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THE MORNING LINE

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FROM: Emily Meagher, Michelle Farabaugh
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The New York Times

Arts & Leisure

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ON THE WEB
This week's "In Performance" video features the actress Barrett Wilbert Weed, with Mike Pettry on guitar, doing a number from the musical "Found":
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DAMON WINTER / NEW YORK TIMES

Bradley Cooper (with a bust of the actor Edwin Booth), at the Booth Theater, where he begins previews Friday.

Serious Business

Bradley Cooper is no mere movie-star ornament for the Broadway revival of “The Elephant Man.”

By ALEXANDRA JACOBS

“You make me sound like a whore,” the movie star Bradley Cooper said, sitting with his sock feet hanging over the edge of a bed.

Alas, we were not sharing charged banter in his hotel room downtown, but 20 feet away from each other in a chilly rehearsal studio on 42nd Street in Manhattan, along with a director, three other actors, a publicist, a stage manager and a smattering of crew members.

Mr. Cooper, his muscular form covered in baggy gray pants and a T-shirt, his mouth screwed into an O that rendered his

famous face utterly unrecognizable, was reciting a line from “The Elephant Man” — the 1977 Bernard Pomerance play inspired by the trying adulthood of Joseph Carey Merrick — that has been a guiding light for him since adolescence.

Merrick is like a rare, irregular coin: Though long out of circulation, he has been sought, turned over and polished by an ardent band of enthusiasts. Born in 1862, he had mysterious and considerable physical deformities that made him an outcast, a freak-show attraction, a medical curiosity and, after his death at 27, an enduring literary subject.

Along with the play, which begins previews on Friday at the Booth Theater for a

14-week Broadway run, there are multiple books about Merrick, including one misnaming him John, which stuck, by Frederick Treves, the doctor who treated him; a 1980 David Lynch film, starring John Hurt in elaborate prosthetics; a shout-out in a mournful Rufus Wainwright song; and “Elephant!,” a musical spoof from the 1989 movie “The Tall Guy” (with one number titled, rather wickedly, “He’s Packing His Trunk”).

Mr. Cooper himself is not renouncing his sense of humor because he is playing someone so spectacularly disfigured — quite the contrary. “Have a cup of tea before you go?” he ad-libbed, a squeaky

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DAMON WINTER / NEW YORK TIMES

Bradley Cooper at the Booth Theater.

Monty Python version of the English accent he's assuming, to a fellow actor. "It takes me *a while* to make a cup of tea," he went on, dolorously, to sniggers from the assembled.

Appearing the evening before on "The Tonight Show" to promote the production, trying to describe how he'd examined Merrick's skeleton for research purposes, Mr. Cooper had collapsed (with the host, Jimmy Fallon) into a laughing fit that lasted over 10 minutes. (Wearing matching visors, they also spent time crushing eggs against their foreheads, bro style.)

But "The Elephant Man," which is directed by Scott Ellis on a modest budget of \$3 million, is serious business for the actor: a scoop of earth following his gradual but precipitous soar into the showbiz stratosphere, with its thinner, giddy-making air.

It's also his first appearance on Broadway since 2006, when he supported Julia Roberts, then a star of much greater magnitude, in "Three Days of Rain." Ben Brantley in The New York Times called

that performance "alternately perky and indignant in the manner of a sitcom actor doing testy and aggrieved."

"I'm a much different person now than I was then," Mr. Cooper said.

A backward baseball cap on his head, he had compressed his 6-foot-1 frame into a corner booth at a TriBeCa restaurant. He is no longer a sitcom actor but firmly entrenched on the movie-industry A-list, having followed the "Hangover" trilogy, which has earned a reported \$1.4 billion worldwide, with back-to-back Oscar-nominated roles in David O. Russell's "Silver Linings Playbook" and "American Hustle."

Along with steadier work, there are perks: Last May, Mr. Cooper interrupted filming of Clint Eastwood's "American Sniper," in which he plays the formidably lethal member of the Navy SEALs, Chris Kyle, to act as co-chairman of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute gala. (His 22-year-old girlfriend, the British model Suki Waterhouse, arrived separately.) Also that month, he formed a production company with Todd Phillips, the

"Hangover" director, whom he calls a mentor.

Mr. Eastwood seems to be playing that role, too: "In him, I sort of see myself at certain stages of my career," Mr. Eastwood wrote in an email, referring to Mr. Cooper. "His work ethic is unparalleled, and he has a concentration level that's uncommon. I think Bradley's a tribute to this particular generation of actors. In general, they seem somewhat more serious than my generation was, but I think he's at the top of that list."

Alighting briefly on Broadway has become a rite of passage for celebrities perhaps eager to counter their forced depictions in *Us Weekly* and *Just Jared* with displays of seriousness. (Daniel Craig, James Franco and Michelle Williams have all touched down there lately.)

Mr. Cooper is not just the glittering ornament in his theatrical ensemble but also its behind-the-scenes orchestrator. He suggested the production to Mr. Ellis for a slot two years ago at the Williamstown Theater Festival, where they had collaborated ear-



T. CHARLES ERICKSON



JOAN MARCUS



KEITH BERNSTEIN

lier on Theresa Rebeck's play "The Understudy." He told Patricia Clarkson upon their first meeting, at the premiere of the Woody Allen movie "Whatever Works," that he wanted only her for the role of Madge Kendal, the actress who provides romantic redemption for Merrick. He wooed her further with text messages.

"It was very flattering and sexy," Ms. Clarkson said on the phone, and she insisted that their version of the play would not disappoint Mr. Cooper's teeny-bopper fans, if the Williamstown audience had been any indication. "I think young girls who came were so rocked out by the jour-

ney that he took them on that they left the theater as older women," she said.

As he faces down his own 40th birthday in January, Mr. Cooper acknowledges that he is less settled, physically at least, than ever before.

His life is "truly nomadic now," he said. He kept his light-blue eyes, perhaps the most cited on a matinee idol since Paul Newman's, angled in the general direction of the tablecloth. "Those eyes can look a little unpredictable or scary, those big blue eyes," Mr. Russell said later by telephone. "He can look like he's got a wild hare in him and then suddenly becomes very

Mr. Cooper with Julia Roberts in "Three Days of Rain" (2006); as Chris Kyle in "American Sniper"; and in the Williamstown Theater Festival production of "The Elephant Man."

tender."

At the restaurant, though, Mr. Cooper was centered, neutral, calm — and not just because he was experimenting, as many of his peers are these days, with meditation. "I kind of feel cleansed," he said of his time being Merrick. "I feel full. I feel relaxed. I find it therapeutic, playing him, inhabiting him every day."

Mr. Cooper has long credited the movie version of "The Elephant Man," which he saw when he was 12 growing up outside Philadelphia, with his fierce desire to act. "Lynch created a character with John Hurt that was sort of innocent and beautiful and effortlessly benevolent, and there was something so moving about him, given all of his adversity, that just crushed me, as a kid," he said. "I just felt so akin to him."

That a comparatively coddled suburbanite could relate to Merrick reveals, perhaps, the unfathomable shadings of teenage psychology. His father, Charles J. Cooper, who died in 2011, was a stockbroker for Merrill Lynch. "I would be lying if I didn't say that hanging out with Clint doesn't feel like hanging out with my dad, because they are very similar, just their mannerisms, so comfortable in their skin, and confident, and with an easy way of being that you don't see men have these days," Mr. Cooper said.

