

RUFUS: Hello, everyone, and welcome to this historic launch of Reasons to be Graeae: A Work in Progress. In almost every way, I am the least qualified person in this room, to be standing here, but I won't do it for very long, so don't worry. In a moment, I'll be handing over to the experts, but I am delighted that it's happening here. As this company, Graeae, and the writers and theatre makers represented in this book are the sorts of activists, visionaries and artists that our culture and this place, the National Theatre, needs more of. Perhaps therefore it's appropriate that someone so unqualified as me is kicking it off, as well because I think the book is for me, as much as it is for the community that it celebrates.

It's also a deep personal pleasure because the Solid Life of Sugar Water was one of the first shows that I invited into this place, in my time as director here, and it will always be one of the highlights. Not of disability arts, but simply of greatness, that we have had on these stages. So the first time I met the famous Jenny Sealey was on a London Arts Board panel, in 1482. Do you remember the London Arts Board? I was immediately bowled over by her humour, and her fearlessness, and quickly learnt to respect her candour, and her perception. In her company, I learnt to think before I spoke. Her very presence was an introduction to a level of awareness that my privilege on many fronts had kept me ignorant of. Since then, at regular and well-timed intervals, she has appeared in person or increasingly on Twitter often at moments of my greatest overconfidence, to keep me humble. In truth, it's a task that she is probably bored with and I imagine that many of the folk whose work is recorded in this book might have preferred not to have been lumbered with the duties of educator, activist, representative, ambassador, whilst going about their chosen craft, of simply being excellent story-tellers. But collectively, the work they do, you do, the work they did, the work also now being taken forward by their rebellious children, work that in this book is illuminated for posterity and for the inspiration of everyone, is of immeasurable value.

I salute and thank Nabil Shaban and Richard Tomlinson, Ewan Marshall, Jenny Sealey, and all the contributors to this fantastic testimony. That's enough from me. So without further ado, it's my pleasure to hand over to our chair for the afternoon, Daryl Beeton. (Applause)

DARYL: Hello, everybody. So we have got about 45 minutes, I have got some questions and then we want to be able to open it up, so we are just going to jump straight in, but just really briefly, panel, no more than maybe two sentences, just introduce yourself and your first experience of Graeae.

JACK: I am Jack Thorne, I am a writer and my first experience of Graeae was a Graeae open day, it must have been about 2002/2003.

ALISON: Hi, I am Alison Halstead, I am a performer, I first worked with Graeae around 2008 and I was a workshop facilitator. And that was my first time actually of ever being in a room with disabled performers, and I was scared shitless!

DARYL: My name is Daryl, director, performer and I first started to work with Graeae under Ewan Marshall in 1996.

JENNY: I am Jenny, director of Graeae. My first experience was seeing Graeae in a tiny little arts centre in Mansfield, and it was a production of Ubu with the infamous Jamie Beddard in it.

NICKIE: I am Nickie Miles-Wildin, theatre maker and director. My first experience of Graeae was meeting Jenny when she came to see my one-woman show in Edinburgh in 1998, that's quite a long time ago, and then from there going to my first Graeae audition not long after.

DARYL: Great, thank you. Well, Jenny, let's jump straight in. When I read the book, the thing that comes across the strongest for me was that most people who have written things mention that they were the only person growing up,

they were the only disabled person at school, and then suddenly they get to know Graeae and their whole world opens up. People talk about it as a community or a family. But why do you think that is? Why do you think Graeae means that much to those that discover it, and stay with it?

JENNY: I think it's because there is so little out there, and just -- to answer the question actually, it could be answered better, we had an e-mail yesterday from a young student up in Scotland, a young disabled person, in a massive mainstream college, he is the only one, feeling really odd, left out, isolated, and he said "I have just read the first few pages of the Graeae book and suddenly I have a world, I have somewhere where I can go, somewhere where I can go and be me", and I think that is what Graeae is, we can just be who we are, floor to fuckery, but it's fine

DARYL: You told me I wasn't allowed to swear! Right, that's it now. Anybody else, Nickie how about you?

NICKIE: For me it was going to that theatre audition and realising I didn't need to apologise for needing to sit down, there were other people as well that had to use a chair, I just felt I didn't have to apologise for being me, and it was great to meet kind of like-minded people and people that shared the same values, like when I had done drama before and at university, I always had to sit out at the side of the room because they couldn't make their exercises -- adapt them in any way for me, make them accessible. So for me, Graeae, I met people that -- and people that had been around much longer than me, that had those names in theatre, I met Maggie Coleran, Ali Briggs and I remembered watching them on From the Edge so I felt like I was meeting TV stars, people from my background that had that same sort of story as me, so it was really enlightening.

