

BUZZ

Inspired by the short life of Mary Ann "Buzz" Goodbody

By Susan Ferrara

1509 Lexington Ave
Apt. 3A
New York, NY 10029
917-406-7485
susieferrara@gmail.com
(c) 2017

Charismatic director Mary Ann 'Buzz' Goodbody was one of only five women directing in the U.K. in the 1970's. In 1975, she famously directed Ben Kingsley in the title role of HAMLET in a theatre converted from a tin shack; the HAMLET of their generation.

Four days after the first performance, she was gone.

THE COMPANY

BUZZ

Female, Director, ages from 21 to 28 years old, British (Posh), Caucasian.

HAMLET

Male, Actor, 30's, British, but of Gujarati descent.

MS. CUT

Female, Costume Designer, 40's-60's, British (Working Class), Caucasian.

MR. RIGHT(also voices/plays FRANCISCO and HORATIO)

Male, Director/Soldier, 30's-40's, British (Posh), Caucasian.

MENTOR (also voices/plays BARNARDO)

Male, Artistic Director/Soldier/Actor, 40's-70's, British (Posh), Caucasian.

MR. BABBLE (also voices/plays MARCELLUS/CHARLIE/CLAUDIUS)

Male, Set Designer/Soldier, 40's-60's, British (Posh), Caucasian.

MISS SOFT (one actress in the company cast as CONSTANCE/OPHELIA)

Female, Actress, 30's-40's, British (Working Class), Caucasian.

SIDNEY

Male, Gravedigger, 40's-70's, Cockney.

LEONARD

Male, Gravedigger, 20's-40's, Cockney.

WORKMEN/BOARD OPERATOR/COMPANY MEMBERS

Any of a combination of the above not already on stage

LOCATION and TIMING

England, 1967; England during the 1970's.

The stage can be divided into three areas: a wooded area; a bedroom and various administrative, theatrical spaces (the main stage, The Other Space, etc.).

MAIN OFFICE: Central meeting place in the theatre. Long table littered with books, paperwork, wrappers. Surrounded by mismatched chairs and an overburdened bookcase with a hot plate, kettle of water and dishes. Ash trays over-flowing. An area where the company members wait, meet and work;

THE OTHER PLACE: A small, black box theatre. A tin shed down the street from the main stage. Holds two chairs and a small table;

BEDROOM: A bed, lamp, papers and;

WOODED AREA: A mound of earth; a hole freshly dug. A graveyard.

PROJECTIONS: Mark the passage of time with dates and select text from the GHOST KING in HAMLET.

MUSIC: Max Miller's theme song, Cheeky Chappy;
(www.dailymotion.com/video/x8svuf_max-miller-sings-mary-from-the-dair_shortfilms)

LIGHTING AND SCENE TRANSITIONS: The pops and flashing lights might be reporters or might be the snapping neurons of a brain coming to rest.

DASHES: Suggest an interruption, a change in thought or direction, struggling to find a word, etc.

The story is told in the amount of time it takes to dig a grave.

1. BUZZ, BUZZ, BUZZ.

Blackout. In darkness.

Three loud knocks on a solid, wooden door.

Two lanterns snap on from the back of the house and find a young woman standing, down stage center, in a nightdress. This is BUZZ. She holds eight hand-written pages above her head. Her breathing, ragged. She stares into the audience. Time passes.

Blackout.

2. A GRAVEYARD.

A PROJECTION comes to life:

"April 12, 1975."

A work light snaps on.

PROJECTION fades.

Two GRAVE DIGGERS stand with their shovels. Working class. One smokes a cigarette, maybe. The other wears a fedora.

LEONARD

What happened to the fat fella? Jolly fella?

LEONARD jams his shovel in the earth, digs.

SIDNEY

Fat one? Oh dead. Dead.

LEONARD

Fuck off.

SIDNEY

Yeah.

LEONARD

Jus' saw 'im.

Died in '59. SIDNEY

The ginger fella? LEONARD

Wun't ginger. SIDNEY

But the fat fella. LEONARD

Which one? SIDNEY

Had a part down the middle. LEONARD

Gestures to the top of his head.

All right. SIDNEY

Was in a wheelchair. LEONARD

No. SIDNEY

But I jus' saw him. LEONARD

Maybe he's not dead. SIDNEY

... LEONARD

... SIDNEY

What year is this? LEONARD

'75. SIDNEY

1975? LEONARD

SIDNEY
 Uh yeah - (counting) - 19-75.

