

**Pat Kinevane's Trilogy:
Shedding Light on the Marginalised**

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ABSTRACT

The trilogy of plays that will be explored in this dissertation are *Forgotten*, *Silent* and *Underneath*, written and performed by Pat Kinevane. The plays were examined with a view to establishing how well each play shed a light on the marginalised. *Forgotten* deals with the elderly and to what extent they are the forgotten voices in society. *Silent* sheds a light on the marginalisation of the mentally ill and the homeless. *Underneath* focuses on how we can be judged solely by our appearance and how what lies underneath the surface remains unknown. This dissertation also investigates the social context at the time of writing these plays together with a more detailed performance analysis of the key moments that shed light on the marginalised. The three plays are explored in terms of their affective and emotional impact. Audience's and critics' reception of the plays are also taken into account. Primary source material comes from interviews with Pat Kinevane, writer and performer of *Forgotten*, *Silent* and *Underneath* and Jim Culleton, director of the three plays. Having analysed each play, it was concluded that Kinevane's trilogy successfully sheds light on the marginalised in society.

INTRODUCTION

*The sociality of emotions takes a similar form to the psychological one, though with an obvious change in direction. The 'inside out' model has become an 'outside in' model. Rather than emotions being understood as coming from within and moving outwards, emotions are assumed to come from without and move inward, [...] sometimes starting "out there" but linking up with something in us so that we feel drawn in and become personally involved.*¹
- Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*

Pat Kinevane is a playwright and performer from Cobh, Co. Cork. He has worked as an actor in theatre, film, television and radio for 25 years. He works closely with Fishamble: The New Play Company and they have produced his trilogy, *Forgotten*, *Silent* and *Underneath*. In 2006, Fishamble: The New Play Company produced Kinevane's first solo play, *Forgotten*, and this was followed in 2011 by his second solo play, *Silent*. His third solo piece, *Underneath*, was produced in 2014. All three plays are written and performed by Kinevane and each employ "comparable monologist techniques to establish and then to manipulate the relationship between actor and audience."² This unique connection between audience and actor results in an experience that is not easily forgotten. All three plays were directed by Jim Culleton, the artistic director of Fishamble: The New Play Company. Each play is approximately 90 minutes in duration.

Kinevane's trilogy deal with the marginalised in our communities and explores "the underbelly of society, the uncomfortable places where we'd rather not look, lending his physicality to give body and voice to those 'forgotten' people we might prefer to ignore."³ *Forgotten* portrays the lives of four elderly people living in nursing homes around Ireland. Kinevane believes that the elderly are the forgotten

¹ Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd., 2014), 9.

² Joan FitzPatrick Dean, "Pat Kinevane's *Forgotten* and *Silent*: Universalizing the Abject," in *Irish Theatre in Transition – From the Late Nineteenth to the Early Twenty-First Century*, ed. Donald E. Morse (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 211.

³ Anne Etienne, "Interview with Pat Kinevane," in *Perspectives on Contemporary Irish Theatre – Populating the Stage*, eds. Anne Etienne and Thierry Dubost (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 164.

voices in our society. Culleton writing in his Director's Note for *Forgotten* asserts that "Pat's trademark theatricality, his wicked sense of humour, his huge sense of humanity, as well as his outrage at how some people are forgotten about at the end of their lives, fuelled the process."⁴ *Silent* deals with the character of Tino McGoldrig, a homeless man who cannot move past the guilt he feels at the death of his brother who died by suicide. This play deals with mental illness and homelessness. It was fuelled by Kinevane's "anger at the treatment of people with mental health issues,"⁵ and he has spoken about how homelessness could affect any one of us, "As 'The Lotto' boasts – "it could be you!"⁶ *Silent* has won several awards including a Scotsman Fringe First, Herald Angel, Argus Angel and most recently an Olivier Award 2016 for Outstanding Achievement in an Affiliate Theatre. *Underneath* deals with a woman who was disfigured as a child and whose life has been affected by this ever since. The play shines a light on those who live on the fringes battered by a prejudicial society that prioritises beauty and the superficial over what lies underneath. Culleton writing in the Director's Note for *Underneath* explains that the play "explores prejudice, beauty and how we treat people according to their appearance; it does this with all of the joy, anger, playfulness and power that we have come to expect from Pat's writing."⁷ *Underneath* has won a Scotsman Fringe First award, an Adelaide Fringe Best theatre award and an LA Stage Raw Best Solo Performance award.

This dissertation will explore how Kinevane's plays are fraught with emotion, feelings and a deep sense of wanting to take action. Sara Ahmed writing in *The*

⁴ Jim Culleton, "Director's Note," in Pat Kinevane, *Silent and Forgotten* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2011).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Pat Kinevane, "Preface," in *Silent and Forgotten* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2011).

⁷ Jim Culleton, "Director's Note," in Pat Kinevane, *Underneath* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2015).

Cultural Politics of Emotion explores “how emotions work to shape the ‘surfaces’ of individual and collective bodies”⁸ and this will be taken into account when analysing Kinevane’s work. I aim to analyse these plays in terms of how Kinevane’s work is “largely an affective power mainly trading in a politics of feeling, emotion and sensation.”⁹ Kinevane’s work takes us directly to the heart of the matter and it is work of extraordinary feeling. Joan FitzPatrick Dean writing in her chapter “Pat Kinevane’s *Forgotten* and *Silent*: Universalizing the Subject” argues that “by breaking the fourth wall, his performance draws the audience into intimate complicity in shaping that performance, not least by making it unlike any other.”¹⁰ In relation to the audience and our ability to shape the performance based on the politics of what we are feeling, Ahmed suggests that “Emotion is not what comes from the individual body, but is what holds or binds the social body together”¹¹ and I would propose that this, on some level, explains the affective impact on the audience at any one of Kinevane’s performances and what gave the audience, a sense of togetherness.

This affective impact can be highlighted by the following audience feedback that illustrates the impact on those who have witnessed Kinevane’s performances. An audience member described Kinevane as having an “amazing and extraordinary ability to show the profundities of human emotion.”¹² Another commented that Kinevane’s “seamless physical morphing from character to character was stunning and he shed light on people whose lives are forgotten by

⁸ Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd., 2014), 1.

⁹ Fintan Walsh, “The Power of the Powerless: Theatre in Turbulent Times,” in *That Was Us*, ed. Fintan Walsh (London: Oberon Books Ltd., 2013), 15.

¹⁰ Joan FitzPatrick Dean, “Pat Kinevane’s *Forgotten* and *Silent*: Universalizing the Subject,” in *Irish Theatre in Transition – From the Late Nineteenth to the Early Twenty-First Century*, ed. Donald E. Morse (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 212.

¹¹ Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd., 2014), 9.

¹² *Underneath*, Post-show discussion, The Civic Theatre, Dublin, April 12, 2018.

society.”¹³ During a post-show discussion, it was expressed that Kinevane brings you on a “rollercoaster of emotions, one minute sad, next minute laughing and he exudes an enormous amount of energy and power.”¹⁴ Another commented that Kinevane “draws you in so you stop becoming just an observer, you are part of it.”¹⁵ The critics’ response to Kinevane’s work will be dealt with in chapters two, three and four.

The performance analysis section of this dissertation and the opinions expressed relate to my own experience of each play. I attended Kinevane’s trilogy in April 2018. Two of my main sources are from interviews that were undertaken with Jim Culleton and Pat Kinevane and these shall be referred to throughout this dissertation. Kinevane in his trilogy brings us on a journey with each character where there are familiar themes that may have become inconspicuous as a result of the normalisation of these issues. Bert O. States writing in *Great Reckonings in Little Rooms: On the Phenomenology of Theater* believes that art can create a sense of seeing things for the first time.¹⁶ He considers how we can “[...] grow away, perceptually, from the contents of reality [...] and that art is a way of bringing us home via an ‘unfamiliar’ route.”¹⁷ Kinevane’s plays push the issues of the marginalised into the foreground, where we see them anew. Analysing his trilogy, with an emphasis on the key moments in performance, the emotive impact and the social context, this dissertation aims to demonstrate that Kinevane successfully sheds light on the marginalised in society.

¹³ *Forgotten*, Post-show discussion, The Civic Theatre, Dublin, April 14, 2018.

¹⁴ *Underneath*, Post-show discussion, The Civic Theatre, Dublin, April 12, 2018.

¹⁵ *Silent*, Post-show discussion, The Civic Theatre, Dublin, April 13, 2018.

¹⁶ Bert O. States, *Great Reckonings in Little Rooms: On the Phenomenology of Theater* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1985), 22, [https://www-fulcrum-org.elib.tcd.ie/epubs/h989r369j?locale=en#/6/8\[xhtml00000004\]!/4/1:0](https://www-fulcrum-org.elib.tcd.ie/epubs/h989r369j?locale=en#/6/8[xhtml00000004]!/4/1:0).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 22.

CHAPTER ONE: THE SOCIAL CONTEXT

Kinevane's plays deal with the marginalised in society and an exploration of the social context of these plays will shed some light on why these issues still remain pertinent today. Kinevane's plays relate to those who live on the fringes such as elderly people, people with mental illness and the homeless and the isolation of those who do not equate to the idea of perceived perfection and beauty. These themes are universal and cannot be tied to one specific time or place. Kinevane has said it took approximately two to three years to write each of his plays so this dissertation aims to look at the social context from 2003 to 2014 and from 2014 to the present day splitting the years in relation to when each play was written. Kinevane's plays still continue to tour and have had success in many countries around the world and in many venues the length and breadth of Ireland. Taking a brief look at the social context will highlight just why these issues are still so relevant and in turn why the subject matter in Kinevane's plays refuses to grow stale.

Kinevane wrote *Forgotten* between 2003 and 2006. Its main theme deals with the elderly in our society. During this period, the care of the elderly was principally covered by the Nursing Home Subvention Scheme (NHSS) and a lesser funded Home-based Subvention Scheme. This funding system favoured residential care rather than home care which the majority of elderly people would prefer.¹ In addition many "patients with the same level of need and resources were being treated differently in different health boards which the 2007 Review of the NHSS found to be unacceptable on basic equity grounds."² This Subvention System

¹ Department of Health, Professor Eamon O'Shea, *Review of the Nursing Home Subvention Scheme* ([2002]). Accessed [August 17, 2018]. <https://health.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/nhsubv.pdf>, 99.

² *Ibid.*, 119.

suffered from a chronic lack of funding resulting in many elderly people finding it difficult to access either residential or home care. Kinevane's characters in *Forgotten* portray elderly people in residential care suffering from loneliness, loss of dignity, loss of home and feelings of isolation and abandonment. The lack of adequate care for the elderly was compounded by a policy encouraging women to return to the work force: for example in 1992, 48% of women aged 20-64 were in the workforce, compared to 67% in 2007.³ Hopefully the position relating to adequate home care is about to improve under a proposed change to the Nursing Home Support Amendment Bill 2016. Gráinne Ní Aodha writing for the *Journal.ie* stated in January 2017, that "the government allowed a change to the above bill which will change how we care for the elderly. The change proposed aims to meet the wishes of 85% of the population – to be cared for in their old age at home."⁴

In addition to the inadequate care system the elderly also lacked prompt medical care in our hospitals. In *Forgotten*, Kinevane writes about an elderly person dying on a trolley in an Emergency Department: he could have had no idea that the situation would be as bad as it is currently. Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation data combining the number on trolleys with the overcrowding on wards for the period January to May 2006 was 29, 879. While the data for the same period in 2018 was 51,910 an increase of 74%.⁵ Health Service Executive data also showed that for the period January to the end of October 2017, 9,206

³ Jennifer Wade, "Changing role of Irish women over past 50 years reflected in relationships," *The Journal*, March 19, 2012, <http://www.thejournal.ie/changing-role-of-irish-women-over-past-50-years-reflected-in-relationships-382725-Mar2012>.

⁴ Gráinne Ní Aodha, "Home care: the way we care for the elderly could be about to change," *The Journal*, January 27, 2017, <http://www.thejournal.ie/nursing-home-care-3206433-Jan2017>.

⁵ Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation, *Trolley Plus Ward Watch Analysis Reports*, ([2018]). Accessed [August 17, 2018]. <https://www.inmo.ie/tempDocs/INMO%20Trolley%20Plus%20Ward%20Watch%20January%20-%20May%202006%20-%202018.pdf>

people aged 75 and over were left waiting on trolleys for over a day before being examined and/or treated.⁶ While comparable data for 2003 to 2005 is not readily available we can assume that it was no better when Kinevane was writing *Forgotten*. As mentioned above Kinevane's characters in *Forgotten* portray elderly people in residential care suffering from loneliness. ALONE, the agency that supports older people to age at home suggests that loneliness can decrease life expectancy by 10 years,⁷ therefore to combat loneliness it is important to support such organisations to provide befriending services to the elderly in both residential and home care situations. I think Kinevane's portrayal of these elderly people in terms of the social context was very apt. Looking at the statistics one can see why the themes discussed in *Forgotten* are still so relevant today.

Kinevane wrote *Silent* between 2009 and 2011. Its main themes are mental illness and homelessness. In 2006, a new national policy relating to the provision of mental health services was set down in the publication *A Vision for Change*. One of its objectives was that "Each citizen should have access to local, specialised and comprehensive mental health service provision that is of the highest standard."⁸ A review of this policy was carried out and a report titled *A Vision for Change Nine Years On* was published in June 2015. This report concluded that "the mental health system set out in *A Vision for Change* has yet to be realised across the country. Nine years on, despite pockets of innovation, implementation of *A Vision for Change* is incomplete and uneven."⁹ The Mental Health Reform in its

⁶ Clodhna Russell, "Hospital breakdown: 9,206 elderly people forced to wait over 24 hours in Emergency Departments," *The Journal*, November 15, 2017, <http://www.thejournal.ie/more-than-9000-elderly-people-forced-to-wait-3695785-Nov2017/>.

⁷ "ALONE Befriending Service," ALONE, accessed August 17, 2018, <http://alone.ie/what-we-do/befriending>.

⁸ Department of Health and Children, *A Vision for Change*, ([2006]). Accessed [August 17, 2018].

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/mentalhealth/mental-health---a-vision-for-change.pdf>

⁹ Mental Health Reform, *Submission on review of A Vision for Change*, ([2017]). Accessed [August 17, 2018]. <https://www.mentalhealthreform.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Submission-on-review-of-A-Vision-for-Change.pdf>

submission of September 2017 relating to *A Vision for Change* stated that while the recommendations made in 2006 are still of significance today, there were many important policy areas including the homeless crisis that were not addressed in the original policy document.¹⁰ In addition, the Mental Health Commission's annual report for 2017 published in 2018 confirms that the mental health system is still unsatisfactory. This report prompted an article that was published in the *Irish Independent* on 25 July 2018 which drew attention to a statement made by the Mental Health Commission chairman John Saunders: "Progress in many significant areas has either been non-existent or slow, leading to the continued provision of poor quality services for people who use mental health services [...]."¹¹ A more alarming point made by the Commission was that vulnerable people with mental health difficulties are being "forgotten by both the mental health services and society."¹² This is interesting considering that *Silent* was written during 2009 to 2011 and is about those who have mental health issues who have been forgotten by society and now in 2018 we are still in a similar situation.

It is highly relevant that the Mental Health Reform submission of September 2017 drew attention to the homeless crisis alongside mental health. Niamh Randall, spokesperson for the Simon Community, in an article in the *Irish Independent*, 25 July 2018, stated that we are now in the "midst of the greatest housing and homelessness crisis that we have known."¹³ The Peter McVerry Trust listed homeless statistics based on figures from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government and this would seem to confirm the crisis this country is in. In 2009, when Kinevane was writing *Silent*, there were approximately

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Eilish O'Regan, "Dirty hospitals, hours alone: state of mental care exposed," *Irish Independent*, July 25, 2018, 14.

¹² Ibid., 14.

¹³ Kevin Doyle and Kirsty Blake Knox, "Housing crisis deepens and raises pressure on Murphy," *Irish Independent*, July 25, 2018, 16.

3,000¹⁴ homeless people and now, in June 2018, there are 9,872¹⁵. The situation has continued to worsen and is very different from when *Silent* was being written with one obvious example: now we have whole families including children who are homeless. This is a new phenomenon. In 2018, according to Focus Ireland, “in the last decade the lack of social housing provision combined with private house building [...] has meant more people than ever have to find a home in the private rented sector.”¹⁶ Focus Ireland also states that “this has led to enormous pressure on the private rental market which has resulted in constantly rising rent levels and a lack of properties to rent”¹⁷ thus exacerbating the homeless situation. This homeless crisis and our lack of a 21st century mental health care system seems to go some way to explaining why *Silent* has remained so relevant over the years.

Kinevane wrote *Underneath* between 2011 and 2014. The themes of the play mainly focus on how we are judged by what is on the outside and how we can ignore the person who lies underneath. In doing this Kinevane deals with the continuing obsession with beauty and the quest for perfection. During my interview with Kinevane, he talked about how there are so many people who are judged by their looks and they are “ [...] a missed opportunity as a touchstone, as a pot of humanity, for their wisdom, for their glory, all those things can sometimes be passed by purely by a veneer and I find that fascinating.”¹⁸ When Kinevane wrote this play the use of social media was growing exponentially and other applications alongside Facebook and Twitter, were being developed. Instagram was founded in 2010 and Snapchat came into being in 2011. For the first time in history there is

¹⁴ Kildare and Leighlin Diocese, “Focus Ireland on Reality of Growing Homeless Figures,” accessed August 15, 2018, <https://www.kandle.ie/focus-ireland-homeless-figures/> 0:34-1:42.

¹⁵ “Facts and Figures,” Peter McVerry Trust, accessed August 17, 2018, <https://www.pmvtrust.ie/news-media/facts-and-figures>.

