*
THE BREEZE OF MILD
TEMPTATION
AHHHHH OHHHH
CRACK COCAINE CRACK COCAINE
FEELINGS
IT'S WHO YOU ARE IT'S SEEPING
IN

IT'S NOT ABOUT INCRIMINATION
IT'S ALL ABOUT INSINUATION
YOUR SILENCE MAKES MY
STOMACH POUND
YOUR VIOLENCE COMES FROM
THE UNDERGROUND
RECALLING YOU DON'T STOP ME
FEELING
IT OPENS UP THE HEART THAT'S
HEALING
IT'S A BIG LIFE NOW
IT'S A BIG LIFE NOW

JESSIE
And we dance.

AND I'M COMING FOR YOU

Beat kicks in heavy, dark and low.

IT'S NOT ABOUT INCRIMINATION
IT'S ALL ABOUT INSINUATION
YOUR SILENCE MAKES MY
STOMACH POUND
YOUR VIOLENCE COMES FROM
THE UNDERGROUND
RECALLING YOU DON'T STOP ME
FEELING
IT OPENS UP THE HEART THAT'S
HEALING
IT'S A BIG LIFE NOW
IT'S A BIG LIFE NOW
AND I'M COMING FOR YOU

She's on for about an hour
but it's over way too soon.
The way she filled the room
I can't explain it –
it's like she gripped me with each tune.
Spoke to me like I was the only person there
and danced with me like she didn't care.
What was her name?

DONNA What?

JESSIE Her name – the singer? What was her name?

DONNA Allie Touch.

JESSIE Allie Touch.
How can you forget a name like that?
I wanna tell her she's great,
I wanna tell her she blew me away,
I wanna tell her that she's an artist
and I'm artist and somehow
we should collaborate.
Before Donna makes my day
and screams in my ear.

DONNA We're heading back to Allie's place.

JESSIE Then a short bus ride away
we find ourselves in the living room
of Allie's flat on Gipton estate.
Vodka in glass, coke up our nose
then someone picks up the guitar and plays.
And Allie,
for the second time tonight,
blows me away.

ALLIE
THINK OF THE TIME
A SHORT TIME PASSED A LONG TIME LEAVING
WHEN I THOUGHT THINGS WERE FINE
NOW MY HEART'S GOT ME WONDERING
WHAT EVEN IS THE MEANING OF THIS ASSEMBLING
OR WHATEVER IT IS THAT GETS YOUR HEART TREMBLING
A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A GIRL WITH NO NAME
ADDICTED TO STRIFE LIKE A BUG YOU INFLAME

RALPH Smashed it Allie!

DONNA I love that one.

JESSIE Allie's great when she's up close
none of that bullshit thanks for coming guys.
It's her night tonight and she fuckin' knows.

PAUL What about this one!

PAUL *plays.*

RALPH Come off it Paul, no one wants your dad music.

DONNA Leave him alone.

PAUL He's just jealous.

JESSIE That were proper different to what you did earlier. I love it!

ALLIE Yeah it's cool.

RALPH You should do more acoustic stuff.

JESSIE You should.

ALLIE My producer wants me to keep it electronic.

RALPH Your producer's a twat. Thinks he knows about music 'cause he done a course.

ALLIE But he's got the contacts.

JESSIE Well use him, then move on.

ALLIE That's the plan. He wants me to move to London so I'm gonna go down there to see how it goes.

JESSIE Dead pricey, though.

ALLIE It's alright actually, I found one of those warehouse shares. We're having a housewarming, you lot should come!

RALPH Not around mate.

DONNA We'll be there!

PAUL Yeah sounds like a right laugh.

ALLIE They're looking for acts I think, if anyone wants to play?

RALPH Jessie, get on that!

JESSIE Fuck off! I can paint if that helps?

ALLIE What, like paintings?

RALPH No...fences. Course paintings.

PAUL She's an artist.

DONNA Yeah, you've done artwork for gigs and stuff before!

JESSIE It's all the way in London though.

ALLIE Trust me, it'll be worth it. The last one was a proper rave.