LEONARD
 Huh.

Pointing to the grave.

LEONARD (CONT.)
 What's this make?

SIDNEY
 This one? Well, let's see -

LEONARD
 Hold off.

SIDNEY
 There was - uh - Duse in '24.

LEONARD
 Sidney.

SIDNEY
 Siddons in - what was it?

LEONARD
 I hate when you do this.

SIDNEY
 Siddons in -

LEONARD
 June 8, 1831.

SIDNEY
 June 8th?

LEONARD
 1831. Had a cold that day. Never get sick.

Short beat.

SIDNEY
 There was Booth.

LEONARD
 Bloody Hell.

SIDNEY
 All them Booths.

Right. Right. Sid. LEONARD

Brecht in '56. Garrick in - SIDNEY

1779. LEONARD

Reinhardt in '43. Damp that day. Chekhov in '04. Beckett in - SIDNEY

SIDNEY. LEONARD

What? SIDNEY

I want to know about the fat fella. Jolly fella. Tells a good story. Does that bit on the tellie. LEONARD

You takin the piss? SIDNEY

No. LEONARD

It was Lou Costello. SIDNEY

Lou Costello? LEONARD

Yeah. Christ all. You helped me bury him. SIDNEY

American fella? LEONARD

Yeeeah. Lou Costello. SIDNEY

Lou Costello. Well why didn't you say so? Lou Costello. I know Lou Costello. What happened? LEONARD

Massive, sumthin', heart-attack. SIDNEY

Fiber.
LEONARD

Eh?
SIDNEY

LEONARD
Good for the horse and cart (taps his chest, means "heart").

LEONARD nods at the grave.

Who goes there?
LEONARD (CONT.)

SIDNEY pulls a work order from his pocket.

SIDNEY
Uh - (reading the work order). Some bird, says here. "Mary Ann 'Buzz' Goodbody".

Blackout. Three, loud knocks on a solid wooden door.

3. THE BEDROOM.

A SOLDIER's lantern snaps on from the back of the house. Finds BUZZ in her bedroom, collapsed, down stage center. She jerks to a seated position.

HUHuh.
BUZZ

Two empty bottles of barbiturates roll gently at her feet.

MS. CUT
(off stage) OPEN THE DOOR!

MS. CUT stands just offstage banging at the door.

BERNARDO
(back of house) WHO'S THERE?!

MS. CUT
(off stage) Let me in!

FRANCISCO

(back of house) Nay, answer me. Stand and unfold yourself!

BUZZ's small bedroom comes to life as the SOLDIERS' lanterns search the stage.

BERNARDO

(back of house) LONG LIVE THE KING!

MS. CUT

(off stage) Unlock the door.

FRANCISCO

(back of house) Bernardo?

BERNARDO

(back of house) He.

MS. CUT

(off stage) Stop pissing about.

FRANCISCO

You come most carefully upon your hour.

BUZZ

Is it time?

BUZZ searches for and finds a pen; paper. Writes.

BERNARDO

(back of house) Tis now struck twelve; get thee to bed, Francisco.

MS. CUT

(off stage) I can hear you.

BUZZ

(writing) Let me finish.

FRANCISCO

(back of house) For this relief much thanks; tis bitter cold, And I am sick at heart.

MS. CUT

They're waiting.

More knocking.

BERNARDO

(back of house) Have you had quiet guard?

BUZZ

(writing) I need more time.

FRANCISCO

(back of house) Not a mouse stirring.

MS. CUT

(off stage) I'll leave.

BERNARDO

(back of house) Well, good night.

MS. CUT

(off stage) I mean it.

BUZZ

(writing) "Tell them...tell them..."

BUZZ finishes writing.

BERNARDO

(back of house) If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus, the rivals of my watch bid them make haste.

BUZZ stands, unsteady; raises the pages above her head.

MS. CUT

(off stage) UNLOCK THE DOOR!

BUZZ

LET ME SLEEP.

FRANCISCO

(back of house) I think I hear them. Stand ho! Who's there?!

The banging on the door increases until the lock breaks and the door slams against the wall. MS. CUT enters as BUZZ collapses.

Blackout.

MS. CUT (CONT.)

(a wail in the darkness) BUUUUUUUUUZZ!