¹⁶ “About Homelessness,” Focus Ireland, accessed August 17, 2018, <https://www.focusireland.ie/resource-hub/about-homelessness>.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Pat Kinevane (Writer and Performer of *Forgotten*, *Silent* and *Underneath*), interview by Kathryn Sinnott, July 19, 2018, transcript, Appendix 2, 79.

now a generation of people who have never known life without the internet. This rise in social media has had good effects but also many negative consequences. People, and especially those in the younger age bracket, have become obsessed with the idea of celebrity. We are bombarded with celebrity images every day and the idea of what is so-called perfection. These 'perfect' images and the invention of the 'perfect' selfie have helped to create anxiety in people today because they feel they don't match up to this superficial notion of perfection. The term "lookism" was coined in the 70s but it has to be acknowledged that it is extremely pertinent today. It is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as: "prejudice or discrimination on the grounds of a person's appearance,"¹⁹ and this aptly describes the relationship that has developed over the past number of years that one might have with others. Before social media there were always these prejudices but the rise in social network activity has meant a destructive spiralling of obsession with looks and celebrity. This coincided with the formative years of *Underneath* and continues to the present day.

What are the consequences of this obsession with how we look and the never ending quest for perceived perfection? Several agencies have completed qualitative research and their findings are a damning indictment on the use of social media and how it has raised the notion of what it is to look perfect, increasing the amount of pressure and anxiety especially on the 15-30 age bracket. Bodywhys, The Eating Disorders Association of Ireland have said that "Social media triggers body image issues in young people"²⁰ and also that these young people "[...] described how the number of 'likes' on profile pictures was frequently a source of worry, and they felt that responses through social media were associated with self-

¹⁹ Oxford English Dictionary, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/lookism>, accessed August 29, 2018.

²⁰ Joyce Fegan, "Social media 'triggers body image worries for teenagers,'" *Irish Examiner*, August 15, 2016, <https://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/social-media-triggers-body-image-worries-for-teenagers-415839.html>.

judgement.”²¹ A 2011 report published by Growing Up in Ireland on the ongoing study of nine year old children found that “a person’s physical attributes could make them a target for bullying and name-calling.”²² In an article, written in 2011 for *CNN*, a member of the British parliament and co-founder of the Campaign for Body Confidence, Jo Swinson, addressed what is now seen as the ‘norm’ in advertising, that being the airbrushing of models to within an inch of perceived perfection. This airbrushing has caused women and men to have unreal expectations of themselves in terms of their body image and these unattainable goals for perfection were and still are causing undue harm to people and one can only say the situation has continued to get worse. Jo Swinson writes that “For some, the desire to look as perfect as these models can become all-consuming, and a wealth of evidence suggests that people in the UK are experiencing serious body image problems -- a trend undoubtedly replicated around the globe.”²³ Swinson continues with the idea of how we are bombarded with so called perfection everywhere “From children's toys to TV programs, images of the idealized body have permeated every level of our visual culture.”²⁴ This ‘ideal’ is causing damage to the health of adults and more importantly to the health of children which links in with the report I mentioned earlier in relation to nine year olds growing up in Ireland. An article published in 2015 relating to our obsession with celebrities and the perceived perfect image stated that there are increased levels of anxiety amidst the growing concerns “over the number of image-obsessed young women going under the needle to achieve “the

²¹ Ibid.

²² Catherine Shanahan, “Study reveals the social pressures facing young children,” *Irish Examiner*, September 23, 2011, <https://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/study-reveals-the-social-pressures-facing-young-children-168470.html>.

²³ Jo Swinson, “False beauty in advertising and the pressure to look good,” *CNN*, August 10, 2011, <http://edition.cnn.com/2011/OPINION/08/08/swinson.airbrushing.ads/index.html>.

²⁴ Ibid.

perfect look"²⁵. The themes Kinevane writes about in *Underneath* will continue to have relevance as our obsession with looks grows ever stronger highlighting all the time how we have started to forget the importance of what lies underneath the surface in our bid to achieve the ultimate goal which is perfection.

In conclusion, the investigation of the social context of each play has confirmed that the issues of the marginalised portrayed by Kinevane are very topical and relevant even to this day. As highlighted above, some progress has been made on these issues, but it is important that these issues are kept to the fore by plays such as Kinevane's trilogy or similar.

²⁵ Claire McCormack, "Selfie culture to blame for surge in lip fillers among 'image-obsessed' women," Independent.ie, December 27, 2015, <https://www.independent.ie/style/beauty/selfie-culture-to-blame-for-surge-in-lip-fillers-among-imageobsessed-women-34315738.html>.

CHAPTER TWO: *FORGOTTEN*

Forgotten is a story about four residents in different nursing homes around Ireland. It was first performed on 25th May 2006 as part of the Bealtaine Festival. This festival is run by Age and Opportunity, the national organisation that promotes active and engaged living as we get older. In my interview with Jim Culleton, artistic director of Fishamble: The New Play Company and director of *Forgotten*, he states that Kinevane was “very moved by the different kinds of experiences people have at the end of their life and he wanted to say something about that.”¹ Kinevane has spoken about visiting a relative of his who lived in a nursing home and who was dying. He wondered at whether the other residents received visitors or if they had been forgotten about.² His son was also born around this time and he wondered at how the novelty of a newborn baby wears off as the months and years go by.³ This made him wonder about what happens when we are at the other end of our lives. In researching the play Kinevane talks about how he had a lot of sources to go to and he also knew many people who worked with elderly people all their lives.⁴ He used examples of people in his own family who were growing old and he was interested in what their journeys were like.⁵ During an interview at the Irish Arts Centre, New York, Kinevane stated that what he hoped to achieve with *Forgotten* was that he “wanted to make a difference. I wanted to make a social comment, what I’m trying to make is for people to be aware of the issues of the elderly [...]”

¹ Jim Culleton (Director of *Forgotten*, *Silent* and *Underneath*), interview by Kathryn Sinnott, July 11, 2018, transcript, Appendix 1, 55.

² Pat Kinevane (Writer and Performer of *Forgotten*, *Silent* and *Underneath*), interview by Kathryn Sinnott, July 19, 2018, transcript, Appendix 2, 71.

³ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 67.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 67.

wanted to stir it up because there's nothing worse than not talking about it. I wanted to bring it to the surface."⁶

At this point, it is worthwhile giving a brief synopsis of the play. As stated earlier the play revolves around the lives of four residents in four different care homes around Ireland. They are all between eighty and one hundred years of age. For approximately ninety minutes, we follow the lives of Flor, Dora, Eucharua and Gustus. Of the four, Flor seems to be the most embittered and dislikes with a vengeance the nurses trying to wash him as he believes he can do all that himself and wants to keep at least some dignity for himself. According to Culleton, Flor is probably in the throes of dementia but this is not made clear in the play. As Culleton states Flor is "the one who's getting in amongst us and engaging with us."⁷ In comparison to the other three characters, Flor makes use of the theatre space to a larger degree in that he comes into the audience and stands and immerses himself with us. Culleton states that in his and Kinevane's minds "it is to capture the fact that he is suffering from dementia."⁸ Because Flor spends a lot of time in his imagination, for example thinking that he is on the Late Late Show, perhaps according to him, we, the audience, are also only in his imagination. He hallucinates and sees Holy Mary under his bed. He believes that he and people like him built the country and made it what it was but all he has now are disgusting meals and a bed that has had several people die in it.

Dora continuously plants herself between the ages of nineteen and twenty-one regaling the audience with old stories of romances and loves lost. Her mother died when she was young from a rat bite and her father never recovered from the

⁶ Interview with Pat Kinevane, "Forgotten at The Irish Arts Centre," February 28, 2010, audio, 7:47-8:06, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jw59sKK8MPU>.

⁷ Jim Culleton (Director of *Forgotten*, *Silent* and *Underneath*), interview by Kathryn Sinnott, July 11, 2018, transcript, Appendix 1, 61.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 61.

death of his wife. Dora nursed him until he passed away. Dora tells us about falling for a labourer called Flor who worked on the farm. However, as her mother was bitten on the day Dora went with Flor to the cinema, the love affair never developed and Dora always felt guilty for lying to her mother about where she was going. Dora also speaks about her scullery maid, Eucharia, who unbeknownst to Dora slept with Flor and became pregnant by him. This is the reason why Eucharia left her job for a while but eventually returned.

Eucharia, lives more in the present compared to the other characters. She takes delight in telling the audience about how she passes her time. As she pops another marshmallow into her mouth, she tells the audience about her expedition to Dublin. Every Saturday, she gets the bus to Dublin and enjoys doing her makeup using all the free creams and samples that are available at the counters in Arnotts. Eucharia is the only one who comments on the other residents in the nursing home and gives the impression that she has forged friendships with some. She seems to be relatively happy where she is and feels respected by the staff. The Japanese influence can be seen with Eucharia as she paints her face in Geisha-style makeup and this in some way illustrates the invisibility of each character because by the end of the performance it seems that all the characters have morphed into one.

Lastly there is Gustus who has had a stroke and who lives in a permanent state of disappointment with his daughter. She rarely visits Gustus and Gustus explains how he and his wife never had it easy with their daughter. They adopted her and it is alluded to that Eucharia is the mother who gave her up for adoption. It is from Gustus that we get the connection to Japan as he remembers a Geisha song his daughter used to sing as a child and he talks about how the Japanese mind their elderly. The play ends with the possibility that Flor commits suicide but this is left up to the audience's interpretation. As Kinevane states "He's been

stocking up on his tablets, whether he actually does it or not is open to interpretation.”⁹

The Japanese influence in this production is obvious from the start. The overall colour theme of this production is red. When I asked why red was such a dominant colour, Culleton explained that it came from Japanese influences because “of how people as they grow older are respected in the Eastern culture where as in Western civilisation that maybe isn’t the case.”¹⁰ The stage is soaked in red light, there are red ribbons hanging from the ceiling, there are red petals on the floor, the kimono also has red on it and some of the various props used are also red. Kinevane also uses Kabuki-style movement and dance and Geisha-style makeup. Kabuki is a classical Japanese dance-drama. Every movement that Kinevane makes is incredibly precise, slow and dignified. Kinevane in an interview with the Irish Arts Centre speaks about how “Asian theatre and dance and performance always strikes me as just bubbling over with grace”¹¹ and he goes on to say “that is one of the main reasons as to why he wanted to enter a kind of spiritual culmination of character and dance so that they would maintain their dignity at all times.”¹² Each transition in the show moving from one character to the next is performed with gracefulness and dignity and Kinevane states that “he wanted to go against the typical way of representing old people and the way they move which is decrepid and with walking canes [...], and I just thought no, I want to give this a bit of dignity so I looked to the East.”¹³ The play ends with a red sun on the wall through which Kinevane disappears and so the idea of everything being red and being influenced

⁹ Pat Kinevane (Writer and Performer of *Forgotten, Silent and Underneath*), interview by Kathryn Sinnott, July 19, 2018, transcript, Appendix 2, 74.

¹⁰ Jim Culleton (Director of *Forgotten, Silent and Underneath*), interview by Kathryn Sinnott, July 11, 2018, transcript, Appendix 1, 58.

¹¹ Interview with Pat Kinevane, “Forgotten at The Irish Arts Centre,” February 28, 2010, audio, 2:22-2:33, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jw59sKK8MPU>.

¹² *Ibid.*, 2:39-2:48.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 3:00-3:18.

by that Japanese flag is how it all came about according to Culleton.¹⁴ Kinevane during the same interview with the Irish Arts Centre also talks about how the two cultures, the Irish and the Japanese, used to have a lot in common in terms of the three generational family living together but that somewhere along the way Ireland changed and we lost our sense of duty.¹⁵ Kinevane believes that we used to hold the elderly in so much esteem but that is missing now due to money and greed.¹⁶ He concludes by saying that “he thinks we are all guilty in our own way of ignoring the needs, the very delicate needs of the elderly.”¹⁷

The following performance analysis outlines key moments where Kinevane sheds light on the plight of the elderly who he believes are the forgotten voices in society. Even though the characters’ stories are intertwined, it is important to treat them as individuals as they are in separate homes: more significantly they are people in their own right with their own story to tell. There is darkness in the auditorium, the music that envelops us is from the Tsuke, an instrument that has its origins in Japan. The music gathers pace and then stops with the sound of a door slamming. The sound of a baby crying punctuates the air which in my mind signifies the novelty of a baby, the newness and preciousness and possibly the journey in between this and the end of one’s life. Flor ponders on this when he says “How come when we arrive, no baby is better off than the other. Neighbours and presents and sentiments o’welcome...Ye little special precious little novelty.”¹⁸ He goes on to say how when “[...] the wind down starts. None of us is aqual then”¹⁹ and that there’s “Better fuss for some, others left to bake in the sand of no care

¹⁴ Jim Culleton (Director of *Forgotten*, *Silent* and *Underneath*), interview by Kathryn Sinnott, July 11, 2018, transcript, Appendix 1, 58.

¹⁵ Interview with Pat Kinevane, “Forgotten at The Irish Arts Centre,” February 28, 2010, audio, 3:58-4:50, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jw59sKK8MPU>.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 4:52-5:11.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 5:13-5:24.

¹⁸ Pat Kinevane, *Silent* and *Forgotten* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2011), 50.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 50.

[...].”²⁰ Kinevane enters the stage, fully robed and stands at the back wall which is suffused with red light. He is wearing a kimono and has his arms outstretched.

Voices start to become audible over the sound system, speaking over each other:

FLOR. T was...
GUSTUS. To look at me now...
[Lights up slowly]
EUCHARIA. Ye'd never think I was once...
FLOR. Seventeen...
DORA. Twenty-one.
FLOR. See you in three!
GUSTUS. Twenty-two.
EUCHARIA. Sixteen...
GUSTUS. Golden...
DORA. With my whole life...
FLOR. Shpread in front of me...
EUCHARIA. Like...like...
GUSTUS. A beauteous meal...
DORA. But now.
FLOR. Now!
EUCHARIA. Most of the time...
GUSTUS. These days...
DORA. I feel.
EUCHARIA. I'm feeling...
GUSTUS. And I'm not even...²¹

These opening lines are quite poignant in how they reflect the passing of time for each character and each one is remembering when they had their whole lives ahead of them instead of now looking back on the life that has passed. Kinevane moves around the stage and removes black cloths from each table, two downstage and one upstage revealing specific items for Dora, Eucharia and Gustus. He then moves to the back of the stage and removes his kimono and puts it on a hanger. Graceful movement brings the actor from the back of the stage to the front where he pulls out a red cloth, spits on the floor and starts to clean it. The floor is covered with what looks like red petals and this links back again to Japanese influences as

²⁰ Ibid., 50.

²¹ Ibid., 29-30.

Culleton says that they were inspired by Japanese blossom trees.²² This is our first introduction to Flor.

From the moment Flor speaks, there is no doubting the fact that, as Kinevane says, he wanted to stir it up and bring things to the surface. Flor in a dark and accusatory tone tell us “Twas the likes of me made this basterin country what it is today [...] and what do I get for my crownin fuckin years? Pigswill dinners on plastic plates and a dirty oul candlewick spread what whiffs of all the gumsy hoors that croaked it in this kip of a home afore me.”²³ Flor seems to be very much the spokesperson for highlighting what is wrong in society and for venting his anger at how he is treated. His cleaning of the floor could be seen as his disgust at living in a dirty nursing home but Culleton also states that “he has got a version of OCD, that he just likes to keep things clean [...] he feels it’s not up to his cleanliness standards and so he goes around cleaning everything basically.”²⁴ Through Flor, Kinevane makes a pointed attack at the government and at how the elderly get a few pounds extra in their pension for towing the line:

FLOR. And our Minister in Brussels oooooooo!
Eighteen-carat prick. [...] A dope like that, nepresentin’
us abroad the land [...] Then he gives us a shpare
tenner ‘o pension for good behaviour, for not givin out or
shittin on the floor.²⁵

Flor creates a very strong image when he breaks the fourth wall for the first time. He moves from the stage over to the steps that run alongside the tiered seating. He stands at the wall, wiping it clean. He leans against the wall and shines a strong torch light into his face, this creates quite a terrifying image and he particularly asks that the audience don’t look away from him. This part of the performance was very

²² Jim Culleton (Director of *Forgotten, Silent* and *Underneath*), interview by Kathryn Sinnott, July 11, 2018, transcript, Appendix 1, 59.

²³ Pat Kinevane, *Silent and Forgotten* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2011), 30.

²⁴ Jim Culleton (Director of *Forgotten, Silent* and *Underneath*), interview by Kathryn Sinnott, July 11, 2018, transcript, Appendix 1, 59.