DARYL: You said yourself Alison that the first time you were working with disabled people, did that impact on you politically?

ALISON: Politically?

DARYL: Socially?

ALISON: Those are big words!

DARYL: I know!

ALISON: First of all, it's representation. It was a new language, that I didn't even know that I didn't have. And it was also like a question -- I could ask questions of myself, that I didn't even know I could pose. Graeae gave me the space, also working with other people that had -- that had disabilities, it just freed the room up. And like -- I have forgotten your name, I am so nervous! Nickie, sorry.

NICKIE: We have met before. We spent three months in Dundee!

ALISON: So also, like, my own self-acceptance, I can sit in this space now with a stool in a way that before I just would have been like "oh I'll just make do", but working with this company has shown me that it's not necessary.

DARYL: And how about you, Jack? What do you get as a sense of community?

JACK: My experience was slightly different in that I had, I don't really -- it's not quite as severe as it was but I had an invisible disability that was blighting my life and I didn't know quite what to do, and I didn't know quite where I fitted, and I didn't feel like necessarily I fitted in the disabled community, and I went along to a Graeae open day and I said that to Alex Bulmer and Alex said and actually Tim Gebbels, I am so moved the book is dedicated to Tim

because he was just the greatest of guys and it's a tragedy to have lost him. And Alex gave me a slightly awkward hug and said "of course you're disabled", and that sort of just -- yeah, and that feeling has never really left me, you know what I mean? And I have worked with Graeae periodically, every few years, and it has always been that feeling of genuinely feeling like you're part of something.

DARYL: Thank you. So Jenny, this book it really scratches the surface. You said yourself it's not a complete history. We don't want to give the end away! Gosh, how did you choose or decide what to put in there?

JENNY: Well, it was all a bit random. Because Graeae is a bit random. You know, we did have the absolute privilege of being able to do Reasons to be Cheerful, we have got Derek and Jemima here in the audience, and doing Reasons to be Cheerful, I just thought, the reasons for who we are -- oh, have we got a reason? And really start to unpick where -- is Graeae going to be around in the next 20 years? So I decided to call it "Reasons to be Graeae", and it is work in progress, but I just put out this random e-mail to various people, and those that came back are in the book, and there's many more that didn't come back, because time, whatever, so there's a whole other book of everybody else that still needs to be done. And I think what we're going to do, we're going to carry on gathering the stories but we might start making them into podcasts for people. We'll have to work that out. It just started to gather momentum and then I became absolutely terrified, thinking, oh my God, I have got all these e-mails coming, these essays, with bullet points, these academic things, what is it going to be? There has been so many people who have helped shape it. Not least the most glorious man, Constantinos, you need to stand up and take a bow, please.
(Applause)

He did the beautiful layout. He was the one that kept pushing and pushing for us to get it right. And I think we sort of have, haven't we?

FLOOR: Pretty much, yes.

JENNY: It's not an academic book, there are academic papers in there, but it's not academic. I get so many academic books around disability, disability arts, that are impenetrable, I don't understand what is being written and I didn't want a book like that, I wanted something that's nice and easy to read and informative and personal, and I think that's what this is.

DARYL: Thank you. Lots of the people on this panel work for Graeae off and on and work elsewhere, but Nickie, you have worked in some quite mainstream venues now, including the National.

NICKIE: Yes!

DARYL: When I work outside of Graeae on projects, I feel that sometimes I have to be that champion that Graeae is within the wider field, but also know that I have that sort of -- yeah, support of Graeae, for thoughts and ideas, so do you feel like the torch bearer? How does it work for you?

