



## The Tempest

### **The Pitch**

South London, 2008. A teenage culture of immigration and gun crime, the fag end of Blair's Britain.

Opposite the Oval cricket ground, a group of disparate adolescents meet twice a week to rehearse a play. Over the course of nine months, they piece together a vision of an enchanted island, ruled by Shakespeare's wizard king. The work culminates in a performance of one of the most emblematic works of a culture which most of the performers are only just beginning to feel a part of.

Shakespeare's last play is about desert islands and mythical beasts. Fifth Column Films will follow the kids' progress as they stage the play. It will bring *The Tempest* to life on screen in a new, highly topical manner. The film will be a blend of documentary and Shakespeare, building a portrait of the contradictions of what it means to be British in this brave new world.

### **The play**

*The Tempest* is Shakespeare's last play. It is set on a magical island, where a shipwrecked company is washed up. The play explores the relationship of the individual to the state, the inevitability of fate and the notion of creating an ideal environment. It is also about the importance of magic in our daily lives. *The Tempest* is the only play written by Shakespeare where there is no apparent source text. Its creation was influenced by the recent early stages of colonization of America and the West Indies. It remains a definitive portrait of a society on the brink of major transformation, the last great play written by a genius reflecting on what has been and what is yet to come.

### **The film**

*The Tempest* will be a movie of the play. It will be performed by a group of young actors who participate in The Oval House's local youth group.

The filmmakers will follow the youths through their nine month rehearsal process. The participants come from one of the most disenfranchised corners of the capital. South East London suffers from high crime rates and poverty. Many of the performers are second or first generation immigrants. They will be dealing with the national poet in what for many will be their second tongue.

The film will spy on their development, tracing the magical steps they take towards the stage. It will in this sense be part documentary. However, the dialogue, will be entirely Shakespeare's. The film will be a representation of *The Tempest*, rendered in a way it's never been done before.



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## The Process

There will be a two stage production process, followed by post-production where the separate elements will be brought together.

### 1. The Rehearsal Process

The rehearsal process will take nine months, with meetings taking place twice a week. The filmmakers will be present throughout, capturing the development of the piece. They will use limited lighting and one camera. The emphasis will be on capturing the evolution of the performances, as the actors get to grips with the text and the project. It will follow the inevitable frustrations and the dense of impossibility, through to the point of production.

### 2. The Production

The production itself will be captured with far more cinematic detail. A full crew will be brought in to render the performance with due cinematic care. This will take place over the course of a few days. There will be performances which will be filmed; as well as a week of filming the actors under lights, capturing key scenes from the finished production.

### 3. The Edit

This is a project that is tightly bound up in the effectiveness of the edit. Moments from the different stages of the production will be interweaved, to illustrate the journey that the actors have gone on towards the final performance.

## Key personnel

The co-directors of the film will be Rob Curry and Anthony Fletcher. They will be working in association with Nicholai Labarrie, who runs the Oval House Youth Theatre company.

### Anthony Fletcher – Director

Anthony Fletcher is a screenwriter, playwright and theatre practitioner. He worked with Rob Curry to write and facilitate the production of *The Boat People*, Fifth Column Films first feature. His plays have been performed at The Stephen Joseph Theatre and Soho Theatre, amongst other venues. He has worked as a theatre director in the UK and Uruguay, where he had previous experience of directing *The Tempest* with a mixed company of inexperienced actors.

### Rob Curry - Director

Rob recently completed his first feature film as a director, *The Boat People*. While he has directed short films and music videos, his main directing career has been in theatre. He has directed over 20 productions, including UK and European and tours of new and classical work. This includes adaptations of three Shakespeare plays – *Henry IV*, *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*. He previously collaborated with writer Anthony Fletcher on a theatre production, 'The Focus Group'. A fascination with storytelling through visual language has led him naturally to cinema. He is currently in pre-production for 'The Tempest', and is working on a second feature due to film early 2008, 'Truck'.



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### **Key personnel (cont)**

Nicholai Labarrie – Youth Theatre Director

Nicholai is currently Head of Youth Arts and resident youth theatre director at the Oval House Theatre. He recently directed the Festival of London Youth Arts award winning production of Chatroom for the National Theatre Shell Connections Youth Festival and a site-specific production of Peter Pan, staged in the flower garden of Kennington Park. He has directed youth theatre productions of Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare at the Oval House, Ti-Jean and His Brothers by Derek Walcott at the Unicorn Theatre and The Bald Soprano by Eugene Ionesco at the Oval House, also the professional production of Chet Baker: Speed Ball at the Oval House

### **Key Staff**

Mark Townsend - Editor

Mark is a key part of Fifth Column's creative team. He is a highly experience TV editor, having edited major terrestrial TV documentaries such as How We Built Britain, Dan Cruikshank's Marvels of the Modern Age, and Hannibal, as well as being one of the core editors of Big Brother. Mark is looking to develop his career in features, and was instrumental in working with Rob Curry in creating the stunning editing of The Boat People. His experience of documentary, docu-drama and reality TV shows will be invaluable in managing the challenging edit of The Tempest.

Richard Mitchell - Operator

Richard Mitchell is an experienced camera operator. As well as working on features such as The Boat People, he has also worked on documentaries such as Chris Atkins' Taking Liberties. He has worked on numerous music videos and documentaries.

### **Oval House Young People's Theatre**

The Oval House Youth Company is made of some the best young actors from South London. These young actors work outside of their colleges two afternoons a week, to produce theatre that they feel challenges the way that they are perceived and the way they perceive the world. They have recently participated in the Shell Connexions festival. The company has been running for several years, with its core acting resources changing on a year by year basis. Nicholai La Barrie has been director of the Oval House Youth Company for the past two years.