²⁵ Pat Kinevane, *Silent and Forgotten* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2011), 33.

emotive and his isolation carried with it a deep sense of how alone and marginalised one might feel when being cared for in a place other than their home. It is difficult to know how much of Flor's temperament is down to his fantastical journeys or whether what he sees is real. But there is no confusion on how he perceives his life in the nursing home. Breaking the fourth wall again, Flor stands directly in front of the audience. As if seeing the audience as an imaginary nurse, his anger and frustration is palpable:

FLOR. I'll bath myself! I'll bath myself I don't want none of your nurse hussy hands on my Pelt. I am the claneest buck in here and yet ye scald me with suds and sudo-cream. That water is scalding. Please! Don't! Don't touch my buttons! I'll bath myself. Has nobody a shkitter of dignity left?²⁶

I remember noting that there was laughter at first as if people felt awkward at seeing this desperation but very quickly silence followed. I felt scared and mesmerised as at this moment Flor is so powerful in his hatred of somebody trying to wash him that all one feels is his anguish and it really made me think about that loss of dignity and being treated almost like a child. At this point, the performance is striking in its depiction of the loss of dignity that can be suffered by those who are confined to living in a residential home. The emotive impact resonated like heartbreak for this person. I recognised that beneath all the anger that Flor shows is someone who is desperately unhappy locked away in that world. Flor is someone who on the one hand is well aware of the situation he is in but on another level, he lives in fantasy land, often resorting to imagining being on the Late Late Show. This may be simply a means of escape or it could be his dementia causing him to believe that this is really the case. In moments of lucidity Flor reaches out and really connects with us and for me it caused a real stirring of emotions and I felt angry and sad that this is what some people have to put up with when they reach

²⁶ Ibid., 35.

the other end of their lives. During my interview with Kinevane, he made an interesting comment which was that “people think you’re in your prime in your 20s, 30s etc. but I believe you’re in your prime when you’re gloriously old.”²⁷ He continues with this line of thought saying that he thinks society should reward everybody for getting through the battle that is life and that Flor is a warrior and faces forward and gets through it, they all do.²⁸ When one thinks of elderly people as being warriors having survived the unpredictable journey that is life, Flor, despite his anger and bitterness, becomes a character that reaches out to your heart and makes you really think about the situation he finds himself in. He appeals for privacy and wonders what happened to society where he now feels such a burden to everyone:

FLOR. Please give me a bit of privacy and let no one in – [...] Leave the shoppin now, old man, old curse to the country, oul dyin thing that the state drags along like a leper’s limb. Trapped and lingerin in your decrepid body. If twas legal, we’d chop ou off and bury you on an offshore island for geriatric odds n’ends.’ Where’s decency? Where’s manners? Where’s patience and grace?²⁹

Dora, unlike Flor, stays downstage left sitting at her table, bathed in a pool of light and she engages directly with the audience. She spends most of her time reminiscing on a life lived between the ages of nineteen and twenty-one and when the world lay open to her. Dora ended up looking after her ailing father and her reflection on this links back to Kinevane’s idea of duty and virtue:

DORA. I could not leave him alone for any period of lengthy time but he’d pine like an urchin puppy on a wet lost day. There’s always that onus on just an only child. He...he was a burden, honestly. [...] I had little time for anything – he needed constant care until, he yearned,

²⁷ Pat Kinevane (Writer and Performer of *Forgotten*, *Silent* and *Underneath*), interview by Kathryn Sinnott, July 19, 2018, Appendix 2, 76.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 76.

²⁹ Pat Kinevane, *Silent* and *Forgotten* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2011), 41- 42.

pitifully, and I buried him too, the following dark Boxing Day.³⁰

Kinevane uses Dora to highlight how we can see the elderly as a burden but in saying that, it can't be denied that there is honesty there in demonstrating how one might feel when looking after someone. I feel that Dora's travelling back to her life when she was young displays a sense of loneliness and also a sense of wanting to be heard. Dora was not always in this eighty-three year old body. She was young and beautiful and fell in love and had fun and adventure. Kinevane sheds light on the plight of the elderly through all of his characters.

Gustus has had a stroke and this character sits towards the back of the stage constantly at a distance from the audience. We hear his thoughts and feelings through a voice over as his stroke has left him incapacitated:

GUSTUS. Three years back. A stroke. Me daughter – useless. Couldn't cope with me after the rehab. Would ya credit that? A stroke. Released 20 per cent of the equity of me gaff. [...] Maybe she'll call later on.³¹

Gustus is an interesting character as Kinevane chose to play him by using his back. He places a half mask on the back of his head which only has eyes and half a nose and is extremely odd-looking. Kinevane sits with his back to the audience linking his arms at the back and using his back to embody the character of Gustus. His shoulder blades are fully engaged and he uses slight turns of his head and precise hand movements. After a while I forgot that I was watching Kinevane's back. The folds of skin that gather at the back of Kinevane's head and neck when Kinevane moves his head almost become mouth-like so that even though Gustus' voice is recorded, it almost looks like he is speaking from the back of Kinevane's head. I think visually it captures the distortion of someone who is trapped in their body where there is very little movement. It also physically gives the character of Gustus

³⁰ Ibid., 34.

³¹ Ibid., 36.

an overwhelming sense of loss; his body has become alien to him and so has his home as he states “There’s strangers in my home now, drawing my curtains and turning my key. [...] Regard for them? Yes, sure I can’t throw them on the street. Can I?”³² This is a poignant scene as Gustus laments the loss of his home and obviously realises that it is not possible for him to be cared for at home which means he now sits in a residential home forgotten and alone. Gustus also connects to the Japanese influence and Kinevane’s idea of the Japanese sense of duty when it comes to looking after their elderly when he says “Now dares a crowd. The Japanese. Treat their elder lemons with the utmost respect. See it as their duty.”³³ Kinevane is highlighting that this is something we don’t have here, we put most of our elderly into nursing homes because our duty has become more about sending the issue to someone else to deal with rather than trying to find solutions that would make it easier for elderly people to stay in their homes. This issue was touched upon in my chapter on the social context.

Eucharria sits downstage right for the duration of the play. With Eucharria, we meet somebody who is concerned about her appearance and who takes good care of herself. We learn that she likes to travel up to Dublin on a Saturday to spend her time in Arnotts doing herself up using the free samples of creams and makeup:

EUCHARRIA. I gets a day out of here on Saturdays – and when I come back all the others ask me how I look so well. See, Saturday is a very special day for me. Saturday is my time to start all over again, like most people’s Mondays like.³⁴

In my opinion, Eucharria is the most down-to-earth of the four characters. She has a gorgeous way about her as she sits popping a marshmallow into her mouth every so often. Eucharria seems to be very happy in the home that she resides in

³² Ibid., 47.

³³ Ibid., 46.

³⁴ Ibid., 38.

commenting on the fact that “In fairness the staff in here are amazin. They don’t just do things for ya like. They ask if you would like them done.”³⁵ In this home at least, the residents experience respect. Eucharía tells us that one of the residents has died and Kinevane uses this opportunity to first raise the issue about relatives trying to grab what they feel entitled to when their elderly loved one has passed away and he then raises the issue about deaths on hospital trolleys:

EUCCHARIA. Nelly Dentures died this morning. [...] Sure her family were all here within the hour, riflin through her wardrobe over there. Near scalpin each other claiming her stuff – a few trinkets. [...] Her twin sister died in Accident & Emergency last Tuesday on a trolley. A trolley! – God rest and redeem their souls shu God help us!³⁶

This play was written in the early 2000s and first performed in 2006. It is a sad indictment of our government that the hospital trolley issue is even worse now in 2018 than when Kinevane was writing about it. During my interview with Pat, I asked him whether he thought the social issues had improved or disimproved, his comment was:

I thought the themes when I wrote it, would be old fashioned now but actually it’s more relevant than ever. [...] When you see a government, any government that doesn’t care about trolleys, old people on trolleys and the misery of a family watching their elderly loved one on a trolley, I think we have really lost that beautiful care that we used to have.³⁷

During the play, I had momentary lapses of concentration which made me wonder whether this can be how we treat our elderly, that we lose our focus on them and become bored or restless, thinking of what else we could be doing. I found myself wondering whether Kinevane had written the play so that these lapses would happen. When I asked him about it, he said that “it’s impossible to concentrate for

³⁵ Ibid., 39.

³⁶ Ibid., 48-49.

³⁷ Pat Kinevane (Writer and Performer of *Forgotten*, *Silent* and *Underneath*), interview by Kathryn Sinnott, July 19, 2018, transcript, Appendix 2, 75.

an hour and a half full stop. You have to lull in and out.”³⁸ Kinevane also said that “In each of their stories, they go off on little tangents, and sometimes those tangents give the opportunity for people to just breathe, and come back to the main drive of the story.”³⁹ With this explained, I still found it to be an interesting thought in terms of how we might see the elderly and the life that they have lived. Are we interested in hearing about it? Are we interested in spending time with our elderly relatives?

The play concludes with Flor, who at this point, could be an amalgamation of all four characters, moving to the back of the stage and putting back on the kimono where he then moves gracefully to stand directly in front of the audience. Flor picks up handfuls of red petals and lets them fall slowly through his fingers over the audience members who are sitting at the front of the auditorium. It is a beautiful image. As I watched it, I thought of all the stories that each character told and how much dignity each one had, or at least each one was trying to hold on to what little dignity was left. I saw this moment as a goodbye. We hear the same voice-over that introduced us to the four characters at the start of the play except this version has two additional lines added to the end, two significant lines that really drive home the meaning behind this play:

FLOR. Twas.
GUSTUS. To look at me now...Ye'd never think I was
once...
EUCHARIA. Seventeen...
FLOR. See you in three.
DORA. Twenty-one...
GUSTUS. Eighteen...
EUCHARIA. Sixteen...
GUSTUS. Golden...
DORA. With my whole life...
FLOR. Spread in front of me...
EUCHARIA. Like...like...

³⁸ Ibid., 76.

³⁹ Ibid., 76.

GUSTUS. A beauteous meal...
DORA. But now...
FLOR. Now!
EUCHARIA. Most of the time...
GUSTUS. These days...
DORA. I feel. I'm feeling...
GUSTUS. Forgotten...And I'm not even...
ALL. Gone.
[A baby cries. The door slams shut. Darkness]⁴⁰

The following critics' reviews highlight how the performance of *Forgotten* was received. During performances of *Forgotten* in Los Angeles in 2014, praise was heaped upon Kinevane's work. *Life in La* described it as "a visual triumph. [...] His performance is stunning. Using Kabuki theater mixed with dark humor, unforgettable characters, and even a little audience participation, makes this a genre-blending odyssey, a journey that lingers with you long after you've left the theater."⁴¹ Steven Leigh Morris writing for *LA Weekly* states that it is a show that focuses "[...] on four souls relegated to the margins of society by old age [...] and that when it starts to plummet, as it does during stretches of redundancy and stasis, it rescues itself before crashing."⁴² This confirms a view I made earlier relating to how my concentration waned during the performance and yet this did not take away from how affecting an experience it was.

⁴⁰ Pat Kinevane, *Silent and Forgotten* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2011), 53-54.

⁴¹ Patrick Hurley, "Not Easily Forgotten," *Life in LA*, March 25, 2014, <http://lifeinla.com/entertainment/streams/theatre/128-theatre/861/not-easily-forgotten.html>.

⁴² Steven Leigh Morris, "Pat Kinevane's *Forgotten* at Odyssey Theatre," *LA Weekly*, November 24, 2011, <http://www.laweekly.com/arts/pat-kinevanes-forgotten-at-odyssey-theatre-2173078>.

CHAPTER THREE: *SILENT*

Silent was first performed on 9th February 2011 having taken approximately three years to complete. Kinevane was inspired to write *Silent* after visiting New York for the first time and seeing so many homeless people living on the streets of Manhattan. He recalls his visit, “I went to New York visiting a friend and I was walking around the place and I hated it the first time I went, absolutely hated it [...] I was just so sad that there was so many homeless people there and I had never experienced that in my life.”¹ When Kinevane came back to Dublin he remembers that “all I could see around me in Dublin was homeless people, and I thought this is terrible and I’m going to have to write something about this.”² In researching *Silent*, Kinevane states that it was “[...] much more sporadic and raw and the best way I found of researching was that I read some government and academic reports and I talked to people face to face.”³ When Kinevane left school, he obtained some training as a psychiatric nurse which gave him an insight into the lives of people living with a mental illness. He says of that time “I saw a lot of good stuff but I also saw a lot of horrible stuff as in how people are treated with any sort of mental illness and that really troubled me.”⁴ He believes that the government’s national mental health policy *A Vision for Change* “has not kicked in, I don’t know what’s going on.”⁵ During our interview he states that “if you’re not at home in your head and you’re not comfortable in the home in your head, that you can lose that too and you can be homeless physically but you can also be homeless mentally”⁶ and all of these factors are what inspired Kinevane to write *Silent*. In some disbelief Kinevane also

¹ Pat Kinevane (Writer and Performer of *Forgotten*, *Silent* and *Underneath*), interview by Kathryn Sinnott, July 19, 2018, transcript, Appendix 2, 76.

² *Ibid.*, 76.

³ *Ibid.*, 67.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 76-77.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 77.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 77.

mentioned the fact that since he wrote the play the homelessness issue has actually got worse with families, including young children, now being recorded as being homeless.⁷ Through *Silent*, Kinevane hopes to raise awareness about these issues and to get the audience thinking about them so that the issues will actually register with them on some level.⁸

Silent uses theatrical techniques that are evocative of silent films. The overall colour theme is silver grey. This is to represent the silver screen of silent movies or as Culleton describes it “we imagine it’s like a Hollywood sound stage with the silver screen.”⁹ The silent actor Rudolph Valentino is celebrated in this play according to Kinevane. The stage design consists of title cards that are situated at the back wall of the stage. They each have one word in white font on a black background. The font style is reminiscent of the writing on silent movie title cards. McGoldrig uses these for his silent ‘movies’ which is when he tells us about each suicide attempt his brother Pearse made. He performs these ‘movies’ with dance, mime and gesture. There is McGoldrig’s blanket centre stage and a tin bowl for collecting coins. There is a wine bottle that doubles as a phone and there is a boxing glove. The boxing glove is used during one of Pearse’s ‘movies’, as McGoldrig is explaining how Pearse always forgot that the body is out to survive, “The body is always in the ring, gloves on, flakin away at danger and trying to knock out the perils that are, well, daily.”¹⁰ There is also a black sack which contains other props that he uses during Pearse’s silent movies. The narrator in *Silent* is Tino McGoldrig, named after the silent movie star. He is a man who has lost everything, including his mind. He once had a wife and child and a job and lived in Cobh, Co.

⁷ Ibid., 77.

⁸ Ibid., 78.

⁹ Jim Culleton (Director of *Forgotten*, *Silent* and *Underneath*), interview by Kathryn Sinnott, July 11, 2018, transcript, Appendix 1, 61.

¹⁰ Pat Kinevane, *Silent and Forgotten* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2011), 14.

Cork but now lives on the streets of Dublin. For the audience sitting in the auditorium the first soundscape is the sound of noise and traffic as if on the side of a busy street. Once the doors close, piano music replaces that of the traffic sounds and a light is shone centre stage. The audience first sees McGoldrig when we see a blanket on the floor start to move to the beats of the music and eventually a body rises up from beneath the blanket. This is where McGoldrig lives. He has his own patch of 'home' on the streets of Dublin. Tino's older brother Pearse was named after Padraig Pearse, the freedom fighter. Pearse was gay and had committed suicide years earlier due to the homophobic prejudice he was experiencing in Cobh. This small-town mentality ruined his life. Pearse had made several unsuccessful suicide attempts but finally threw himself in front of the Cork to Cobh train which ended his life. McGoldrig has never got over his brother's suicide. It has shaped his life forever. McGoldrig reflects sadly on his brother's life "it was a hard out station for him – born at the wrong time and place – sure today, if he was alive, he could get his hole in any gay club he wanted and nobody would bat an eye."¹¹ He goes on to say that "It was tough for Pearse daw...sneakin around, ashamed of himself. There were lads in town who would have gladly kicked him to death if they had proof. [...]. He was completely terrified [...]."¹² After his brother's suicide, McGoldrig tried to move on with his life, getting married and having a son. But he could never escape his head. He started drinking, his marriage eventually broke up and he ended up incarcerated for two years in a mental hospital. After that he moved to Dublin where he registered as homeless. McGoldrig explains how he has tried "[...] with every single ounce of my will and strength to get myself sorted but the fuckin guilt won't leave me (*Pause.*) That I should have stood up for him

¹¹ Ibid., 8.

¹² Ibid., 8.

more.”¹³ McGoldrig cannot move beyond the pain. As the play reaches its conclusion, we learn that McGoldrig has also committed suicide and that the audience was seeing his ghost all along. An interesting aspect to this is that the suicide note is stuffed into his mouth. I also noted that he growls like an animal and the audience hears the contents of the note by a voice-over. When I asked Culleton about this he said they put the note into his mouth so that the audience would know it was his words.¹⁴ He goes on to say that “in terms of the whole notion of silence and being silent about things that maybe it’s we can hear the note but it’s almost too much to speak it but he’s got the note in his mouth to suggest that it is something coming out of his mouth.”¹⁵ The following performance analysis outlines key moments where Kinevane sheds light on those who are marginalised as a result of mental illness and homelessness.

The play opens with the character of McGoldrig telling us that “If anyone asks, I’m not here at all, alright?:”¹⁶ here Kinevane is leading us straight into the realm of how the majority of homeless people appear to be invisible to us. Thousands of people every day walk past homeless men and women without batting an eye. McGoldrig explains how most people walk past him as if he didn’t exist and how he was once like the majority of the population before he lost it all:

Only one in every six hundred will stop and talk, look ya level in the eye – like an equal, not like the other 599 sprinting past, in their slingbacks and peeptoos, their wedges and Pradas – But they don’t know that I once had splendid things, a job a wife a son – all splendid [...].¹⁷

¹³ Ibid., 18.

¹⁴ Jim Culleton (Director of *Forgotten, Silent* and *Underneath*), interview by Kathryn Sinnott, July 11, 2018, transcript, Appendix 1, 63.

¹⁵ Ibid., 63-64.

¹⁶ Pat Kinevane, *Silent* and *Forgotten* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2011), 3.

¹⁷ Ibid., 20.