He has always been very close to his mother, Gloria Campano; his older sister, Holly, is a legal assistant who maintains Bradley's Facebook fan site.

"He's always been kind of shiny," said Brian Klugman, a fellow actor who co-directed Mr. Cooper, a friend since they attended Germantown Academy, in "The Words," a 2012 Sundance entry. "I'd go to his house, and he'd cook something, and then I'd go home and try to cook it and set my house on fire."

Mr. Cooper, though, said that his artistic ambition "was always met with a bit of a smirk" from his intimates, and that he didn't get to express his feelings until he underwent actual psychotherapy, when he was still struggling for parts in Los Angeles. "I found it to be a very fulfilling process," he said. "Especially growing up in an environment where none of that was ever condoned, let alone talked about."

While doing graduate work at the Actors Studio Drama School, he proposed performing "The Elephant Man" for his master's thesis. "Why don't you do something

else?” he said, imitating skeptical advisers. “Why don’t you play the Gentleman Caller in ‘The Glass Menagerie?’”

But he insisted, saving money from working the graveyard shift at Morgans Hotel to buy a Tower Air ticket to London, where he saw the hospital where Merrick was treated (“since sort of dismembered”); viewed his cloak and birth certificate; and walked across Whitechapel Road to the address where he exhibited himself (“now a sorry store”).

Back in London this summer, he did more research while also working on a film, one in which he’ll play a chef, as he did on the short-lived Fox series “Kitchen Confidential.” He has converted the roof of his house in Los Angeles into a garden, hoping for fresh vegetables by spring. Asked what he had made in the kitchen recently, he replied, “Halibut on a bed of bok choy and mushrooms and then sort of string calamari on top of it.”

Still, though dinner service had begun, Mr. Cooper, who said he had lost 30 of the 40 pounds he gained to play Kyle, had ordered only coffee, and though gender politics have advanced considerably, this reporter did not feel like snarfing down a plate of French fries in front of People’s Sexiest Man Alive of 2011.

The actor said that despite such honors — and the breathless chronicling of his outings with Ms. Waterhouse — he is not overly harassed by an adoring public. “I take the subway everywhere,” he said, though “if I wear a hat and sunglasses, I can get through the day better.”

His next career move, he said, will be to direct: “At some point I’ll have to do it or I’ll be a complete annoyance.” He said he had never aspired to be so well known, and one got the sense that even though he called the role of Merrick “a big swing,” disappearing into his lumpen skin, even metaphorically (there are no prosthetics in the play), might come as a relief.

Waiting back in his hotel room was an inversion table, a decompression device on which he has been lying upside down, like a bat, to recover from playing the contorted 5-foot-2 Merrick and once again become Bradley Cooper, with all that now entails.

“To straighten out your spine at the end of the day,” he said, “I find it very soothing.”

The New York Times

November 1, 2014

From Month to Month, in a Work of the Eerie and the Oddball 'October in the Chair and Other Fragile Things'

By Alexis Soloski

A sad tale's best for winter, Shakespeare tells us. So what's the right kind of story for this time of year? A spooky one, of course.

Old Sound Room, a young company built by recent Yale School of Drama graduates, has five on offer. In "October in the Chair and Other Fragile Things," an enjoyably eerie if overwrought piece, the ensemble adapts yarns plucked from "Fragile Things," a collection of miscellany by the fantasy writer Neil Gaiman.

On a set bedecked with cobwebs and dead trees, five performers (including the director, Michael McQuilken) play various months of the year. Wearing ragtag clothes and the sort of stage makeup that resembles a wasting disease, they take turns telling anecdotes and legends. (What of the other seven months? I guess it's a very short year.)

August offers a standard-issue chiller; February, a sad romance; May, a metafictional jumble; March, a bit of faux-Victoriana; and October, an early version of Mr. Gaiman's much-loved "The Graveyard Book." Much of this is in the story theater vein, with the months narrating the characters' actions.

Mr. Gaiman has a restless, playful intelligence and a fan boy's devotion to oddball genre, and the performances are deft and spirited. (Laura Gragtmans's girlish May is especially charming.)

But despite the verve and ingenuity, this evening is ultimately pretty exhausting. The cast seems determined to present this omnibus as a giant calling card, so there are exotic accents and big gestures and outsize, outlandish ways of walking and talking and doing just about anything. There's also a sword fight.

Some lighter, quieter, less attention-seeking passages would give the program a more satisfying shape and make it seem shorter. Otherwise, we risk feeling like a character in August's tale: "Tired of the story, tired of life."

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The New York Times

November 3, 2014

Contortions, Clowning and Confetti 'Metamorphosis' at the Big Apple Circus

By Andy Webster

"Metamorphosis" is the theme of the latest edition of the Big Apple Circus, now nested at Lincoln Center for the holidays. And considering the scale of this troupe — more intimate, in the European tradition, than the Ringling Brothers behemoth — you could say this impressive production starts modestly, only to spread its wings and soar.

Amid soft fluorescent colors, you hear the Big Apple Circus Band, a genial engine of musical bounce, perched above a tendril-covered archway. Soon, you meet Francesco, a clown in coattails not above pulling audience members into the ring for bits of business or pouring confetti on spectators. He warms up the crowd in tandem with John Kennedy Kane, an ebullient, mutton-chopped ringmaster handy with doves, rabbits, ferrets and wisecracks.

The lithe Mongolian contortionist Odbayasakh Dorjoo somehow folds herself into a transparent box, where she is joined by the Armenian juggler Tatevik Seyranyan, in a green outfit recalling chaste bathing suits of the 1920s. Then the animals take over, as the trainer Jenny Vidbel parades miniature horses, goats, an African porcupine and various dogs (including a shamelessly crowd-pleasing sheepadoodle named Sophie) on a "living carousel" around the ring.

"Have you heard of sleight-of-foot?" Mr. Kane asks, introducing the Anastasini Brothers, specialists in Risley, or antipodism, the art of juggling objects (or people) with the feet. One flips and twirls, and the other flaunts his strong lateral muscles.

Things enter a galactic phase when a being sprouting wings in a sunlike sphere heralds the arrival of a spaceship and Giovanni Anastasini and Irene España, aerialists who ascend to the big top's heights for some graceful, vertigo-inducing pyrotechnics.

After intermission, Ms. Vidbel breaks out her superstars: camels and llamas, majestic creatures so close you can smell them, and I mean that as a compliment. In an art called rolla bolla, Ms. Seyranyan juggles rings while balanced atop a stack of cylinders. The Smirnovs, quick-change artists, take the stage before Ms. España and the Anastasinis assemble for diabolo, a form of juggling. The biggest thrills come with the trapeze artists the Aniskin Troupe, founded by graduates of the Moscow Circus School, who are skilled at inducing zingy sensations in your legs as you gaze skyward.

These performers, many from circus dynasties, preserve an important tradition, reinforced by the nonprofit Big Apple Circus's commendable community-service activities, notably the Clown Care program, which entertains hospitalized children. This company, now in its 37th year, doesn't only have awe-inspiring acrobatic skills; it has a lot of heart, too.