NICKIE: Mm, interesting question. I think it depends on where you take that work, and I think me as a disabled woman anyway, it is truly part of my identity, and I know that when I go to certain venues, working as a director or an assistant director, there's only so much I can do before I tip the scales too much. But it's -- I mean, for me, it's really interesting because when I was here, I was assistant director to Rufus on Mosquitoes in the Dorfman, and I was really trying to change how they wanted to do their captioned performance. I don't know if you were aware of this. I wanted to get away from the bog standard Stagertext, and as we were using six monitors in the show, I wanted to have the captions put on there but I was told it wasn't allowed. Anyway, I lost that battle. But I'm working now, and with Amit as well, up at Manchester Royal Exchange, to actually have sign language interpreters integrated into

performances, because they used to be filmed, or they were up in a room doing interpretation, and then that was projected into little monitors, so we are really trying to champion getting interpreters actually on stage at the Exchange, so we are trying to solve that. And also look at interesting ways that they can start bringing audio description into their performances as well. And I think it's just -- I think having worked so closely with Graeae, and understanding the importance of accessible performances, so you're not just limited to going to see them on one particular day, I think I take that into my own work as a theatre maker, and I am going to be directing *The Tempest* in the summer, up at the Royal Exchange, and I have already said I want a sign language interpreter integrated into every show and looking at having the audio description done by the young company that are there, so it's about -- I think that's how I'm going to start influencing the next generation of theatre makers as well. And I have done it recently at the Exchange, with the show *Mixtape*, where we needed a sign language interpreter quite quickly, so I got someone I knew, Becky that does a lot of work with Graeae came up and we spent an afternoon and just thoroughly integrated her into the show, and got some of the young company learning sign to integrate it as well. So I think you kind of -- you slowly try to make change. You can't go in there like a steamroller and make it all happen at once, you have to carefully pick your moments and I think that -- you know, that learning through Graeae is never going to leave you, it can't. Because you're doing it for your mates as well. A lot of your mates need sign language or they need audio description, so it's about how -- why would I make work that they can't come and see?

DARYL: Thank you very much. Jack, in the book, you talk about writing -- sorry, yes, writing without casting implications and then casting without writing implications, in terms of how you approach your writing with Graeae, but then that sort of changed, can you just tell us a little bit about that process?

JACK: I can't even remember what I wrote!

DARYL: It was around -- with *Sugar Water*, it was only through working with Amit --

JACK: Yes, that when we started working on the show, we decided to just find the best two actors we could, which we then did and they were amazing, and Genevieve happened to be deaf and we thought, let's just not reference it at all in the scripts and see what that feels like, and it got to a certain point when it felt inauthentic and we started working it in, and it was transformative to the show and made it a lot more powerful than I had written it. But I mean, as the sort of -- I mean, I mostly work in mainstream. It is a battle. And I am probably not as good a warrior as Nickie, but just that think of kind of trying to -- that when you have auditions, trying to at least identify some parts where you can have disabled actors in for the roles, it's happening, but it's happening very, very slowly, and I am sorry it is not happening faster.

DARYL: That's okay.

JACK: I do feel it's my responsibility actually, and I'm not quite there yet, but I am trying.

DARYL: It's always a shared responsibility. Rufus said it at the start, there is different levels of activism across it all and it's when those all join up into one force, it makes the change.

NICKIE: That's the importance of Graeae as well when you talk about casting, it's that thing -- my office is next door to the casting director at the Exchange, there are times when me and Amit will go in and bombard him with ideas for people they should see for the next season. It's because of this big family of Graeae, we get to know people, we get to know those actors, writers, directors that are out there, so it is that thing of keep pushing it. It's really hard. It's really, really hard. But I think, you know, we have to keep on. And make that change.

DARYL: It's interesting, because in the book, also Nabil and Richard talked about in the early days that they were aware that their shows may have -- what did they say, verged on voyeurism in terms of having disabled people on stage. (a) do you think that still exists today? And (b), I suppose what's your biggest difference you have seen in the life of Graeae?

JENNY: Well I think the fact that Rufus, in auditioning deaf and disabled people now, and the National headed up the, what was it called, loads of disabled people have been filmed doing their monologue, so their CVs are there, so there is a lot of activism within the National, and we have also got Ramps on the Moon, big productions, working with more deaf and disabled people, and I think there are still those directors out there that just still say, Jenny, don't you realise that it's much more palatable if you don't put a handicapped person on the stage, and it's played by someone normal, so the audience don't feel uncomfortable. That's says more about that director than it says about the audience. I think audiences are up for it. And the more that we're out there, and doing our stuff, the more it becomes -- you know, it becomes more commonplace, so it's slowly changing. But not quick enough actually. We did The Threepenny Opera, I can't remember where we were, can you remember? I think it might have been Leeds or Birmingham. And all the actors were outside busking. The cast gets on stage and this woman sitting next to me, who happened to be an Arts Council officer, this woman turned to this officer and said, we need to get front of house, the disabled people that were out there busking, they're on the stage! And then the overture starts, and the red curtain comes in and John starts singing and this poor woman goes ... oh, got it. Brilliant, I love that story.