JESSIE Dunno if I can really...

ALLIE Just stay at mine? We've got loads of space.

JESSIE The thought crosses my mind,
now's really not the time.
Donna catches my eye.
and silently asks if I'm alright,
which kind of pisses me off,

seeing as I'm having a good time.

I ignore her.

You gonna do the same set as tonight?

ALLIE More or less. Might switch it up a bit.

JESSIE I wish I were musical. My mum used to play a lot. She was incredible! She played in a Folk band for a bit.

ALLIE Does she still play?

JESSIE I'm not sure.

Beat.

ALLIE Are you into Folk?

JESSIE I love it. When I was little I was always singing Joni Mitchell.

ALLIE Love her!

JESSIE She makes you think big man! I always think about how small we are. Just stardust. Literally nothing but stardust and dreams.

RALPH That's so fucking lame.

JESSIE Fuck off!

DONNA Don't be nasty.

RALPH Oi, Paul, play something a bit more funky, I'm fallin' asleep with this shit.

PAUL *plays something different.*

Allie, jump on this one with me!

ALLIE Go on then.

RALPH Ralph and Allie

Also known as Rallie.

Coming off the top!

Here we go!

RALPH *starts to freestyle.*

Yeah
and we're in Allie's flat
Paul's on the gui-tar
Ralph with the rap
you know we're out all night
Allie hit us with the hook
that will set the room alight

ALLIE *jumps in with an improvised chorus.*

She follows by humming the melody.

ALLIE
BOY YOU GOT ME FEELING
LIKE A GLASS HALF EMPTY
PROBLEM WITH THE LOGIC
I LOVE DRINKING PLENTY
I LOVE DRINKING PLENTY
I LOVE DRINKING PLENTY

DONNA Are you ok?

JESSIE Yeah, I'm fine!

DONNA You sure you're alright?

JESSIE I'm fine.

DONNA I just want you to know I love you.

RALPH Allie smashed it tonight,
burnt up the stage
like I might do a mic
Donna whispering and shit
bumming off with Jessie
while they have a little bitch.

DONNA Fuck off!

JESSIE Why're you such a dickhead, Ralph?

RALPH I'm only joking
now come and have a line,
Allie hit us with the chorus
one more time!

ALLIE
BOY YOU GOT ME FEELING
LIKE A GLASS HALF EMPTY
PROBLEM WITH THE LOGIC
I LOVE DRINKING PLENTY
I LOVE DRINKING PLENTY
I LOVE DRINKING PLENTY

BOY YOU GOT ME FEELING
LIKE A GLASS HALF EMPTY
PROBLEM WITH THE LOGIC
I LOVE DRINKING PLENTY
I LOVE DRINKING PLENTY
I LOVE DRINKING PLENTY

JESSIE I let their voices fade behind me
as I slip, unnoticed, out the door
and into the empty streets,
where I can breathe
with no one around.
I'm no fun when I'm like this,
stuck in a mood,
and I really don't want to bring
the rest of the room down.

Music takes over before fading out into an alarm clock.

I roll over to my alarm going off for work.
Lucky I booked it off
because my head fucking hurts

and I'm ready to throw up.
11AM on a Saturday morning
and I'm feeling rough.
I think back to last night,
it blurs out. Cracked lips. Dry mouth.
So I get myself a glass of water
to wash away the shame.
As I pass the empty room
I feel the sadness rise again.
I stop in the door frame.
See the bed made,
and the clothes poking out the wardrobe.
The bathrobe on the back of the door
and the battered brown loafers
Left out on the floor.
Everything's just how he left it
making it feel like an untouched shrine.
I feel disrespectful as I go through his things
even though now they're technically mine
I make a few piles in a line on the bed.
As I do I can't get that sound out of my head,
the song Allie started with,
it sings softly in the background of my mind
as I uncover things from the past
which he couldn't leave behind.
At the bottom of the wardrobe
there's a box labelled Jess
and yes, what's inside
isn't exactly hard to guess.
There's a small framed photo of me and him,

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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