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The New York Times

November 3, 2014

Herb Schapiro, Playwright Behind ‘The Me Nobody Knows,’ Dies at 85

By Bruce Weber

Herb Schapiro, a writer and teacher whose idea to create a stage play from the collected essays of poor city kids resulted in a hit musical, “The Me Nobody Knows,” died on Oct. 17 at his home in Brooklyn. He was 85.

His son, Mark, said the cause was complications of non-Hodgkins lymphoma.

Called “a dark and lovely rock-folk musical” by the New York Times critic Clive Barnes when it opened at the Orpheum Theater Off Broadway in May 1970, “The Me Nobody Knows” tells the stories, largely in their own words, of a dozen children, mostly black or Puerto Rican, and what it was like for them to grow up poor in New York City.

Mr. Schapiro called it a “ghetto ‘Under Milk Wood,’ ” referring to the Dylan Thomas drama peopled by the inhabitants of a Welsh fishing village.

In December of that year, the show moved uptown to Broadway, where it ran for nearly a year, joining “Hair,” the celebrated musical with which it shared a contemporary score and immersion in the culture of young people.

“Many musicals have arrived with the tag of being characteristic of New York City attached to them like a gold medal — musicals such as ‘West Side Story’ or even ‘Company,’ ” Mr. Barnes wrote. “But ‘The Me Nobody Knows’ is New York, it is the New York nobody wants to remember.”

The show was inspired by an anthology of writing by New York City schoolchildren edited by Stephen M. Joseph, a teacher. Mr. Schapiro read the book, “The Me Nobody Knows: Children’s Voices From the Ghetto,” and immediately envisioned its coming to life as theater.

At the time, as a playwright, he had had a few plays produced, including “Kill the One-Eyed Man,” an adaptation of a Gogol short story, and he was teaching in New Jersey. One of his interests was bringing theater to places where it was not much available; he had put on performances in prisons and in down-and-out urban settings. “The Me Nobody Knows” began as a short nonmusical film that he made in Trenton’s streets, the parts performed by local residents.

Afterward he enlisted a composer friend, Gary William Friedman, with whom he had written a show on an environmental theme, to write songs, and a producer, Jeff Britton, with whom Mr. Friedman had been working on a stage adaptation of “Androcles and the Lion.” The director was Robert H. Livingston. Lyrics were written by Will Holt and Mr. Schapiro.

Some 200 separate writings from the book, by about 100 children, were winnowed down to 12 characters and not quite two hours of stage time.

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“The problem was to impose some form, to be true to the book yet create something, something with substance, validity, orderly development,” Mr. Schapiro said in an interview with *The Princeton Packet*, a New Jersey newspaper, after the show opened Off Broadway.

“The *Me Nobody Knows*” won an Off Broadway Obie award. Its Broadway incarnation was nominated for five Tonys, including best musical, but “*Company*,” with a score by Stephen Sondheim and a book by George Furth, swept the musical awards that year.

“The *Me Nobody Knows*” ran for nearly 400 performances on Broadway and was produced in theaters across the United States and in other countries. In 1980, it was made into a television special that appeared on Showtime.

Herbert Elliott Schapiro was born in Brooklyn on Jan. 20, 1929, to Irving Schapiro, an investment broker, and the former Julia Neshick. He studied literature at New York University, earning bachelor’s and master’s degrees and completing the course work for a Ph.D., though he never wrote a dissertation. During the Korean War he served in the Army and was assigned to a base in Puerto Rico, where he taught English to Spanish-speaking recruits.

Mr. Schapiro’s theater projects were often motivated by social causes. His stage plays included “The Love Song of Saul Alinsky,” about the radical Chicago-based community organizer. Two decades after “The *Me Nobody Knows*,” he, Mr. Friedman and Mr. Britton collaborated on “Bring In the Morning,” a musical in the same mold, based on writing produced in a New York City program, *Poets in Public Service*, by older teenagers — students, hospital patients, addicts in rehab and unwed mothers. It ran Off Broadway in 1994.

Mr. Schapiro was married and divorced three times. In addition to his son, he is survived by his partner of eight years, Gail Richardson; two daughters, Judith Nevard and Elizabeth Marsh; and four grandchildren.

“We were very, very lucky,” Mr. Schapiro recalled during the Off Broadway run of “The *Me Nobody Knows*.” He explained that another show had been scheduled to open the same night, but that a cast member had become ill, forcing a postponement. As a result, he said, “we got the first-string critics down at the Orpheum.”

One was Mr. Barnes, who was unequivocal.

“I loved it,” he wrote.

ONWARD AND UPWARD WITH THE ARTS

ALL OR NOTHING

A playwright's search for his feral instincts.

BY EMMA BROCKES

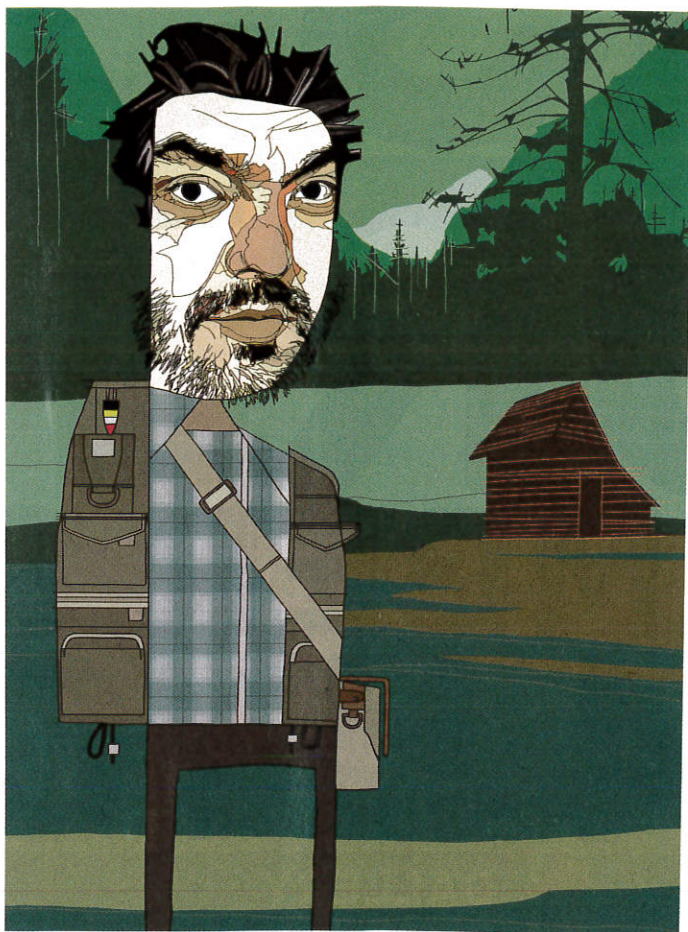


ILLUSTRATION BY CONOR LANGTON

One afternoon in early October, Hugh Jackman strode around a rehearsal space near Times Square, dressed in black and with a scabbard on his hip. The knife in the scabbard was intended for a fish, which, every night from November 16th onward, Jackman will gut, fillet, and season onstage in Jez Butterworth's new play, "The River." Part of Jackman's rightness for the role, Butterworth told me, is his understanding that the sea trout is in some ways the star. "He gets it."