A clump of earth hits the stage.

4. THE BEGINNING. 1967.

PROJECTION:

"Mark me. My hour is almost come."
The Beginning. 1967.

A desk lamp snaps on.

PROJECTION fades.

An office. BUZZ stands. Younger.
Wears a long, striped African dress,
clutches paperwork and a too large
purse. Wears knee high, suede boots
and sports giant Liz Taylor-esque sun
glasses. Digs through her purse for
her lighter. With cigarette in mouth,
she speaks.

BUZZ

So. Good. This is - good.

Lighter. Lighter. Lighter.

I'll be to his left. Good.

"Very nice to meet you."

"Indeed. Very nice. Very nice indeed". Where - is it?

Lighter. Lighter. Lighter.

No. Wait. I'll be - to his right. Yes. Better to his right.
Ridiculous. Why would I stand to his left? No one would stand to
his left. That's bad luck.

Where is it?

So. All right. Good. If the room is small, I'll stand.
If there's a chair, I'll sit.

Lighter, lighter, lighter.

Wait. He'll expect me to sit. They always expect you to sit.
Right. So. No. I'll wait for him to sit. And then. I'll stand.

Finds her lighter. An explosion of
words offstage.

HAMLET

BLOODY HELL. (in a child's voice) "Look mummy. Look mummy. Look at
the short, brown clown, mummy."

HAMLET enters dressed simply; perhaps
as a clown. Doesn't see BUZZ.

HAMLET (CONT.)

You pasty-faced twats. You fucking - I will play Richard III - you shiny-faced children - you tiny - fucking - non people - with your tiny sticky hands. Your ugly faces. Your fat stupid ugly faces with your stupid fat parents - I will play KINGS you freakish - tiny non-people. You twats. You know nothing, noise making, interrupting, fucking idiot CHILDREN. Talk while I'm SPEAKING?!!!

Oh God. God. I'm in a children's show. I'm in a fucking children's show.

I AM A MEMBER OF THIS COMPANY.

Sees BUZZ.

HAMLET (CONT.)

Who are you?

BUZZ

What?

HAMLET

Who are you? Why are you here? (short beat) You're one of the - good FUCK - you're one of the parents. You're one of the fucking - I saw you.

BUZZ

I promise you didn't.

HAMLET

You're one of the fucking parents.

BUZZ

I'm not.

HAMLET

You're not?

BUZZ

No.

HAMLET

Well. All right. You were here - I just thought -

BUZZ

Right.

HAMLET
I don't always - you know - this isn't what - I don't normally do
this.

BUZZ
Children's shows?

HAMLET
Right.

BUZZ
I think children should be locked in cages -

HAMLET
Pardon me?

BUZZ
- 'til they're old enough to work.

BUZZ stares at HAMLET.

BUZZ (CONT.)
Well. Well. Well.

HAMLET
What? What are you doing?

BUZZ
Give me your hand.

HAMLET
What? Why?

BUZZ grabs his hand.

HAMLET
What are you going to do? What -

He attempts to disengage. Fails.

BUZZ
(softly) Look at you.

HAMLET
You taking the piss?

BUZZ stares intently.

HAMLET (CONT.)
Fuck off. I mean it.

(still staring)... BUZZ
 Who are you? HAMLET
 "He was a man, take him for all in all, I shall not look upon his
 like again." BUZZ
 What? HAMLET
 Buzz. BUZZ
 I don't - wait - what? HAMLET
 She moves her sunglasses to the top
 of her head; peers into HAMLET's
 face, clutching his hand. Briskly
 shakes it.
 Buzz. My name. Hello. Mary Ann Goodbody. Call me Buzz,
 please. My brother calls me Buzz 'cause I never stop moving.
 He's my - well, you know, he's my brother, yeah? So. Hello.
 (smiling) Buzz. HAMLET
 Yeah. BUZZ
 Hello. HAMLET
 I'm so nervous. Never been nervous a day in my life. Y'have
 anything to eat? I'm starving. BUZZ
 Eh, no. HAMLET
 Almost missed the train. Coming out here. Three bloody hours.
 Haven't eaten a thing. BUZZ
 BUZZ rummages through her purse.

HAMLET
You're wearing a nightdress.

BUZZ
It's not really. It's African.

HAMLET
I like it.

BUZZ
Thanks. Just. Looks like a nightdress.

HAMLET
I'm a clown.