DARYL: We can't talk about Graeae without talking about the rehearsal process at Graeae, which can be -- it can be frantic, it can be fun. Alison is not that keen on it! That's what you said in the book.

ALISON: I did, yes.

DARYL: Well actually, on that, you do sort of say, in the book, that during rehearsals, you wanted to stop playing games and looking in the mirror and actually get on with the text. And also as a director, you can be quite forceful in the rehearsal room, so I just wondered (a) are you thinking of being a director soon? Because of your forceful habit in the rehearsal room. And what is it that -- could you talk about meaty roles with Graeae?

ALISON: I will answer the second one. Jenny has cast me in two of the biggest roles of my performing career, I was in Blood Wedding and I was in House of Bernarda Alba, and I was also privileged to work with Kathryn Hunter, she was Bernarda Alba, it was at the Manchester Royal Exchange, I theatre that I had wanted to work at, and honestly, because opportunity doesn't always come, when Jenny cast me in the roles that she did, I had difficulty seeing myself in the parts. And I just had to trust her eye, and her sense of me as a performer, and do my work, and it was awesome. Working with Jenny has afforded me the opportunity to see myself in a different way as a performer, fuller, rounder, more humane, like I am a woman, I am a woman! The other parts that I got did not take this -- you know, my sex or gender into account. And this woman casting me in these parts, it was a gift, truly, truly. So yeah. Directing? No.

JENNY: There's also a quote in this from Milton Lopes that says that he has been playing zip zap boy in every rehearsal room for years.

DARYL: When you go to the rehearsal process, what's your main aim -- what do you go in there thinking, I want the people in this space, and the space to be like what, what is it you want to set up in order to make people be as creative as they can?

JENNY: The only thing I know is I have all my pyjamas ready for rehearsals and then the rest takes care of itself. It's the weirdest thing, in the weeks leading up to rehearsals, you have your script and suddenly the words just go blah

blah blah and I can't read them any more, a bit like this bloody book! But if you've -- the thing I love more than anything is casting. And I love my creative conversations with my assistant director, associate director, like Nickie and I and Amit and I have meaty conversations and then we don't see each other until just before rehearsals, you know this as a director, you go into a weird no man's land and then you start, but in your gut, if you have got the right cast, you're fine. Because I'm afraid I am not one of those directors that blocks, cross arms, smile, don't do that, I am just "do something" and that's what I like. Do something.

DARYL: That is one of the best things, a gesture that comes an awful lot.

NICKIE: Just give me something.

JENNY: Art has to come from actors, in the same way, they are the people that the cast dictate or inform rather the essence of the access. You can't just say, oh, I am going to have it like this, no, you're casting that, but if you know that's what you want to explore, and you get the people that are really up for exploring it, I mean think about all the different things we tried with Bernarda, millions of different things, we didn't get it all right, but we got more right than wrong. It's just that exploration, it's gold dust really, we are so lucky to do it.

NICKIE: I think as well with that, having worked with you on Blood Wedding and Bananarama that you do cast really well and then it's that thing, when you get into the rehearsal room, and it's what those people bring to it, and also the access that's in that room at that time. That helps to tell the story as well. In a more interesting way than what you could ever perceive before you get into that rehearsal room, because people bring stuff to the table with that as well. And I think it really -- it builds those characters and it builds the text and the shape of the story that you want to tell. And you do have lots of pyjamas, that's true.

JENNY: The same really with this book. This is all a play on braille, which I still have that sensibility of -- it's not accessible to a blind reader, unless it's on JAWS, but it's still linked, so the layout, has been beautifully considered, and just sorry, I'm going on, but the other thing for you to know is that Audible, sorry, I am just naming them, because I was so pissed off, they wouldn't fund the audio book of this for blind people. Because the aesthetic of this is so lovely. We had to have something. So we have a group of us, Amit, Stephen, Jude, me, other people, Alison, you read some, various different people in the room have read chapters, not their own, "I am Jenny Sealey, reading for ..." so we have created a beautiful audio file. Emma, are you here? She is there. Madam over there, in a little studio, in her front room, did it, she nailed it. It was glorious actually to read it. Funny. And terribly moving, I started to cry, there is a quote in there Bradley -- "and thank you Bradley Hemmings" and I said it and burst into tears, it's ridiculous, but anyway you're in the book, Bradley, a lot. I don't know why I am telling you all this. Because it's in the cloud, that's all I know.