"The River" can be a tough play to get. It opened in London two years ago, for a limited run at the tiny ninety-seat theatre upstairs at the Royal Court, and

is transferring to Broadway's Circle in the Square, with the role that was played in London by Dominic West now filled by Jackman—"the biggest Broadway star in one of the smallest Broadway theatres," Butterworth said. This marks a conscious downsizing from his last play, "Jerusalem," first produced in 2009, and a huge hit. "The River" is a different beast: eighty minutes to "Jerusalem"'s three hours and contemplative where the earlier play was raucous, turning on the intimacies of a couple rather than the carnival-like energy of a cast of fourteen. The first time I met Butterworth, in New York in the middle of the summer, it was in one of his natural environ-

ments, a cool, dark pub, which he entered, on a blazing hot day, wearing an unseasonably warm coat and a gray porkpie hat, with the shambling gait of a man on home turf. He ordered a pint of Guinness and removed his hat, revealing a jagged crest of dark hair streaked with silver, which, along with his black-and-white beard, gave him the look of an affable but vaguely diffident badger. (Butterworth finds the word "badger" hilarious; it crops up all over his plays. In "The Winterling," for example: "I'm here to tell you, the badger bears a grudge.")

Butterworth was in the States for a few days for the premiere of "Get On Up," a bio-pic of James Brown that he'd written with his younger brother, John-Henry. On returning to London, he would start on a rewrite of the forthcoming James Bond movie. He is in high demand as a screenwriter, a lucrative job that gives him the freedom, in his playwriting, to take risks like "The River." On paper, at least, "The River" looks aggressively uncommercial, taking place in a remote fishing cabin in rural England and, more accurately, in the figurative space of the leading man's memory. Hugh Jackman's character is identified only as The Man, and his girlfriend, The Woman, and a third character, The Other Woman, interchange at key points to represent The Man's previous relationships. Played wrongly, Jackman told me, The Man could make the audience recoil and think, "Ugh, what a dick." Played right, "The River" is an almost Gothic play about the influence of past relationships on the present. It is also a play about nature. The action, which occurs over the course of a single evening, describes The Man's ritual of taking every new girlfriend on a romantic night fishing trip, assuring her that she's the only woman to have been granted this privilege. The character is not necessarily cynical. "He's only got one fishing cabin," Butterworth said. "And it means a lot to him."

There is a tremor of suppressed mirth behind much of Butterworth's speech, a note of incredulity played to comic effect. Like the kid who buys himself license by going into an exam claiming not to have studied, he often minimizes his output and sends up the portentousness of being a playwright at

Jez Butterworth has a need to move between country and city, stage and screen.

all. In September, while we were talking in his apartment in South London, drilling started in the street outside, and Butterworth shouted out the open window, "On behalf of the arts, I command you to stop!" He likes to point out that, at the age of forty-five, he has written only six plays. "I couldn't call myself a tailor if I'd made six suits. I don't do anything until it shows up, and when it shows up I'm a playwright and in between I'm not. And the extent to which I'm not, in between, is ridiculous."

"The River" was well received by critics in London, but no one knows if it will repeat the Broadway success of "Jerusalem," for which Mark Rylance, in 2011, won a Tony Award for Best Actor as Johnny (Rooster) Byron. Outside the rehearsal space, visitors stood in a windowless room exchanging whispers over a rubble of dirty mugs and spent tea bags while waiting for the actors to take a break. Just before 1 P.M., Sonia Friedman, the producer, entered, in a woolly bobble hat, to join the company for lunch. In London, theatregoers were frustrated by the short run and the small venue, queuing for hours outside the Royal Court only to be turned away. What they didn't understand, Butterworth said, is that "there would've been nothing to go to see if I hadn't put it on there. I mean, really. It wouldn't finish itself. I'd go and look at spaces like the Wyndham's and I'd just think, This isn't that story."

The rehearsal room was blocked out to look like the cabin, simply outfitted with a kitchen table, a plastic fish (which will be replaced with a real fish once the play starts its run), and a cabinet full of fishing paraphernalia—feathery lures and hooks. Jackman flashed a purposeful grin at newcomers to the room. "Is there a roll with this?" he said, holding up a plate of salad before sitting down at the kitchen table for lunch with Friedman and Ian Rickson, the play's director.

Butterworth was not there, although in the early days of the play's development he was a more frequent visitor to the rehearsal room. He works best under pressure, thriving on the kind of tight deadlines that would paralyze other writers. This gives him, like a lot of his characters, the air of the blagger, that British word for someone with a slightly

knowing way of doing things on the fly. During the writing of "Jerusalem," he took this to the point of finishing the play after rehearsals had started. "The River" had an equally tortured delivery. "I would come with the same part of the play over the course of about a year and a half," Butterworth said. "We would do the same fucking stuff. I couldn't get any further with it at all. It was very late in it that I managed to make it work."

After lunch, I joined Butterworth downtown, in a hotel coffee shop. One gets the impression that, given the choice, he would like to find a less dysfunctional way of working. He recalled watching a Miles Davis interview on YouTube, in which the jazz legend was asked how, having spent years in the seventies doing pretty much nothing, he had managed to return to work: "And he said 'Dizzy Gillespie came round my house and said 'What the fuck are you doing?' and I went back to work.'" Butterworth laughed. "I just loved the idea that it's that simple."

Jez Butterworth's apartment, in Borough, near London Bridge, sits at a junction between worlds. From one angle, you can see the Shard, the glittering Renzo Piano-designed tower and monument to the capital's ritzy excesses; from another, Cross Bones Graveyard, one of the oldest graveyards in London, medieval in origin and once an unconsecrated cemetery for prostitutes, later a paupers' burial ground. A plaque on the gate reads "The Outcast Dead R.I.P."

It was early September, and Butterworth, who divides his time between London and a farm in Somerset, had spent the week in conference with Sam Mendes and Daniel Craig, tweaking story lines for the new Bond movie. (He hates corporate limos and had been conveyed every morning to Pinewood Studios, outside London, on the back of a motorbike.) This was Butterworth's second Bond; he worked on "Skyfall," too, making the kind of script changes that his twelve-year-old self, watching the movie at the St. Albans Odeon, would be pleased to see. "You know, like Bond doesn't have scenes with other men. Bond shoots other men—he doesn't sit around chatting to them. So you put a line through that."

Butterworth derives comfort and energy from being able to move between states: from city to country and from theatre to screen. This inclination has the added advantage of meaning that no one ever knows quite where he is. He was born less than a mile from Borough, in St. Thomas's Hospital, but grew up in St. Albans, a commuter-belt town just north of London, in the type of sixties housing development that has come to stand for a certain kind of spiritual death in England. (One neighbor was a salesman for Polaroid. Another neighbor was a salesman for Kerrygold butter. The guy across the road killed rats on the London Underground at night.)

Five kids is above average for that part of the world, and the family stood out. There were always broken-down vehicles outside the Butterworth house. "The house was full of stuff," Butterworth said. "And it was a mess. And we were a mess." He said this wryly, but in his plays Butterworth tends to correlate mess with integrity. Butterworth's father, a former truck driver who, after winning a trade-union scholarship to Ruskin College in Oxford, qualified as a lecturer in industrial relations and economics, met Butterworth's mother after coming round to fix her gutter. He was nineteen years her senior, a veteran of the Second World War who had been on the landing craft at Omaha Beach, and, like her, was part Irish Catholic. "My dad wanted to batten down the hatches," he said. "He was a very sweet man and enormously bright and very funny. But very afraid of the outside. His life lessons weren't about 'Go West, young man.' They were 'Don't go West, young man. Because you might get shot.'"