BUZZ
Yes, well.

HAMLET
Right.

BUZZ
Aren't we all?

They smile. MENTOR enters
carrying a file.

MENTOR
There you are.

HAMLET
I -

MENTOR
You're late. You'll miss the next - whatever it is you're doing.

MENTOR waves HAMLET away. With a
stammer, he exits. BUZZ lights a
cigarette.

MENTOR (CONT.)
Put that away. There's no smoking here.

Puts out cigarette.

MENTOR (CONT.)
Who are you?

BUZZ
I'm to meet John Barton.

MENTOR
What is it you're wearing?

BUZZ
It's -

MENTOR
I know what it is. Why are you wearing it?

BUZZ
I like it.

MENTOR
Do you intend to meet John Barton in a nightdress?

She digs in her purse.

BUZZ
Can't find my lighter.

MENTOR
Please, you can't smoke here. I don't like smoke.

BUZZ
Who are you?

MENTOR
What?

BUZZ
Are you Barton's - ?

MENTOR
What? No. Me? What do you mean? Certainly not.

Beat. Flips through a file A realization.

MENTOR (CONT.)
You're Buzz Goodbody.

BUZZ
I am.

Extends her hand, which is ignored.

MENTOR
Barton's - man.

Yes.

BUZZ

From University.

MENTOR

Yes.

BUZZ

MENTOR

Well. All right. There must be - (he shuffles papers) - some mistake here. I was expecting a Buzz Goodbody. And you are saying that you are - he?

BUZZ

I am.

MENTOR

You're to assist - to ah -

BUZZ

Direct. Barton said -

MENTOR

(Mumbling) "Barton said." Good lord. Man gives me a file. Doesn't tell me whom I'm to meet.

Flips through BARTON's notes.

MENTOR (CONT.)

Well. All right. He's written a great deal about you. Says here your work is - eh - your direction of "Notes From Underground".

BUZZ

At University, yes.

MENTOR

Said it was extraordinary - that you're an extraordinary talent; an extraordinary - director.

BUZZ

That's very kind. Thank you.

MENTOR

He said it.

BUZZ

Right.

MENTOR

I've never seen your work. So. Until this mess is sorted -

BUZZ

Barton said -

MENTOR

Until this mess is sorted, you'll be responsible to Barton. Whatever he needs, you'll assist him. Secretarial. Most like. Errand running. Bits and bobs. Coffee. Tea. That sort of thing. Speak to my secretary. She'll show you 'round. Been here for years. Knows everything. You need a pen?

BUZZ

No.

MENTOR

To write this down?

BUZZ pulls three scripts from her bag, covered in notes. A few pages fall to the floor.

MENTOR (CONT.)

What is this?

BUZZ

Hamlet. Lear. And King John.

MENTOR

And you're giving them to me - why?

BUZZ

I'm here to direct.

MENTOR

My dear, sweet girl -

BUZZ

That's why I came. Barton said -

MENTOR

I'm sure he didn't.

BUZZ

- I would direct.

MENTOR

That's not how it works.

BUZZ

I'll start with these. My ideas. Notes. They're all there.

MENTOR

Miss Goodbody, we have our way of doing things.

BUZZ

Hamlet. In a small space.

MENTOR

Surely you realize -

BUZZ

Intimate. With the audience, not to the audience, you see? And Lear -

Another page falls. BUZZ picks the pages up from the floor and extends them to the MENTOR as he escorts her to the door.

MENTOR

Miss Goodbody, please. You can't just walk into a room and make demands.

BUZZ

You can't?

MENTOR

That's not how it works.

BUZZ

All right.

MENTOR

Barton must have told you that, at least. It's simply not the way things are done. Not by us. Not here. No. We are - well, my dear, you know who we are or you wouldn't be here, isn't that right? There is a ladder one must climb.

BUZZ

A ladder?

MENTOR

Yes. You may think our system antiquated -

BUZZ

Don't know what your system is.

MENTOR

- but we have been very successful at what we do - we are, after all, one of the most - well, one of the largest, with the most history-

BUZZ
How long?

MENTOR
Pardon me?

BUZZ
How long will I have to wait?

MENTOR
Well, I don't really know, do I? Everything happens in good time, my dear - yes - all in good time. Things have a way of - "Notes From The Underground", eh? Marvelous play, that. Marvelous.

MS. CUT enters.