DARYL: One more question before we open it up. It's something that gets talked about a lot within the work that we do for Graeae. And you sort of mention in the book about, you know, are we ever going to get to a point where we have got a fully accessible production, where -- that's absolutely perfect? And you sort of say, is this possible, or does it even a -- is it achievable? Yes, my question is: why do you think it is that there is an openness to that sort of, oh, we got it -- because for me, Graeae is sort of saying "that didn't exactly work quite right, let's try this", why do you think there is that attitude within the company?

JENNY: That we haven't achieved perfection?

DARYL: But putting your hands up and going "oh, that didn't work, we'll try something different".

JENNY: I think because we are trying to create theatre for a very diverse audience and everyone is learning sign or communication styles or reception styles, they are so different, and you get it right, and you think, oh, gosh, that's really not going to work for a deafblind audience, we haven't even gone there, we are there now, doing some work, but it's like there's a whole other world that we still haven't -- we are not there yet, by a long chalk, I mean, I think in that respect, the company will always need to exist, because it's the company that's curious, really, really curious to find out, what is it? What is it? And that is absolutely the foundation. That and complete equality, and no compromise. I think the company may become smaller, but then we're -- actually, no, we won't become smaller. We are going to have Graeae Sisters, Graeae University! But it will be a moment where people don't -- Graeae won't be the first place people have to come to, and that's absolutely fine, as long as it will always be a place for lots of people to come to, who are curious about disability, even if they're not disabled, so it's a home for lots of people, so hopefully we'll exist forever and ever.

DARYL: Thank you. So this is a good -- we have only got about 15 minutes left so I am going to open it up to anybody who has got a question from the audience and also from the panel, if anybody has got a question they want to ask. That is a great start. Yes, go for it.

FLOOR: Hi, I was wondering, as a young disabled person today, how do you think we can get more diverse audiences to actually come to the theatre?

DARYL: Oh, who do you want to ask that to?

FLOOR: I am going to have to go for Jenny obviously.

JENNY: God. We had a conversation with Soho actually, Steve Marmion was saying that they have -- because their building regulations, they have only enough access for six wheelchair users in the audience, but he did a play where there were six wheelchair users in the cast, so he couldn't have any wheelchair users in the audience. I said, don't do that. And he said, well, you want me to employ disabled people! So there's lots of things around building regulations but there is also, I think there is a lot of work, Graeae has to work really hard to get audiences in, in the same way the National -- but I think it's about how do we, the National, Manchester Royal Exchange, how do we share what works getting audiences in? But actually a lot of the time, there is a woman in Manchester, a blind woman, who I went over to and asked her whether she would listen to the preamble, and she said no, and I thought, I bet this is really hard to understand, because it's one of the shows we didn't get quite right for blind audiences. And she said, no, I come to the theatre to be reminded that I'm not blind and I don't really like seeing deaf and disabled people on the stage. I want to forget. And I thought, okay, we're damned if we do and damned if we don't, sort of thing. I don't really know how to answer your question, but it's about making sure that all the accessible models, BSL synopsis, making sure that it goes out to blind and visually impaired people, making sure everyone has the opportunity to know the show is happening and the venue is welcoming, that is really important, and the box office get it and they understand how the whole thing around customer services to support, it being a good experience. That's really important.

NICKIE: And I would say lower ticket prices as well. Not just have them on the day, that you can buy them a couple of days in advance. Because also, being a disabled person, you have to sort transport, get to go a venue, you can't just go "oh I'm going to go to the theatre today, because you have to sort X, Y and Z" so have those tickets on sale for at least a week.

FLOOR: This is a response really to the last question rather than a question itself. I think it's slightly unfair to expect Graeae to be responsible for getting audiences in, particularly in out of London theatres, it's the responsibility of

those venues. Now Graeae can make a huge difference to the way that venues understand how to communicate with a wide variety of audiences, but regularity of diverse programmes, which is beyond the influence of one company, you need a regularity, you need the quality of work on a regular basis, and you need to make sure that all audiences feel welcome in that venue, dealing with addressing some of the physical obstacles that Nickie talked about, but it's something that companies like Graeae can champion, but it's up to all of us that work -- my background is as a venue manager, it's up to venues to get their house in order, with advice from companies like Graeae, but they have got to make the commitment.