"Bands, or dreaming up plans," his eldest brother, Tom, said, of the group dynamic in which they were raised. Of the five Butterworth siblings—four boys, with Jez the second youngest, and one girl, Joanna, the oldest—he and Tom were the first to collaborate, while both were students. John-Henry, seven years Jez's junior, has worked with him the most, co-writing the bio-pic "Fair Game," about Joe Wilson and Valerie Plame, and the sci-fi movie "Edge of Tomorrow."

"For a long time it was quite adversarial," John-Henry said, of their early

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methods. "Lots of storming out and shouting."

"We would argue over every comma," Butterworth said. "My working relationship with John-Henry took a seismic leap forward when I abdicated as elder brother. I started to listen to him—the fact that I saw him on the day he was born notwithstanding."

The undisputed leader of the pack was Joanna, who "featured largely in the role of boss," John-Henry told me, not least because she had her own bedroom, while the four boys bunked together. She was an inventor of games and stories who introduced her brothers to Roald Dahl and C. S. Lewis, and left clues around the house for buried treasure. "Joanna was extremely good at blurring the boundary between the real and the imagined," John-Henry said.

Tom introduced Jez to drama. Butterworth visited his older brother at Cambridge and saw him in a student production of Brian Friel's "Translations," a classic play of Irish national identity, set in 1833 in County Donegal. "That was the blastoff," he said. In "Translations," you see a comic verbosity and linguistic exuberance similar to Butterworth's achievements in "Jerusalem." One is aware that there are words Butterworth uses partly because he finds them amusing: prannie, prannock, flapjack, Maypole, Chorleywood, piss-head, and accordion, among others—words he picks up and saves like a magpie. "Jez has got the most incredible memory for dialogue," John-Henry said. "We'll be walking around and something will happen, and he'll take a shine to it and it'll come up years later. He doesn't make any notes. He just remembers."

Unlike most students who harbor the desire to write a play, Butterworth, who followed Tom to Cambridge, sat down and wrote one, a surreal adaptation of a 1961 recipe book by Katharine Whitehorn called "Cooking in a Bedsitter"; he and Tom turned it into a black comedy about student alienation and took it to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. (The first person Butterworth auditioned at Cambridge, a fellow-student, was Rachel Weisz. He told me, "I thought, I'm sticking with this.") James Harding, the director of news and current affairs for the BBC, went to college

with Butterworth and would later be his best man. "He behaved at nineteen years old as though he was already famous," Harding said. "Not in a self-regarding way, but he was extremely unflustered and unbothered about being around grand and famous people. He was the best storyteller there was, night after night, in the Maypole pub." He had an extraordinary ability to "embellish," Harding added.

After Edinburgh, a couple of agents expressed interest in the Butterworth brothers, and, eventually, they decided to leave London, where they'd both moved on graduating, and take their writing more seriously. It was the first of Butterworth's flights to the country, in this case to Pewsey, a small village in Wiltshire. "Part hiding, part escaping," his brother said. At the end of that period, they had, together, written a TV movie for Channel 4 called "Christmas," which aired in 1996 without much fanfare, and Butterworth had finished his first full-length play, "Mojo."

In retrospect, Butterworth is amazed at how casually he pulled this feat off. "It was like, 'I shall now go off from London and I shall write a play that's got an interval. It'll be a proper play and I'll know what I'm doing before I start.' And then it happened exactly like that. I gave it in to my agent and I was at the Royal Court two days later and a week after that we had a reading, and that was it. That was the whole process. I moved back to London. It had gone exactly as I had hoped. To a disastrous degree."

"Mojo" came out of a conversation he'd had with Malcolm McLaren about the relationship between London gangland and the arrival, in the city, of rock and roll, and at the Royal Court it fell into Ian Rickson's hands. "When you're finding plays, you're looking for what is intrinsically theatrical—what in the writing could not be done onscreen," Rickson said. "It's about the particular event of theatre, and it had that kind of jazzy, combustible, thrilling way about it." It was the start of a working relationship, and a friendship, that Butterworth calls the single most important enabler of his work.

"Mojo" was set at a seedy music club in Soho in 1958: dim young goons and

wannabe hoods exchange ritualistic banter in the style of early Tarantino—it has lots of abrupt shifts in tone, and its humor turns on the conflation of high and low diction. It is often described as a play about gangsters, but the gangster part is in some ways incidental; it's as much a piece about friendship and the way members of a group start to speak their own language—playful and exclusionary, giddy at times to the point of nonsense—getting at what Don DeLillo identified, in "Underworld," as "the hidden triggers of experience, the little delves and swerves that make a state of being."

At one point, Potts, Goon No. 1, advises Sweets, Goon No. 2, to go to a museum in order to put their jobs as fixers in a historical context.

POTTS: Go down take a look at any picture Napoleon. Go take a butcher's at the Emperor Half the World. And you'll see it. You'll see. They got a lot of blokes standing around. Doers. Finders. Advisors. Acquaintances. Watchers. An entourage.

SWEETS: Big fuckers in fur boots. On the payroll.

POTTS: Napoleon's chums. And they're all there. Sticking around. Having a natter. Cleaning rifles. Chatting to cherubs. Waiting. Waiting for the deal to come off.

"Mojo" ended in sudden bloody violence—the kind of rip in the fabric that Butterworth has come to specialize in. When it debuted, in 1995, it caused a sensation.

It was seven years before another play of Butterworth's was produced. Many found it hard to discern what had happened. He didn't self-destruct in the obvious ways. He didn't turn up on red carpets at premières or snort coke in the loo at the Groucho Club. And he looked busy. "Mojo" got made into a film, which Butterworth was invited to direct. (It was released in 1997 and did moderately well—"Too stagebound to be entirely successful," *Variety* wrote, in a typical review.) Other screen projects followed, and Butterworth started to develop his parallel career as a sought-after screenwriter.

"But he was definitely not writing another play," Tom said. "I wasn't surprised that later, looking back, he said there was a sense of panic. He'd done it once and might not be able to do it again."

Ian Rickson looked on with concern.

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"There's not a lot you can do other than be available—unconditionally there—and maybe offer little provocations," he said. The biggest problem was tracking him down. "He was like mercury on a bit of glass."

Butterworth didn't disappear, though, from his family or friends. Part of his coping strategy was to embed himself in the pub in north London. "There were always periods of his life where he was extremely professionally successful but wasn't entirely rooted," James Harding said. "Or periods where he was being pulled by the film industry and not having time for writing plays. He wasn't so much disguising it in the pub as drinking in the pub."

"I was completely marooned," Butterworth said. "I couldn't write plays. I couldn't find the time to work. I was spending all of my time just hanging out with friends and waking up with a hangover. And feeling like that was an endless cycle." His group, those "lovely friends, who are still my friends," couldn't help, he said, because "I looked like I didn't care." The dry spell lasted until 2002, when he finished his second play, "The Night Heron." Meanwhile the idea of Rooster Byron started to form in his mind, although it would take many years to cohere. "But at the end of that decade, I wrote a play about someone who spends all their time just drinking and surrounded by the same people."