MENTOR (CONT.)
There you are! Good. Meet, eh - (swirls a hand in BUZZ' general direction) - this young - Miss Goodbody - lady - director - person.

BUZZ
Buzz. Hello.

Extends her hand, which is ignored.

MS. CUT
All right.

MENTOR
This is our - eh -

MS. CUT
Costumer. Designer.

MENTOR
Right. Meet Barton's new girl. Show her 'round.

MS. CUT
Let Barton show her 'round.

MENTOR
I want you to show her 'round.

MS. CUT
I don't have time to show her 'round. I'm working.

MENTOR
Do it.

MENTOR hands MS. CUT a folder,
exits.

MS. CUT
(shouts after him) What's this?

MENTOR
(from off stage) Her file.

MS. CUT
What am I meant to show her?! Oi! What am I meant to -

MENTOR
(from off stage) Sort it!

MS. CUT
Bloody hell.(mumbling) Stupid old man.

MS. CUT peers at BUZZ.

MS. CUT (CONT.)
You're wearing a nightdress -

BUZZ
It's not -

MS. CUT
- to a meeting at this theatre. (short beat.) How old are you?

BUZZ
Twenty.

MS. CUT
Good Lord. I have jumpers in my cupboard older than you.

MS. CUT walks.

MS. CUT (CONT.)
Come along. Tick. Tock. Don't have all day.

BUZZ follows. Lights up on the
COMPANY and MR. RIGHT, directing.
BUZZ and MS. CUT enter.

MR. RIGHT
WHY must you test my PATIENCE? Do you not understand English? Do you not have ears? Look at your selves. This is not what I rehearsed. This is not what I asked for. This play is five hours long. FIVE. How did that happen? You're - you're rolling about on stage like - like giant - nothings - my GOD. I need more speed. More. More. Something. We talked about this. Am I the only person

listening to myself SPEAK? We open in three days. Three. I can't look at you. I can't. You're making me - you're making me -

He grabs his stomach, as if in pain, and bends at the waist; his head hanging at his knees.

MR. RIGHT

(under his breath) I'm going to be - my God - I'm going to be -

BOARD OPERATOR

(off stage) All right Ladies and Gents. Five minutes. Back in five.

The COMPANY disperses.

MS. CUT

Oi! You there, Mr. Wonderful. A word.

MR. RIGHT, still bent at the waist.

MR. RIGHT

I'm rehearsing.

MS. CUT

(nod toward BUZZ) Barton's girl.

MR. RIGHT

I don't need a girl.

MS. CUT

Show her 'round.

MR. RIGHT

I don't want to show her 'round. You show her 'round.

MS. CUT extends BUZZ's file.

MS. CUT

Your man said.

MR. RIGHT

What's this?

MS. CUT

Her file.

MR. RIGHT

What does she do?

MS. CUT
 (to BUZZ) What do you do?

BUZZ
 I'm a director.

MS. CUT
 She's a director.

MR. RIGHT
 (laughing) Oh piss off.

MS. CUT
 There's a good lad.

MS. CUT attempts an exit.

MR. RIGHT
 Right. Listen. Eh. Before you go - take this.

MR. RIGHT gives file back, pulls MS.
 CUT aside.

MR. RIGHT (CONT.)
 I meant to ask you.

MS. CUT
 Lord, please, I wish you wouldn't.

MR. RIGHT
 You've seen this. A few run-throughs? What do you think? You think
 it's all right? It's missing something - I don't know.

MS. CUT
 Really?

MR. RIGHT
 Well, yes. Yes. Do you think it's - I'm asking - (in a whisper)-
 do you think it's any good?

MS. CUT
 You're askin' me what I think of your show?

MR. RIGHT
 Well, yes. Look at them! This is what I have to work with!

MS. CUT
 They're perfectly fine.

MR. RIGHT
 AMATEURS!

MS. CUT

Everyone works with the same.

MR. RIGHT

I know. But. I just. Tell me. Tell me -

MS. CUT

You know what I think.

MR. RIGHT

I just. Tell me.

Short beat.

MS. CUT

I've no idea what they're doing.

MR. RIGHT

Precisely.

MS. CUT

That one mumbles. That one doesn't know his lines. And they're all so far up stage, I can barely see them. And sweet, darling boy, I know I made the costumes they're wearing, but - honestly - they're rubbish. I can't believe you asked me to make them. And why is everyone shouting?

