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| **PROFESSIONAL WORK** | **THE UNRETURNING** |
| **COMPANY** | **FRANTIC ASSEMBLY** |
| **SCENE / MOMENT** | **THE PROLOGUE AND OPENING** |
| **OVERVIEW OF WORK** | **A British northern coastal town – Scarborough. Three young men are coming home from war. Their stories, set at different times over the last 100 years, are interwoven in this compelling new play featuring Frantic's celebrated physicality. The Unreturning explores the profound effect that war has on young lives, and asks - what does coming home really mean? What is home? And when experience has shattered you into a million pieces, will home help to put you together again, or treat you as an ugly truth it does not want to confront?** |

**ELEMENTS**

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| **PERFORMANCE AND RELATIONSHIPS** | **DESCRIPTION** | **ANALYSIS** |
| Pace | Pace of movement, set changing and vocal delivery is fairly quick and constant throughout  Slows down when expressly referencing home and returning  Speed of transitions is very quick and the set and the lighting are constantly changing throughout this moment | * The characters are taking the time to be still, to reflect and to yearn, whilst all around them their world, their milieu is churning and moving. * They year and long for home – the want to return – each wants something different for this, but each want to be on home soil * We move between the time periods with pace and fluidity –it gives this moment a very cinematic quality as if a camera is following the characters through different spaces |
| Dynamics | The stillness of each central character is in counterpoint to the movement of the container and the lighting – the back ground is never still  Vocal delivery slow  Underscore music slow and legato | * The container spinning around them is the one thing that will bring them home * The container and its movement is a metaphor for the cargo it washes back to British shores |
| Timing | Movement of container, and ensemble actors manipulating the space   * tight unison, continuous, * Timed to allow entrances by other characters through the moveable doors and sliding side panels | * United front – ensemble are supporting the narratives, they are all a part of this story – 3 central narratives woven together * Others are listening, following, agreeing |
| Musicality | The underscore music developed by Pete Malkin was a low bass hum, interspersed with the sound of the sea washing backwards and forwards onto a beach | * Underscore supported the theme of the text, and played with rather than against it * It was the movement of the container that was used in a contrapuntal way |
| Voice | Natural but rhythmic delivery  Delivery is mostly light hearted and non-aggressive at the start  Change of tone when talking directly about home  Use of actors own cadencies and dialects | * Complete conviction is what they are is saying – ease and natural – direct address coming from the heart – a character truth * Trying to persuade and bring listener on board with his views |
| Movement |  |  |
| Gesture | Each actor explored on physical gesture during the prologue  Nat- Held tightly onto his back pack, his hands clutched the straps tightly, as he talked about home he removes the bag, crouches down, but always holds onto it  Frankie  In his hand he held a mobile phone  At times he beats his chest with his fist  George  Constantly touching, arranging, holding or smoothing his soldiers cap | It was here he carried his life line, his laptop which he was constantly referencing – he didn’t want to lose it, his connection with home and his brother  The phone could access films – his past – what he has done  He wants to assert his masculinity, his power – his maleness  He has a pride in his role in the army – a deference to those in authority – it is also a memory of dead soldiers from his squad |
| Character | Three different characters  GEORGE – 1918 | 1918 - George is a thoughtful romantic. A middle child who is quiet and reflective – did alright at school and is considered a kind and loyal friend. For as long as George can remember his thoughts have been consumed with Rose – the girl he used to see when she would holiday in Scarborough with her family as a child. George thinks he fell in love with her before he even knew what love was. War breaks out. At first George feels removed from war, his whole life is just beginning; his family. But as the first few months of the war play out pressure on him becomes heavy. He fears the white feather – afraid of being branded a coward. But when the Germans attack Scarborough in 1914 they kill many and put his family and his Rose in danger. His protective, patriotic instinct kicks in… And George  signs up to Kitchener’s New Army. Now in his early twenties –  George has been demobbed and is coming home. |