As Kinevane states in the preface to his play, “It could be me lying against a posh restaurant door. It could be me under a blanket outside a bank. It could be me hassling you for cash beside an ATM [...] It could be us at the toss of a coin.”¹⁸ In writing this play Kinevane wanted to shed light on the fact that anyone of us could find ourselves in this position and his performance aims to create such a feeling of empathy. The emotions and feelings that it created in me were very real which made the play unforgettable. McGoldrig is wearing a morning coat bringing an ounce of respectability to proceedings but is barefoot with black pants. His wine bottle doubles as a phone which he uses to bring some light entertainment in relation to his dealings with mental health, “Hello and welcome to the Mental Health Hotline! If you are obsessive compulsive, press 1 repeatedly!!”¹⁹ and “If you have multiple personalities – kindly press 3, 4, 5 and 6!”²⁰ Early on in the performance these ignite laughter in the audience and lighten the whole theme so we know we are going to be in for a treat of comedy and seriousness. I felt a deep connection straight away with McGoldrig. It felt like I was watching a real homeless person who also had a sense of humour in amongst the blackness. As the play moved on, the atmosphere changed from light to dark in an instant and this quick shifting of emotions and feelings created an energy in the audience that one could sense was with McGoldrig. Even in the silent parts, there was no sense of awkwardness that I have experienced at other plays. There was silence and stillness and the audience as a whole was calm and with him on this journey. When I asked Culleton about how Kinevane achieves this he explained:

That the play is called *Silent* and [...] it’s about issues we are silent about and that we don’t talk about. It’s also about allowing ourselves to be silent and to listen to

¹⁸ Pat Kinevane, “Preface,” in *Silent and Forgotten* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2011).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

each other so I think that is a theme through it. Pat as a performer and in terms of what the play is about, enjoys those moments where he's just with the audience and maybe it's quiet for a moment or he poses a question and lets it sit in the air and hang there a moment. [...] He's also a very charismatic performer that draws an audience in.²¹

The audience are now at a section of the play where McGoldrig asks a question and lets it hang there. McGoldrig lies on the floor bathed in a white light that shines straight on his face casting a diagonal line of light by his body to the back of the stage. I felt that the light created something that almost symbolised a tightrope, a void, a tunnel where everything surrounding the light was pitch black apart from this line of light. McGoldrig starts to speak into the light, "Please don't censor your thoughts! What is your honest response? The images and feelings you have when I say the following words...Are you ready? Here's the words.....'Anti Depressants!' Responses?"²² I can feel a nervousness in me, an almost constricted feeling in my chest. The energy has changed in the audience. There were only a very small number of responses and they were "profit making", "numb" and "waste of time". I could feel myself getting more and more annoyed at these answers until I eventually offered up my opinion which was "life-saving". I was surprised that I had got riled enough to shout out the words. Sara Ahmed writing in her chapter "The Contingency of Pain" draws attention to how words can conjure up emotions without a description or history being required.²³ This is certainly what happened when Kinevane said the words 'anti-depressants'. The responses from the audience and possibly more importantly so, the silence that followed the words 'anti-depressants', is an example of how, in Ahmed's view, words can evoke images and how they can link to pain, anger, sadness, or a host of emotions that demands

²¹ Jim Culleton (Director of *Forgotten*, *Silent* and *Underneath*), interview by Kathryn Sinnott, July 11, 2018, transcript, Appendix 1, 62.

²² Pat Kinevane, *Silent and Forgotten* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2011), 10.

²³ Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd., 2014), 20.

a collective as well as an individual response.²⁴ McGoldrig continues to create the awkward space by asking “Anyone prepared to put their hand up and say that they are now or have in the past been on them? Why the fear to admit that?”²⁵ What I found most interesting about this is the choking feeling I felt, I could feel my throat and chest constrict as I waited to see if anyone would put up their hands. The lack of participation in this part was representative of the silence and stigma surrounding this issue. McGoldrig then goes on to suggest why there is that fear in putting your hand up:

You know why! In case people think you are somehow unhinged, unpredictable, nuts...A bit less dependable as a friend, a worker, a parent or son or daughter, or maybe even...A lover? And that makes you weak and this ‘weakness’ will be forever recorded on yer permanent record as a patient, citizen and a person.²⁶

During my interview with Kinevane, I asked him about this section: I call it the ‘anti-depressant’ section and he said that “it’s to get people to express themselves and to get any sort of opinion out of them [...], it’s to get people to talk about it but also to talk about the judgment of it, to get people to ponder on that, that we still judge people for taking medication to keep themselves level.”²⁷ I told Kinevane that when he asked people to put their hands up, I felt quite constricted and there was a nervous tightening in my chest. He admitted that he was “glad that it kind of arrested you and that you experienced that because it’s meant to be arresting.”²⁸ Kinevane hopes that the moment will “stay with people and hopefully they will start to not judge as much as before.”²⁹ McGoldrig talks about the time when a passer-by gave him fifty euro but never looked at him or had any contact with him.

²⁴ Ibid., 20.

²⁵ Pat Kinevane, *Silent and Forgotten* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2011), 10.

²⁶ Ibid., 10.

²⁷ Pat Kinevane (Writer and Performer of *Forgotten, Silent and Underneath*), interview by Kathryn Sinnott, July 19, 2018, transcript, Appendix 2, 77.

²⁸ Ibid., 77.

²⁹ Ibid., 77.

Tellingly, this reminded him of a doctor he had attended, “Reminded me of the first doctor I went to about my nerves. Never really caught me glance. Head down, writin out prescriptions to beat the band – I think he heard me.....but he didn’t listen!.”³⁰ In our society today, time is such a precious commodity that it is becoming increasingly difficult to spare time to really listen to someone. McGoldrig continues on his tirade, this time aiming his bitterness at the politicians. Kinevane is trying to point out the lack of humanity that exists around these issues and he says that this is a play with a political edge. He makes a strong point in terms of the politicians when McGoldrig says:

I have to laugh like...the ads they have out now – the HSE! Tryin to fool us into thinkin that they give a shit about us, about our Mental Health. [...] Am, ah sorry bout this now Minister but, ah, how can I? I’m gone way beyond the Cuckoo’s nest so I don’t know how to care for meself? Well, it doesn’t matter to us how loopy you are Sir, you must look after yourself, cos we can’t cos we don’t have the resources [...].³¹

Kinevane mentioned *A Vision for Change* policy during our interview, and as stated earlier in this chapter, he says he has no idea what is happening with it but things don’t seem to have changed. Kinevane’s concerns seem to be justified. McGoldrig succinctly gives his opinion, “I’m still in and out of Hospitals where there is still mould on the walls – Vision for Change my hole.”³²

Throughout the play, I found that I went through the full spectrum of emotions. Kinevane’s gestures and movement say more than words. When McGoldrig is talking about his brother, his gestures are filled with pain and even though the gestures are very simple, I felt such empathy for him and such sadness. He starts to cry and there is only silence and stillness. I recognise no sense of awkwardness from the audience. We are there with him. At one point, he is crying

³⁰ Pat Kinevane, *Silent and Forgotten* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2011), 9.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

³² *Ibid.*, 18.

using improvisation saying “I get terrified, where am I?” and he calls out to one of his chosen few in the audience. The audience member answers him and reassures him that she is still there and he knows then that he is not alone. It is deeply affecting, in ways that I have not experienced at other plays. At one point in the play he reacts to a person on the street, shouting “How dare you?”, and his voice is loud, deep, visceral, as if it is coming from the depth of his soul and there is a terrifying power to it. This voice hits me like an arrow and I feel anger and sadness reverberating inside of me. In relation to this affected response, Ahmed asserts that the feelings one experiences when faced with the other’s pain is what allows one to enter into a relationship with the other.³³ In this case, I felt very connected to the pain that McGoldrig was expressing and this links to a view expressed by Ahmed that the “the pain of others becomes ‘ours’, an appropriation that transforms and perhaps even neutralises their pain into our sadness.”³⁴ Some of these parts are improvised and are all the stronger because of it. Kinevane’s quest to shed light on this matter is still completely relevant. Although there is now more awareness of mental health issues, the stigma very much remains so that many people do not want any attention brought on to them because of it. It is highlighted when McGoldrig is speaking about his brother’s funeral:

And even when Pearse finally succeeded, the word was nowhere to be heard...and yet, it was there, bursting to escape, behind the front teeth of everybody’s downturned mouth.³⁵

This inability to say the word suicide would not have seemed out of place if it was back in the 1950s or even in the 1980s when Pearse died, and even today, one would have to question why there is still so much shame and stigma around this issue. It is an awful indictment that we have still so far to go in terms of making

³³ Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd., 2014), 21.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 21

³⁵ Pat Kinevane, *Silent and Forgotten* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2011), 12.

mental health issues a more ordinary topic and something that we do not need to be ashamed about. Kinevane highlights what not to say to someone who is suffering from a mental illness when McGoldrig tells us one of the worst things that people have said to him, “[...] and that’s a complete headwreck of headwrecks when people have said to me over the years ‘pull yourself together’ the worst thing ever.”³⁶ It really makes for thought-provoking reading and watching. I was so affected by this performance that in May, 2018, I joined the Darkness into Light walk, a fundraising event for those affected by suicide and self-harm. The play closes with McGoldrig getting underneath his blanket again and the line that closes the story is the same as the one that started the play, McGoldrig telling us “If anyone asks, I’m not here at all alright?”³⁷

It is worthwhile noting some of the critics’ reviews of *Silent* as they give a feel for how the play was received. Lyn Gardner writing for *The Guardian* in 2015 described *Silent* as “[...] virtuoso writing and performing”³⁸ and she also writes about how the title of Kinevane’s play is many-sided and that it deals with silence in many different shapes and forms not least in relation to societal concerns:

It’s the silence surrounding mental health and the fact that we extend easy sympathy to broken legs but fear broken hearts and minds – particularly if they are self-medicated with alcohol. It’s the silence surrounding the growing numbers of homeless in rich cities such as Dublin and London, and a failure to recognise that so many of us are just a couple of pay packets away from a downward spiral of disaster.³⁹

Ben Brantley writing in *The New York Times* draws attention to the fact that everyday huge numbers of us walk by homeless people on the street and we act as

³⁶ Ibid., 18.

³⁷ Ibid., 23.

³⁸ Lyn Gardner, “Silent review - from the street to the stars in virtuoso monologue,” *The Guardian*, July 14, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2015/jul/14/silent-review-pat-kinevane-soho-theatre-fishamble>.

³⁹ Ibid.

if we don't see them and he observes how at Kinevane's play the audience cannot hide:

And so you look away and walk faster. But of course you can't walk away. It's a small theater you're in, for one thing. [...] "Silent," which opened on Sunday night, insists that you pay heed to a homeless Dubliner who believes he has become invisible and inaudible.⁴⁰

Brantley continues by writing that Kinevane "specializes in giving voice to the voiceless."⁴¹ The social issues of *Silent* are as relevant now as when the play was written. The themes are universal and until society changes and the stigma is erased in relation to mental health and we manage to tackle the homelessness problem more effectively, I feel *Silent* will be relevant for many years to come.

⁴⁰ Ben Brantley, "Acting It Out, Like Valentino," *The New York Times*, September 9, 2012, <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/10/theater/reviews/silent-by-pat-kinevane-at-irish-arts-center.html>.

⁴¹ Ibid.

CHAPTER FOUR: *UNDERNEATH*

Underneath was first performed on 5th December 2014 as part of Limerick City of Culture. During our interview, I asked Kinevane about what had inspired him to write *Underneath*. Kinevane speaks about how even today when our minds are expanding and we are becoming more educated we still have so much concern for how we look.¹ He elaborates further by saying that we still respond to very shallow stimuli like looks and he finds that fascinating.² This issue really concerned him and that is why he wrote the play. Kinevane says that “men are now under far more pressure to look in a particular way and women are bombarded with it and I find that really upsetting because I think there is more to a man or a woman than the shell they are in.”³ The thought of what it must be like to be in the body of someone who is incredibly beautiful or someone who is disfigured facially really started to interest him.⁴ Kinevane’s research for the play turned into what became a journey of observation as he delved into the history of aesthetics and the history of beauty.⁵

The overall colour theme of *Underneath* is gold and this is in relation to the Egyptian flavour that runs through the play. Culleton remarked during our interview that:

“[...] it’s about what’s underneath the surface, how we judge people by what’s on the surface but also she’s underneath the ground of course in her tomb. She’s buried in a tomb like an Egyptian goddess or an Egyptian queen so yes the gold is inspired by that Egyptian element.”⁶

¹ Pat Kinevane (Writer and Performer of *Forgotten, Silent and Underneath*), interview by Kathryn Sinnott, July 19, 2018, transcript, Appendix 2, 78.

² Ibid., 78.

³ Ibid., 78.

⁴ Ibid., 78.

⁵ Ibid., 67.

⁶ Jim Culleton (Director of *Forgotten, Silent and Underneath*), interview by Kathryn Sinnott, July 11, 2018, transcript, Appendix 1, 64.

During a post-show discussion, Kinevane was asked why he chose to play the character in *Underneath* as a woman and he said that he wanted to address the mania to look perfect which seems to afflict women in particular. Kinevane explained that “It is so much harder to look a particular way, to age a particular way and because of this there is an incredible amount of pressure on women to fit in to a particular beauty.”⁷

The protagonist of the play is called Her. When I asked Kinevane why she does not have a name, he said “She does, I just didn’t tell anybody what it is! I purposefully didn’t give her a name because I wanted people to associate with her and get to know her as Her. [...] She doesn’t need a name to be respected or to be identified because she’s Her, she’s noble.”⁸ As the audience arrive, there is carnivalesque music playing as the first soundscape; then as we take our seats and the lights are dimmed, there is the sound of a strong wind blowing and the melodious notes of a harp. Upstage centre, there is a body crawling as if coming up from the earth to lean against the tomb. The body is wearing old, torn and raggy black clothing and her skin is painted black from head to toe; the whites of her eyes and her teeth are incredibly dramatic against the blackness. There is a gold-lightning strike mark on the side of her head and she has gold lips. This is Her. She lies on top of the tomb and says in a thick Cork accent “You never know what’s around the corner, do ya?”⁹ This moment is somewhat surreal and therefore very humorous. We are told from the start that she is dead and therefore the black body makes sense as it is decomposing. She moves gracefully towards downstage centre. Music returns and Her moves her hands almost as if making the image of a bird but also reminiscent of Egyptian hieroglyphics. Her breaks the fourth wall

⁷ *Underneath*, Post-show discussion, The Civic Theatre, Dublin, April 12, 2018.

⁸ Pat Kinevane (Writer and Performer of *Forgotten*, *Silent* and *Underneath*), interview by Kathryn Sinnott, July 19, 2018, transcript, Appendix 2, 79.

⁹ Pat Kinevane, *Underneath* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2015), 3.

almost straight away by asking someone in the audience their name and then asking “What’s around the corner, Annmarie?, what did you do today?” As in Kinevane’s other plays, the spontaneity and improvisation flows naturally. We are brought into the life of this character with such ease and immediacy. Her begins to tell her story. Her lived with her mother. Her’s father left the home when she was very young, there is no reason given. Her had a favourite uncle who always sang to her. When Her was nine she was struck by lightning as she sheltered from the rain under some cypress trees. The damage this did to her face and body was significant. She was in and out of hospital over the next three years, developed a stammer and was paralysed for a while. Her face was completely disfigured. When she eventually started secondary school she was bullied because of how she looked. Her’s life was a misery up until the arrival of Jasper, a new boy at the school, who was beautiful to look at and made friends with ease. Jasper and Her struck up a friendship, until eventually one day, he turned on her in the most cruel way in front of other students from the school who had spent their time bullying her. Her was devastated and she stayed off school for a year. The years passed by and eventually she moved to Cork city working night shifts at a hotel so that she wouldn’t be seen by many people. This worked out well until she met Jasper again and she decided that she had to leave Cork and would move to Dublin. In Dublin, she again worked night shifts in a local hotel. Her rented a flat where two prostitutes worked in the flats above her. They became friends. Her heard one of the ladies being beaten up one night and goes out to help becoming overcome with a wild violent rage that she takes out on the man. The man says he will return and will kill her. Months later, the man does return and it is Jasper. He murders Her in her flat, puts her body in the boot of his car and drives to Cobh to bury her in the tomb where we first meet her. Her is forty-eight years of age when she is

murdered. The night before she is killed we are told that she had the best night of her life stating:

HER. For my forty-eighth birthday [...]. The girls took me clubbing. The best night of my life. The last night of my life [...] Dancing like the girl I always wanted to be...[...] with no stammer, no temper, no disfigurement, no loneliness, nothing...just [...], dancing.¹⁰

I felt such sadness when these lines were said towards the end of the play. Her had waited her whole life to feel that she belonged. The fact that Kinevane is giving her these lines that speak so much about just being allowed to be, without all the attributes that made her stand out makes for a happy but heartbreaking moment: the first time she felt happy was at forty-eight years of age and the night before she died. The play ends with her foreseeing a terrible and painful death for Jasper.

The stage design is a black area that includes several gold items. There is a long, shiny, gold curtain hanging up that is used in several ways. Her uses it like a shield and also wraps herself up in it so that she looks like an Egyptian queen. Jasper wraps her body in it after he has killed her. There is the tomb covered in gold cloth and a gold lampshade that when used signifies that the character is now Jasper. There is a lighting change when Jasper appears. The light is blue in colour which Culleton explains “We thought maybe it would be a cool and icy cold kind of light so we went for a blue light for all his scenes. They are side-lit as well so we wanted that sense that his legs aren’t really lit for that, it’s only the top half of his body that is lit by the side light so you just see Jasper floating through the space.”¹¹ There is a roll of gold wallpaper which Jasper used to kill Her and a gold washing-up glove that Jasper used to clean up the flat after the murder. There is a gold magazine that is to represent the RTE Guide that Her uses a lot as she spends

¹⁰ Ibid., 27-28.