DARYL: Does anybody else have a question or anything they want to add? Yes, Jamie.

FLOOR: What's your best Graeae moment? To all of you.

DARYL: Let's go down the line.

NICKIE: Mine was 2003, working with Jamie Beddard! Apart from that, oh, that's hard. So it was doing Flower Girls in 2007. I was lucky to be part of the R&D the year before as well, but I think for me, Flower Girls because it was about the history of disabled women, how it was these women in John Grooms' home out in Edgware that made silk flowers and then during World War II were taken off that and sorted rivets, they were part of the war action really, so for me that was learning a lot about the history, and the importance of those disabled women and the fact that a couple of them were still alive, who gave their stories to Richard Cameron, and we got to meet them as well, and hear about their experiences, so for me, that was a really valuable experience.

JENNY: It's a beautiful play, and Jeremy, you are here from Radio 4, it will make a beautiful radio play, I am going to talk to you about it!

NICKIE: Yes, I second that.

JENNY: Oh, me? I have had one of my best moments today, watching our Ensemble do a sharing. We have got a young company and they have been having their training, they are the future, and they strutted their stuff for us this afternoon. They were good. And I was so very, very proud. And I am so glad you're here. And this is all about you, you know, in a way, it's yours. But I have to say, oh God, there's too many millions of memories. But Reasons to be Cheerful in Ipswich, when Jenny, my gorgeous interpreter, and Jude was on the stage, thinking, have we got this right? Have we nailed it? Feeling really nervous, we had never done a big musical before, and it was going all right, thinking, just -- I can't really watch it, but it was at the end when the audience was just up on its feet and Jenny and I were the only two people sitting down. Oh my God! It was amazing, wasn't it? And the actors, the musicians knew it, they were used to it from gigs, but the actors on stage were like ... what do we do? And they just started to walk off. It was brilliant. Gold dust, that was.

DARYL: Thank you. My favourite moment was when --

JENNY: Playing a fish?

DARYL: I often get the random roles, but I have been made -- turning random roles into lead roles in the rehearsal. But my favourite moment was learning to work on the sway poles, the mantra of Graeae, based on the social model, it's about changing the environment not the individual. We spent two weeks climbing the pole, trying to stand on the pole and sway, it wasn't working, it was getting close to the show, I could get on the pole, I was standing on it, and at one point do you remember we got my crutches and built this metal frame and put me in it? No, it's sort of working, but I have got no control! And then on the last day, I think we all just sat round and went, oh, why don't I

just sit on it? I could just sit on it! Oh, it works when I sit on it! But that's another classic case of like "oh yeah, we have got a better idea". So that's one of my favourite moments.

ALISON: Mine would be in House of Bernarda Alba, it was watching Kathryn Hunter at the end of the play, sign -- speaking and signing, the use of silence, she talks about it in her essay, and it's -- yes, the exploration of like all the different ways you can communicate, and the choices that they made of like when to sign, when she was silent, at this moment in the story, and it was just -- and then you could hear the other, the characters crying, so it was just so beautifully quiet. That was my favourite moment.

JACK: Doing hunchback on the radio with Jenny and Alex Bulmer and having this long discussion about the importance of the hunchback being deaf and what that would mean for the radio, and what that voice would sound like on the radio, and going what do we do, how do we make him understandable to the radio audience and all that kind of stuff, and realising that we would make him the narrator because then everyone's ears would adjust, and that was the most Graeae moment I think I have ever had, and people's ears did adjust and they really got -- and David's performance in that was just extraordinary, I remember being in the recording for that and just seeing him go, he just was sensational.

DARYL: Yes?

FLOOR: Hello, so Jack, you spoke about feeling a responsibility in your writing to write roles that can be open to anyone, and I was just wondering, do you think that all writers should kind of build that in, when they're writing a script, and be more open to those roles -- and casting directors, whether they are to be played by a disabled or deaf actor, and how can the industry kind of get that message out?