|  | FRANKIE – 2013 | 2013 - Frankie has always been a bit of a dreamer. Growing up he  longed to explore the world but his mum couldn’t afford holidays  to exotic climes. He didn’t do well at school and found it difficult  to a job when he left. He began experimenting with drink and  drugs and getting involved in crime with his group of mates.  Encouraged by his family Frankie joins the army in his late teens  as a means of escape. He thrives on the structure and loves the  camaraderie, the travel and the adventure. And he’s good at it.  Everyone is very proud, especially his mum and his nan. Frankie  is confident and up for a laugh; a bit naughty but definitely his  mum’s favourite - hence his nickname “Golden Balls Frankie”.  Now in his mid-twenties, he has to deal with the fallout of what  happened on his last tour to Afghanistan. |
|  | Nat – 2026 | 2026 - Nat is a deep thinker and a hard worker. At school he was  considered naturally bright and had a promising future. Even his  mother’s illness and subsequent death in his teenage years didn’t  stop him it excelling; learning was an escape, a distraction. Nat  has always had a strong sense of responsibility and threw himself  into the role of caring for his younger brother Finn after losing his  mother, their only caregiver. But then war came to England – and  war changes paths. The idea of physically fighting - for any cause  - terrifies Nat. Violence sickens him. A series of events led to Nat  escaping the UK without Finn. Now he is completely lost; having  been away from home for two years, languishing in a refugee  camp. He misses everything he knows and carries enormous guilt  about leaving without Finn. He goes over and over in his mind  how things could have been different. Now in his early twenties  he has plucked up the courage to make the treacherous journey  back |
| Spatial awareness | The centrality of the container filling about 80% of the acting space – it dominated  Small area at the front, near to the audience downstage that was used | * Quote from designer: ANDRZEJ GOULDING * The idea of the container actually came from many discussions I had with Neil about objects and items that we use to pack away homes or to take our homes with us. That led us to talking about what we would actually use to transport our home to another place or to store our home while we are away. During the workshops we were looking a lot at bags. But in order to create a large space for the cast to move around in I needed to think about something much bigger than bags, trunks and crates. * My research led me to shipping containers. A container can be many things; from a refugee camp, a lorry trailer, boat or a tunnel in Nat’s story, to airbase hanger doors, a pub and a promenade meeting place for Frankie, to a stark hospital room, a WW1 dugout and battlefield or a train carriage for George. |
| Performer to performer | This opening section contains direct address  The connection between performer to performer comes from the ensemble watching the central speaker as they manipulate the set around them | * Complete agreement and familiarity with what he is saying, understanding the sentiment * All in this together, we share the same central narrative * Encouraging the audience to listen and to also own the narrative   Three of the characters seemed to link to each other through their monologues at the start of the play. For example, Nat says that he wants to “greet the Landscape” and mentions more about being excited to see his country more than he is to see the people left behind. This links to the welcome that Frank got when he came home, when not many people greeted him, and he spent more time exploring the town he came from instead of talking to the people he missed. On top of this, In Frank’s opening monologue, he states that he wants a “hero’s welcome”, which ironically is the welcome that George receives, even though George wanted a quiet return. This link could suggest that people get caught up over what others had in the past, and forget to look to the future. On top of this, the three of the mention running along the sea front, and the sea seems to be a very dominant theme in this production, and almost acted as a sort of anchor for each of the characters, so no matter what their uncertainties were about coming home, the sea would be there to greet them. |
| Contact work | n/a |  |
| Performer to space | Centre stage  Gradually move forward during the scene  Moving in and out of the container as they speak |  |
| Performer to audience | Direct address of text to audience | * Combined with vocal delivery feels as if speaker is trying to persuade the audience * Makes the story more personable * One could argue that the actor/audience relationship is strong due to very high emotional dependence. The actor plays the character in a naturalistic manner to convey to the audience real emotion. Throughout the whole play, the characters do not have strong relationships within themselves, they rely on the audience to listen to them and to be able to open up to. Therefore, the audience connects with the character and the actor, due to their determination to project the effects of war. |
| Performer to accompaniment | See musicality above | * During this opening section all the characters share the same underscore, showing their similarities stretching across time periods are actually greatly at this stage than their differences |
| Placement and role of audience | End on |  |