¹¹ Jim Culleton (Director of *Forgotten*, *Silent* and *Underneath*), interview by Kathryn Sinnott, July 11, 2018, transcript, Appendix 1, 66.

most of her time indoors. A gold scarf, needles and wool lie downstage left. There is an enormous amount of empathy felt for the character. Her moves with such femininity and grace and when I asked Culleton about this physicality, he remarked “we decided early on that he wasn’t going to try and feminise his voice or his look. There’s a few lines in there about how she looked like Joan Crawford, and she was always a broad and tall girl so that kind of explains that without us having to perform in that way.”¹² He also commented on the fact that theatre audiences will generally travel with you, for example the audience will generally go “oh right, he’s a woman who’s dead” and they will just go with it.¹³ *Underneath* was no exception. Writing in the Author’s Note of *Underneath*, Kinevane comments on how “Words have always fascinated me and more so when they are formed and released from the mouth. How joyful they can be, how hollow, how cruel.”¹⁴ He continues by saying that “[...] the power of uplifting or brutal words was akin to throwing, or not throwing, a grenade.”¹⁵ Kinevane writes about several themes in *Underneath* namely Cruelty, Beauty, Death and Loneliness which are all jumbled up in the life of Her.¹⁶ When I commented to Kinevane about the amount of empathy that I felt for Her and also the amount of empathy that comes from the audience for Her, Kinevane agreed and said he could sense that from the audience also. He went on to say that “he wanted people to understand that she doesn’t have to be physically as we call to our standards, beautiful, to be beautiful and the point is again, not to judge a book by its cover.”¹⁷ He is amazed at how people are passed over just because of how they look and all because they don’t fit some superficial idea of beauty.¹⁸ I was

¹² Ibid., 64.

¹³ Ibid., 64.

¹⁴ Pat Kinevane, “Author’s Note,” in *Underneath* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2015).

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Pat Kinevane (Writer and Performer of *Forgotten*, *Silent* and *Underneath*), interview by Kathryn Sinnott, July 19, 2018, transcript, Appendix 2, 79.

¹⁸ Ibid., 79.

deeply moved by this play and by the character of Her, possibly because I could connect with some of the issues. Even though she has her moments and some of these moments are violent and angry, there is also something so fragile and beautiful about Her. I felt emotions and physical sensations in my body that related to my feelings for her and I wanted to protect her. Simon Murray and John Keefe writing in *Physical Theatres A Critical Introduction* suggest that “It is part of the human condition to feel emotion physically and thus to understand the same human conditions in others, however portrayed”¹⁹ and this links to all three of Kinevane’s plays as he manages to create a special connection between character and audience that enabled me, certainly, to relate to similar human conditions even on a basic human level. The following performance analysis will focus on key moments that shed light on the plight of those who live on the fringes of society because they are judged by what’s on the surface rather than what lies underneath.

The main theme of this play is highlighted when Her asks the following question:

HER. I know we need beauty, all of us. Need the glimpse of an exquisite landscape or Venus shimmering in the palm of the Moon. But I have seen how human beauty works. How the surface is rewarded above skill. How we flock to be around the beautiful ones and go out of our way to help them, how they get promoted faster and forgiven sooner. How some use it to get exactly what they desire crushing everybody in their paths. So when was the last time you judged another...just because of this?²⁰

We have travelled with Her on her journey which all leads to this point: how she is judged based on her looks, how she has been marginalised for most of her life and how people didn’t want to get to know what was underneath. Kinevane writing this play, asks the question, when was the last time we judged another just because of

¹⁹ Simon Murray and John Keefe, *Physical Theatres - A Critical Introduction* (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2007), 39.

²⁰ Pat Kinevane, *Underneath* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2015), 27.

how they looked? This prejudice can start from such a young age. As Her reflects “Now the teenage years are hard enough God knows, but to be beautiful must make it triple easier for a boy or for a girl”:²¹ early on the beautiful and the plain are pitted against each other. Her goes through secondary school being called names like “Mashed-up monsterface mangirl”²² and when Jasper turns on her, the viciousness of his words are heart-breaking:

JASPER. I said nothin', you varicose bitch. The ugliest bitch I've ever met in my life. You are an example of why animals eat their young. If you played hide-and-seek nobody would look for you. You have a face like a hatful of assholes, you fucking gargoyle.²³

The intensity of Kinevane's performance at this point was broken by Her hearing someone talking in the audience and straight away she asked them their name and what they were talking about. The audience member said that they were saying how they could imagine being Her's friend and I think this demonstrates the connection between the audience and the character. I understood what that audience member meant because I could feel a strong bond with Her and such empathy. Because of his performance, one feels so much pain and grief for the character. Kinevane's method of breaking the fourth wall means that we can't hide in the dark space. We are invited to engage with the character and be a part of the politics of loneliness or the politics of beauty. At one stage, Her even manages to get the audience singing “My Heart Will Go On” and then makes fun of us for doing so. The ease of the audience's involvement creates a space where the audience believe and go on the journey with the character. Every movement the character makes is fully embodied from her fingertips to her toes. There is a rhythm about how the character moves and speaks that is common throughout the three plays.

²¹ Ibid., 7.

²² Ibid., 7.

²³ Ibid., 23.

Each word and gesture is given its moment. Murray and Keefe assert that “Gesture precedes knowledge, Gesture precedes thought, Gesture precedes language,”²⁴ and this is relevant to Kinevane who is an extremely physical actor and whose gestures are an integral part of the performance even more so when there are no words being spoken. This can also be said of *Forgotten* and *Silent*. Kinevane speaks about his philosophy of theatre arguing that gestures can say what a word cannot and that when he used to go to the theatre he would always understand the character by the physical embodiment and the story would come after.²⁵ This all combines to create a very engaging and thought provoking piece.

There is a moment in the performance when the lights change colour and all of a sudden Her is surrounded by smoke. It envelops her and we can't see anything of her until she peers through the smoke and a light is shone and lights up her face. The only part of her that is showing is her head as if it is disembodied peeping through the blanket of smoke. The rest of her is still covered by the smoke, hiding her. It is a visually stunning moment. It reminds me of when Her says “I always felt like I was born on the brink of the world,”²⁶ as in this moment there is nothing else but Her. Even though this stage effect is known in the play as a “soul-sucking moment”²⁷, I feel it is representative of all the loneliness that is swallowing Her up and what threatens to drown her when she is trying to keep her head above water. The image is a very powerful one. Kinevane talks about prejudice in this play and how we judge people by what is on the surface but he also shines a light on our materialistic superficial selves and our endless search for happiness when he introduces us to Sofie and Trevor. Sofie and Trevor are a

²⁴ Simon Murray and John Keefe, *Physical Theatres - A Critical Introduction* (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2007), 21.

²⁵ Pat Kinevane (Writer and Performer of *Forgotten*, *Silent* and *Underneath*), interview by Kathryn Sinnott, July 19, 2018, transcript, Appendix 2, 69.

²⁶ Pat Kinevane, *Underneath* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2015), 8.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 10.

couple on one of those reality television shows such as *A Place in the Sun*. The voice is from the character of the Television: “Sofie and Trevor have a budget of £560,000. They have been hunting for their dream home for twenty-seven years and are very particular about what they want.”²⁸ This is a very comedic part of the play as Sofie and Trevor spend thirty years looking for their dream home and “have rejected over six hundred properties in their brutal search for the house of their dreams!”²⁹ At the end of their search, they buy a pyramid in Egypt and Sofie locks them both inside it forever. Sofie and Trevor add much comedy and light relief to the performance whilst still deriding the materialistic standards we live by. In highlighting the issues of bullying, prejudice and the cruel nature of judging people only by how they look, Kinevane resorts to a philosophical outlook quite early on in the play but one which I think is very relevant here. Her says “I realise now that my body was just a shell, a kind host – it was never me. Just a loyal vessel. I should have cared less and laughed more.”³⁰ This message really shines a light on the importance of finding out what lies underneath because as Her says at the close of the play, “[...] ye never know what’s around the corner, do ya?”³¹

The following gives a brief indication as to how the critics’ responded to *Underneath*. Monica Insinga writing for *The Reviews Hub* asserts that “*Underneath* explores the eternal and yet extremely contemporary conflict between skin-deep beauty and those that go through life without it, constantly mocked, rejected and pushed aside.”³² *Underneath* invites the audience to question our priorities and how we can all be guilty of judging someone based purely on their appearance. Breaking the fourth wall plays a significant part in each of Kinevane’s

²⁸ Ibid., 5.

²⁹ Ibid., 24.

³⁰ Ibid., 11.

³¹ Ibid., 30.

³² Monica Insinga, “Underneath – Civic Theatre, Dublin,” *The Reviews Hub*, February 21, 2015, <https://www.thereviewshub.com/underneath-civic-theatre-dublin>.

three plays and is focused on by Dom O’Hanlon writing for *London Theatre* in relation to *Underneath* “The ease of which Kinevane can shift between trivial audience patter, that extends from getting to know the names of the assembled to chiding those who arrive late, to harrowing descriptions of life on the other side is remarkable.”³³ O’Hanlon also acknowledges that Kinevane’s “relationship to the audience is key to his performance style and the wider art of storytelling itself.”³⁴ In an article in the *Journal.ie*, Kinevane is described as “one of Ireland’s finest actors, and the man behind a trilogy of plays that explore what it is to be marginalised, a person on the edge, a person on the outside looking in” and the article continues saying “He will howl, he will laugh, he will cry, he will rage. He’ll reach out to people – to strangers – and bring them into his world.”³⁵

³³ Dom O’Hanlon, “Review of *Underneath* by Pat Kinevane and Fishamble at the Soho Theatre,” *London Theatre.co.uk*, November 25, 2016, <https://www.londontheatre.co.uk/reviews/review-of-underneath-by-pat-kinevane-and-fishamble-at-the-soho-theatre>.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Aoife Barry, “Pat Kinevane: ‘We can be terribly cruel so that drives me to try and make sense of people’,” *The Journal*, April 11, 2017, <http://www.thejournal.ie/pat-kinevane-interview-3335190-Apr2017>.

CONCLUSION

The plays *Forgotten*, *Silent* and *Underneath* were analysed in this dissertation and it found that all three plays successfully shed light on the marginalised. Kinevane's performances, the themes of the plays and his interaction with the audience ensure that the character and content of the plays become an integral and inescapable part of the audience experience. Bert O. States writes that "Art exists that one may recover the sensation of life, it exists to make one feel things"¹ and Kinevane certainly has created three plays that do just that. In an interview with the *Irish Examiner*, Kinevane says in relation to his shedding light on the marginalised that "If it's just one person you give impetus to, spark change in, that's huge to me. That's such a treasure for me."² In *Forgotten*, he successfully sheds light on the plight of the elderly living in care homes around Ireland. Flor, Dora, Eucharika and Gustus believe they have been forgotten about before they have actually left this world. Kinevane endows them with anger, humour, warmth, vulnerability, fear, happiness and a host of other emotions that encourage great empathy between character and audience member. He deals with their loneliness and their memories giving them the delicate attention they so rightly deserve. It is interesting that none of these characters receive visitors which Kinevane could easily have portrayed if he had chosen to but when I asked him about this, he commented that to a certain extent they are forgotten about and they tell their story to the imaginary visitor which is the audience.³ This succinctly portrays the idea of

¹ Bert O. States, *Great Reckonings in Little Rooms: On the Phenomenology of Theater* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1985), 21, [https://www-fulcrum-org.elib.tcd.ie/epubs/h989r369j?locale=en#/6/8\[xhtml00000004\]!/4/1:0](https://www-fulcrum-org.elib.tcd.ie/epubs/h989r369j?locale=en#/6/8[xhtml00000004]!/4/1:0).

² Alan O'Riordan, "Scratching the surface with Cobh's Pat Kinevane," *Irish Examiner*, November 13, 2015, <https://www.irishexaminer.com/lifestyle/artsfilmtv/scratching-the-surface-with-cobhs-pat-kinevane-364656.html>.

³ Pat Kinevane (Writer and Performer of *Forgotten*, *Silent* and *Underneath*), interview by Kathryn Sinnott, July 19, 2018, transcript, Appendix 2, 74.

people being forgotten about in homes and creates awareness of the fact that these are people with stories that are worth listening to.

In *Silent*, Kinevane successfully raises awareness of the marginalisation of those suffering from mental illness and homelessness. He also draws attention to how suicide is not discussed and how mental illness is often brushed under the carpet. Kinevane successfully highlights just how invisible homeless people are to the majority of us and how to a certain extent people walk by ignoring those who live on the streets hoping that the problem might just go away. However, the social context around this play has shown that the issues of mental illness and homelessness are not improving significantly.

Underneath is a powerful play telling the poignant story of Her who was never accepted because she did not fit the superficial idea of beauty and was judged on her looks rather than on what lies underneath the surface. Kinevane deftly raises awareness of our preoccupation with this superficial quality and the extent to which people are judged everyday based purely on their appearance. Even though Her has moments of real anger and hate, her fragile personality overrides this and it is a deeply affecting play where the cruelty of people really strikes a chord.

As previously mentioned, emotions can come from without and move inward making emotions a social and cultural issue rather than one based on interiority. Sara Ahmed writing in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* holds that “Emotions should not be regarded as psychological states, but as social and cultural practices.”⁴ The part of the performance where this is evident is when Kinevane breaks the fourth wall. Even though Kinevane only asks for one or two members of the audience to

⁴ Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 9.

give their names, it actually feels like he has asked for the names of everybody because the audience almost becomes like an individual travelling on the one journey. Looking at emotions as social and cultural practices allows us to gain a deeper understanding as to why Kinevane's work is so affecting: emotions are coming from the social collective and not just from within, therefore the experience is intensified and the tension is heightened. As Kinevane's work successfully sheds light on the marginalised, he leaves us with the realisation that all of us are only a stone's throw away from being pushed out to the margins ourselves.

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APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW WITH JIM CULLETON

Jim Culleton is the Artistic Director of Fishamble: The New Play Company and Director of *Forgotten*, *Silent* and *Underneath*.

This is a full transcript of the interview that took place in Dublin on the 11th July 2018.

Kathryn Sinnott. What is the production history of each play?

Jim Culleton. The relationship that I and Fishamble have with Pat is a long one. He was an actor in plays that we did a long time ago that he didn't write. And then he came to us about twenty two years ago with an idea for a play, loosely inspired by his experiences growing up in Cobh during the 1970s. It was about a bunch of teenagers in the 70s picking spuds in the fields and being implicated in the murder of somebody on the grounds of the convent and so he wrote that play called *The Nun's Wood* and we produced that in 1998. It was a great success and then we produced another play by Pat, *The Plains of Enna*. He then came to us with an idea for a solo show and talked about how he might write a play inspired by work he did in a geriatric ward while he was training to be a nurse before he became an actor. He was very moved by the different kinds of experiences people have at the end of their life and he wanted to say something about that, so that's where the idea for *Forgotten* came from. That took a couple of years to develop and we produced it in 2006. Then in around 2009 he said he had another idea for a play. He said he'd been very affected by meeting people who are homeless and he wanted to say something about that and to talk about mental health, things that we are quiet about and again that developed into *Silent*. We started that in 2011 and then in 2014, we premiered *Underneath*. That came about in a similar way: he came to us and said he wanted to write something about appearance and prejudice and bullying and how we judge people and he had this idea. I suppose each play takes 2 or 3 years to develop and to work on. It's a lovely process and of course Emma O'Kane is the choreographer and Denis Clohessy writes the music and Catherine Condell the designer come on board as we go along so we have a lovely little family of people. Gavin Kostick is dramaturg but for the early parts it's really me and Pat together so it's kind of something that develops slowly and sporadically in a really lovely and organic way.

KS. How much research goes into a show?

JC. A lot of research goes into it because Pat's a curious person and he's interested in human nature. He's interested in people and he talks to people and he finds out about people and so certainly in that way a lot of research goes into them. He taught himself a lot of Kabuki influenced stuff for *Forgotten* by looking at videos etc. He was inspired by people he knew and stories he knew. For *Silent*, Pat will talk to a lot of people who are homeless. He will sit down on the ground beside them and have a chat with them. So I think his research in that way is very extensive. He's not necessarily looking up statistics and reading books about what

he writes about but it's coming more from personal engagement with people and research in that way.

KS. Are other theatre companies / theatre artists doing similar work to Pat's?

JC. I think there are other fantastic performers as well of course but I think Pat is doing something kind of unique, which is different to what other people are doing. He's brave, he's bold and he's theatrical, he thinks visually and musically and he thinks in terms of words. He's got all that going on really so he's a very exciting theatre artist to work with. He's bursting with ideas.

KS. Do you see Pat's work as being socially engaged?

JC. I think so yes, he's very influenced by stories by people who are well, literally as the title of the plays suggest, people who are forgotten about, people who are suffering in ways that we are often very silent about, people being judged by the surface not by what's underneath, people living on the fringes of society, the underdog, people that have been cast aside. He's really interested in all that and that's why there's a really strong social message through the work. A lot of the work Fishamble does has that, that sense, hopefully, of humanity and of drawing the audience into a world that you might not experience all the time, to meet people you might cross the road to avoid and that you actually get brought into that world and Pat is very socially engaged in that way. We have performed *Forgotten* for hundreds of nurses that deal with geriatric patients and we have performed *Silent* for the Simon Community and also for audiences of homeless people. We really love to engage with communities and that is what he's writing about as well.

KS. There are some stunning visual effects. Are these performance techniques e.g. lighting, props, costume, music thought of and designed to also shine a light on the marginalised in society? Are they all connected?

JC. I suppose so, well, we hope that every aspect is part of the same production, the music, the lighting, the costume, that everything works towards working together and that everything complements each other. So certainly like the music, it's not like during a sad bit, we have sad music, it's not necessarily as simple as that but you're hoping that the themes of the story and the characters and the issues that we are looking at will be helped, that we help to tell that story through all the theatrical elements that are at our disposal.

KS. How well does Pat's accent and colloquialisms travel between countries?