JACK: Yes, but it's not all -- it's not the writers, it's the directors, the casting directors, the commissioners, do you know what I mean? I was having an argument just today about it. And people saying, well maybe we could divide this part in two, because there was a disabled actor that I'm desperate to get in this show, and you realise that by doing that, what they're doing is basically just putting someone on the side, and it's a ongoing long-term battle that's happening, but it's the thing that's happening at the moment, diversity generally, the trouble is that disability has been left out of every diversity conversation. You have just got this situation where everyone is prepared to set targets for everything else, and then you try and include disability within it, and it's not happening. Channel 4 are doing it, but I think -- I don't think the BBC are. No, they are, you have got a stipulation on a Channel 4 show to have a disabled actor in the show. That can be a very small part and it can be crap, but it's at least something, you know what I mean?

JENNY: But they do Undatables still, I hate that. Some of those things are awful.

DARYL: Yes?

FLOOR: This is to Jenny and Nicola. I am just about to register a theatre company, and the ethos behind it is that it is an inclusive theatre company, and I just wanted to get your piece of advice on maybe the most important thing that you think to think about when you're starting, although I have a lot of experience working for a charity called I Can Dance which is for young people with disabilities.

JENNY: I think the first thing is organise, let's have a meeting, and we'll talk it through.

FLOOR: That sounds amazing.

JENNY: Yeah.

DARYL: Did you want to say anything?

NICKIE: No, I think it's thinking about what you're going to offer as this company, what it is you can offer, what's your unique selling point? Also access, for where you're going to be, and how you're going to market yourselves and get the right people to come. It's hard. I run a company in Gloucestershire called TwoCan and it's really hard, because it's disabled led, which is brilliant, celebrate that, but it's still really hard to hit the mainstream with that, and for people to see your work of any value, you have a long time to go. Do you know what I mean? But yeah, we'll happily chat.

DARYL: We are coming to the end now. It's 7.00. And yes, I suppose just one final word from everyone, we talk about the Graeae family and the community, but where's the next -- what's the next thing that the Graeae family and the community need to focus on in order to make the next step change?

NICKIE: So the next generation of theatre makers. Making sure that they're well-educated, well-supported and they can -- what's that saying? You stand on the shoulders of giants. And remember that you're standing on the shoulders of some very impressive giants, and keep pushing it forward.

DARYL: Jack?

JACK: Mat Fraser has said something that's just stuck with me ever since, people say that the disabled community is waiting for its Denzel and the truth is it hasn't had a Sidney Poitier yet. Championing the great acting talent and directing talent and finding someone that's going to smash the doors down, like Sarah Lancashire who can lead a TV show, and there is the people out there to do that, so it's just a matter of making that happen.

ALISON: What's the question?

DARYL: Where should the Graeae community focus their energies to make the next step change?

ALISON: Cast me! I would say this, because of Graeae, I am now working in other stages, other platforms, so there is something in the casting, so ... oh, I don't know. The work -- yes. For me it's the work, and the opportunity and the possibility and I did this, this and this, it's not really that, but access, representation, so that just -- it's not this disparate happening, it just is!

DARYL: It just is. Thank you. I would say that it is around -- yes, the sort of -- to keep feeding the next generation. But Jenny, final words from you.

JENNY: Oh, that's really not fair. I don't know, I have got a millions things to say, but -- I don't know what to say. I am feeling a bit emotional. What can I say? I just hope that Graeae is always in a position to keep pushing doors open, and that we have got a really beautiful strong cohort of performers that we can usher through, and that they in turn open more doors, we just -- the doors need to keep opening, and that we don't get left behind, because sometimes, people just gather up everything that Graeae does, oh, we now know how to do it, and we get left behind, because we know a lot about what we do, and we share it, and we're very generous, but don't leave us behind, please, because I am not very nice when I'm angry! Believe me. So I just want us to be able to carry on opening doors and I really want you to enjoy this, enjoy it, I am sure there are typos in it. I have been proof reading for months and months, my eyes are bleeding, and I do apologise. There are many more stories, but I feel very proud that this has happened, and thank you all very much for being here and you are all part of the Graeae family, and those of you who know the Graeae family well, we like drinking and partying, and that's what we're going to do now!

DARYL: That's perfect, what a way to end, thank you! (Applause)

I would just like to thank Jack, Alison, Jenny and Nickie for their contributions on the panel, and copies of the book are available at the bar, funnily enough, and there are even signed copies, so if you want to grab one on your way out, please do. Thank you all very much for coming and see you at the next one.

JENNY: Can we thank our Palantypist, and Jude, and Jen. (Applause)