On May Day, 2009, Jez Butterworth, Ian Rickson, and Mark Rylance visited the town of Padstow, in Cornwall, two counties west of Butterworth's farmhouse. The men were trying to drum up ideas for Butterworth's unfinished play, which would be his fifth and was provisionally called "St. George's Day," after England's national day. May Day, traditionally the first day of spring, is another ancient holiday in England, one observed with a pagan festival going back to Roman times. The celebration includes such largely defunct rites as the crowning of the May Queen and

Morris dancing, which no English person can refer to without suppressing a light snigger. In the drizzling rain, they took in Padstow's pageant, watching townsfolk dance around a Maypole

and perform other arcane rituals with the artificial theatricality of a historical reenactment. Nonetheless, the rituals survive, and, even in reduced form, provide some antidote to the sense of modern Britain as a place of characterless small towns presided over by a capital city full of Saudi-financed glass high-rises.

When the men returned to the farmhouse that afternoon, Rickson asked Mark Rylance to read aloud a poem. Rylance, a former artistic director of London's Globe Theatre, is perhaps best known as a brilliant interpreter of Shakespeare, most recently on Broadway in "Twelfth Night" and "Richard III." He took a book from the shelf and prepared to read. Butterworth looked on in a state of despair. A month shy of the play's going into rehearsal, he had spent most of the day bluffing to the other two about how much he had actually written. "Essentially dissembling," he said recently, still incredulous at the memory. "It was a complete nightmare."

Although Butterworth was stymied by the new play, he recognized the importance of the farm to his writing. The effect of the countryside on the imagination is a cliché that Butterworth holds to be true. It triggers some instinct that overcomes the layers of self-consciousness which can silence a writer. In 2002, Butterworth married Gilly Richardson, a film editor, and in 2005 they moved to the West of England, first to a small cottage in Devon, and then to the farm in Somerset. They had two children, Mabel and Grace (now eight and five). Butterworth got a dog called Crosby and acquired a flock of sheep and some pigs. He started fishing and walking, and began "digging my way out."

Describing the post-"Mojo" period, Butterworth quoted Harold Pinter, with whom he'd grown very close. Pinter, who died in 2008, once said that "when you can't write, you feel you've been banished from yourself." Some of Butterworth's alienation showed up in the screen work he produced during those years, which also marked the end of his short career as a director. In 2001, he directed and co-wrote with Tom a film called "Birthday Girl," which was

produced by their brother Stephen. It was set on a British housing estate like the one they'd grown up on and starred Nicole Kidman as a mail-order Russian bride, with Ben Chaplin as the weedy bank clerk who buys her, and Vincent Cassel as her boyfriend. Butterworth's writing is customarily sharp without being cruel, but there is a sneering aspect to "Birthday Girl"—small people, the film implies, living small, silly lives—and the language, in places, feels too dense and inventive for the screen. It is an oddly empty film, and small wonder. The shoot was delayed for six months, because Kidman got injured, and by the end Butterworth was bored and depressed. "I directed two films, and I hated both processes so much," he said. "It takes so fucking long. It's like you have to keep telling the same ninety-minute story for four years."

He revisited the terrain of "Birthday Girl" five years later with his play "Parlour Song," a more nuanced and sympathetic depiction of the suburbs, in which the location, neither wholly urban nor rural, stands in for a kind of psychological holding place that Butterworth described to me as "nostalgia for the opposite." Holding two options in one's mind simultaneously enables an emotional state—of freedom or evasiveness, depending on one's view—in which Butterworth's characters tend to reside. "The idea of one constantly feeds the other," he said. "If you're in one place, you long to be in the other. Which feels terrific."

"Parlour Song," which premiered in New York with the Atlantic Theatre Company in February of 2008, was the last of three plays written by Butterworth over the course of six years. "The Night Heron," staged at the Royal Court in 2002, and "The Winterling," put on at the same venue in 2006, both turn on scruffy old blokes having baffling conversations, and the plays won Butterworth comparisons to Beckett and Pinter. He says Pinter's friendship was as important to him as Pinter's work, yet he acknowledges that he went through a Pinter "phase," something he was glad to emerge from. "Harold was such an inspiring man and guiding light, and so relentlessly himself. But a play

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like “The Homecoming” is fucking horrible—what that is saying about relationships and people. It’s unbelievable and brilliant, and so true. But, Christ, it is horrible.”

“Parlour Song” marked the beginning of Butterworth’s recovering his voice, although none of the three plays received the rapturous reception of “Mojo.” It was a period that John-Henry characterized as Butterworth’s attempt to find a new style for himself and get out from under the influence of Pinter. After the success of “Mojo,” John-Henry said, “he had to reconfigure his ambitions.” He added, “I think that’s a relatively common thing with musicians and stage artists—that they’ll work their way out of stasis by copying something that they love.”

For years, Butterworth had been toying around with “St. George’s Day,” which was partly based on a character he’d met fifteen years earlier, in Pewsey. He wanted to write about England through the lens of a ramshackle guy living in a trailer. It wasn’t working. None of the big speeches had been written, and there was no Act III. In May, 2009, when Rylance and Rickson came to visit, he was years overdue with the final draft, and although the actors had been cast and the Royal Court booked, the end was still not in sight.

Rickson had a hunch that, “like a good chef, if I brought in the Rylance element we’d get in a domain that would really release the flow. And that’s what happened.” Back at the farmhouse, Rickson suggested that Rylance read aloud “Daffodils,” from Ted Hughes’s “Birthday Letters,” his final collection, which drew on his life with Sylvia Plath. It’s a poem about grief, making sudden turns from the gentle depiction of the couple picking flowers “among the soft shrieks / Of their jostled stems” to the savage foreshadowing of death: “wind-wounds, spasms from the dark earth, / With their odourless metals.”

Rickson and Butterworth had spoken in the past of their admiration for Hughes, and “Daffodils,” in which human experience is rooted in the cycles of the natural world, overlapped with the themes of Butterworth’s play. Hearing Rylance read, Butterworth said, ig-

nited an ambition to write something equal to Rylance’s talent. He renamed the play “Jerusalem,” after the William Blake poem, adapted by Hubert Parry into a popular hymn that is sung on St. George’s Day. It provides a sort of bathos: the grandest expression of Englishness is used to describe the goings on of a group of drifters.

“Had that not happened, we probably wouldn’t be sitting here talking about it,” he said of Rylance’s reading. “It had such a fundamental effect, because you were suddenly aware of what this person was capable of. You knew the second that it began that what you were hearing was the poem; it was the clearest transmission. It came through on the clearest frequency, and I had never experienced anything like it in my life. It was like hearing Aretha Franklin sing.”

If you missed “Jerusalem” when it was onstage, the only way to see it is to go to Blythe House, in West London, a grand outpost of the Victoria and Albert Museum. Butterworth doesn’t like plays on film—he compares them to “being told about a dinner party that you weren’t at”—and he refused to give permission for a commercial DVD of the production.

In a small room, on a tiny TV, you are able to watch one of the most requested DVDs in the V. & A.’s collection, recorded at the Royal Court in 2009. Even under such circumstances, “Jerusalem” is extraordinary. It is also very long, leaving one bleary-eyed and a little blasted, wandering down Hammer-smith Road to be asked by security guards, “You all right, love?”