JC. There are some things of course that are very colloquial and very specific to Ireland or specific to Cobh or to Cork even, that other people don't quite get. But you know with Pat's plays and other plays when we've toured internationally, especially when we've been in America or Australia, you think let's just slow it down a bit, or let's change the language or change the words and that can help. But normally we don't do that because it makes it less authentic and I think ultimately an audience would feel condescended to when you do that. I think they prefer to not quite get all the references but to know that what they are experiencing is very

truthful, authentic and real. I think Seamus Heaney had some line about the local and the universal and I think the more local you are sometimes and specific to a place, the more that has universal appeal because you are writing about something so specific, it's so real that it connects to people in a very universal way. And I think that is the case with Pat's plays, even though of course you miss a little in translation sometimes. When we've been to some countries like Bulgaria and Romania and countries like that, they have used surtitles and some people are reading it – it's quite extraordinary. But in many countries we don't do that, and it has just as engaging and visceral a reaction as ever. It's great going to different countries, you realise people are culturally different even though, of course, humans around the world are the same in most ways but there are cultural differences, like in *Underneath*, when he says to someone here in the audience 'are you abit freaked out talking to a dead woman?', most people laugh or they don't say much but we did it in Los Angeles earlier this year and they have no bother talking to a dead person whereas Irish people are more reserved.

KS. Why break the fourth wall? What are you hoping to achieve? Is it to connect the story with us and for us to go along with it and be pulled into the life of the character and to go along the journey with him?

JC. Yes, that's it exactly, a very good answer! All your observations are very good! It's exactly that, it is wanting to connect the audience with the characters. I was at the Theatre Forum conference recently and Fintan O'Toole was talking at it. He was saying with so much talk in the world about putting up walls and creating borders, that he said theatre for thousands of years has been an art form that has a wall in it, it has a border, it's called the fourth wall but it's been permeable and you can move through it, and you can reach out and connect with people on each side of the wall, and that maybe the world needs to take note of theatre's fourth wall and to ensure that those walls remain permeable and the borders don't disconnect us and they help connect us. I thought it was a really interesting observation. I suppose you want all of theatre to connect with an audience and if it's not doing that, it's not working. And I think with Pat as a performer and in terms of his approach to theatre, he really wants to connect with people in a really visceral, direct way. That's the reason he goes into the audience and he might touch someone's face or he'll talk to people and ask them their name. Names are so important to the plays especially in *Silent*, the way people view Tino's name and then people's names in the auditorium and when he calls out when he's lost or lonely and sees they are still there, all those moments are very special so yes it is a way to connect with the audience and to connect in a very real, direct, immediate way. And it's not just about chatting with them, it's not so much audience participation, no one is ever dragged out of their seat, people get nervous sometimes but it's really just about being in the space together and really coming on the journey with him and people love to go with that.

KS. What have you heard from audiences in their reactions to the plays?

JC. Thankfully, it's fantastic feedback, people really love the plays and respond so positively to them and I think because Pat is so open on stage as a performer and the plays are so honest and engaging and provocative and funny as well. You're given a good time even though the subject matter is so dark about suicide, depression and mental illness but you'll have a great night out and you really do have a great night out. Because he is so open and honest, people are very honest in turn, people tell us all sorts of things about their experiences and how they've connected to it. We were in Cambridge just a few days ago at a festival of new plays and a woman came up to us and said that she saw *Silent* and said she had had a relationship for three years with a man who was homeless throughout that time and it had brought it all to life and it was completely truthful and it brought her right back to him and that he was similarly a charismatic wonderful person but who had all sorts of issues going on. And when we did it for the Simon Community, we had people who were homeless in the audience and we had a post-show discussion afterwards and they were talking to Pat in character as if they were saying 'now Tino what you need to do is...go along and get help...in such a such a place, if you go on this day..it's the best day to go.' They were giving him advice etc. And it was kind of beautiful. We've had gorgeous connections with people. **(So they had really felt that he was Tino?),** oh yes absolutely.

OBSERVATIONS FROM PLAYS:

Forgotten

KS. Why is the overall colour theme red?

JC. I suppose when Pat and I started talking about *Forgotten*, he was thinking as the writer about the text and the story, the narrative and the themes and issues, and the idea of people who are forgotten about or at the edges of society. However, he's also thinking as a performer about the kind of characters he'll create and he's obviously got the performer's innate sense of characterisation as well and has the writer's instinct for that but he's also a very visual thinker. Right from the start while we were developing the characters and when he was writing the actual play, we were thinking about the look of the play and the colours. There are a few lines in the play as you know about how people as they get older are respected in Eastern culture traditionally whereas in Western civilisation that maybe isn't quite the case and so Japan is mentioned a lot. There's the little Geisha girl's song, that Gustus sings remembering his daughter doing it, there's talk of samurai and Pat is very influenced by Kabuki theatre and that is passed on obviously from father to son, so you can't train or learn it but you can study it and be influenced by it which he was. With all that in mind we were just thinking about the Japanese sun and the flag and the redness. So the play ends with a big red sun on the wall that he kind of disappears out of and so the idea of everything being red and being influenced by that Japanese flag is how it came about.

KS. What does the baby crying at the start and at the end represent? Is it to do with being reborn or birth and death or what's the significance of that?

JC. In general Pat is a very instinctual kind of person and I'm a bit more logical so a lot of those things are to do with his sense of what he wants the play to be about. How we're born and then we die and what happens in between and what the difference is. There's a line in the play about how babies are welcomed into the world and swaddled and as time passes and you leave the world but depending on your circumstances you may not be valued quite so much and just that sense of going through life and being born and dying and what the difference can be in those two experiences. I suppose that was what influenced the idea to have the sound of the baby crying and then there's the sound of a child counting as well and counting backwards to childhood, so there's that sense of just looking at maybe a 90 year span of some of these characters and remembering the moment they were born. They also talk about the moment they were teenagers and young adults and looking ahead at life and now they are at the end looking back at it, forwards and backwards, life and death.

KS. Why is Flor spitting on the floor and cleaning it?

JC. I think the idea with him, in our minds, is that he has got a version of OCD, he just likes to keep things clean. And he thinks of the home he's in, whether it is dirty or whether he might well be in a kind of retirement facility that's not very well tended or it might be in his mind but either way he feels it is not up to his cleanliness standards and so he goes around cleaning everything basically. It's kind of obsessive compulsive.

KS. What is the significance of the rose petals scattered on the floor? Is that just a visual image or do they signify something?

JC. In a way everything we have in it signifies something, but sometimes it's a little bit ambiguous about what that is and so we quite like to explain things sometimes or share that, but also they can be whatever you like really. They are kind of inspired by the cherry blossoms or some influence of Japanese blossom trees and the colour red coming through it and what it actually means emotionally in that moment I think is kind of ambiguous. It could be a number of things.

KS. What inspired the Gustus character to be performed by using Pat's back and a mask?

JC. When Pat was creating the play, he wanted one of the characters to have had a stroke, be a stroke victim, and so we were talking about Gustus and what we might do for him. Pat said what if he can't speak and what if his body is twisted and then the idea of recording his voice so that you're hearing his thought process but he's not actually speaking to us came about. Pat then started playing around with what he could do with his body physically in order to suggest that he has had a stroke, that his body was sort of changed in that way and he literally just turned his back, what if I do it back to front **(and why that particular mask? It is very odd**

looking), it is yeah, no we just tried out a few masks and that is the one we picked. We liked the fact that it was almost a half mask so it's like a Greek theatre mask, it covers half the head, not leaving his mouth free because it's on the back of his head, we tried to use lighting and the staging of it to help the audience believe it of course but what I like is that at the beginning the audience often say 'oh he's sitting backwards and has a mask on his head' but then as it goes on you forget that and you start to think the crease on the back of his neck is his mouth or his chin and his ears are the other way around and it's lovely when we can get that sense.

KS. Pat uses a similar rhythm when saying the text in each play, is there a reason for this? Also there is a similar length of time for various movement phrases in each play, why?

JC. Yes, I think each of the plays has a rhythm and it has a pace to it so there are bits which feel that the story needs to move along quicker and there are bits where we felt things needed a little bit of breathing space and sometimes he's just gauging an audiences' reaction and just seeing how an audience is responding to something before he moves on with them. Sometimes the audience might be getting ahead of us so we kind of speed along a bit more in order to keep ahead of them so I suppose it's trying to get the balance right **(I notice it like he's in every word, it's like he embodies every word that he says and that's like the rhythm of how he says it, the movement that he does, it's all just so precise and structured).** Yes, it is like a poet, a poet's care for every word, every word is very carefully chosen, very carefully edited and then the performance feels spontaneous but you know it's also not flippant or being made up on the spot, there's a lot of care in the choice of words and the way of expressing them.

KS. Why does Eucharis paint her face, chest and shoulder white?

JC. Again, there are a few reasons in our minds for that but if you as an audience member bring a reason to it, for us that is equally valid. In my mind she loves making herself up, she has that great story of how she goes to Arnotts every Saturday and she uses all the free products to do her hair, do her makeup, it's fantastic, she's a very normal character and your heart goes out to her. She loves putting on makeup but at the end of course it's more stylized and it's like a Japanese Kabuki inspired mask which she puts on at the end, which kind of unites the characters or brings them together in one kind of character at the end. Maybe it's suggestive of a death mask as well and it slightly stylizes it as he goes back and puts on the kimono at the end and heads off. It's like these four people that we have met are representing us all or everyone, that's kind of what is in my mind but if you have a different reason for it, that's also valid.

KS. And also it's really terrifying how he plays Flor up against the wall by the side of the audience, was that just to create a dramatic effect and to pinpoint the focus onto Flor or was there some other reason for making him...like he had the torch lighting up his face and he was banging on the railing, what were you trying to achieve?

JC. In our minds, it's partly just playing around with the theatre space and how we use it and how we use it to try and tell the stories that differentiate the characters a bit. So the two women are on each side of the stage in their pool of light and they stay in that and engage very directly with us. Gustus is far away from us, he's got his back turned to us, he's suffering and recovering from a stroke so he's kind of removed from us a bit. Flor then seems to be the one who's getting in amongst us and engaging with us, so he's the closest to us and in the auditorium at times. In our minds it's to capture the fact that he's suffering from dementia. Therefore, a lot of his flights of fancy and his imaginings and his reality are all kind of mixed up in his own version of reality in some way and so we like the idea that he goes into the audience and maybe he's talking to us, maybe we are his imaginary audience, maybe he thinks he's on a TV programme which he often imagines that he is and maybe he imagines that we are the audience in his head that he's talking to so that we get sucked into his world in a different way to the way we get sucked into the worlds of the other three characters.

KS. What do the red ribbons signify?

JC. There are two things when we are touring the kind of work we do with Pat. One is that it has to tour in a very compact way and that's the reason why we have been to 17 countries with his plays, we've been to about 80 venues in Ireland, and it can do that because it doesn't need a truck and a crew, it's fairly compact so anything we use in the set or on the stage has to be easy to transport. A roll of ribbon is very easy to transport! I suppose it's there because visually it ties into the Japanese sun, the petals, the kimono, the miniature doll that Dora has, the red colour of it and it changes the space. If we are performing the plays at venues and festivals and if people are seeing all three plays over three nights, we like for them to be taken by surprise when they come into the theatre each time and see that the red ribbons make it into a very different kind of space....black space for *Silent* and then all the gold for *Underneath* so it does that...and then I think there's a hint or a suggestion that maybe the ribbons are somehow a route up to heaven perhaps but people have seen all sorts of things in them and everyone's view is kind of interesting to hear, and we don't want to tie that down too much either.

Silent

KS. Why is the overall colour theme – silver/grey? Is it for the silver screen of silent movies?

JC. Yes, that's exactly it. We imagine it's like a Hollywood sound stage with the silver screen.

KS. Can you explain the pre-show music for the plays?

JC. The pre-show music for *Silent* is the sound of traffic and cars going by, it's a very naturalistic pre-show sound as if you are on the side of the street with him and then when the play starts we go into a much more imaginative musical kind of world. The pre-show for *Underneath* is like a carnival in the distance and we

imagine that people in another tomb are having a bit of party, that's a weird, strange, carnivalesque kind of thing and then for *Forgotten* it's the tsuke instrument and also the pre-show music is music from the 40s which is the era they are referring back to.

KS. Pat is able to create a space where there is no sense of awkwardness in the audience when there is silence and stillness – you can feel it with the energy in the audience that we are calm and we are with him, how do you think he manages to does this?

JC. The play is called *Silent* and it's about the silent movies that he imagines his brother's life/Rudolph Valentino, and it's also about issues we are silent about and that we don't talk about. It's also about allowing ourselves to be silent and to listen to each other so I think that is a theme through it. Pat as a performer and in terms of what the play is about, enjoys those moments where he's just with the audience and maybe it's quiet for a moment or he poses a question and lets it sit in the air and hang there for a moment. So I think it's kind of thematically driven in terms of what the play is about but I think as you know he's also a very charismatic performer that draws an audience in. So I think you're right, you do feel when you're watching it that he has the audience in the palm of his hand, and we'd go anywhere with him, any wild, mad direction he wants to go, we'd go with him.

KS. What is the significance of having the word 'suicide' unable to escape Tino's mouth? I suppose this leads back to what the play is about, I guess that it is again about the stigma that surrounds mental health and the silence that is around this whole area, I just think it's a significant thing in him doing it that way because these things are sort of trapped inside of us and we don't want people to know how we're feeling.

JC. A very good answer!

KS. That leads into the section where I think it's really interesting lighting-wise in the 'anti-depressant' section; Tino lies on the floor with light shining in his face creating a diagonal line of light across the stage, like a tightrope, and I was just trying to think, I mean obviously all your lighting is done for specific reasons so was there a significance to having him like he's in a tunnel and there is black around him and also he can't see anyone in the audience so can't see what the reaction is. I'm just wondering lighting-wise was it to create something like being in a void?

JC. Again, a very good answer! It's exactly that, it's someone in a void, it's someone on a tightrope, on the razor's edge, in a tunnel, all those images are really good as that is what we are going for in that moment. He's asking the audience to think about anti-depressants and to be honest and open if they wish, and then he makes the joke about how he can't see people if they have their hands up. An option was to put up the lights and to go let's have a chat about anti-depressants but obviously we wouldn't do that because that would be blatant and it would no longer be a safe kind of place. We kind of felt that when we are all in the dark,

there's a tiny glimmer of light, like a little bit of light in a dark place, that maybe people would be happy to either physically put up their hand or mentally to go with him in that they've been there or they've experienced it or they know someone who has experienced depression or the need for anti-depressants and would kind of engage in that conversation with him and that's fascinating. That changes every night. As you were saying the plays are very precise, there's a sense of the words being chosen very carefully and there's a little bit of leeway for it go off into a bit of improvisation and ad-libbing, not much because there's 50 or 60 sound and light cues, so it has to be very disciplined as a show, all three of them are and he has to stick to that but there is room to ad-lib in front of the audience. Some nights people say nothing and they are very silent about that and sometimes the floodgates open and people talk all about their experience of anti-depressants and depression in general. It can be amazing, it can be all sorts of ranges in between. Somebody saw the play a few times and said that they thought that seeing it more recently with the economy turning around and the country doing better that there was less talk of depression. They were saying that people are more in a mode of things are getting better now, we've got to keep everything intact and not admit to weakness as you might see it, whereas maybe when things had collapsed, people were more open to saying things were bad and we are suffering and there's no shame in talking about it. I don't know if there's truth in that but it is interesting certainly.

KS. Why are Tino's hands and feet on show at the end and at the start they are not?

JC. He has that recurring line in the play 'if anyone asks, I'm not here at all, alright?' 'you didn't see me, alright?' and it's about how we walk past people sometimes or don't notice people who are homeless perhaps. Of course at the end we realise that it's because he hasn't been there, he's actually been his ghost all along, saying goodbye to his little area of the street where he used to hang out and live. I think at the beginning we wanted that sense that it was rubble, that he wasn't there at all, a lump of something like you wouldn't know that someone was in it, then the blanket starts to move and he emerges and it's actually a person where we thought there was just a blanket. At the end there is not the same need to hide him, as maybe his hands and feet were there all along and we just didn't notice earlier on when we walked past, which was the idea.

KS. When he lies on the floor, growling like an animal, does he have the suicide note in his mouth? And why put it into his mouth? Is it like he is choking on the words and can't get them out?

JC. That's an interesting thought. Yes, it is in his mouth. You think it might be his brother's and then you realise it's his. He could have just read it out but because we recorded it, the voice-over took care of telling us what was in it, but they were the words coming out of his mouth so we put it in his mouth to show that it was his words. But also to show that sometimes again, in terms of the whole notion of silence and being silent about things, that maybe it's we can hear the note but it's

almost too much to speak it but he's got the note in his mouth to suggest that it is something coming out of his mouth.

Underneath

KS. Why is the overall colour theme – gold? Is it in relation to the whole Egyptian theme?

JC. That's it exactly, I like the fact that they all have different colours, somebody who couldn't remember the names of the plays once said to me, 'I've seen the red one and the silver one but I haven't seen the gold one yet.' It's completely to do with that, we're underneath, you know it's about what's underneath the surface, how we judge people by what's on the surface but also she's underneath the ground of course in her tomb. She's buried in a tomb like an Egyptian goddess or an Egyptian queen so, yes, the gold is inspired by that Egyptian element.

KS. Why are her teeth left so white in comparison to the rest of her body? Obviously it creates a really good image, but is it a bit like Beckett's *Not I*, because with that you only see the teeth. In this, you see his eyes popping out and then these big white teeth and I just think it's interesting that considering she's supposed to be dead, you could have blackened out the teeth, was there a reason for leaving them stand out so much?

JC. Yes, I suppose her skin is black and decomposing and decaying and turning into ash, it's obviously not the way somebody is when they're dead, it's a theatrical or imaginative way of showing that. We thought that as she was so concerned with how she looked and her skin, if we didn't see her skin but yet we still saw her eyes and her mouth so the ways that she communicates with us are still visible to us, that's really where it came from, nothing more than that.