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| **PRODUCTION AND REPERTOIRE** | **DESCRIPTION** | **ANALYSIS** |
| Text | Lyrical  Episodic  Direct address | * Written by: Anna Jordan * Use of Direct Address the start of the play which immediately broke the fourth wall. It was used because the soldiers were feeling isolated and so used the audience as a journal as they needed somewhere to process how they are feeling. * They were also inviting us to join them on their journey home because they want to share their adventure with someone. |
| Choreography/direction |  |  |
| Score/music |  |  |
| Content | THEMES:  WAR  MASCULINITY  WATER/THE SEA  ESCAPE  YEARNING FOR HOME  POLITICAL UNREST | The sea is something that is mentioned a lot in the play, the coast line being a constant throughout all of the stories. The idea that it has remained unchanged for over 100 years. The need to be cleansed or to find forgiveness or to reset the past and erase everything is present in all of the characters.  George is haunted by the ghosts of his war friends and is never alone in any of his scenes. He describes the moment his team are blown up during the war and he wakes to find his dead friend on top of him. Most likely saved by the body of his friend he is constantly haunted by the memory of this. He finds it hard to touch Rose without having violent flashbacks and as his PTSD gets worse he loses all sense of control. George goes through a complete breakdown up to the point where he is led into a hospital room and his wife hands him his baby. This feels like a moment of release for the audience and as George says - ‘A beginning’.  *“Their yearning for home was so great that they were willing to live with those levels of discomfort and sometimes danger. This had a big impact on me; the power of Home. So I tried to recreate that sort of scenario - but in a Northern Coastal town in England. Although of course, it’s hard to imagine the level of bloodshed and destruction that’s occurred in Syria happening here.” QUOTE FROM WRITER* |
| Genre | Naturalism mixed with a physical theatre response |  |
| Style | Physical Theatre |  |
| Set | Central container  4 pillars around the edges of the space utilised for projection | DESIGNER:  The uprights surrounding the container was an image I had even when the set was to be mainly slider-based and was an aesthetic I was keen to keep. For George they represent the burnt trees of no-mans land, for Frankie and Nat they are pieces of Scarborough, the tallest of which was a hint to the pillar of Oliver’s Mount.  At one point a column is lit, it is representing a war memorial. |
| Staging and special effects |  |  |
| Costume | See images posted above  Realistic  Signify a time period  Signify status  GEORGE: Accurate soldiers uniform, then waistcoat, shirt, trousers, long johns, nightshirt  FRANKIE: Khaki, Camouflage uniform, Beret  Boots - Informal Clothing - When drinking in the bar they are wearing jeans or tracksuits and jackets.  NAT: Blue modern coat, Woollen Hats, Bag |  |
| Hair and makeup | n/a |  |
| Mask | n/a |  |
| Lighting and multimedia | Each time period has a specific lighting design / feel  During the opening section these different time periods are established so each character is immediately set up with their design around them  GEORGE: warm tungsten feel to the lighting with deep oranges and brown gels - sidelighting  FRANKIE: naturalistic lighting, multi light sources, green gels  NAT: LED, sharp lines – sources of light built into the container, cool white LED, pale blue gels – the light from his lap top – single source lighting | Sepia images, black and white photos, fires, bombs, explosions, softened the scenes and focused on the bodies through the side lighting  Green evokes colour of the army – strong colour, multiple sources open the scene up – big and bold –  Futuristic feel –sharp lines – clean – a lot of projection images from his laptop onto the container |
| Projection | Sea  Bombs  Images from the laptop  Translation from different languages | Washing away everything and start again  The recurring images that taint them  Images when Frankie seems himself online |
| Sound |  |  |
| Puppetry | n/a |  |

**CONTEXTS (please ensure you fill this in after the class discussion and from your own research)**

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| Historical |  |
| Social |  |
| Cultural |  |
| Geographical |  |
| Economic |  |
| Political |  |