“Jerusalem” is devastating in the way that, say, a Stevie Smith poem is devastating: it nails that lightning swerve from comic to tragic and trivial to meaningful, so that the audience feels, at certain points, as if it had plunged through a trapdoor. The hero, Rooster Byron, is a petty drug dealer, liar, shagger, all-round rogue, and venerable pisshead in the English style, whose great unwinding speeches start out vaguely Shakespearian—“Friends! Outcasts. Leeches. Undesirables”—and end with something more akin to the Sex Pistols: “God damn the Kennet and Avon. Fuck the New Es-

tate!” As with most Butterworth plays, outwardly nothing much happens—the story is of a man getting evicted from his trailer in a forest in the southwest of England. Rooster and the teen-agers who hang around his trailer summon a world on the fringes, which tells us precisely why the center isn’t holding.

The early version, “St. George’s Day,” had foundered when Butterworth tried too hard to make it about the state of England. It was “very raw,” Rylance said. “I’ve always felt he writes very subconsciously and at a kind of feral, almost animal level.” It was only when Butterworth abandoned his grand plans that he ushered in the very elements he thought he’d abandoned: “Jerusalem” was widely taken as a commentary on English national identity, that ambiguous mixture of bravado, self-abasement, and sardonic pride in which pretending to be a shambles provides cover for keener movements.

“Jerusalem” is also a play about kindness. When, toward the end, Rooster is brutally beaten by thugs from the village, one implicitly understands it to be a statement about how marginal figures are treated by the mainstream. Like so many of Butterworth’s characters, including James Brown in this year’s biopic, Rooster is full of shit. He is also touching and warm, broken and tender, self-mythologizing and self-mocking. “Riches. Fame. A glimpse of God’s tail,” he says, in one of his wild speeches. “Comes a time you’d swap it all for a solid golden piss on English soil.”

The difference between a play that works and one that doesn’t is infinitesimal and huge. For Butterworth, something is working when “the connections that I normally make accelerate, and you’re suddenly in a state where you’re making them all over. And it becomes a play.” Butterworth knew “Jerusalem” was good because he wrote it in a blur and revised every day during rehearsal. “I didn’t feel defensive,” he said. “I was open to the process. And something strange was going on, where you’re working at a speed you’re not capable of on a normal day. A madness you slip into. But it can be really beneficial.” (Butterworth is less fun to work with when he’s on an unsure footing. During

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the rewriting of the movie "Edge of Tomorrow," he lashed out at Doug Liman, the director, who recalled that "almost immediately afterward Jez said, 'You know, if I ever attack you again personally, you should just know that means I know I'm wrong.'")

"Jerusalem" transformed the way people thought about Butterworth. Ben Brantley, in a review of the Broadway production in the *Times*, said, "It thinks big—transcendently big—in ways contemporary drama seldom dares." The play and its performances had left him in a state of "glassy-eyed rapture."

A few years ago, Butterworth went to an exhibition of Robert Capa photos in New York. Capa's contact sheets were on display, and you could see the pictures leading up to each famous shot. The differences between photos came down to a matter of milliseconds, yet, Butterworth said, "the one before, that is so nearly the shot that rings like a bell forever," had no resonance at all. "And it taught me something about the difference between nearly and really. Those days where you're looking at a page and thinking this is an imitation of itself—it could be as close as the frame before the actual one, and it's nothing. It's nothing."

The Butterworth kitchen in Somerset is a riot of kids' shoes, dishes, books, plants, two Aga ranges, and cats flopping about on the flagstone floor. On the wall of the downstairs loo there's a poster for the movie "Airplane!" with a note from Jerry Zucker, one of the directors, scrawled across it: "Jez—please forgive me for corrupting your childhood. If I had only known how impressionable you were." The farmhouse was Butterworth's retreat in the months after "Jerusalem" opened. The play won two Olivier Awards and transferred to Broadway (where it lost out to "War Horse" for Best Play at the Tonys). When Butterworth finally got back to his desk, he once again faced the challenge of unseating a hit.

He had a more secure base from which to fight it this time. The farm is strikingly situated, with Exmoor National Park behind it and rolling fields in front, where the River Exe meets the River Barle to almost moatlike effect. In

September, Butterworth greeted me at the door, bouncing lightly on his toes and wearing the accessories of youth—or, rather, of the parent of young daughters who force one to wear their handcrafted string bracelets.

It was a Saturday morning, a few days after our meeting in London, and Butterworth was back in Somerset for the weekend. (Butterworth and his wife recently split up.) He took me to his writing shed, two fields north of the farmhouse, stopping halfway up the hill to explain the counterintuitive effect of the landscape; namely, that "you can walk the dog in a circle and never leave the river." Butterworth pointed out a goat named Boy, "who is a girl"—his daughters named her—and Dogger, the last of a flock of sheep named after areas of the Shipping Forecast, a weather report for British coastal regions read out on the BBC, like a national liturgy. Early on, one of the sheep died shortly after birth. Butterworth buried it, but something dug it up in the night. "The first lesson you learn is that you've got to dig them deep," he said. The livestock have been radically reduced over the past few years. "Now it's down to a few animals," Butterworth said. "The chickens mostly got killed by the fox."

The cabin is furnished with a single bed, a desk, and three chairs. There is no toilet. Butterworth sat in the armchair, kicked off his boots, and curled one bare foot over the other. The view from his desk looked down over fields toward a cottage, not far from the house. It was there, during the year he was finishing "The River," that his sister, Joanna, lived after being given a diagnosis of brain cancer. Before her illness, she had been working in London as the registrar at LAMDA, the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art, but had always wanted to live in the country. At night, when Butterworth looked up from his desk, he could see the light in Joanna's room.

If the intimate setting of "The River" had an immediate precedent, it wasn't in any of Butterworth's plays but in "Fair Game," the 2010 film about Valerie Plame, the ex-C.I.A. agent, and her husband, Joe Wilson, the former Ambassador, which Butterworth wrote and produced while finishing "Jerusalem." In the run-up to the second Iraq war, Wil-

son was sent to Niger to investigate the possibility that it was selling yellowcake uranium to Saddam Hussein, and his public protest over the use, or misuse, of his findings by the Bush government led to his wife's exposure.

Butterworth is not political. His response to the conflict ("I didn't think we should have been at war in Iraq, and I think that's being borne out right now. It's the Pottery Barn rule: if you break it, you own it") wasn't the reason he said yes, or why Doug Liman, the director, hired him. Both men were primarily interested in the dynamic of the marriage between Plame and Wilson, played by Naomi Watts and Sean Penn; Butterworth and John-Henry depicted the union as both tender and fraught with conflicting egos.

Responses to the film were mixed, but Butterworth makes no apology for avoiding the political controversy. It is a question, he said, of "knowing what you're good at" and where your genuine interests lie. "After meeting Valerie and—I can't remember his name, whatever his name was; I love that I can't remember his name, I'm such a prick—the character Sean played, they were in such a compelling situation because he needed the world to know who he was and she desperately needed the world not to know who she was. You could tell the second he walked into the room that he was desperate for this, and she didn't want it to happen."