KS. Why do you think Pat chose to be a woman in this piece?

JC. Well he wanted to write about how people are perceived by how they look and how a disability can affect someone's life and men of course are judged by how they look as well and a disability is as likely or unlikely to affect their view of themselves. I think he thought it was a story in his mind that a female character might tell and of course in *Forgotten* he plays two men and two women, in *Silent* he plays a male character but there are lots of female characters that he plays as well. He's got a great ability, a great androgynous quality that means he's able to play men or women. We decided early on that he wasn't going to try and feminise his voice or his look. There's a few lines in there about how she looked like Joan Crawford, and she was always a broad girl and a tall girl so that kind of explains that a bit without us having to then perform in that way. Funny, at the beginning I thought would people go with that or would people wonder but generally people go 'oh right he's a woman who's dead' and that's the great thing about theatre isn't it – you say 'I'm a dead woman' and we're on for that.

KS. Actually that's something about women, his portrayal of the women in *Silent* is very different to *Underneath*. In *Underneath* you sort of fall in love with her and you really go with her and feel so much empathy, whereas in *Silent* it's quite a negative portrayal of every woman that he meets and I just think why?...was there no woman that was caring? Each woman is portrayed very harshly. Why did he have that?

JC. Yes, we did discuss that and a lot of the women give him a very hard time, there's his friend Gretta who's a lovely person but doesn't have a huge role in it but she's a really lovely example of a female character in it. There are lines in it to suggest that if you asked Judy, his ex-wife, about it that she'd have a very different version of events. He's giving out about her and saying she was appalling and she treated him so badly but he also then describes how he drops the baby and she comes home and finds him drunk and the baby has fallen on the floor, so you do catch glimpses that her view of things would be very different and this is his view but it's not necessarily a truthful view, it's biased really. It is an interesting point certainly.

KS. Her surrounded by smoke – can only see her head lit up and peeping through – what is this to represent? Is this a soul-sucking moment? I think visually it is actually stunning. Is it showing that she is peering out from death or that there is a soul being sucked in from somewhere else?

JC. Oh yes, that's interesting. Yes, so I suppose there are souls being brought to their death or a new birth happening and then similar to that there are those two moments when there's just a thin veil of light and his face is in the light. One of the possible titles for the play very early on was Veil, like that he was looking at us through a thin veil, like a gossamer veil between life and death. He does say during that 'how I am so close to you and yet because of death we're torn asunder' and we actually called the lighting state 'Asunder', we'd have nicknames for all of the lighting states so that we know what they are ourselves. It's meant to capture that divide between someone who is alive and who's dead but it's a very thin one, you can almost get through it. I'm glad you think its visually interesting because we really like that state as well and that's the reason it's there, to show the thin veil and how close the living and the dead are and we can almost touch but ultimately we're alive and we'll leave the theatre and she will stay in her tomb.

KS. 'I was nine....' – using long gold curtain like a shield – is this what she is trying to do? She uses the curtain in different ways, what is the purpose of it?

JC. So, there's a line about where everything gold are the things that Jasper has thrown in the tomb after the murder, so it's all the stuff covered in blood, like the gold lampshade becomes the helmet for Jasper, the rubber glove is the glove that he uses to clean the place and the gold cloth is meant to be the curtains that he wraps her body in and throws in with her and that's kind of the logical naturalistic version of it. Of course it then becomes as you say like she wraps herself in one of the gold curtains and becomes Nefertiti at one point and then at the end Trevor puts

it on his head like Tutankhamun or something and it's used to cover herself in a veil when she buys the owl brooch. Earlier on in the lightning story there's a line that talks about how she's playing behind the curtains and peeping out from between the curtains and looking out the window, so we can use it as the curtain she's peeping out of and she's dancing with...**(she's doing a million different things with it and also she has a magazine and at one stage she has it around her head, was it a magazine or was it more than that, what is she using it for?)** So that is meant to be the RTE Guide because she spends a lot of time indoors and she looks at her TV and I think when she uses it behind her head, it's having a laugh at the expense of the fashion programmes on TV because she puts it up as if she's the presenter wearing a ridiculous looking collar or outfit.

KS. What does the blue light represent? Is it just for change of character to Jasper?

JC. Yes, it really is just that. We thought we'd have a different colour light and a particular look for his scenes. And he's got white hair and is like something out of a Merchant-Ivory film and we thought maybe it would be a cool and icy cold kind of light so we went for a blue light for all his scenes. They are side lit as well so we wanted that sense that his legs aren't really lit for that, it's only the top half of his body that is lit by the side light so you just see Jasper floating through the space and hopefully it works well.

KS. What inspired the music, I found it difficult to place it? Was it Egyptian in theme? I think at the start it's kind of carnival type music.

JC. Yes, the pre-show is kind of carnival music. So Denis Clohessy has written the music for *Silent* and *Underneath* and yes the music is certainly influenced by North African and Egyptian kind of cadence and harmonies. There is a hint of that location.

KS. Would there ever have been a thought that Pat would have liked to have...say for example in *Forgotten*, three other actors playing the parts? Or was it always his intention to have a solo show?

JC. Yes, it was his intention to create a solo show and he had a story in mind that was based on something else he had written that he wanted to use as the centre for *Forgotten* which involved a number of characters. He thought maybe to play four characters himself would be interesting and it would allow him to explore a range of people in that age group in different retirement homes, so it was always intended for that. I think he'd be open to somebody doing it with four different actors eventually. At the moment we are happy with doing it ourselves.

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW WITH PAT KINEVANE

Pat Kinevane is the writer and performer of *Forgotten*, *Silent* and *Underneath*. This is a full transcript of the interview that took place in Dublin on the 19th July 2018.

Kathryn Sinnott. How did you research each play?

Pat Kinevane. They were all researched in very different ways. I had a lot of help with *Forgotten*. I had a lot of sources to go to and a lot of people who worked with elderly people all their lives. I talked to a lot of elderly people and I used examples in my family of people growing old and their journeys, so I did a lot of research that way. It was very smooth and it was very sensitive. *Silent* was utterly different. *Silent* was much more sporadic and more raw and the best way I found of researching was that I read some reports as in government reports, but also academic reports, and I talked to people face to face. Everyone is protected, all genders have been changed, all stories have been hidden and there's so much fiction there that no one would know. *Underneath* was a very different thing altogether. More of a journey of observation, going into the history of aesthetics and the history of beauty and how it repeats itself constantly. How people fall constantly for it, and how people can rise with it, so it was done in very different ways for each piece.

KS. You have been touring the plays for many years now, how do you keep the plays fresh? Is it because you think the subject matter is still highly relevant?

PK. Number one is the way they are programmed. Fishamble are amazing to me and always have been. They will programme only a certain amount of performances and they'll space them out in a particular way. At this stage it's almost like second nature to them. At the start, we had to get used to having one, then another, and then the third one and we had to find a way of orchestrating that. Fishamble understands that there has to be a certain amount of break between them. There has to be a pace set so that I can recharge and then I can attack them with full energy. One of the longest runs we ever did was four weeks in London, whereas in the Peacock when we did it there, they gave us space to have an easy pace with a certain amount of performances. That meant you could give the audience full tilt on it and then it's easier to keep it fresh. When I have the break in between, I totally wipe my head clean of them, I don't think of them at all and then when I come back into them, the experience I've had in between informs it. Each time I have to say to myself that I will never complain about the work. It's such a huge opportunity to attack the work and to be immersed in the work and to give the viewer a very unique experience than the person who saw the show two weeks ago. Each performance to me is like a duty of care that is attacked in a different way every time. So you never see the same show. I am always very aware of

delivering the work so that the work is there, it's not taken for granted, it doesn't slide and get lazy, that it's there because I'm a worker.

KS. Do you think your work has raised the profile of and sheds light on those who are forgotten in society?

PK. I hope so. I always said if one person per performance comes out considering their own prism of the world and if the prism is out of focus, that they actually sharpen it, so that it's balanced with all of the colours. I suppose it's like acupuncture in that people talk about that there's a flow, that it repairs the flow of energy through your body and the same in life. We all have to, I have to do it constantly, I have to address my flow of energy and what I'm giving out and what I'm taking in even just towards anyone we meet during our day for example someone in a shop, somebody in a garage. People call it work life balance now, that flow of energy between us all. I'm fascinated on how you can make your day worse or better by having that, be it with somebody who's homeless, somebody you meet on the street with a facial deformity, somebody you meet on the street who is elderly, whatever it is or somebody who has none of those things. I suppose it's recognition of the divine in everybody and recognition that everybody has worries and cares and joys, nobody gets away with it. To understand that we are all in it together and to make it easy on ourselves. There is an old saying 'would you ever conduct yourself', we are full orchestras and we have to conduct it, we can't expect everybody else to do it. We are all responsible for what we are putting out and for what we are taking in. What I really hope is that somebody would sharpen their focus a bit, so that that is the way it is meant to be, all the colours in harmony together. We all have to constantly do it. When you get a collective doing it, it makes it stronger. You feel that you're supported and it makes for a better existence for everybody.

KS. Do you see your work as being socially engaged?

PK. I really like the fact and I am very respectful of the fact that people see it as socially engaged. I never really set out for it to be that way. I set out to give people the opportunity and make an opportunity available to people through the medium of theatre, which I think is a very powerful medium, and is so simplistic. The beautiful thing about theatre is that it is a two-way street. I'm a great believer in shattering the elitism of theatre, I come from a working class background, I always did and I don't believe in elitist theatre. I believe in theatre where everyone feels comfortable when they go into a theatre, that they have just as much right to be there and to comment on it as the person who goes to everything. I think theatre is a great leveller, and for that reason I wanted to make it a place, particularly through my work and my work with Fishamble, to give people an opportunity to just sharpen themselves, be it good or bad. To look at the world in a different way for 90 minutes or to consider that the world and that all of our opinions need to be shifted and pushed in different ways. The worst thing we can do to ourselves is to settle and believe that our Gospel is according to us and nobody else. It has to shift for good and for bad and it's hard to do it sometimes. I think sometimes we have to

consider that our own Gospel has to change in order for us to evolve and in order for us to get to a place of compassion. I believe that we are flawed but I believe that our capacity for compassion is huge.

KS. You use theatrical performance techniques for example Kabuki, how do these techniques, as opposed to the text, help focus the light on those who are marginalised in society?

PK. That's a really good question. I was always interested in the physical as well as the spoken even when I started off. I would have been very influenced by a lot of European theatre. Even when we were touring, we went to Romania a few times with *Forgotten* and *Silent* and going to watch the state theatre and the way they use their bodies and the way they use both, I was always fascinated by it. I remember as a young man, people would say 'oh, he's a very physical actor' but as far as I was concerned it was my duty to be a physical actor because I was embodying things. When I started working by myself, I thought do you know what, I am and I always will be because that is the only way I can express myself. I don't want to stand there and I have great respect for people who can stand still and capture a story but my idea and my philosophy of theatre was always that sometimes a gesture can say things that a word can't. You can set something off in an audience member's mind that gives them exclusive interpretation and nobody else can own that because the gesture can be my finger doing that (*shows a movement*). I have an idea of when I'm performing what that means but they can take what they want from that and then it can become a kaleidoscope to everybody. So I suppose to answer your question, the techniques that are used are to keep the pieces moving, to keep the narrative moving in and out of people's conceptual minds so they are constantly using their vision and their ears because light travels faster than sound to me. I always remember going to the theatre and I'd always get the character through the physical embodiment of it and then the rest was the story. That is why I celebrated Rudolph Valentino in *Silent* because he was all about that, he wasn't about language, he was all about the flick of an eyebrow, the movement of a mouth, the physical representation of ecstasy and woe and everything through the face and the body.

KS. Your interaction with the audience is so special. Even though you've only picked two people out of the audience, I feel you may as well have picked all of us as we are all on that journey with you because there is such a beautiful energy between the audience and you. Can you talk a little about it?

PK. They are conduits actually. They are the conduits for everybody else to come through. That only happened by half accident, half Jim Culleton and half me messing around and trying something. It was an organic thing. Jim Culleton encouraged it more and it's funny because sometimes it feels okay, sometimes it feels great, and sometimes it feels limp and then other people don't like it. I suppose at this stage we've been doing it for so long that we feel it's better than alienating an audience. I'd rather err on the side of bringing them closer with that device but sometimes it helps me as a performer also. It makes me feel more

secure sometimes when I build up a thing with the audience and I go 'What's your name?' because then I have a connection so any sort of apprehensions I have or if I'm a little bit fearful on the night, it helps me too. It's a two-way street. **The interactions that you do enable the audience to go on the character's journey, I feel that I am not just standing back with a barrier between me and you, I am actually so in it that I believe totally in the character forgetting nearly that you are an actor.** Well, thank you because that is the intention. I remember the night we were opening *Underneath* in Limerick. I remember feeling so insecure and I said to Jim 'this isn't going to work' and he said 'please believe me, go out and do it'. I was afraid that people wouldn't go into the tomb with her, and that's what I wanted, my intention was always for people to come in almost on a roller coaster of sound at the start and then just to come in and find themselves in this person's grave. So the credit on it is actually down again to a theatre audience because theatre audiences do things that a film audience won't do. A theatre audience, if you say look at all of the feathers around me and there's no feathers, they will see the feathers. That night gave me my biggest gift because I remember saying after the show, because it went really well, and I remember saying to Jim and he said 'It's okay Pat, they went in there with you, they went in to meet her.' It's a risk and some won't go with you but most will.

KS. What type of feedback have you received from audience members? Are there any particular comments that stand out to you?

PK. With *Forgotten*, it's mostly people who are now or have been on a journey with their elderly parents and how they have survived that or how they are immersed in it. They are either very raw and will express and talk about that or else that they've healed and are reminiscent. The commentaries coming from the two different sets are utterly different yet they are all about the same thing. They are all about the letting go of the parent, or the aunt or the uncle but usually the parent and the struggle there and the dichotomies. *Silent* fascinates me because people want to talk about what's in their head, they want to talk about experiences in their families of people who are struggling or who have struggled with their mental health and the absolute carnage that has happened in their families because of that. Also suicide, the amount of people who have encountered it now which is much more so than ever before and particularly around the Celtic Tiger and the crash, that's something that hasn't even been talked about at all. The amount of people who lost their lives then and we're asked conveniently now to move on and recover without remembering all those people. I think we are going to have to go back on that, go back and honour all of those people. They were perfectly balanced in their lives and suddenly they lost their livelihood and they are the people that we haven't even calibrated. There's so many people and daughters and sons of those people that did the same because they weren't used to upheaval in their lives. We haven't even started to count that yet and that was really seminal for me in *Silent*.

Underneath...you know people get angry with me as well on all those things. That's fine because I'm an open book on that because if you open up subject matter like that, you have to take responsibility for opening it up. For example,

Underneath, some people are really comforted by it and other people are really disturbed by it. I remember working at a festival abroad and this woman came up to me after, who was working at the show and said 'I really can't talk to you, I can't talk to you for a few days, I find this very disturbing' but that's ok because that is your relationship with the other world or with your impending mortality. She said 'you've opened up something in me that I didn't want opened up' and then other people are very kind. Sometimes, there's just a slight resentment with the material for opening up stuff that people didn't want to address and I understand that but I can't not talk about it because that is what theatre is about. It's about addressing rather than standing there with a silent audience and a silent performer. You have to address and maybe also dilute negative power, dilute it by talking about it. Throw theatre light on darkness.

KS. Is that why you use so much humour in the plays?

PK. Yes, well we have to, don't we? Really glad you said that because the Irish are brilliant. I notice when we go abroad in parts of America that the audiences underestimate their sense of humour. Irony is a different thing but sense of humour is all around the place. Our irony and our sharpness is amazing, we can understand it ourselves and relish it but we also have an absolute devastating irreverence to darkness and death because we see the absurdity of things and all of that mad sort of irreverence to ritual and yet we're very ritualistic. We can also laugh at ourselves when we do it and so in that sense theatre is a ritual that you're doing it, you're presenting it. I hear people sometimes laughing at a really profound moment, some of it is nervous and some of it maybe it's their first time even hearing it. It's a twisted compliment because they may be totally immersed in it more than anyone else or maybe it's the first time they've heard something said, I don't know.

OBSERVATIONS FROM PLAYS

Forgotten

KS. What inspired you to write *Forgotten*?

PK. What inspired me to write *Forgotten* was an aunt of mine in around 2000, she was dying, she was slipping away slowly. She was elderly and frail so I went down to see her in Limerick. I went to see her in a beautiful home down there and the men and the women were segregated in the home. I saw this long line of beds with all these beautiful old ladies in them, some of them were asleep, some of them were sitting up, some of them had their hair done and some of them had their lipstick on. I remember going into her and she was chatting to me and then she would nod off and I remember looking down the ward and remember saying to myself oh my god, I wonder how many of these old ladies and men in the other ward had been forgotten about, like do they have anybody visiting them or what are their lives like because it was homogenous the whole thing. I remember thinking everybody has such a different life here, it would be amazing to delve into that and that was the first thing really that came into my head. That was in my head and I wasn't going to write anything and then my son was born that year and I remember

thinking even as a child, even as a six month old baby that he was less of a novelty than a newborn. As it went on, I started to notice the difference between the cute factor and all that. It all came into line in my head and then that's really what I suppose the inspiration was and I wanted to examine the whole kind of facile nature of how we treat things and people and how disposable we are, if that makes sense, so that's where the inspiration came from.

KS. The Japanese influence is very strong in this play and I know it's the link with the Eastern culture of how they look after their elderly and the three generational family, is that why you chose to have the Japanese influence in *Forgotten*?