MR. RIGHT

...

MS. CUT

(to MR. RIGHT as she exits) There's a hole in your trousers. Bring them 'round. I'll mend them.

MR. RIGHT checks his trousers.

BUZZ

Is she right?

Short beat.

MR. RIGHT

Get me a cuppa tea. Black. No sugar.

BUZZ

I'm -

MR. RIGHT

Now, please. Thank you. PLACES. I need PLACES.

BOARD OPERATOR

You heard the man. ON YOUR FEET.

BUZZ

But I'm -

MR. RIGHT

Get tea. Fuck off. Don't say another word.

Blackout.

A clump of earth hits the stage.

5. WHEELCHAIRS.

A work light snaps on. GRAVEYARD.
GRAVE DIGGERS on break. SIDNEY eats a
sandwich from a paper bag. Offers
half to LEONARD. He demurs. Beat.

LEONARD

Ever sit in a wheelchair?

SIDNEY

What?

LEONARD

Me neither. Ever think about it?

SIDNEY

What? Sitting in a wheelchair?

LEONARD

You're born one minute. Pick your way through life. Get to the
end. Suddenly, you're in a wheelchair.

SIDNEY

Why am I in a wheelchair?

LEONARD

Rolling about, no legs - well, you got legs, but they don't work
and you sit there and you think -

SIDNEY

Is this about the ginger fella?

LEONARD

"Is this my life?"

SIDNEY

What're you on about?

LEONARD

"Am I wearing clean socks?"

SIDNEY

Wait. What?

LEONARD

'Cause that's what you worry about, innit? The basics. The black and white of it. Do I want to be here if being here is being in this wheelchair, yeah? And if I'm am found -

SIDNEY

Found?

LEONARD

Am I wearing clean socks? 'Cause that's how they'll they remember you, see?

SIDNEY

Wait. What just happened?

LEONARD

Things change, right? You get old, ya die. Or you're young an'- you know. (nod to the grave). Ya can't control it, I'm sayin'; ya can't prepare for it.

SIDNEY

What, life? Ya can't control life?

LEONARD

It just happens. Just a series of decisions you don't know are connected until you get to the end and you're in a wheelchair.

SIDNEY

WHY AM IN A FUCKIN' WHEELCHAIR?!!

LEONARD

And if that happened, could I do this?

LEONARD sings and dances.

LEONARD (CONT.)

"I'm known as the Cheeky Chappy, the things I say are snappy. That's why the pretty girls all fall for me."

SIDNEY

All right.

LEONARD

Max Miller. Music hall fella. You remember.

SIDNEY

Yeah. Died in '63.

LEONARD

Was that film - tall skinny fella played him. Olivier. Olivier played 'im.

SIDNEY

Tarty arsehole. "The Entertainer."

LEONARD

I liked 'im. Played piano in that film.

SIDNEY

He was rubbish.

LEONARD

Liked her more, though.

SIDNEY

Vivien Leigh.

Stops dancing.

LEONARD

Yeaaaaaaaah, Vivien Leigh.

SIDNEY

Never got her due.

LEONARD

A mystery.

SIDNEY

Gone now. '67.

LEONARD

Yeah. How'd she go?

SIDNEY

Dunno.

Short beat.

SIDNEY (CONT.)

Think her socks was clean?

Oh piss off. LEONARD

No? SIDNEY

Ah c'mon. Just - I mean it. LEONARD

'Cause that'd be a problem. SIDNEY

Oh ha ha ha. LEONARD

Ol' Viv with dirty socks. SIDNEY

Funny one you, eh? LEONARD

A real travesty. SIDNEY

Fuck off. LEONARD

SIDNEY laughs. Grabs his shovel.

From another space and time, music, softly sung. SIDNEY and LEONARD pause to listen.

HAMLET
(singing) "I'm known as the Cheeky Chappie, the things I say are snappy."

Dig. SIDNEY

HAMLET
"That's why the pretty girls all fall for me."

LEONARD doesn't move.

Dig. DIG. SIDNEY (CONT.)

They dig; pick up their pace. The work light snaps off. Blackout. In darkness, HAMLET sings.

6. THE KITCHEN.

PROJECTION:

"Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing to what I shall unfold."
Three years later. February, 1970.

PROJECTION fades.