Butterworth worked on several scripts during this period, among them "Get On Up," and he returned to "The River" in a different mood. Living in the countryside had, to that point, made him think of the "unbelievably visceral" horror of the natural world, the fact that two feet from his door "there's this godless game playing itself out."

Lately, something else had struck him. "If all those winds are blowing in one direction, then there's one wind blowing in the opposite direction, and it might be called mercy," he said. "That you are capable of not eating the thing in front of you, that you're not just driven by the same relentless maths. There's some other quality there. And what is it doing there? What is that idea? Is it just an extension of how we protect our larger needs?"

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Butterworth's parents, lapsed Catholics, considered religion foolish, and he used to agree. Whether or not he had now become religious was irrelevant, he said. "My brain was. My brain had been set up around all these rituals and observances for tens of thousands of years before me, that would respond to the sun and the moon in numinous terms, that would respond to hunting, and to births and deaths in those terms, whether or not I thought it was nuts," he said. "It's why story is there in the first place."

It's one of the ideas of the play—that the conversion of life into myth, the act of curating one's own experience, is a defining aspect of what it is to be human. The day Butterworth finished writing "The River," his sister died. The play is dedicated to her. Afterward, he said, "I suddenly couldn't believe how many brothers I had. It had never seemed like that."

And what of grief? "The main thing that you learn from grief is that you might as well try and get over it, because it's coming around the mountain again. It's just going to come, and come, and come, and come, and when you go it's somebody else's problem."

In "The River," Butterworth wanted all the dramatic elements pared down. No pyrotechnics, no flights of verbosity, but a singular story about the way people love each other. "A lifetime's work, to try and say one thing that's true."

It comes down, in the end, to a question of structure. Butterworth has an image in his head of a play without plot, in which, like a good relationship, the balance is achieved through equal weight distribution. "It's almost like nails in a building," he says. "If you could put it together with none and just make everything lean on everything else, it would be perfect."

There is a risk that "The River" will infuriate audiences. Some will arrive expecting "Jerusalem." Others will be there for Wolverine. Hugh Jackman, who described the play to me as a piece of "chamber music," hopes they remain open-minded. "I love people coming in not knowing what to expect," he said. "If that means someone who goes to every X-Men movie comes to see me playing

a fly fisherman trying to sort out his relationships, fantastic."

Quite apart from taking pride in the show, Butterworth is pleased with "The River" for reasons of perversity. He talked about Neil Young, one of his musical heroes, following up his hit album of 1972, "Harvest," with a series of more muted records, among them "Tonight's the Night." He said, "He's playing 'Tonight's the Night' to an English audience, and they're screaming at him for songs off 'Harvest' and they're all off 'Tonight's the Night,' and at the end he goes, 'I'm going to play you something you've heard before,' and they all cheer, and he played 'Tonight's the Night.' Again."

For Butterworth, the continuity is in the people around him. Writing a play is hard enough. "It's like going deep-sea diving. You wouldn't want to do that on your own." ♦

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CRAIN'S

NEW YORK BUSINESS

November 3, 2014

OUT AND ABOUT

by Jessica Kramer

FUNDRAISERS

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 10

Actors Frances McDormand, Cynthia Nixon, Mary-Louise Parker and David Hyde Pierce, among others, toast Tony-winning director Daniel Sullivan at the **MANHATTAN THEATRE CLUB'S FALL BENEFIT 2014**. The evening features a cocktail reception, dinner and a show. The party starts at 7 p.m. at the Appel Room at Jazz at Lincoln Center's Frederick P. Rose Hall, 10 Columbus Circle. Tickets start at \$2,000 and can be purchased at manhattantheatreclub.com.

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CRAIN'S

NEW YORK BUSINESS

November 3, 2014

OUT AND ABOUT

by Jessica Kramer

MARK YOUR CALENDAR...

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7, THROUGH SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2015

BRADLEY COOPER STARS in *THE ELEPHANT MAN*, the true story of Joseph Merrick, a 19th-century British man with elephantiasis who became a freak-show attraction. Patricia Clarkson and Alessandro Nivola co-star as an actress and doctor who befriend Merrick. The play runs at various times at the Booth Theatre, at 222 W. 45th St. Tickets are \$79 to \$169 and can be purchased at elephantmanbroadway.com.



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Newsday

NOVEMBER 2, 2014

hot stuff

THEATER

THE RIVER A night with no moon. An isolated cabin. And Hugh Jackman? What could be bad? Broadway theatergoers get to see for themselves when Jackman plays a man who brings his new girlfriend to his cabin in this dark drama by British playwright Jez Butterworth. Ian

Rickman, who directed Mark Rylance in Butterworth's "Jerusalem" here in 2011, stages the New York premiere at Circle in the Square, 50th Street west of Broadway. In previews for a Nov. 16 opening.

Tickets, if you can score any without paying premium prices, are \$35-\$175. Call 212-239-6200 or visit theriveronbroadway.com, or nwsdy.li/riverbw

— LINDA WINER

Total Daily Circulation – 437,000
Total Sunday Circulation – 495,000
Monthly Online Readership – 2,553,000

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The Record

NOVEMBER 3, 2014

Talk Shows

LIVE! WITH KELLY AND MICHAEL Jessica Chastain ("Interstellar"); Michael C. Hall; dog-grooming. (N) (HDTV) (CC) **7 9 a.m.**

Total Daily Circulation – 144,897
Total Sunday Circulation – 176,985
Monthly Online Circulation – 1,700,000

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Newsday

NOVEMBER 3, 2014



NIGHT
DAILY SHOW (11 p.m., Comedy Central) — Jake Gyllenhaal

Total Daily Circulation – 437,000
Total Sunday Circulation – 495,000
Monthly Online Readership – 2,553,000

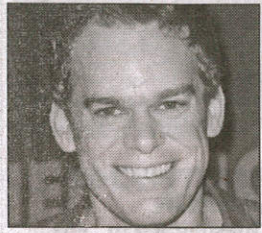
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NEW YORK POST

November 2, 2014

LOOK WHO'S TALKING THIS WEEK'S GUESTS

SETH MEYERS
12:37 a.m., Ch. 4



Monday: Kerry Washington; Michael C.Hall (pictured)

Total Daily Circulation – 576,711
Monthly Online Readership – 12,000,000

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The Star-Ledger

NOVEMBER 3, 2014

GOOD FOR KIDS

Free tickets to Broadway plays and musicals

Want to see a show on Broadway — for free? You can, if you're a kid. The dates have been announced for 2015 Kids' Night on Broadway and tickets for participating shows will be available Wednesday at 11 a.m. The initiative allows children ages 6 to 18 to attend a play or musical gratis when accompanied by an adult (who must pay full price). Tickets include pre-theater activities and discounts on restaurants and parking.

The roster includes "Aladdin," "Beautiful — The Carole King Musical," "Chicago," "The

Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time," "A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder," "Honeymoon in Vegas," "Jersey Boys," "If/Then," "Kinky Boots," "Les Misérables," "The Lion King," "Mamma Mia!," "Matilda," "The Phantom of the Opera," "On the Town," "Pippin," "Rock of Ages," "Side Show" and "Wicked." The event takes place Jan. 9 through 15 and is presented by the New York Times and the Broadway League. For more information or to order, visit kidsnightonbroadway.com.

— *Ronni Reich*

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