PK. I was always kind of fascinated by Asian theatre anyway. I always had an inexplicable sort of a draw to it. I remember going to Thailand in 1992 and I went to see this big traditional show and I remember looking at it thinking wow, just the whole gesture, the whole colour and this was just an ordinary show for families to go see but even at that it kind of fulfilled something in me looking at it. I remember thinking there's something quite mystical about this but there's also something quite comforting in it. Utterly different theatre but I always had Chinese theatre in my head back to a time when I was a young fella. If theatre came to Cork city, anything exotic, I would go see it just to be taken away somewhere else. So I started to marry this in my head and thought you know this is mad. I remember thinking why am I being drawn to Japan, why am I being drawn to that style. I wasn't trying to imitate any particular style, I was very much interested in borrowing facets of Kabuki and Noh and actually just making it my own. Obviously I can't train in Kabuki because it's all in the family circle, so I actually studied a lot of Kabuki performances and I was really drawn into the whole world of voice and spectacle and massive expression. It just started to fit in place really for me also because of the whole idea of the Onnagata in Kabuki theatre where the man can play a female's part and it's not even questioned. It's like early Shakespeare in that it's an unwritten rule so it started to make sense for me as the script started to hone itself with Dora and Eucharis. I thought, you know it's okay just enter them, because it's not as if it's a male actor pretending to be a woman, it's actually the actor becomes the woman and the gender is immaterial. Then you just slide in and out of it as I kind of witnessed with the exactitude of a lot of the stuff I was watching and reading a lot about Kabuki. It's actually like there's an absolute osmosis there of the character and the detail and the preparation that goes into it and each performance and also this, which I didn't use, but arriving at the voice of the woman or the female character.

KS. What do the marks on Flor's body represent? There are lines on his chest and on his legs almost reminding me of whip marks.

PK. When I did *Forgotten* first, I used to actually wear the Japanese script for *Forgotten* on his body and that kind of evolved, I might go back to that sometime, but I think it's more that they are open to interpretation. I suppose they are parts of what makes him strong, whatever battles he had but they are also signs of his

vulnerability, do you know what I mean, and the audience can interpret, they can start to build that narrative themselves, it's a visual narrative and it's up to them to take it where they want to take it.

KS. When Flor lies on the floor bathed in blue light and his hands and arms move like swans, what were you trying to achieve here?

PK. I think it's a moment for him of total immersion. It's a very protective moment for him. I think in his mind he goes back to this image of Our Lady. He goes back to the image of her appearing to him constantly and he sees her, so nobody can disprove it, but she brings with her for him symbols of strength and beauty and grace and these are what make him get up off the floor again. I suppose at that moment he's telling of something that happens to him but it's quite fantastical as far as the audience are concerned. Actually I wonder when people are in a state of altered consciousness especially if your mind is straying as you age, that's a reality and that's his reality, but in that moment and thank you for picking out that piece because that piece in *Forgotten* for me can be very very difficult sometimes. I find that it depends on my day, other times its full of strength, but other times I can be very vulnerable doing that, because it's like a reality for him and it's him telling us where he's safest and he is safest with this divine mother figure. Maybe she's his own mother passed on, he calls her Holy Mary but it's that kind of divinity. Also I believe that even though Flor is of that generation, I believe that he would probably have had the greatest respect for women. When Dora asks him to meet her, she does it like a kind of cheeky thing, as a young man he would have been a very honourable man, a farmer, uncomplicated, beautiful man but she takes advantage of that and that actually is the start of his demise when she dismisses him. I think that leaves an indelible effect on his life and she just so happens to be from an upper class background as well which makes it kind of worse for him. I always felt that even though he doesn't elaborate on it, that Flor would be very wise to the story of Our Lord, very wise to story of the strong women in the bible. I'd say he has a narrative in his head that he actually reveres that and he puts them on the right pedestal that's there for him and that's why he goes to her.

KS. At the end, Flor picks up handfuls of the red petals and stands in front of the audience, letting them fall through his fingers, why? What does it represent? Is it like a goodbye or does it go deeper than that?

PK. That's a really nice way of putting it actually, it is a goodbye, but I think it's a kind of cyclical thing. It's a goodbye but it's also him entering something else. It's like no matter what I do, I go, the character goes, but the cherry blossoms will always fall. It will always happen but they're cleansing and it's just a simple thing. There's obviously like an incantation there or a ritual that he performs to himself and to others. It's a thank you, it's a goodbye, but it's also a moment where again the audience can just actually interpret that visually. Some people are over there and some people are there so they get a very different view of it. For some person it might be a very sad moment, some people might find it comforting so it depends really on where you are and the day you're having.

KS. Does Flor commit suicide at the end?

PK. He's been stocking up on his tablets, whether he actually does it or not is open to interpretation. That could be part of the fantasy that he has, to go to his mother in the sky, or it could be a reality there. Sometimes when I do it, I think yeah absolutely he does, in his reality he does it, other times I think, the audience are actually in on something, maybe they've been duped, I always leave it open. I feel it's him taking control of the end of his life as well, he's kind of going, you know what, I am very happy now, I've done everything I want to do and now it's time for me to go. I've said what I've had to say, I thank you imaginary visitors that have come but I am going now and I am going to go and the swans are going to appear again as I go. It's open to interpretation.

KS. In all of the plays you use a similar rhythm when speaking and moving - why? For example, every word has its moment and it's fully embodied, there is rhythm to it that I can't really describe.

PK. Thank you for taking such attention on it because to me there are parts of it that have to be thrown away, everything can't be dark chocolate. It can't be because then it will just start getting too high-falutin' and pretentious but the words of the pieces come and go really. Sometimes pieces that I would throw away, the next performance they are the pieces that I would go to, to give attention to. I find that my only way of keeping it fresh is to actually give due attention to a particular passage or if it is one that will constantly demand my attention it will get it. I suppose I was always very drawn to the word and was lucky as a young man to work with such brilliant playwrights, at the Abbey and the Peacock in particular. You were exposed constantly to new writing so even though I find it hard to take the writing mantle seriously for myself, I would always have revered other people's words and given them the time and the stretch and the rhythms they deserve, of what I interpret them to be, it's almost a force of habit, it went in out of respect really. It's almost as if somebody else has written it when I go to perform. It's just a respect for that the audience are always ahead of you, you don't have to explain to them but when a section demands a theatricality of it and a shifting and a tone then you enter it.

KS. How come there are no visitors in *Forgotten*? Is it because they are forgotten about? If you had wanted to include visitors in some way you could have.

PK. That's a really good point. I think they are to a certain extent forgotten about. But I think they almost in a strange way visit each other. As in they are all connected by one big story, they tell the audience that story so they tell the imaginary visitor. Like Eucharis talks to the people sometimes saying 'Hiya, thanks for coming to visit me', now whether she's making it up or not, who knows. In a way

the story is like the strong linear story in your life which is very important to you and mine is to me and sometimes we find ourselves repeating it over and over again, saying this major thing happened etc. which informed my entire life. Maybe in a way we are all culpable of that and we all have to make sense of our major biographical story in order to find all those landmarks and give our own kind of novel its value. In a way they are telling the story, in some way shape or form they are telling it in completely different locations but it has been vital but it's also been so beautiful but brutal for all of them that the narrative will always have to be told. A lot of old people that I grew up with I notice want to tell their story, everyone wants to be heard don't they? As people grow older, fewer people are listening to them, so it's important that they tell even just for the sheer fact of feeling a little bit wanted or important in the world. That someone is interested in their story. We all need that.

KS. The costumes on each character are interesting, what is behind the choices you made?

PK. When we started working on the piece, I really wanted the neutrality of all the characters to be there, that we knew that it was a man playing the characters. We knew he would be stripped down to just this vessel, this body, and it's the addition of things that delineate the different characters, the addition of just simple but distinctive things. I didn't know what to do and then I had worked with a beautiful friend of mine, she wasn't a theatre costume designer but she's probably one of the best stylists in the country. She's a fashion stylist, her name is Catherine Condell and she's a really good friend of mine. We started discussing stuff and I asked her would she be interested in styling this and so we messed around with stuff and she styled the piece in a very alternative way. For example that piece of fabric that Dora wears is all one piece of fabric, we messed around with how Dora would use it. Catherine got that fabric from a friend of hers, Peter O'Brien, he gave it to us and it's still there, to me it's Dora, she would have bought fine things for herself and so it turns into a dress, it turns into her life, it turns into her dotage and it also turns into her sexuality that she celebrates so then we kind of went another direction with the other pieces. I also worked with her on *Silent* and on *Underneath*. She puts things together in an incredible way. Jim was brilliant in that as he trusted me and Catherine to play around with it. Everything in the play is quite sacred to me.

KS. Do you think the social issues have improved or worsened since the play was first conceived?

PK. That's a really good question. I thought the themes when I wrote it would be old fashioned now but actually it's more relevant than ever. It's about us needing to understand more how as we age we become frailer and in many cases more vulnerable. We're coming toward our natural end and surely that has to be respected in a loving way. That journey has to be made easier and easier so that when we do come close to departure, we are so well-minded by everybody else and we are so much revered because we have got through life. I really believe that that is nearly gone out of the country. I'm not talking about any political party here,

but when you see a government, any government that doesn't care about trolleys, old people on trolleys and the misery of a family watching their elderly loved one on a trolley, I think we have really lost that beautiful care that we used to have. I believe it's declining faster and faster. People think you're in your prime in your 20s, 30s etc., but I believe you're in your prime when you're gloriously old. I love people growing old and how their faces age with lines and shadows that were never there. Flor is a warrior and he faces forward and gets through it, they all do. I think that society should reward everybody for getting through that battle.

KS. What do you hope the audience will get out of seeing *Forgotten*? I am assuming it's to awaken that awareness in us.

PK. Absolutely.

KS. At one stage I was watching *Forgotten* and I must have lost concentration and I found myself thinking is this representative of the fact that this can happen with elderly people that you lose your interest in them or your focus on them and I remember thinking I wonder did Pat write it that way so at some stage we are losing our interest in what's happening?

PK. When I go to the theatre I always lull in and out of the piece. In *Forgotten*, loads of people have said that. I am glad you brought it up because it's impossible to concentrate for an hour and a half full stop. You have to lull in and out. In each of their stories, they go off on little tangents, and sometimes those tangents give the opportunity for people to just breathe, and come back to the main drive of the story. So, it's okay. I find that really interesting the way you put it, that it's almost like 'oh she's going over it now again' 'She wants me to listen to every detail.'

Silent

KS. What inspired you to write *Silent*?

PK. *Silent* came very fast. It still took the same amount of time to write, it took about 3 years to put it together but it came in a completely different way. I didn't expect it, I was very grateful and still am to have *Forgotten* and that would have done me, I was happy on that journey and then suddenly *Silent* came along and I remember thinking this is really snapping me back and forward and it's slapping me really around the place. What happened was I went to New York visiting a friend and I was walking around the place and I hated it the first time I went, I absolutely hated it, I was very fearful number one because I'm a country boy and I was looking at massive towers and people coming towards me which really freaked me out as well as that I just hated it because I was just so sad that there was so many homeless people there and I had never experienced that in my life. I had never experienced that overwhelming amount of people and most of them were veterans, then I started talking to people, you know, I was interested to know details, why they were there and I noticed the more I went into the city, the more as they call them 'crazies' were there. God love us, with their whole lives in a shopping cart and when I came back all I could see around me in Dublin was homeless people

and I thought this is terrible, and I'm going to have to write something about this. Also in tandem with that, when I left school I started training to be a psychiatric nurse and I saw a lot. I saw a lot of good stuff but I also saw a lot of horrible stuff as in how people are treated with any sort of mental illness and that really troubled me. There was a huge emphasis on medication which is wonderful and it can work for some people but at the time I remember feeling this is so archaic, there's something seriously wrong here. It hasn't changed anyway, the Vision for Change has not kicked in and I don't know what's going on. Homelessness has completely changed now. When I came to Dublin first, the only homeless person you would see is some down and out poor hobo and wino, but now it is a completely different field..families..that was the inspiration for it, was those, and the whole idea of if you're not at home in your head and you're not comfortable in the home in your head, that you can lose that too and you can be homeless physically but you can also be homeless mentally that you're living in a very dangerous dark park in the middle of the world.

KS. What is your aim in relation to the part in *Silent* where you ask about 'anti-depressants'? Is it to create a sense of openness, a place to talk about it?

PK. It's to get people to express themselves and to get any sort of an opinion out of them because sometimes actually you get really really positive ones. It depends on the actual animal and I call it the pack animal that's there that night. A brilliant energy coming from the audience, sometimes it can be fearful so it comes out negative, other times people come in with more vibrant energy or maybe news that day has been better so it affects the show. It's to get people to talk about it but also to talk about the judgement of it, to get people to ponder on that, that we still judge people for taking medication to keep themselves level. To me it would be like judging somebody who is diabetic because it can affect their mood and it can affect your entire health, and you can have ups and downs, sugar lows and highs, it's the same thing. It's balancing chemicals in your body and thank god for medicine and the wonderful treatment of diabetes for example. We should be overjoyed that the drugs are there if people want to take them, take them and if they don't, don't, but find their way through. I am glad in a way that it kind of arrested you and that you experienced that because it's meant to be arresting but to come out the other end of it, that we survive that moment, that people go 'oh my god that wasn't too bad'. It will stay with people and hopefully they will start to not judge as much as before.

KS. What did you hope to achieve by Tino having his suicide note in his mouth and growling like an animal? Is it like he's choking on the words?

PK. That changes from performance to performance. Sometimes it's more of a physical fight, almost an expulsion of what he's trying to get rid of and then other times it depends on whether the piece before has been more harrowing on him that it comes out as a vocal battle against that. It's also I suppose a moment that is ambiguous and we don't really realise at that point what the note is and its significance. We thought it might have been Pearse's, so it's a moment again that

the audience hear the contents of the note but also he must have read it hundreds and hundreds of times and each time it has a very different effect.

KS. Do you think the social issues (i.e. mental health, homelessness etc.) have improved or worsened since the play was first conceived?

PK. Homelessness, absolutely shocked, thought at the time that it was a kind of passing phenomenon, that it would be recognised for and understood for what it is, which is not a group story. What I've learned through working with the Simon Community and working with different organisations that are amazing is that everyone's story of homelessness is entirely unique and multi-factorial. The only thing that people have in common is that they are dispossessed. Some people might have a mental health problem, some people develop the mental health problem from being on the street, so it's all over the place circumstantially but the fact is, the fact remains that it's about when you don't have a shelter all sorts of terrible things can happen to your head. Home to me is shelter. Now no-one has a chance, even if they are working really hard they are actually in danger of losing that shelter. They are so close to it that I think it's remarkable and I think from a political point of view and I do get political about this piece in particular is that what's happened is that they've let it run and run and run and it's going to get worse. They can't stop it and I think there is a total lack of understanding of what a shelter is. Your skull shelters your mind and your brain and then physically in order to copper-fasten all of that we all need just a room, a home just to feel safe. So yes, to answer it, I think it is getting worse and I think it's shameful.

KS. What do you hope the audience will get out of seeing *Silent*? Is it that you are raising awareness about these issues and to get us thinking about it and to let it register?

PK. Yes absolutely and let it register.

Underneath

KS. What was your inspiration behind *Underneath*?

PK. *Underneath* was inside my head for a long time but I didn't really know how to write about it. As I get older, in a nice way, I realise that all of this body stuff, it's great that we are healthy and we can function with all of the miracle that is the body but the emphasis that's put on that, in people's lives even though we're evolving as human beings and are minds our opening. But actually some things don't change like our reaction to what we perceived to be beautiful and our obsession particularly as sentient and sensual human beings that we haven't evolved that much at all. We still respond to very shallow stimuli like looks and I find that fascinating. Maybe that's for the survival of the human race, I don't know but it's something that really worries me. Men are now under far more pressure to look in a particular way and women are bombarded with it and I find that really upsetting because I think there is more to a man or a woman than the shell they are in. Unfortunately the sense of

judgment, the sense of belonging, the sense of loneliness can be delineated very quickly. I then started to think what is it like to be in the body of someone who's incredibly beautiful or somebody who is disfigured facially, and that really started to fascinate me. How does your world change, what are your priorities, does it make you a less evolved person or does it make you a more evolved person and you question yourself more if you are at either end of that spectrum. Ultimately, how mortal the whole thing is and when you look back on your life...because she says in it 'I should have cared less, I should have laughed more', that maybe we all care too much. An over-emphasis on the physical can tip it over to narcissism and with narcissism comes power. We only have to look at Trump who does judge people on how they look, who judges women on how they look and the rest of the world on the colour of their skin. All of that is really wrapped up in *Underneath* for me.

KS. Why does she not have a name?

PK. She does, I just didn't tell anybody what it is! I purposefully didn't give her a name because I wanted people to associate with her and get to know her as Her, with that emphasis on a soft H, and also to sometimes go 'Look at Her'. Because she's flawed, she brings things on herself as well. Jim Culleton was brilliant in that he always used to say the flaws are important to bring out, her reaction to people's reaction to her, all of our reactions to people's reactions to us. We play that table tennis all the time and then sometimes we smash and we do the wrong thing, so how vulnerable we all are. Yes, that's why Her is important to me that she doesn't need a name to be respected or to be identified because she's Her, she's noble.

KS. There is an extraordinary amount of empathy felt for Her during this play, do you sense that from the audience?

PK. Without a doubt and I think it's a great observation and great question. I always wanted people to understand that she doesn't have to be physically as we call to our standards, beautiful, to be beautiful and the point is again, not to judge a book by its cover. There are so many beautiful people in the world but they are passed by because they don't look like Elle Macpherson and Elle Macpherson I'm sure is a beautiful woman but there are plenty of really beautiful men and women that are trapped in a vessel that just doesn't add up to somebody else's perceptions. Therefore they're actually floating around and they are a missed opportunity as a touchstone, as a pot of humanity, for their wisdom, for their glory, all those things can sometimes be passed by purely by a veneer and I find that fascinating.