HAMLET

"I don't do things contrary. My love will never vary - "

Lights up. A kitchen. BUZZ stands at the counter. A radio. Curlers in her hair. Cigarette in her mouth. Furiously writing. HAMLET stands close by.

HAMLET (CONT.)

"Ask Mary from the Dairy here's the key - " What time is it?

BUZZ

Don't know. Late. It's late.

HAMLET

Buzz.

BUZZ

What?

HAMLET

What are we doing?

BUZZ

Not now, yeah? I want to - I need to finish this before we leave.

HAMLET

Here we are. In my kitchen. A block from the bloody theatre. Night after night. I go there. I speak. They listen.

BUZZ

Yeah. You're an actor.

HAMLET

God help me.

BUZZ

I don't know.

BUZZ stops. Looks at HAMLET.

What's the matter? BUZZ (CONT.)

Nothing. HAMLET

You're brilliant. You know that, don't you? You're fucking brilliant, yeah? (short beat) What? BUZZ

... HAMLET

Been friends for three years now. Think I'd know when something's wrong. BUZZ

Beat.

Ever wonder why we're here? HAMLET

No. BUZZ

Shoulda been a doctor. HAMLET

Bollocks. BUZZ

BUZZ turns on the radio. Returns to writing. HAMLET turns it off.

Better than this. HAMLET

Maybe. BUZZ

What are you doing? HAMLET

Attempts to read BUZZ' work.

You can read it when I'm finished. BUZZ

Anything to eat? HAMLET

BUZZ points. HAMLET grabs a bag of walnuts from the counter. Eats.

HAMLET

(again singing softly, bored) "I'm known as the Cheeky Chappy, the things I say are snappy. That's why the pretty girls all fall for me."

BUZZ

(sighing) Are you going to do that all morning? Until we leave? (short beat) Is this about the note I gave you? It's about the note I gave you, isn't it?

HAMLET

No.

BUZZ

I gave you the note because -

HAMLET

Yeah.

BUZZ

- we both know you are much better -

HAMLET

Right.

BUZZ

- and if no one is going to say anything -

HAMLET

They don't want me.

BUZZ

Of course they want you.

HAMLET

I don't know what I'm doing. I'm thirty-two.

BUZZ

Nearly dead.

HAMLET

I'm - why can't I be more like - him?

BUZZ

Who him?

HAMLET

Him. Him. Your man. Charlie. Everyone loves him. Everyone - wants him. He's -

BUZZ

Welsh.

HAMLET

He has a dressing room - with mirrors. And chairs. Lots of chairs. For all the people who come. They come just to be in the same room with him. No one does that for me. No one comes. I don't have chairs.

BUZZ

All right.

HAMLET

The whole - the dressing room is so big and beautiful and they all meet there, all of them working on the main stage.

BUZZ

Have you been there?

HAMLET

Well. Yeah. It's - I mean - yeah, of course I've been.

BUZZ

Right.

HAMLET

Of course. Not for long. Not with them.

BUZZ

You're your own man.

HAMLET

Easier to be one of them. Your man Charlie. Easier to be him. Have someone fetch my tea; tell me what to do. I could do that. I could have that. Be that. On the main stage. In the - dressing room. With all those - I could have mirrors.

BUZZ

No you couldn't. We are who we are. (short beat) Main stage has nice dressing rooms, does it?

HAMLET

Yeah.

BUZZ

Does it have inspiration? Ideas? A library of books? Does it have drinks and crisps? Party hats and such? Challenge and push? (short beat) Does it have a giant, pulsing, god of invention?

HAMLET

(sheepishly) It's a dressing room.

BUZZ

That's right.

Pulls a copy of "Hamlet" from her bag, flips to a page.

HAMLET

What's this?

BUZZ

Read.

HAMLET

"If it assume my noble father's person, I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape." Oh fuck off.

BUZZ

We could do it. We could bring all the things we love -

HAMLET

Oh piss off, Buzz. This doesn't help.

BUZZ

The main stage can't do what we can.

HAMLET

What are you on about?

BUZZ

Get rid of the proscenium. Engage with the people here, in Stratford, all the people we've talked about - the shop owners, the mechanics - everyone - I've written it down. Maybe. Maybe they've never seen it before. To them, it's all new. Shakespeare for Mummies and daddies. Spotted fourteen-year-olds. We reach - families - we do that.

HAMLET

Hamlet?

BUZZ

Yes.